

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Janet M. Finneran, Chair
Lynne S. Farrell
Theresa Hopkins-Staten
Patricia B. Luke

Minutes of the Meeting of
May 6, 2009

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Janet Finneran called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the State Department of Education, 165 Capitol Avenue, Room 305, Hartford, Connecticut. Present for all or part of the meeting were Committee Members Ms. Janet Finneran, Chair; Mrs. Patricia Luke, and Mrs. Theresa Hopkins-Staten. Dr. Lynne Farrell was absent. Also present were Commissioner Mark McQuillan, Associate Commissioners Marion Martinez, Barbara Beaudin and Charlene Russell-Tucker, Assistant to the Commissioner Pamela Bergin, Education Manager Cheryl Resha, Bureau Chiefs Barbara Westwater and Paul Flinter, and Consultants Marie Glowski and Bonnie Edmondson.

II. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mrs. Luke, seconded by Mrs. Hopkins-Staten, the committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2009, Policy Development Committee meeting.

III. Draft Position Statement on Coordinated Approach to School Health

Committee members discussed the draft version of the Position Statement on a Coordinated Approach to School Health, dated May 6, 2009. A few changes were requested (e.g., explain staff wellness needs, clarify educational disparities, use "community-based partners" instead of "communities; and change "risky behavior" to high risk behaviors."

Under the Guidelines: include under "families' responsibilities," ensuring that children receive required vaccinations. This might be cross-referenced under the school district's responsibility, too. Mrs. Hopkins-Staten expressed concern regarding the first few bullets under "families' responsibilities," noting that parents/guardians of high risk children do not always have the time or the resources to meet such responsibilities. It would be of greater use to delineate how parents can obtain pertinent information – via websites, a list of community agencies available, family resource centers, etc.

Mrs. Luke noted that she thinks the guidelines are more suited for State Department of Education staff and practitioners. Committee members questioned the role of students as “advocates” and agreed to remove the second bullet under “students’ responsibilities,” and modify the fourth bullet to make it more individualized (i.e., advocating for their own health).

Also under this section, committee members reached consensus to add a bullet (or expand on the one that currently reads, “Make sound decisions to live a healthy lifestyle”) that addresses the need to avoid high risk behaviors (drinking, smoking, unprotected sex, etc.)

IV. Draft Position Statement on the Education of Students Who Are English Language Learners

Associate Commissioner Martinez initiated a discussion of the revised draft statement. Commissioner McQuillan noted that it is important to keep in mind the needs of prekindergarten students, as well. Committee members agreed to remove the phrase “(where mandated)”, from the first sentence. Mrs. Luke recommended several editorial changes, and provided staff with a copy of her edits. She suggested that the second paragraph be restructured, to more clearly show the link between its belief that providing high quality bilingual and English as a second language education helps meet the educational needs of students whose dominant language is other than English and supports the Board’s commitment to providing a high quality education for all learners. Committee members agreed to remove the language in the second paragraph beginning with, “These programs must support....and ending with “have meaningful access to schools’ programs.”

Discussion ensued regarding the need to clarify that “ELL” pertains to the students, while bilingual education and ESL are services to meet the needs of ELL students. For purposes of the position statement, no acronyms will be given. The guidelines will contain acronyms that are defined the first time of appearance.

Committee members agreed that the guidelines need to be condensed.

V. Draft Position Statement on Educational Leadership

Associate Commissioner Martinez initiated a discussion of the revised draft statement. Mrs. Hopkins-Staten recommended that the term “community-based partners” be used consistently in other position statements. Mrs. Bobroske thought it would be appropriate to share the draft with those groups that have an interest in educational leadership (e.g., CAS). Regarding the fifth bullet on page 2, Mrs. Luke asked that the statement clarify who will maintain accountability. In the sixth bullet, change the terms “research-based redesign and change” to “research-based practices.” Eighth bullet, change the “slash” to “and.”

The importance of all stakeholders understanding and respecting each other's role in effective leadership is crucial (including students, teachers, paraprofessionals, school board, superintendent, building principal, etc.).

On page 3, add the word "school" before "board" in the first line. Add the words "supported by" immediately before "scientifically research-based strategies." Reread and edit the last paragraph for clarity.

VI. Adjourn

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

Prepared by Pamela V. Bergin