

**CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Hartford**

Mastery Examination Task Force  
Organizational Meeting

Tuesday, September 22, 2015

**I. Call to Order**

Chairperson Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**II. Introductions**

Present: Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education, Chairperson  
Dr. Joseph Cirusuolo, CAPSS  
Marcia Ferreira, CEA  
Patti Fusco, AFT  
Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Connecticut State Department of Education  
Kathy Greider, CAPSS  
Dr. Stephen Hegedus, SCSU  
Cathy Hill, CAS  
Ed Leavy, AFT-CT (Representing Jan Hochadel)  
Kathleen Kennedy, CT PTA  
Abe Krisst, Connecticut State Department of Education  
Patrice McCarthy, CABE  
Richard Murry, Killingly, CABE  
Dr. Karissa Niehoff, CAS-CIAC  
Jim Accomando, CT PTA, (Representing Don Romoser)  
Allan Taylor, Connecticut State Board of Education, Chair  
Jeffrey Villar, CCER  
Don Williams, CEA  
Stephen Wright, Connecticut State Board of Education

Absent: Ellen Cohn, Deputy Commissioner of Education

**III. Legislative History and ESEA Waiver Approval**

After the committee members introduced themselves, Commissioner Wentzell provided a description of the statewide student assessments currently in use (and those proposed for use this year) in Connecticut. The Commissioner also provided the legislative history of statewide assessment at both the federal and the state level, and described pertinent portions of the state's ESEA waiver that has been approved by the federal Department of Education.

#### **IV. Charge of Committee/Scope of Work**

The committee then reviewed their charge which is captured in Public Act 15-238:

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/ACT/PA/2015PA-00238-R00SB-01095-PA.htm>

With particular reference to this section regarding reporting due dates:

On or before February 15, 2016, the committee shall submit an interim report and, on or before January 15, 2017, a final report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly.

#### **V. Schedule of Meetings**

The calendar of the proposed meeting dates was reviewed and objections were raised to the date of the scheduled November 19<sup>th</sup> meeting date. A date change will be made.

Consideration was given to the issue of how best to satisfy the requirements of section 2 of PA 15-238. In pertinent part the Act contains these words:

...not later than January 1, 2016, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Mastery Examination Committee...shall enter into an agreement with a provider of a nationally recognized college readiness assessment...

Part of the discussion centered on the urgency of completing this requirement before the October meeting of the State Board of Education in order to give all the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) sufficient time to prepare for high-school testing. In the end it was decided that this expectation could be met, not by a formal vote, but instead by the content of the discussion at today's meeting.

#### **VI. Other Topics**

A summary of issues and concerns raised by committee members follows:

- The notion was raised that agreement should first be reached by the members of this committee around the purposes of statewide assessment. Once a shared understanding of the purposes of assessment can be articulated, then agreement on other issues will become easier.
- The new SAT claims to be aligned to research associated with the CCSS, but members are concerned that they have not actually seen the new SAT.
- There are concerns raised about the number and types of accommodations that will be provided to Connecticut students if the SAT is administered statewide. Those closest to these discussions characterized the proposed accommodations as reasonable and as better than they had feared.
- There are technical concerns raised. The state should study both the reliability and validity of the new SAT. The idea of inviting Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) feedback was raised as a possibility going forward.
- There are social concerns. The committee should also listen to the voices of stakeholders and especially to those of teachers and students to consider the impact of the overall assessment plan on them.

- The committee should also consider and recommend the best uses that can be made from the test results.
- The committee should consider the differences between a paper-based test and a computer-based test and weigh the merits of each kind of system.
- Since there are other states that have already decided to adopt college-readiness exams statewide, the committee should learn what it can from the experiences of these other states.

Next Meeting—October 27, 2015

## **VII. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.