

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**Legislation and Policy Development Committee Meeting
September 7, 2016**

Draft Minutes

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education Legislation and Policy Development Committee met in Room 2600, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, Connecticut on September 7, 2016.

I. Call to Order

Member Joseph J. Vrabely, Jr. called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m. Also present was committee member Robert Trefry. Member Maria Mojica arrived at 8:42 a.m. and Member Erin Benham arrived at 8:50. Committee members Theresa Hopkins-Staten and Terry Jones were absent.

Also present for all or part of the meeting were the following Department of Education staff members: Chief Operating Officer Charlene Russell-Tucker; Bureau of Choice Programs Chief Mark Linabury; Communications Director Abbe Smith; Bureau Chief John Frassinelli; Director of Internal Audit Gloria McCree; Charter School Program Manager Robert Kelly; Legal Director Peter Haberlandt; and Attorney Louis Todisco.

Also present were members of the general public.

II. Legal Overview Concerning Guidelines for Alternative Education

Public Act No. 15-133, Section 2, requires the Department of Education (“Department”) to develop guidelines for the provision of alternative education as defined in the Act. The Department has established a committee to develop the guidelines. Ms. Russell-Tucker, Mr. Linabury, Wendy Simmons, State Education Resource Center (SERC), and Maureen Bronsfield, Director, New Horizons Alternative High School, gave a presentation on the draft guidelines.

Mr. Linabury addressed guidelines for student placement and gave a brief description of the committee’s work. Mr. Linabury noted the importance of a local educational agency (LEA) having a clear policy for placement of students in an alternative education program. Mr. Linabury also addressed ways that students may be referred to an alternative education program (by parents or the school district), the need for the board of education and the administration to approve alternative settings, and the need to delineate an appeals process. Wendy Simmons noted that the LEA should determine the appeals process. Mr. Linabury said that alternative education students should have the same opportunity to attend college and have a career as other students. Exit criteria should be documented in a handbook.

Ms. Simmons noted that committee members wanted to be sure that alternative education was not viewed as a negative; even if a student spent all of high school in an alternative program the student could still have a rich high school experience. Ms. Simmons noted that the committee looked at what

other states were doing. She also noted the importance of a philosophy and understanding why students were there. Guidelines for family involvement were discussed as was the need to hold staff accountable.

Ms. Bronsfield noted that alternative education is not a receptacle for failure; rather, it is a conduit for success. Alternative education programs are all a little different. They need to be supported with resources. There is a need for individual growth models for students. Ms. Bronsfield also noted the need for a trauma specialist due to the life experiences of some students. Some students every year are determined to need a residential program. Ms. Bronsfield discussed experiences in her program.

Ms. Russell-Tucker discussed the number of alternative education programs in existence in 2015-16. These programs serve 2022 students.

The presenters then responded to questions from the Board members present.

A motion to send the draft guidelines to the full State Board of Education was made and passed unanimously. The draft guidelines are enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

By unanimous consent, the committee tabled consideration of the minutes of the July 6, 2016, committee meeting.

IV. Legislative Proposals

Laura Stefon, the State Board of Education legislative liaison, gave a presentation on legislation which will be proposed on behalf of the State Board of Education and the Department in the upcoming legislative session.

After Ms. Stefon's presentation, a motion to send the legislative proposals to the full State Board of Education was made and passed unanimously. A copy of the draft legislative proposals is enclosed in the official file of this meeting.

IV. Other Matters

None

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Prepared by:

Peter Haberlandt, Legal Director