Digital Learning Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
August 3, 2017

Attendees
- Katie Bauer — University of Connecticut
- Nick Caruso — CT Association of Boards of Education
- Doug Casey — Commission for Educational Technology
- Jonathan Costa — EdAdvance
- Larry Covino — Bristol Adult Education
- Sarah Edson — Ethel Walker School
- Jason Jones — Stonington Public Schools
- Dawn La Valle — Connecticut State Library
- Laura McCaffrey — Archdiocese of Hartford
- Jim Mindek — Connecticut Department of Education
- Karen Skudlarek — University of Connecticut
- Josh Smith — New Milford Public Schools
- Jim Spafford — Manchester Adult Education
- Shelley Stedman — New Fairfield Public Schools

Agenda

- Commission Strategic Goals and Plan

- Student, Educator, and Administrator Technology Proficiency Standards

- Open Education Resources

Meeting Notes

The points below represent an assimilation of ideas rather than a strict verbatim or chronological record of points shared.

Commission Strategic Goals and Plan
The meeting convened at 9:00 AM with a welcome by Nick Caruso, Digital Learning Advisory Council Chair, and Doug Casey of the Commission. Nick asked the attendees to introduce themselves briefly and thanked them for their participation.

Doug echoed his appreciation for the work of the Advisory Council, which informed the development of the 2017 – 2022 Educational Technology Goals and Plan, recently adopted at the June Commission meeting. He shared a brief overview of the Commission's eight strategic initiatives, as follows:

CTEDTECH
Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology

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2017 – 2022 State Educational Technology Goals and Plan

The Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology has developed a set of goals around its core mission to support schools, libraries, and higher education:

> Design, steward, and promote policy, programs, insights, and resources that support the effective use of technology for all learners, educators, and educational organizations in Connecticut

The Plan includes eight key initiatives across three focus areas: Digital Learning, Infrastructure, and Data and Privacy.

Digital Learning	
	Open Education Resources Provide training and a repository of free, high-quality digital learning resources that make learning more affordable for schools and students.
	Education Innovation Recommend opportunities to scale innovative teaching and learning with a focus on speed, quality, efficiency, and sustainability.
	Technology Standards for Students, Teachers, and Leaders Adopt, promote, and integrate standards into existing frameworks to support the use of technology in teaching and learning.
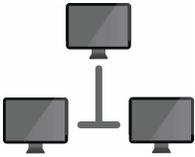
Infrastructure	
	eRate Maximization Study and recommend ways to leverage federal funding to support connected schools and libraries.
	Digital Equity Work to close the "homework gap" by providing communities with tools and guidelines to connect all learners outside of school.
	Educational Technology Best Practices Curate and publish research-based standards and frameworks to assist and guide technology professionals in education.
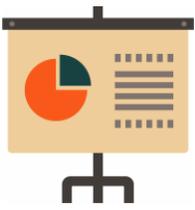
Data and Privacy	
	Privacy Compliance Support statutory compliance, innovation, and cost savings through a statewide educational software registry and online community.
	Privacy Best Practices Identify and promote a framework among schools and libraries for protecting the data, information, and records of learners.

Download the Goals and Plan at www.CT.gov/CTEdTech/Publications. For more information, contact Doug Casey at (860) 622-2224 or doug.casey@ct.gov.

After encouraging the members to review the complete plan, which reflects the priorities that all three Advisory Councils and the Commission members had set, Doug asked for comments and questions. Jonathan Costa appreciated the plan but suggested that it articulate more precisely how each initiative relates to its parent focus area (Digital Learning, Infrastructure, and Data and Privacy).

Several members noted the importance of equity as a theme running through most of the initiatives. Josh Smith noted other states' approaches to equity that leverage technology, including the use of distance learning technologies on snow days in New Hampshire and the adoption of competency-based learning approaches to ensure that all learners master content and skills before advancing to subsequent lessons and units. Jim Spafford underscored the importance of competency-based approaches in adult education. Doug noted the strong ties between the initiatives and other strategic plans and documents, including the five-year plan of the Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE) and its emphasis on equity.

Student, Educator, and Administrator Technology Proficiency Standards
The group shifted attention to the topic of technology proficiency standards. Doug provided a brief update on progress to adopt the Student Technology Proficiency Standards of the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) within Connecticut. At its September 12, 2016, meeting, the Commission members unanimously endorsed the ISTE student technology proficiency standards. At the June 2017 Commission meeting, Deputy Commissioner of the State Department of Education (SDE) Ellen Cohn announced that the SBE would likely review and (hopefully) adopt in early 2018 the ISTE Student standards to replace the outdated sets posted on the Web sites of the SDE and the Commission for Educational Technology.

