

# CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## Hartford

Mastery Examination Task Force Meeting

Monday, December 14, 2015

Present: Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education, Chairperson  
Jim Accomando, CT PTA  
Mary Anne Butler, Connecticut State Department of Education  
Dr. Joseph Cirasuolo, CAPSS  
Marcia Ferreira, CEA  
Patti Fusco, AFT  
Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Connecticut State Department of Education  
Kathy Greider, CAPSS  
Dr. Stephen Hegedus, SCSU  
Cathy Hill, CAS  
Ed Leavy, AFT-CT  
Kathleen Kennedy, CT PTA  
Abe Krisst, Connecticut State Department of Education  
Patrice McCarthy, CABA  
Richard Murry, Killingly, CABA  
Dr. Karissa Niehoff, CAS-CIAC  
Don Romoser, CT PTA  
Allan Taylor, Connecticut State Board of Education, Chair  
Jeffrey Villar, CCER  
Don Williams, CEA  
Stephen Wright, Connecticut State Board of Education

### **I. Call to Order**

Chairperson Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

### **II. Approval of Minutes from November 23, 2015, Meeting**

Minutes from the meeting on November 23, 2015, approved.

### **III. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

Commissioner Wentzell provided a brief overview of the ESSA

- Congress passed this legislation last week and the President signed it into law.
- Annual assessment remains an important element in federal law. Requirements around annual testing in English/language arts, mathematics, and science remain the same.

### **IV. Surveys**

Task Force members were supplied with survey results from the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS), from the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABA) and from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).

### **V. The Value and Limitations of this Survey Information**

- The CAS survey consisted of seven questions, which served as a model and were adjusted for the CABA survey. The CSDE results come from various surveys administered during the 2014 field test. CAS surveyed school administrators, CABA's version was tailored to members of the local school board.
- CAS made the survey available to nearly 1,000 principals. Responses came back from about 100. The CABA survey has a similar response rate and similar trends were evident in both sets of results.
- Respondents to the CAS survey were mostly from suburban school districts and mostly, but not

exclusively, from the middle-school and high-school level.

- The CSDE Survey results were administered to students, test proctors, and to district superintendents at the time of the Smarter Balanced Field test in 2014.
- The Task Force is currently collecting survey responses from six different member groups.

#### **VI. Survey Responses and Discussion**

Survey responses were mostly in reaction to the first administration of the Smarter Balanced assessment. Discussions surrounding the survey responses focused on the following:

- **Total time to administer the test.**
- **Test Preparation/Incentives.**
- **Appropriateness of Test Accommodations.**
- **Test Anxiety.**
- **Sufficient Education for Parents.**
- **How Test Results Align with Expectations.**
- **How will this test impact instruction?**

#### **VII. Questions for Task Force Future Consideration**

Discussion included the mention of several issues worthy of Task Force consideration. They included:

- *What are the purposes of assessment?*
- *What are good practices around assessment?*
- *What is the impact on instructional practice?*
- *How do we Change the mindset?*
- *How do we improve communication differently with different audiences?*
- *Reducing Teacher Anxiety.*
- *Reducing competition between public schools.*
- *Reducing the gap between instruction and assessment.*
- *Improving access to technology.*
- *Theory of action.* How can this Task Force best translate these discussions to recommended actions by the Education Committee? How can these recommendations expand to recommendations for the local education agencies (LEAs)?

#### **VIII. Progress on the Task Force Report**

The CSDE is working on a sharable draft of the preliminary report due in February. A draft will be shared with Task Force members for feedback before it is due.

#### **IX. Next Meeting**

- Survey feedback is due from CT PTA, CEA and CAPSS by January 4, 2016.
- The next meeting will be on January 11, 2016, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

#### **X. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m.