CONNECTICUT
Administrative Services

CONNECTICUT COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY
December 1, 2025
1:00 – 3:00 PM
MINUTES

Executive Summary

The December Commission meeting focused on integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into teaching, learning, and workforce preparation. Members discussed the need to balance innovation with safeguards, ensure mastery of core academic content, and align instructional goals with assessment and accountability systems in an AI-powered world.

The Commission also received updates on efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of educational technology, advance digital opportunity, and expand broadband access. Members emphasized the importance of responsible AI use, data-informed decision-making, and policy guidance to support educators, learners, and residents across Connecticut.

Recommendations and Action Items

Educational Technology Effectiveness and Sustainability

- Use research and data, including rapid-cycle evaluation, to guide educational technology investments and discontinue tools that do not demonstrate value.
- Promote sustainable approaches to technology funding and procurement.

Digital Opportunity

- Despite the loss of federal funding, advance digital opportunity through model programs that expand technology access through the distribution of used computers and the use of school resources for adult learners.

Artificial Intelligence in Education

- Promote responsible use of AI in schools that fosters the development of durable, human-centered skills alongside the mastery of core content.
- Ensure that curriculum and assessment systems support local and state "portrait of the graduate" definitions and provide guidance to districts and policymakers on AI-related opportunities and risks.

Infrastructure and Capacity

- Recognize the CEN's role in providing secure, high-capacity connectivity to support AI and other advanced technologies statewide.

Commission Members in Attendance

Raymond, Mark — Commission Chair and Chief Information Officer, DAS-BITS
Bailie, Colleen — Director, West Haven Public Library (Connecticut Library Association)
Caruso, Nick — Associate Executive Director for Field Services and Technology, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)
Casey, Doug — Executive Director, Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology
Cohen, Burt — Staff Attorney, Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel
Dumais, Chip — Executive Director, Cooperative Education Services (C.E.S.) (Office of the Governor)
Elsesser, John — Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Mundrane, Michael — Interim Chief Information Officer, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities
Parisi, Irene — Chief Academic Officer, Connecticut State Department of Education
Polci, Maura — Vice President of Research and Administration, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
Salvatore, Tony — Co-President, Connecticut Federation of School Administrators (CFSA/AFSA) (Speaker of the House)
Schander, Deborah — State Librarian, Connecticut State Library
Smith, Josh — Superintendent, Region 15 Public Schools (Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents)
Suh, Grace — Chief of Staff, Office of Workforce Strategy
Toomey, Carol Quinn — Managing Director, Connecticut Public Service, Accenture (President Pro Tempore of the Senate)
Uche, Chinma — Math and Computer Science Teacher, CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering (Connecticut Education Association)
Williams, Holly — Section Director, Education and Workforce Development, Office of Policy and Management (OPM)

Others in Attendance

Kocsondy, Ryan — Director, Connecticut Education Network (CEN)
Racamato, Victoria — Executive Secretary, Office of Chief Information Officer Mark Raymond

Welcome

Commission Chair Mark Raymond called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM. He noted that the meeting was streamed via the Connecticut Network (at the time of this writing, available as an archive at http://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=25622). Following the Thanksgiving holiday, he expressed his gratitude for the members present. The Commission's work addresses critical concerns, including ensuring residents' access to technology, equipping them with the skills to use digital tools wisely, and preparing the next generation to flourish in an AI-enabled world. He specifically thanked Executive Director Doug Casey for his efforts and acknowledged the longstanding contributions of Nick Caruso. The meeting marks more than 31 years of Nick's service on the Commission and its precursor, the Joint Committee on Educational Technology (JCET).

Approval of Meeting Minutes

As the first order of business, Mark welcomed a motion to approve the Commission's September 8 quarterly meeting minutes, which had been previously shared in draft form. Nick offered the motion with a second from Burt Cohen. Members unanimously adopted the meeting minutes.

Report of the Executive Director

Mark welcomed Doug to share highlights of his quarterly report, which was made available on the Commission's website before the meeting.

National Educational Technology Trends

Results of the recent SETDA 2025 State EdTech Trends Report reflect the priorities and concerns of state education chiefs and technology leaders. The top priorities remain similar to those in past surveys and include artificial intelligence (AI), the sustainability of technology funding, student well-being related to technology use, teacher training, and cybersecurity. A key takeaway is that these national trends align with the Commission's initiatives as defined in the Connecticut Educational Technology Plan (www.CT.gov/EdTechPlan).

Grant Award to Support Efficacy Research

The Commission was awarded a grant this summer from the Ballmer Group through the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Funds support a pilot to identify the effectiveness of educational technology for student learning and assessment. Doug highlighted the need for this work, given the question of whether apps have a

measurable impact on student learning and are accurate predictors of it. A cohort of eight districts across the state is participating, sharing data with learning scientists from LearnPlatform, a longtime provider of data-compliance services to the State. Through a process of rapid-cycle evaluation (RCE), the LearnPlatform team expects to share results in three waves during 2026. Demonstrating either a correlation between the use of these software platforms, or a lack thereof, will provide value to the participating districts and serve as a model for similar efforts across the state. Reinforcing the use of effective software and abandoning tools with direct and indirect costs should further student learning and assessment accuracy.