Doug directed the members' attention to the new ISTE Educator technology proficiency standards, released at the annual ISTE conference in June of this year. Advisory Council members received printed copies of both the Educator standards as well as the ISTE Implementation and Adoption Toolkit for review. In preparation for the Digital Learning Advisory Council meeting, Doug asked the group to consider ways that the Commission can support the application of these standards into Connecticut classrooms and libraries to the benefit of student learning at all levels. In preparation for the meeting, Jim Spafford prepared a set of recommendations:

- Fully integrate the standards into existing delivery systems at the state, district, and building levels
- Integrate standards into existing education and workforce (non-profit) development networks
- Integrate the ISTE standards into the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS), and SDE adult education accreditation standards
- Provide as a supplement to the SDE's adopted College and Career Readiness standards

- Provide workshops on the new student and educator technology proficiency standards at statewide conferences (e.g., CAACE, NCTN, CAS, etc.)
- Create a cross-sector ISTE users' group, with members from business as well as education to close the gap between K – 12, higher education, and the workforce
- Encourage teacher modeling of the effective use of technology in instruction
- Integrate and contextualize the use of technology in career pathway components of teaching and learning strategies and activities
- Integrate as part of mandated graduation projects to measure what students have learned
- Include as an ongoing column in professional organizations' newsletters and electronic communications

During a group discussion about the structure and content of the new educator standards, several members, including Jim Mindek, noted the lack of specificity of the standards. For example, under the "Leader" category, the standards call on teachers to "Shape, advance, and accelerate a shared vision for empowered learning with technology by engaging with education stakeholders." While the attendees agreed with the standards' guidance, most felt that they stood more as a framework than a defined set of action steps that educators can easily apply to the classroom, lecture hall, and other learning environments.

To that end, Doug suggested a number of possible means to promote the further definition and adoption of the standards, including their integration into teacher evaluation rubrics and goals, accreditation standards, teacher preparation programs, and existing state standards. Prior to the meeting, Doug reached out to and received input from the ISTE standards team regarding promising practices in other states. He shared some of these examples of translating the frameworks into practice:

- Michigan and Washington: Considering adoption of the standards wholesale at this moment
- Oregon: Integrating the educator standards into their current Digital Learning Essential Skills
- Texas: Recently passed a bill requiring graduates from educator preparation programs to demonstrate proficiency in the ISTE educator standards
- Wisconsin: Combining the ISTE Standards with some of the ALA Standards, currently seeking public input on the resulting standard set.

Several members of the Advisory Council pointed to earlier recommendations within the group, initially suggested by Shannon Marimón of the SDE, to integrate the student and educator standards into the teacher Evidence Guides (ConnecticutSEED.org) to make the standards relevant and actionable. Jonathan Costa recommended that the group continue to pursue this approach to promote adoption of the standards. Josh Smith underscored the importance of relevancy to the expectations of families around building strong teaching and learning outcomes, rather than teaching technology in isolation. He cited the recent Phi Beta Kappa/Gallup survey of parent expectations

around education, which made no specific mention of technology but instead on higher-level, college and career-readiness skills.

The group agreed that having a centralized standards framework would provide valuable guidance to K – 12 schools, libraries, and universities, and several Advisory Council members highlighted the importance of educational institutions contextualizing the standards to their own local learning objectives. For example, Dawn La Valle pointed to the State Library's Best Practices, developed as a guide for libraries to adopt 21st century practices and principles. The Practices address areas such as technology, education, communication, and social connection for library staff to serve patrons and continually increase the relevancy of libraries as community anchors. The State Library produced the Best Practices to acknowledge differences in communities and community needs and to provide resources, training, and case studies to help libraries pursue a path of continuous improvement.

Members of the Advisory Council remarked on the importance of tying any standard to local learning and community goals, including equity of access, tolerance, etc. Laura McCaffrey noted the Archdiocese's work in developing technology-rich curriculum standards and educator performance rubrics for its more than 800 teachers to help ensure that students learn and practice collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Returning to the topic of operationalizing the standards into best practices for schools, Josh Smith suggested that the Commission and its partners running an "unconference" or "edcamp" around technology proficiency. Such an event would convene educators from across the state to define rubrics and case studies that define each of the seven areas of concentration of the ISTE Student and Educator standards. Such crowd-sourcing activities have successfully resulted in bodies of knowledge and helped build professional networks around blended learning, personalized learning, and 21st century skills, among other topics.

