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Infrastructure Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2023

Attendees

- Colleen Bailie — West Haven Library
- Nick Caruso — Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
- Doug Casey — Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology
- George Claffey — Central Connecticut State University
- Burt Cohen — Office of Consumer Counsel
- Tom Dillon — Independent
- Kerri Kearney — Manchester Public Schools
- Michael Mundrane — University of Connecticut
- Rick Widlansky — Libraries Online

Discussion

Tom Dillon, Infrastructure Advisory Council chair, welcomed members to the meeting a few minutes past 11:00 AM. He noted that Nick Caruso, chair of the Digital Learning Advisory Council, was also in attendance in order to facilitate stronger cross-council coordination as the Commission seeks input on its next strategic plan. Tom asked Doug to provide background on some of the initial planning by the Commission.

In March of this year, Doug asked Commission members to share suggested focus areas for the Commission's strategic plan, based on the priorities of their appointing agencies, offices, and organizations. Doug reviewed and culled this input into several common purposes:

- Equity of access to high-quality, personalized learning experiences
- Preparation for college, career, and life
- Flexibility in learning design and modalities

Commission members had a number of commonly suggested initiatives, including the following, listed in alphabetical order:

- Data Privacy
- Digital Equity
- Digital Literacy
- Online Learning
- Open Education
- Sustainability
- Use of AI



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Nick summarized the Digital Learning Advisory Council's input from that group's [meeting on April 28](#). They agreed that exploring each of the above focus areas warrants dedicated time in person. One member suggested a retreat, during which members could collaborate to develop a draft strategic plan that defines, for each initiative, its priority and urgency, why it matters, steps to realize progress, barriers to advancement, and potential partners and resources.

Infrastructure Advisory members weighed in on the proposed initiatives, with Colleen Baillie stating that libraries have emphasized and developed extensive programming around digital equity and digital literacy for patrons. Tom also remarked on the negative impact or risk of technology through online bullying and excessive screen time. He felt the Commission should address these concerns in its next strategic plan. George Claffey introduced the concept of "technology-enhanced" learning, reflecting the current uses of digital tools regardless of where students are physically located.

Michael Mundrane agreed with Colleen's emphasis on digital literacy and felt that the proposed initiatives, in many ways, build on each other. Enabling students to connect with dependable broadband and devices remains an essential condition for learning, and research has made it clear that the most disconnected learners suffered most during the pandemic. Burt Cohen agreed and noted that a given school district's budget and resourcefulness may often determine the educational opportunities afforded to students, leading to inequities in course offerings, for example.

To define the Commission's proposed initiatives further, Doug reiterated Nick's earlier suggestion that an in-person retreat take place, including members of both advisory councils. Doing so would allow the groups to define specific goals, partners, success measures, and barriers to success. Planning for the event would include some pre-reading and information gathering to make the retreat as productive as possible. Michael and others welcomed the idea and acknowledged the benefit of in-person dynamics versus the sometimes disconnected feeling of participating in virtual meetings.

George endorsed a facilitator that Central Connecticut State University has used for strategic planning and offered to make a connection with that individual. Tom welcomed the offer and underscored the importance of effective planning before the event. He described next steps after the retreat to include the development of a draft strategic plan or list of initiatives by the September Commission meeting with a finalized plan ready for adoption by the December Commission meeting.

With no other feedback from the attendees, Tom thanked the advisory council members for their input and adjourned the meeting at approximately noon.