Digital Learning Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
February 12, 2018

Attendees

- Katie Bauer — Trinity College
- Nick Caruso — CT Association of Boards of Education
- Doug Casey — Commission for Educational Technology
- Jonathan Costa — EdAdvance
- Larry Covino — Bristol Adult Education
- Andy DePalma — EASTCONN
- Sarah Edson — Ethel Walker School
- Jason Jones — Stonington Public Schools
- Clint Kennedy — New London Public Schools
- Laura McCaffrey — Archdiocese of Hartford
- Greg McVerry — Southern Connecticut State University
- Jim Mindek — Connecticut Department of Education
- Josh Smith — New Milford Public Schools
- Jim Spafford — Manchester Adult Education

Agenda

ISTE Standards

- Adoption Updates and Timeline

- Public Comment Survey Results

- Adoption Approaches

Open Education Resources

Member Topics

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

Welcome
The meeting convened at 10:00 AM with a welcome by Nick Caruso, Digital Learning Advisory Council Chair, and Doug Casey of the Commission. Doug opened the meeting with a brief synopsis of the agenda items, with details following below.

ISTE Standards

Doug shared a number of updates with the group to provide context for a broader discussion around steps the Advisory Council and Commission may take to encourage adoption of the ISTE Student Standards in Connecticut classrooms. On Monday, February 26, the State Board of Education's Standards and Assessment Subcommittee will review a proposal to adopt the ISTE Student Standards. The supports behind this proposal include the Standards themselves (www.iste.org/standards/for-students), a draft position statement that highlights the importance of student technology proficiency to support college and career readiness, and substantial research behind the Standards. Doug shared that he has worked with Deputy Commissioner Cohn and her team at the State Department of Education (SDE) to gather public comment in the form of a statewide survey and an in-person event for parents and community leaders, taking place at the Connecticut Science Center on February 14.

Clint Kennedy asked if the Advisory Council members could provide any additional support behind the adoption of the proposed standards. Doug mentioned that there was still time to respond to the statewide survey, the primary means by which any individual could offer their opinion on the proposed standards. Andy DePalma called for advocates of the standards to serve as ambassadors of the new framework. He highlighted the need for ways in which districts could apply the standards to current teaching and learning practices in actionable, measurable ways. Jonathan Costa agreed, pointing to the need for observation- or portfolio-based assessment of standards mastery, rather than traditional standardized tests.

On the topic of public input, Doug shared the quantitative survey results to date. A breakdown of respondents by role includes approximately 60 percent educators, 25 percent school leaders, 3 percent parents, and 11 percent "Other" (mostly library media specialists). When asked, "How well do the proposed 2016 Standards address the skills and competencies students will need for college and career," respondents ranked the Standards 4.5 out of 5. They ranked the Standards in priority in the following order: Empowered Learner (34 percent), Digital Citizen (29 percent), Knowledge Constructor (16 percent), Computational Thinker (6 percent), Global Collaborator and Innovative Designer (tied at 5 percent), and Creative Communicator (4 percent).

Prior to the Advisory Council meeting, Doug had solicited assistance from members to review and provide insights into the qualitative (i.e., free-text) responses to the survey. Jason Jones and Josh Smith volunteered to look into the responses and shared their takeaways with the rest of the group. Josh noted the need expressed by respondents for time to understand and integrate the Standards into core teaching and learning. He suggested that districts looking to implement the Standards might simply choose Empowered Learner and its indicators as a point of departure. This first Standard ties to the Next Generation Science Standards, Connecticut Core Standards, and new State Social Studies Standards, and Josh encouraged schools to look at ways of leveraging the Empowered Learner Standard to support these other academic frameworks. Jason shared the responses of many library media specialists concerning the Digital Citizen

standard, pointing to the need to address these indicators in every class rather than as isolated lessons taught in the confines of the school library.

The discussion shifted to how the educational community, and the Commission and its Advisory Councils in particular, can champion the Student and Educator Standards. Clint Kennedy addressed the concern some have that the new Standards represent another academic requirement with no accompanying funding, professional development, or planning time to implement. He positioned the ISTE Standards less as the "what" students should know and more as the "how" they should learn, that is, leveraging technology to explore, build critical thinking, and develop a sense of agency. Andy agreed, citing the importance of not decontextualizing the standards but integrating them into existing disciplines. To that end, Nick encouraged the SDE to look at ways of embedding technology into every other academic initiative.

The group addressed ways to support ISTE Standards adoption, including the development of a library of exemplary lesson plans, unit plans, videos, and other instructional materials. Doug suggested the use of social media hashtags to help curate standards-aligned content, as suggested at a recent CECA Board meeting, and mentioned the likely development of professional development resources from ISTE later this year.

