

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

**Legislation and Policy Development Committee Meeting
October 7, 2015**

Minutes

(Approved 12/2/2015)

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education Legislation and Policy Development Committee met in Room 2600, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, Connecticut on October 7, 2015.

I. Call to Order

Acting Chair Joseph Vrabely called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. Also present were committee members Erin Benham, Robert Trefry, and Terry Jones. Ms. Theresa Hopkins-Staten and Ms. Maria Mojica were absent.

Also present for all or part of the meeting were the following State Department of Education (SDE) members: Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell; Assistant to the Commissioner for Board Matters Pamela Charland; Chief of Staff Kelly Donnelly; Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey; Chief Operating Officer Charlene Russell-Tucker; Chief of the Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education Services John Frassinelli; Chief Talent Officer Dr. Sarah Barzee; Chief of the Bureau of Leadership Development Anne McKernan; Chief of the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification Nancy Pugliese; Legal Director Peter Haberlandt; Legislative Liaison Laura Stefon; and Paralegal Michael Wallace.

II. Approval of Minutes of the September 2, 2015, Meeting

Acting Chair Vrabely moved, Ms. Erin Benham seconded, that the Committee approve the minutes of the September 2, 2015, meeting of the Legislation and Policy Development Committee.

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| Vote: | In favor: | Joseph Vrabely, Erin Benham and Terry Jones |
| | Opposed: | None |
| | Abstained: | None |
| | Absent: | Theresa Hopkins-Staten, Maria Mojica |

Motion carried unanimously.

III. Legislative Proposals

Acting Chair Vrabely recognized Legislative Liaison Laura Stefon who began the discussion by referring members to their individual packets and the legislative proposals itemized therein. Ms. Stefon summarized the proposals, as follows:

An Act Concerning Bond Funds: This proposal would allow the Technical High School Board to vote to expand the list of Technical High Schools authorized to utilize the 3.5 million dollar bond allocation for extending hours for academic enrichment and training in trades for secondary and adult students.

An Act Concerning Connecticut's Seal of Bi-literacy: This proposal would allow a superintendent to place a seal on the diploma and transcript of any student who is able to demonstrate that they are highly proficient in English and another language and will provide employers and colleges with another means of easily identifying those individuals who are proficient in multiple languages. It also requires the State Board of Education to adopt guidelines for how the program will operate by September 2017.

An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to Education Statutes: This proposal would allow three earmarks funded through the Youth Service Bureau Enhancement account to be paid. Eligible for the grants would be The Bridge Family Center, East Hartford Adventure Plus and Virtuoso Orchestra in New Britain. In absence of supporting legislation the payments cannot be released. The grant money totals \$90,250 after a 5% cut.

An Act Concerning Modifications to the Parent University Pilot Program: This proposal would give the Commissioner discretion to award Parent University grants to more than two Education Reform Districts, which is the current cap. It would also clarify that the program is ongoing. Additionally, this proposal removes the word "pilot" from the legislative language as the program has passed the pilot stage and is ready to replicate in other districts. John Frassinelli noted that this program has been very successful.

An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to Bilingual Education Certification: This proposal recommends restoring the requirements for candidates to demonstrate written and oral proficiency in English. However, oral proficiency testing should not be required in the educator's first language.

An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to Teacher Certification Requirements for Interstate Agreements for Teacher Certification Reciprocity: This proposal would revise the language that was passed in July 2015 to allow teachers who have successfully completed an out-of-state educator preparation program from a regionally accredited college or university, but who have not taught under an appropriate certificate issued by another state, territory or possession of the United States or the District of Columbia or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, to gain certification through the interstate agreement(s). Additionally, the proposal would allow SDE to issue the appropriate level of an educator certificate based upon previous successful service completed in the other state and to enter recognition agreements when a state or territory does not wish to enter an interstate agreement, but SDE wishes to accept candidates from that state or territory.

Acting Chair Vrabely then recognized Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey who presented the financial legislative proposals, as follows:

An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Education Statutes: This proposal would remove the ten year lien provision on grants provided for capital start-up funds awarded to Sheff partners which are, by intent, to create temporary classroom space. These proposed changes offer relief from the penalties associated with redirection of facilities within ten years. Without this correction, the Sheff partners would be subject to repayment of funds intended as grants-in-aid, funds utilized to ready space quickly to accommodate Hartford and suburban students in accordance with the assorted Sheff remedies. Some of the temporary improvements may become permanent space.