Other suggestions to increase the specificity, relevancy, and adoption of the ISTE Student and Educator standards include the following:

- Creating a statewide user group to develop best practices in 21st century teaching and learning
- Formulate a rubric for teachers to use in assessing and improving upon their use of technology for instruction, ideally tied to teacher evaluation frameworks
- Providing models for integrating technology proficiencies into existing plans, such as the SBE five-year plan, local (district and library) technology plans, and school improvement plans
- Reference and integrate the standards into more "enlightened" acceptable use and recommended use policies that students and teachers adopt
- Build or adopt at a state or regional level a uniform personal learning management system to support professional development

- Support a growth mindset among educators and provide them with self-paced training resources to encourage lifelong learning, rather than depending on formalized professional development as the only form of effective training
- Tie educator and student standards to administrator standards, equipping building and district leaders with the tools to gauge effective use of technology in teaching
- Leverage the expertise of and influence the professional learning offered by international, national, and state organizations including ISTE (implementation toolkit and booklet, online courses, social media, and communities of practice); the U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Office of Educational Technology; Connecticut schools of education; and professional organizations that represent teachers (e.g., CT Educators Computer Association) and district leaders (CT Association of Boards of Education, CT Association of Public School Superintendents, CT Educational Technology Leaders, etc.)
- Reach out to regional accreditation bureaus to encourage adoption of the standards in their published standards and assessment rubrics

Nick welcomed the suggestions and proposed two motions for consideration. First, he recommended that the Commission endorse the ISTE Educator standards at its September meeting. Additionally, he proposed that Doug work with the SDE to request the SBE to consider adoption of the ISTE Educator Standards along with the Student Standards at its next meeting. The Advisory Council members agreed, and both motions passed unanimously.

Open Education Resources
Following the two motions, Doug asked the group to consider the Commission's initiative around providing high-quality, digital learning resources to schools, libraries, and universities. He highlighted the planning that the group had conducted at the May Digital Learning Advisory Council meeting, prioritizing the creation or adoption of a digital learning repository for the state. The Commission had previously adopted the DoE's GoOpen framework at its March meeting, making Connecticut one of 20 states to do so.

In a facilitated discussion around open education resources (OER), the group addressed the components they would like to see in an OER repository. Such a system would provide educators and students of all ages searchable access to a set of standards-aligned digital learning objects including (but not limited to) reading passages, images, lesson plans, assessments, unit plans, courses, and even complete digital textbooks. Doug referred Council members with interest in further exploring the framework to tech.ed.gov/open.

Features that members of the group cited as priorities include the following:

- Quality Assurance: The platform should provide tools to support peer-level vetting to help ensure that content uploaded by educators has strong instructional value and aligns to the standards that its author(s) associate with it.

With no centralized resources in the state to support quality assurance, users of the platform would need to review, grade, comment, and search on the quality and usefulness of shared content.

- Types: The system would need to store and allow for searching across a broad range of instructional materials, including lesson plans, books, tests, etc.
- Governance and Ownership: The OER platform must allow individual contributors the ability to upload and control access to their content in a tiered fashion. In other words, each author would decide whether to keep content private, shared among a set of peers, all educators in their building, their district or university, the state, or all other users. Authors would also have the ability to define the reuse permissions associated with each learning object, based on the Creative Commons framework.
- Content Development: The platform would ideally offer a toolset for designing instructional units, including lesson planners and pacing guides that paid products such as Eduplanet and Atlas Rubicon include. Such tools would add "stickiness" to the platform and help ensure adoption.
- Standards: In addition to allowing for tagging of assets by the Connecticut Common Core Standards, the system would allow for categorization in line with other standard sets, such as those from NEASC, ISTE, and adult education.
- Training: The OER movement in Connecticut demands communities of practice and instruction for educators to learn how to create, share, curate, and control access to and reuse of digital resources in the platform.
- Sustainability: Adoption of a platform should take into account ongoing costs and risks such as competition from paid providers.
- Communications and Advocacy: OER advocates statewide should articulate clear benefit statements so that educators understand the quality, cost-savings, flexibility, peer-to-peer collaboration, and other advantages that will drive adoption and long-term use of the OER platform and practices.

Doug thanked the group for their suggestions and promised to include them into a forthcoming requirements document as the Commission looks toward adopting an OER platform for the state.

With no further input from the group, Nick and Doug thanked the members for their insights and adjourned the meeting.