

# CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION Hartford

Minutes  
September 17, 2010, Retreat

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education (hereinafter "Board") met on Friday, September 17, 2010. The meeting was held at Northeast Utilities, 107 Selden Street, Berlin, Connecticut.

## I. Call to Order

Chairperson Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Present: Allan Taylor, Chairperson  
Janet Finneran, Vice Chairperson  
Beverly Bobroske  
Patrick Campbell  
Lynne Farrell\*  
Theresa Hopkins-Staton  
Patricia Luke  
Neha Mehta  
Jay Voss  
Pamela Partridge West\*  
Michael Meotti, Ex-Officio\*

Absent: William Fritz

Alan Price and Susan Engel, meeting facilitators from Northeast Utilities, proposed ground rules for the retreat session and gained Board members' support for the rules.

[Dr. Farrell arrived at 9:10 a.m.]

## III. Introductions and Personal Perspectives

The Board members discussed what inspired them to board service and the issues that drove their commitment to education.

## IV. Objective of Meeting

The Board members discussed what they hoped to accomplish during the retreat session, and discussed the importance of acting as a high performing board. They agreed that their work is best served by having a clear sense of direction, holding effective meetings, working collaboratively, understanding their roles and the roles of the department, being adaptive to change, and committed to their work.

V. Umbrella for Discussion

Commissioner McQuillan summarized the work of the agency over the past five years and how its efforts supported the attainment of outcomes delineated for each of the three priorities in the Board's Five-Year Comprehensive Plan: early childhood education; academic achievement; and secondary school reform. He also described some obstacles encountered during that time with regard to early childhood (reduced funding, reduced staffing, interagency collaboration, etc.), and discussed many ways that the agency and the Board could continue efforts to advance this priority (e.g., legislative proposals to increase quality of teachers; entry age for kindergartners; soliciting foundation support; public relations efforts to increase voters' support; strengthening administrative support statewide to implement the policy work, interagency collaboration and coordination of services). The Commissioner summarized several positive results that were realized upon the passage of accountability legislation and secondary school reform. He noted in particular, the positive results realized as a result of the Connecticut Accountability for Learning Initiative and secondary school reform. He expressed concerns, however, with the capacity of the agency to sustain our work due to reduced staffing and funds.

[Commissioner Meotti arrived at 10:30 a.m.]

The Board recessed at 12:30 p.m., and reconvened at 1:20 p.m. All members were present, except Mr. Fritz.

Discussion continued regarding how the Board and Department can best focus available resources and staffing, and the development of the next comprehensive plan. The Board discussed the development cycle outlined on "The State Board of Education's 2011-16 Comprehensive Five-year Plan: Preliminary Sketch" and expressed its desire to be involved throughout. It is the Board's plan, but it will be developed with the participation of the broader community (defined in state statute). Members talked about the six partnership committees having a seat on the advisory committee; and, rather than have the plan considered by each of the Board's standing committees, it would prefer to hold a workshop at an appropriate time. The plan will be developed with consideration given to the "foundations" listed on the "Preliminary Sketch" document, will be measurable, and will include periodic reports on progress.

Board members broke out into two workgroups to talk about what they regard as priorities. The following themes emerged:

Early Childhood: better integration of preschool into K-12 continuum; all-day kindergarten; "Ready by 5; Fine by 9"; standard entry age for kindergarten

Academic Achievement: teacher/leader quality and evaluation; Common Core Standards; technology infrastructure to support assessment accountability; statewide implementation of CALI; relevant professional development at all levels, tied to evaluation; closing the achievement gap;

recognizing and replicating successful practices; alternatives ways to assess quality teaching (beyond test scores)

Secondary School Reform: promoting the Connecticut Technical High Schools; finding ways to tap student potential and consider what skills they need to be employable; replicating successful practices; student engagement in community

Board members discussed the importance of a communications plan, including board members acting as community ambassadors; parent engagement; how to educate local citizens on value of education to gain their support; making good use of "bully pulpit;" providing greater opportunities for innovation and sharing best practices; educating and increasing communication with political leaders. Other comments focused on adequacy and equity statewide, including staffing, resources, and regionalism. The need to examine solutions to the *Sheff* case beyond Hartford was also discussed.

#### VI. Discussion of Evaluation Process

Consensus was reached that the State Board of Education's evaluation form will be filled out and sent to Pamela Bergin, Assistant to the Commissioner for Board Matters.

Consensus was reached that the Commissioner's Evaluation Form will be first filled out by Commissioner McQuillan, then given to the Board for their comments. The Board will send the completed form to Chairperson Taylor.

#### V. Adjourn

By unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mark K. McQuillan, Secretary