

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**Legislation and Policy Development Committee Meeting
April 6, 2015**

**Minutes
(Approved 5/6/2015)**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education Legislation and Policy Development Committee met in Room 117, State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut on April 6, 2015.

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Theresa Hopkins-Staten called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. Also present were committee members Robert Trefry, Erin Benham, Maria Mojica* and Terry Jones.** State Board of Education member Estela Lopez also attended this morning's meeting.

Also present for all or part of the meeting were the following Department of Education staff members: Associate Education Consultant Kimberly Audet; Chief Talent Officer Sarah Barzee; Chief Financial Officer & Acting Legal Director Kathy Demsey; Communications Director Kelly Donnelly; Chief of the Bureau of Health, Nutrition & Adult Education Services John Frassinelli; Interim Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan; Division Director, Educator Effectiveness & Professional Learning, Shannon Marimon; Education Staff Assistant Sergio Rodriguez; Chief Operating Officer Charlene Russell-Tucker; Legislative Liaison Laura Stefon; and Paralegal Mark Shepherd.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

On a motion made by Ms. Benham and seconded by Chair Hopkins-Staten, the Committee unanimously approved the March 4, 2015, Legislation and Policy Development Committee meeting minutes.

*Ms. Mojica arrived at 8:39 a.m.

III. Introduction of CSDE's New Legislative Liaison, Ms. Laura J. Stefon

Chair Hopkins-Staten recognized Acting Legal Director Kathy Demsey, who introduced Legislative Liaison Laura J. Stefon. Ms. Demsey reviewed Ms. Stefon's professional

background for members and staff and outlined her duties. Chair Hopkins-Staten took this opportunity to formally welcome Ms. Stefon to the Department.

**Mr. Jones arrived at 9:00 a.m.

IV. Connecticut Definition and Standards for Professional Learning

At this time, Committee Chair Hopkins-Staten turned to Chief Talent Officer Sarah Barzee for an update on the suggested revisions to be made to the Board Report VI.D. Connecticut Definition of Professional Learning and Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning.

Dr. Barzee highlighted the changes to the report. She noted that "equity" would hereafter be referred to as "Cultural Competence" and "student growth and development" would be referred to as "student growth and learning."

Committee members received a memorandum from Dr. Barzee prior to the meeting outlining the recommended changes to be made to this report. Dr. Barzee further elaborated on each recommended revision.

Chair Hopkins-Staten asked how the Department might support the goals outlined in the memorandum, noting ever-changing state demographics, the need to reach out to talented students of color and the limited availability of resources to teachers. Ms. Hopkins-Staten also noted the work done in this area at the University of Connecticut and suggested that the Talent Office reach out to the university in a collaborative effort.

V. Update on Legislative Session

Acting Legal Director Kathy Demsey and Director of Communications Kelly Donnelly began the legislative review for the Committee.

Ms. Demsey noted the Commissioner's recent testimony before the Education, and Finance, Revenue and Bonding committees. She also updated the committee on the School-Based Diversion Initiative ("SBDI") and the development of Youth Service Bureaus (and their potential coexistence with present Department of Children & Families service areas).

Ms. Donnelly reported that the Department is working with the legislative leadership on English Language Learner (ELL) focus and clarification noting that students in this group are reporting declining graduation rates. She pointed out that our bill successfully passed through legislative committee review.

Discussion ensued. Chair Hopkins-Staten asked about the accessibility of the English Language Learner program to the students who need it most and how this is administered.

Ms. Demsey and Ms. Donnelly replied that this is handled at the district level. Ms. Hopkins-Staten requested that the Department review the ELL program as it is presently coordinated and its benefits delivered to students at the district level. Ms. Demsey agreed and suggested that we return to this as an agenda item at a future sub-committee meeting. Ms. Hopkins-Staten concurred and also asked about the status of the Strategic Plan. Department staff advised her that this will be a priority for the incoming Commissioner.

Ms. Donnelly continued the legislative review noting the Governor's required full day kindergarten initiative and proposed expansion of SBDI as part of the Second Chance Society initiative. Other legislative matters brought to the attention of the Committee were a review of school arrest data (in the context of the SBDI), the Minimum Budgetary Requirement (MBR), Substitute Senate Bill 1053 ("An Act Concerning Suspensions and Expulsions for Students in Preschool and Grades Kindergarten to Two") and funding for choice programs.

Discussion ensued with committee members commenting and posing questions to Ms. Demsey, Ms. Donnelly and Ms. Stefon regarding these pending legislative items.

Chair Hopkins-Staten thanked the Department staff on behalf of the Committee for their respective presentations.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Prepared by:

Mark Shepherd, Paralegal