

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Ad Hoc Committee on Secondary School Improvement**

**Meeting of
March 20, 2009**

Draft Minutes (Subject to Revision)

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Committee Co-Chair Jay Voss called the meeting to order at 9:41 a.m. The meeting was held in Room 307, State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut. The following committee members were present:

Barbara Beaudin, SDE
Alan Bookman, CAPSS
Dennis Carrithers, CAS
Glen Cassis, NAACP
Mary Lou DiPaola, New Haven Public School
Teacher
Janet Finneran, Committee Co-Chair, State
Board of Education
Robert Hale, CABE
Shiela Hayes, NAACP
Lauren Kaufman, CBIA
Robert Keating, OWC
Marion Martinez, SDE
Mark McQuillan, Commissioner, SDE
Yvette Melendez, CSU
Michael Meotti, DHE
Gloria Ragosta, CCIC
Allan Taylor, SBE09
Marne Usher, CT PTA
Jay Voss, Committee Co-Chair, State Board of
Education
Michael Freeman, CEA
Sharon Palmer, AFT Connecticut

Mr. Voss welcomed the committee members, and thanked them for reconvening and for their support for the secondary school reform proposals.

II. Approval of Minutes of September 24, 2008, Committee Meeting

On a motion by Ms. Palmer, seconded by Ms. Hayes, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the September 24, 2008, committee meeting.

Commissioner McQuillan introduced Dr. Marion Martinez, Associate Commissioner, Division of Teaching, Learning and Instructional Leadership.

III. Update on SDE Preparation for Implementing Secondary School Reform in Fiscal Year 2009

Associate Commissioner Marion Martinez summarized the tasks assigned to three work groups formed to carry this effort forward, including the Design, Implementation and Capacity Committee; the Internal Support and Facilitation Committee; and the Public Awareness/Marketing and Speakers' Bureau Committee. Dr. Martinez noted the link on the Department's web site that provides current information on the progress of the secondary school reform initiatives.

Dr. Barbara Beaudin, Associate Commissioner, Division of Assessment and Accountability, noted that 41 districts have responded to the invitation to participate on a voluntary basis in the secondary school reform initiatives, including the student success plan, capstone project and student support and school climate.

Thomas Murphy, Office of Public Information, made a power point presentation on the new portion of the Department's web site that focuses on the secondary school reform initiatives. Committee members made several suggestions, including development of a logo, conveying the urgency of acting now, capturing the attention of diverse audiences, and showing national data on states' efforts in secondary school reform.

Dr. Arthur Skerker, Technology Consultant, described the role of technology in supporting the secondary school reform agenda. He expressed concern that some districts are still without broadband access and lack the infrastructure to move forward.

Dr. Earle Bidwell, Connecticut Association of Schools, stressed the need to educate middle-level educators about the importance of and their role in secondary school reform. He noted that conversations are being held across the state and he is conveying feedback to the middle-level task force. Dr. Bidwell said that a meeting is being planned for April 3, 2009 with principals to discuss how to implement the recommendations.

Marlene Lovanio, Education Manager, Division of Teaching, Learning and Instructional Leadership, presented an overview of the development of an Algebra I curriculum. She noted that the Department is working with the Connecticut Academy to develop a set of requirements for all students to meet when enrolled in Algebra I, and a plan for professional development. This will be piloted in the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years. She noted that the course-level expectations and final examination will serve to make Algebra I instruction consistent across districts.

Dr. Lovanio noted that upon the completion of the Algebra I curriculum, similar actions will be taken to develop curricula in other mathematics areas, biology, English language courses, and American history.

Committee members suggested that future work include a broad base of representatives of the higher education community, including those who work with students at the campus level, as well as public school teachers. This collaborative approach would ensure that the needs of students who are "less ready" for college will be addressed. Discussion ensued regarding the need for alignment between secondary schools and higher education.

June Sanford, Education Consultant, Career and Technical Education, distributed "Connecticut Career Pathways: Seasons of Change and Transition." Committee members made suggestions regarding the distribution of this publication (public libraries, chambers of commerce, etc.). Ms. Sanford shared the Secondary School Reform Student Success Plan "progress report, highlighting the charge to the committee, and the timelines for its work.

The committee recessed for lunch, and reconvened at 1:15 p.m.

IV. Higher Education Recommendation on Admissions Criteria to Connecticut State Colleges and Universities

Yvette Melendez summarized the Connecticut State University System's proposal to strengthen the academic admission requirements, in 2015 or thereafter, in subjects including math, science, social studies and world language. Flexibility in the actual effective date will permit local school districts ample time to assure that students will have an opportunity to complete the academic requirements for admission. She noted the importance of addressing teacher preparation and teacher shortages.

Page 3 of 3

Discussion ensued. A copy of the March 12, 2009, News Release and Staff Report of the Academic Affairs Committee regarding this proposal is contained in the official file of this meeting, and was distributed to committee members. Discussion followed, including how students could satisfy the world language requirement and the additional challenge of students in the technical high school system meeting the requirement. Commissioner McQuillan noted that on-line instruction or taking the course at a local community college are two options.

V. Raised Bill 944, An Act Concerning a Plan for Academic and Personal Success for Every Middle and High School Student

Commissioner McQuillan referred to "Raised Bill 944, An Act Concerning a Plan for Academic and Personal Success." Committee members who attended the public hearing commented on the hearing, noting that the world language community expressed its strong support for requiring world language. Committee members expressed their thoughts about the timing of the world language requirement, recognizing that there is no guarantee that support for secondary school reform will regain momentum in the future. Members expressed the need to convey to legislators the history of secondary school reform efforts and how the success of the higher education proposal is largely reliant on the success of the secondary school proposals.

VI. Possible Amendments to Raised Bill 944, An Act Concerning a Plan for Academic and Personal Success for Every Middle and High School Student

Commissioner McQuillan summarized a proposal to grant a certificate of achievement or some form of recognition to students who complete the requirements of the Plan for Academic and Personal Success for Every Middle and High School Student (the Plan). He invited committee members to comment on whether this should be offered to any student who meets the requirements, or to districts that choose to participate in the Plan. The committee agreed that it should be offered to all students.

Committee members continued their discussion of the world language credit requirement. Following a roundtable discussion of the pros and cons of requiring world language, a vote was called for. Janet Finneran moved, Lauren Kaufman seconded, to recommend to the State Board of Education a proposal to add two world language requirements to the secondary school reform proposal. A majority of the committee members voted in favor of the motion.

The committee also agreed that the courses required for graduation should be specified in the legislative proposal.

VII. Higher Education – P-20 Committee Update

Commissioner Meotti noted that the P-20 Committee will convene at noon on April 28, 2009, at Northeast Utilities. This meeting will be a brainstorming session, to reach consensus on defining the challenge and how to approach it. He noted that the membership includes a good mix of the K-12 and business community. Workgroups will be formed to address data systems needed to assess progress; teacher education and professional development; and Career Pathways. An outside facilitator will conduct the meeting.

VIII. Future Meetings

No meetings were scheduled, although Committee members expressed willingness to meet in the future, when appropriate.

IX. Adjourn

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.