On a related note, conducting a crosswalk or alignment of ISTE standards to other sets could help with adoption and the production of high-quality professional development materials. Jonathan and Josh pointed to the idea previously shared by Shannon Marimón of integrating the ISTE Standards into the SDE's Evidence Guides for teachers. This work would require the SDE's partnership with assistance from outside partners. Jonathan suggested that the new Evidence Guides (see ConnecticutSeed.org) could serve as models of interdisciplinary, 21st-century learning, preparing students for assessments and digital citizenship. EdAdvance's Skills21 group might have resources to provide in support of such work.

Jim Spafford suggested that districts that have already adopted career-readiness standards might engage more readily with the ISTE Standards, given the common objective of preparing students for the jobs of the future. He suggested enlisting the help of educational companies in connecting curriculum materials to standards and career readiness. Sarah Edson agreed and underscored the importance of any technology discussion to tie back to college and career readiness, given the emerging negative perception of technology as being addictive and distracting.

Nick suggested that using policy as a lever may help standards adoption. He stated that, as Connecticut's leader in defining school policy, CABE could review its Policy Manual for opportunities to encourage deeper learning using technology, aligned with ISTE Student and Educator standards. Josh added that survey feedback indicated a need to update policies, such as shifting from "acceptable use" to "responsible use" policies that focus on best practices rather than on restrictions. Clint agreed with this

approach, reminding the group that ISTE's Essential Conditions guide ties directly to district policies.

Educator certification in the ISTE Standards can help with adoption. Doug had previously shared information about ISTE's pilot efforts beginning this June that will result in 30 teachers becoming "ISTE certified" in the Educator Standards. Clint pointed to teacher preparation programs as key points of adoption, addressing the "supply" side of technology integration by producing teachers who know how to use technology in their pedagogy. Josh suggested a dual certification approach by colleges, along the lines of the "bi-literacy" degrees that Connecticut high schools can offer. Doug mentioned work underway through the CAPSS Technology Committee to work with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) to advocate for the integration of technology use into teacher preparation programs. He also shared that ISTE will soon release a teacher self-assessment rubric, enabling educators to determine their strengths, areas of growth, and resources to help them improve their technology integration capabilities.

Doug concluded the discussion with a call to action, asking members to contact him with interest in volunteering to work on the Evidence Guides or some other form of educator exemplars, policy review, and educator preparation efforts.

Open Education Resources
As a result of the Commission's action last year to make Connecticut a "Go Open" state and adopt open education resources (OER), Doug pointed to the need for a collective discussion around statewide OER efforts. Establishing and supporting an OER movement in the state will require stakeholders to develop a shared understanding and framework that addresses the technology platform, vetting standards and process, professional development supports, funding, and staffing.

To these ends, Doug shared high-level plans to assemble a group of subject-matter experts to address these governance-level concerns. He encouraged members of the Advisory Council to engage in these discussions and promised to provide details on an upcoming planning meeting. Jim highlighted the importance of engaging school principals in the discussion, as they often serve as OER champions.

Doug shared a professional development opportunity this summer, the Northeast OER Summit, taking place May 31 and June 1 at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Event organizers will release a call for presenters in the next month.

Member Topics
Several members had suggested topics for discussion prior to the meeting. Jonathan raised the importance of digital learning strategies that do not require significant financial outlays and that leverage existing resources that depend on leaders' commitment to change. He encouraged districts to see a low bar to participation in digital learning approaches, looking to their own teachers and partner districts as exemplars. He addressed time limitations by way of "addition through subtraction," that

is, honestly assessing and eliminating initiatives that do not contribute directly to improvements in student-directed learning. Nick agreed, citing the adage of schools striving to "teach students, not teach lessons." He referred to Simon Sinek's emphasis on the "why" we teach rather than the "what." In the world of education, this means student-centered learning.

Jason Jones brought up the topic of computer science (CS) education. He shared that one of Stonington's schools has a day of code, and he was interested to hear how others promote CS education. Jonathan mentioned that EdAdvance's Skills21 program offers professional development and stipends to teachers through a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant, still open to applicants. He sees a trend toward more NSF funding of CS education initiatives.

Doug reminded the group of the SDE's work in promoting CS education in Connecticut and the State Board's consideration of the CS Framework from www.K12CS.org. Those interested in this and other topics should attend the Connecticut Computer Science Teachers Association CS4CT Summit (www.ctcsta.org/cs4ct/) on Friday, March 14. He also reminded members to spread the word about the CyberStart program (www.GirlsGoCyberStart.com), promoted through the Office of the Governor, the Commission, the SDE, and other agencies as an engaging way to expose girls to careers in cyber security.

With this closing topic, Nick thanked the members for their insights and adjourned the meeting.