

**Connecticut State Board Of Education  
Hartford**

**The Legislation and Policy Development Committee**  
Wednesday, January 14, 2026 -- 1:00 p.m.  
State Office Building, 450 Columbus Blvd., Hartford, Connecticut

**Minutes  
(Approved February 11, 2026)**

Pursuant to notice filed with the Secretary of the State, the State Board of Education Legislation and Policy Development Committee [“LPDC”] met in person on January 14, 2026.

**I. Call to Order**

Committee Chair Bonnie E. Burr called the meeting to order at 1:36. In addition to Ms. Burr, also present at the meeting were Committee Members Kristen A. Record, Seth D. Zimmer, and Paula S. Gilberto, as well as State Board Vice Chair Erin Benham and Board Member Kellie-Marie Vallieres. Joining the Board members from the CSDE were: Sinthia Sone-Moyano, Deputy Commissioner; Charles Hewes, Deputy Commissioner; Keith Norton, Chief Strategic Planning Officer; Julianne Frost, Education Consultant/Compliance Coordinator; Lauren Tafrate, Associate Education Consultant; Karen Colebut, Education Staff Assistant/CEPCB Administrator; and Michael McKeon, Director of Legal and Governmental Affairs.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of the December 3, 2025, meeting minutes was tabled.

**III. Presentation – Statewide College and Career Pathways**

Christine Carver, Superintendent of the Bethel Public Schools; Fran Rabinowitz, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents [“CAPSS”], and Miguel Cardona, Founder of Cardona Solutions commenced their presentation on workplace initiatives, entitled “Statewide College and Career Pathways.” Ms. Rabinowitz began by noting that she has been working on such initiatives in approximately 2005, when she served as an Associate Commissioner at the Connecticut State Department of Education [“CSDE”]. Ms. Rabinowitz added that her recognition of the need for reshaping workplace initiatives in high school when she was the Superintendent of the Bridgeport Public Schools. She explained that the goal is to build public school systems that will give students post-graduation options, including career pathways and access to affordable higher education. Citing the CSDE’s work on these initiatives, Ms. Rabinowitz shared that she has worked on the development of dual-credit programs in high schools.

Dr. Carver, who has served as the Superintendent of the Bethel Public Schools for the past twelve years discussed the fact that the average period of time in which students earn their college degrees is currently six years. She noted that once in college, students often explore different areas of study, transferring majors and schools, which can result in lost credits and the need to be in school for additional years, which necessarily involves greater expenses. With respect to addressing this

reality, Dr. Carver cited the CSDE’s “fabulous work” with dual-credit and micro-credentialing. She added that the Bethel Public Schools offer 42 AP and dual-credit courses.

Dr. Carver noted that 72% of career options require at least a two-year degree, adding that in a number of states, students can leave high school with an associate’s degree as well as a diploma. With respect to an associate’s degree as opposed to a bachelor’s degree, Dr. Carver added that employers were more interested in students’ ability to problem solve and think creatively rather than what degree they possessed.

Dr. Cardona shared that he is “passionate” about different pathways that students can follow, citing his own background as a graduate of a technical high school, from which he ultimately was appointed the United States Secretary of Education. The presenters have worked on a plan to expand such career pathways within Connecticut, but there must be connections among and interactions between various entities and sectors rather than being fully reliant upon just the CSDE. For example, in Rhode Island, \$50 million was appropriated to workplace development.

There followed discussions between the presenters and Committee members regarding possible efforts to enhance these initiatives. Dr. Cardona noted the fact that some students may not wish to take courses that would help position themselves for post-graduation careers as they do not carry the same credit weight as an AP course. Dr. Carver raised a question as to whether there can be an adjunct model, where individuals with the appropriate experience and skills can teach certain subjects. Dr. Carver also referenced a certain lack of flexibility in statutorily required graduation credits, which may limit students from taking career-oriented courses in addition to those needed to graduate.

Ms. Rabinowitz stressed the need for urgency, stating that she is not looking for a multi-year project but would like this expansion of career pathways for students to be determined and implemented as promptly as possible. Dr. Cardona adds that when he was at the United States Department of Education, there was a playbook for addressing these issues and both Dr. Cardona and CAPSS would like to work with the CSDE to support these efforts.

Noting the regular legislative session commencing in 2026, Ms. Burr expressed what a positive it would be if these pathways could be implemented for students sooner rather than later. At the same time, noting the potential silos among the necessary agencies and entities, Ms. Burr added that as an initial matter, potential barriers cannot be allowed to be an impediment. Dr. Cardona analogizes this process to COVID, when things had to be – and were -- figured out with alacrity.

Dr. Zimmerman raised Dr. Cardona’s example about how Intel established a factory in Columbus because there were appropriately trained people to staff the company. Dr. Cardona noted that businesses are looking for locations in which they can save money and which has a trained workforce.

Dr. Vallieres discussed how the Governor has established a workplace strategy, adding that while Connecticut has “pieces” and a “roadmap,” there needs to be better alignment and the ability to work with a “coalition of the willing.” Dr. Vallieres cited Dr. Cardona’s collaboration with CAPSS

as bringing greater credibility to this effort. As an example of what can be accomplished, Dr. Cardona noted that Electric Boat is committed to hiring up to 600 high school graduates a year, and those potential employees are students who have gone through career pathways in order to obtain the necessary training. One of the difficulties, however, was the difficulty in hiring a welding teacher as even newly graduated students who were starting as welders were making the same as mid-career teachers.

#### **IV. Presentation – Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board**

Ms. Rodriguez shared with the Committee a statutory amendment proposed by the Connecticut Educator Preparation and Certification Board [“CEPCB”] that sought to avoid the sunset of regulations that are going to be revised. Ms. Rodriguez explained that the CEPCB was not proposing an open-ended extension of these regulations, but rather the maintenance of the current regulations until they have been revised and subsequently adopted.

Ms. Gilberto moved, and Dr. Zimmerman seconded a motion to approve and recommend this proposal to the full State Board. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Rodriguez then discussed the CEPCB’s proposal to revise regulations so as to limit assessments for teaching candidates to the Praxis II, and to change educator preparation programs to regionally accredited rather than approved. Following further discussion, Ms. Record moved, and Dr. Zimmerman seconded a motion to approve and recommend this proposal to the full State Board.

A question arose as to which agency would be considered the sponsor of these proposals were the State Board to approve them. It was decided that the CSDE and the CEPCB would consult on this question.

Referring to the initial presentation on career pathways, Ms. Gilberto asked whether it was possible to have Dr. Vallieres could give a presentation to the full State Board on all the aspects of the workplace initiatives. Ms. Burr suggested the addition of a monthly line item to the State Board agenda so as to update the Board on workplace development. Committee members discussed about either a special or regular State Board meeting to discuss workplace initiatives. Attorney McKeon noted that committee reports are a regular part of the monthly agenda and perhaps they could be used as a vehicle to discuss such presentations.

Ms. Record noted that Dr. Carver’s suggestion about non-credentialed “adjuncts” teaching high school students in certain career areas would not be possible, noting that public schools are different from higher education in that unlike in public high schools, college adjuncts do not need to be certified. Ms. Record also explained that there have been cutbacks to career centers at schools as the focus is on the statewide assessments, specifically literacy and math.

With the conclusion of the discussion, Ms. Gilberto moved, and Dr. Zimmerman seconded, a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 2:50.