An Act Concerning the Alliance District Grant: This proposal would provide legislative authority to limit carryforward of Alliance District funds to 3% of the amount received in the prior fiscal year and to expend them in accordance with their approved Alliance District plan. Fiscal year 2017 will be the fifth year of the department's implementation of the Alliance District program created as part of Governor Malloy's Education Reform Legislation in 2012. Funding dedicated to the Alliance District program will reach \$148.7 million. This proposal would implement a process improvement based on what the department has learned administering the program over the past four years. Current legislation allows districts to carryforward all unexpended Alliance District grant funds into the following year in an unrestricted fashion. The unrestricted carryforward language was necessary when the department was developing the program as approval of districts' plans and thus their receipt of grant funds came too late in the fiscal year. Now, districts receive their funds early in the fiscal year. Ms. Demsey and Commissioner Wentzell noted that the impact of this proposal is to provide greater assurance that the state's significant investment in education in our neediest districts is being directed in the year it is provided to the efforts most likely to achieve a positive impact on students' educational outcomes.

An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Education Statutes: This proposal would enact technical corrections needed for the Priority School Districts (PSD) grants to: (1) extend the PSD grant beyond fiscal year 2015 allowing payment of this year and next year's grants; (2) since payment will come so late in the fiscal year it will allow districts to carryforward unexpended funds for one year; allow districts to carryforward unexpended funds; and (3) correct the error in the grant amount for Norwalk to the intended grant amount of \$2,270,000.

An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Education Statutes: This proposal allows for payment of supplemental magnet transportation to CREC to cover the additional costs of transporting students in the Hartford area in support of the Sheff initiative. Legislation now caps the per student amount at \$2,000 in the Sheff region. The actual cost is closer to \$5,000 per pupil. Transportation grants are not sufficient to cover the costs associated with the significant numbers of students being transported, bus runs for extra-curricular activities, reasonable ride times and geographic challenges associated with transporting students over such an extensive region. Without this correction CREC will experience a significant transportation deficit. The supplemental magnet transportation grant is typically paid over two years, half in the year the deficit is incurred, and half in the subsequent year, post audit. In this

instance, timing is such that the full amount will be paid to CREC near the end of fiscal year 2016. The estimated amount will be between \$15 and \$20 million.

IV. Update on 2015 Minority Teacher Recruitment Efforts

Chief Talent Officer Dr. Sarah Barzee provided an update on SDE's efforts to increase the racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity of Connecticut's educator workforce. She noted the formation of SDE's Minority Teacher Recruitment (MTR) Committee and discussed the Request for Proposals issued to all Connecticut districts in April 2015 inviting them to apply for planning grants of up to \$25,000. Ten districts submitted applications. Eight of the ten applicant districts were awarded planning grants. The grant recipients gave progress reports at a meeting hosted by SDE on July 27, 2015. Based on the progress updates and a review of the district plans using a four-point rubric, four of the eight planning grant districts were invited to submit a budget of up to \$50,000 to support implementation efforts during the 2015-16 school year. The remaining four districts continue to be invited to participate in the feedback and discussion.

Dr. Barzee was asked about interstate reciprocity and the requirement that out-of-state candidates pass Connecticut state certification assessments. Dr. Barzee indicated that Connecticut participates in the NASDTEC Interstate agreement with all 50 states and the District of Columbia; however, currently, out-of-state candidates applying for Connecticut certification may be required to take and pass state certification assessments in some cases. She stated that Commissioner Wentzell has directed the Bureau of Certification and Educator Standards to begin the process to revise current Connecticut Certification Regulations.

Dr. Barzee then introduced Anne McKernan, Chief of the Bureau of Leadership Development, who explained the process for selecting the four implementation grantee districts in greater detail. Ms. McKernan also informed the committee members that the SDE Talent Office provided additional fiscal resources to the Connecticut NAACP to sponsor a symposium for Connecticut school districts on recruitment strategies with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). The event was held on September 10, 2015, in Bloomfield.

There was discussion concerning the recruitment value of grow-your-own programs, and several committee members expressed enthusiasm for the MTR initiatives underway.

Acting Chair Vrabely praised the Commissioner's leadership in this area and noted the need for receiving feedback from the four grantee districts and the four initial planning grant recipients.

V. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Recorder:

Michael Wallace, Paralegal