

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**Legislation and Policy Development Committee Meeting
June 1, 2016**

**Minutes
(Approved 7/6/2016)**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the Board of Education Legislation and Policy Development Committee met in Room 2600, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, Connecticut, on June 1, 2016.

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Theresa Hopkins-Staten called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. Also present were committee members Robert Trefry, Joseph Vrabely, Erin Benham, and Terry Jones. Ms. Maria Mojica was absent.

Also present for all or part of the meeting were the following Department of Education staff members: Bureau Chief John Frassinelli; Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer; John Watson, Office of Information Systems; Laura Stefon, Legislative Liaison; Chief of Staff Kelly Donnelly; Communications Director Abbe Smith; Legal Director Peter Haberlandt; and Paralegal Michael Wallace.

Stephen Wright, member of the State Board of Education, was also present along with members of the general public.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

On a motion made by Mr. Vrabely, seconded by Ms. Benham, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of the April 6, 2016, Legislation and Policy Development Committee meeting. No meeting was held in May.

III. Legislative Update

Committee Chair Hopkins-Staten introduced and welcomed Legislative Liaison Laura Stefon. Ms. Stefon gave an update as follows: The 2016 Regular Session adjourned at midnight on May 4, 2016 without a budget passing and, as a result, the House and Senate immediately convened a Special Session to take up 5 bills: SB 501 (The Budget Bill) and SB 502 (The Budget Implementer Bill) have both passed through the House and the Senate; SB 504 (The Land Conveyance Bill), which also passed through the House and Senate; SB 503 (The Bonding and School Construction Bill), which, to date, has passed in the Senate; and SB 505 (Governor Malloy's Second Chance Society 2.0), which neither chamber has taken up.

Bills that Passed

Ms. Stefon stated that this is not an exhaustive list of all education related bills that passed and noted that only one of the bills has been signed by the Governor. Once the Governor has

completed the bill review and signing process, Ms. Stefon will send a comprehensive update to the Board.

Ms. Stefon spoke about the postponement of new high school graduation requirements. The Education Committee decided not to take up a bill that incorporated the recommendations of the High School Graduation Requirement Task Force. Instead, they introduced legislation that once again postponed the existing new requirements by another year.

Minority Teacher Recruitment

Senate Bill 379 was signed by the Governor on May 27, 2016. This bill does the following: (1) extends the work and membership of the Minority Teacher Recruitment Taskforce, extending its termination date to January 1, 2026; (2) creates a Minority Teacher Recruitment Oversight Council within the Department of Education that will advise the Commissioner on ways to encourage and recruit minority middle and secondary school students to enter the field of teaching, recruit minority professionals from other fields to enter teaching and to retain all minority teachers employed; (3) requires the Department to conduct an annual survey of students participating in minority teacher recruitment programs, geared to asking questions relating to the effectiveness of the programs; (4) this bill eliminates the requirement for an individual to pass the Praxis core assessment in order to be eligible to enter a teacher preparation program. The requirement to take the test remains, but the score will be used as a diagnostic tool to identify necessary remedial instruction. It will also have no impact on an individual's ability to become certified. The requirement to pass Praxis II still remains in place. Lastly, SB 379 allows the Department to issue an appropriate level of certificate to individuals looking to transfer certifications from another state. Without this fix, as of July 1, 2016, the Department would no longer be able to take into consideration the number of years of previous successful service an individual had in another state to issue a certificate beyond an initial certificate.

Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee

House Bill 5642 resulted from a great deal of collaboration and compromise among a variety of stakeholders. It makes a variety of changes affecting education in juvenile detention, what happens to children returning to school after an experience with the juvenile justice system, and addresses other school disciplinary issues. Further, the bill requires schools to offer alternative educational opportunities to a larger category of expelled students.

This bill makes clear that school boards must offer an individualized learning plan as part of the alternative education for expelled students under the age of 16. It expands the category of students who must be offered an alternative educational opportunity by removing a statutory provision that stated an alternative educational opportunity did not have to be offered if the student was expelled for having been in possession of a firearm, deadly weapon, dangerous instrument, martial arts weapon, or was offering an illegal drug for sale or possession on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event.

This bill also changes notice requirements for parents and guardians to be notified of expulsion hearings and five days prior to the hearing and requires that they be made aware of their legal rights and the rights of the student. This bill requires the Court Support Services Division

(CSSD) to develop and implement a risk assessment tool and adopt and release policies and procedures for students leaving juvenile detention. The bill limits the conditions under which a child can be detained at a juvenile detention center and allows graduated sanctions as an alternative to detention. CSSD and DCF are required to develop and implement a plan to provide community-based services for children leaving juvenile detention.

Juvenile justice residential facilities are now prohibited from imposing out-of-school suspensions, meaning a child would no longer be forced to remain in their room where they are not receiving instruction.

Lastly, the bill creates a working group that will focus on developing a data integration process to share data across various state agencies and the Judicial Branch, while simultaneously establishing provisions to protect confidential information in accordance with federal law.

Disclosure of Certain Education Personnel Records

House Bill 5400 adds several new requirements to the hiring process for local or regional boards of education, state and local charters and magnet operators when they are seeking to fill positions that would place applicants in direct contact with students.

It requires criminal history record checks for substitutes and employees of contractors. It prohibits education employers from offering employment to anyone who was previously terminated or resigned from employment for reasons specified in the law. The bill requires the Department to create a standardized form for distribution to the local and regional boards of education that employers would send to applicants requesting the disclosure of certain information regarding disciplinary actions for findings of abuse or neglect, or sexual misconduct. The bill also increases the penalty for certain school-related threats and establishes conditions under which the Board of Pardons and Paroles must grant an absolute pardon. It also establishes an absolute defense to a civil action for reporting certain threats.

Taskforces

There are three new taskforces on which the Commissioner or her designee will serve as a member. The first is a task force that will review, streamline and align state policies relating to school climate, bullying, school safety and social-emotional learning. The second is a task force to study issues relating to the need for and the recruitment of manufacturing teachers. The third is a task force to study issues relating to the professional development requirements and the in-service training requirements for educators.

Ms. Stefon then talked about the Seal of Biliteracy legislation that the Department proposed which would have allowed a Superintendent to place a seal on the diploma or transcript of a student who had demonstrated a high level of proficiency in both English and another language.

IV. Introducing Edsight

Committee Chair Hopkins-Staten then introduced and welcomed Mr. Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer, and Mr. John Watson, Education Consultant, who presented a Power Point

Presentation on Edsight which is a central repository that integrates all CSDE data. It can be accessed at: <http://edsight.ct.gov>. A copy of the presentation is included with these minutes.

V. Other Matters

None

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Prepared by:

Michael Wallace, Paralegal