

Educator Professional Development Requirements Task Force

Thursday, October 6, 2016

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Connecticut State Department of Education, Room 307B

Present: Kimberly Audet, Jack Cross, Dan Hansen, Kate Field, Kathy Greider, Kristin Heckt, Everett Lyons, Shannon Marimón, Sheila McKay (representing CABE), Steve McKeever, Denise Seel, Chris Todd

Not Present

Gary Maynard, Patrice McCarthy

Meeting Minutes

Shannon Marimón began the meeting at 3:00 p.m. Sheila McKay was introduced as the representative for Connecticut Association of Boards of Education in Patrice McCarthy's absence.

Minutes were reviewed from the September 22, 2016, meeting. Everett Lyons made a motion to approve the minutes. Jack Cross seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

Shannon reviewed the agenda for the meeting and noted that her goal was to have a draft of the proposal for the General Assembly for them to review by early November. Districts are continuing to complete the inventory of mandated professional development as discussed at the last meeting.

The task force divided into small groups to examine the mandated trainings based on the following themes: Health and Wellness, Teaching and Learning, School Culture and Climate, and Other. Each small group researched and compared the different statutes that outlined requirements for educator professional development. They then reported their findings and recommendations at the end of the meeting. The reports are included below and are organized by theme.

Health and Wellness: The small group recommended that some topics for required training/PD be grouped together as the requirement in order to streamline and remove redundancies. This grouping would allow for the development of curriculum for a training that connects related topics instead of having individual, disparate trainings for each topic. Example topics that could be grouped include: drugs, alcohol, and tobacco; social emotional well-being, which would connect mental health and suicide; and domestic violence and teen dating violence. Grouping topics together could decrease the number of trainings that educators need to complete and enhance the trainings to build stronger connections between topics.

The group also proposed that districts should have more discretion in terms of identifying the individuals required to participate in certain training topics, instead of requiring that all certified and non-certified staff complete the training in all cases. A proposal was to include wording that supports districts defining who must be trained with the recommended wording, for example, "such as, but not limited to." Districts could then identify psychologists, social workers, special

education teachers, and other staff that work closest with students in particular programs/functions.

Overall, the small group recommended striking a balance in the recommendations between giving specifics for trainings and not being too prescriptive for districts. This would allow districts to make decisions beyond what they are required to do in statute. The task force can recommend the use of language that is less prescriptive and more encouraging. An example of language could be that a training “**must** include school nurses, and others as deemed appropriate.”

The small group also recommended that districts continue to require the Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation training for all staff.

Climate and Culture: The small group reported that some of the requirements are unclear in Connecticut General Statute (C.G.S.) 10-220a. Violence and cultural competency are referenced in the statute, but there are additional statutes that speak to the trainings for those two topics. C.G.S. 10-222j refers to annual training for bullying and seven different topics within bullying, teen dating violence, cyberbullying, and youth suicide. C.G.S. 10-145a requires cultural competency training in teacher preparation programs. The group recommended greater clarity on what is actually required and when.

The group shared that a lot of these topics are not a one hour workshop. They are more appropriately embedded into the culture and climate of the school. If districts are required to do surveys assessing the school climate, schools should be responding to those results on an ongoing basis. C.G.S. 148a supports that type of learning for educators - ongoing, job-embedded, related to professional growth, supportive of teacher evaluation, and related to school and district goals. This statute, that supports high-quality professional learning, is being jeopardized because districts cannot spend time on what is most needed given the context of a specific school/district. The time is taken up by the required trainings. Districts want to focus on the guidance in C.G.S. 148a and provide professional learning that is related to teachers’ needs and their roles.

Training for the topics under Climate and Culture can cover several of the topics at once. For example, in order to learn about bullying, educators should also know about conflict resolution. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Justice are examples of ongoing learning that integrate several topics into a curriculum.

Teaching and Learning: The small group shared that they agreed that the statute needed greater clarity. The recommendations the small group made are included in the chart they completed and emailed to Shannon Marimón and Kimberly Audet.

Other: The group discussed the items included in C.G.S. 10-220a (A-F). The topics reviewed only “encourage” local and regional boards of education to include as a part of in-service training program. The group recommended greater clarity on school violence prevention, conflict resolution, and the prevention of and response to youth suicide.

Sheila McKay informed the task force that the legislature is studying allergies and EpiPens. There is also a committee studying bullying. Desi Nesmith, Connecticut State Department of Education Chief Turnaround Officer, is on this committee. They are discussing the use of surveys and the elements of a good climate plan. Shannon mentioned that she would connect with Desi to get any relevant updates that might affect the recommendations of this task force.

The task force discussed recommending that the surveys districts are required to complete are used as the basis for the identification of training needs.

Shannon Marimón reminded the members of the next meeting on October 20, 2016, from 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. The members would have the notes and recommendations from each group to review at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.