Digital Opportunity

The Commission leads efforts across agencies and partners to advance digital opportunity in the state. The state plan, "Connecticut: Everyone Connected," serves as a blueprint for equipping residents with the connections, devices, training, and support they need to flourish in today's digital world. Despite the termination of federal funding in May, work continues on this front, albeit at a slower pace and on a smaller scale, without the $17M in funding that was awarded and later revoked. Efforts include coordinating work across nonprofits and state agencies, particularly in areas that help residents use emerging technologies such as AI to build workplace skills, find employment, leverage telehealth, and pursue advanced education. Doug welcomed input from Commission members on potential partners for this work and on general advice to advance efforts to support residents' use of technology.

Burt noted that Congress allocated funds to the Digital Equity program in 2021 through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, subsequently signed into law by the President. Article 1 of the Constitution authorizes Congress to create programs and make these allocations, which the executive branch cannot cancel. He stated that the judicial system may resolve the issue of terminating awards to states through the Digital Equity and other congressionally authorized programs.

Integration of Artificial Intelligence into Daily Practice

Given AI's prominent role in education, the Commission welcomed guest speaker Jonathan Costa, Executive Director of EdAdvance, to share the work his regional education service center is doing statewide. Jonathan thanked Mark for the introduction and directed attendees to a presentation he had prepared for the meeting.

During the presentation, he highlighted how EdAdvance leverages AI as an organization, how it helps schools and communities use AI effectively, and key policy imperatives for the Commission to consider. He encouraged a balanced approach to AI, given its enormous potential to deepen student learning and its risks.

Internally, EdAdvance has an AI Strategies Team that explores ways of using enterprise AI tools in areas such as teaching and learning, talent recruitment and retention, and client services. The team has put in place systems that help ensure employees have a general awareness of AI capabilities and encourage them to explore the use of tools to solve problems and deliver value.

To meet the demands of school districts, a smaller team of experts at EdAdvance has developed resources to support current models of teaching, learning, and assessment (www.EdAdvance/AI). In the long term, he expects AI to disrupt those models, shifting from traditional learning outcomes driven by standardized tests to outcomes that develop and assess higher-level thinking skills. The latter will prove more "durable" against AI, which stands poised to eliminate jobs that can be automated.

These efforts focus on professional development across K–12, higher education, and the adult (workforce) sector. Resources include a weekly podcast and an AI certification, or "microcredential." Examples of other initiatives include a regional transportation mapping and efficiency application and a secure, AI-powered tool for developing individualized education plans (IEPs) as part of special education service delivery.

Jonathan provided several policy recommendations to ensure students develop a uniquely human skill set for a world where AI is ubiquitous. He sees a current dichotomy across instructional goals, teaching practices, and assessment. Current practices are often vulnerable to AI-enabled cheating. Still, AI can also be used to make curriculum, teaching, and testing more resilient against the "shortcuts" that AI-powered tools enable. Those recommendations include the following:

- Vision of the Future: Have the State develop a single "portrait of the graduate." Skills that are already part of most local portraits include critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving.
- Durable Curriculum: Focus teaching on ensuring students learn the human-centered, durable skills that AI will not soon make obsolete.

- Holistic Accountability Standards: Adopt more formative approaches to data collection and providing feedback to students. The School Accountability Index should assess student progress in applying and developing high-level skills and dispositions.
- Aligned Systems of Policy and Regulation: Ensure that the foundational policies and practices support the above learning outcomes.

Mark thanked Jonathan for the overview and welcomed questions from the Commission members. Deborah Schander asked for an example of what a "durable" lesson is. He provided the example comparing a "vulnerable" lesson of writing a five-paragraph essay (easy to generate from a large language model) to the "durable" assignment of comparing different aspects of a topic and then engaging in a mock trial, role-playing one of the points of view.

Chinma Uche shared her reflections as a math educator. She appreciated the higher-level thinking skills captured by many portraits of the graduate. However, these often do not include assurances of mastery of content. The result she sees in her classes is students who cannot perform basic arithmetic, which in turn reduces their ability to solve problems and apply common sense to academic challenges. She called on the Commission and other educational leadership organizations to encourage a proactive rather than a reactive stance in the use of technology to support learning.

Jonathan agreed with this assessment and highlighted the need for both content mastery and the skills to apply their learning. His concern was the current model of education that emphasizes memorization, in a world where the effective use of tools to facilitate writing, coding, etc., is far less dependent on the individual to produce high-quality work. The current "prescribed course of study" in Connecticut statute perpetuates this emphasis on exposure to a long list of subjects rather than higher-level skills.

Nick noted the decades of progress in integrating computers into schools and the importance of technology access. Jonathan agreed and defined equity as enabling teachers to understand and use technology tools to support learning. From an assessment perspective, Josh Smith pointed to the misalignment between the goals in most portraits of the graduate and current tests. He noted that the SAT, Smarter Balanced, and Next-Generation Assessment tests do not effectively gauge students' critical thinking or problem-solving capabilities.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is addressing the need for a model "portrait of the graduate" through the State Board of Education Comprehensive Plan, as Irene Parisi shared. This work is being conducted in partnership with the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the accrediting body for Connecticut schools. She noted that schools also have the flexibility to adjust educational elements, including content, pacing, and other factors. Connecticut law does afford leeway, and she encouraged local boards to think critically about school structures. She recommended that the Commission and its partners promote the use of these flexibilities to advance personalized learning. The CSDE is also exploring ways to integrate AI into the Common Core State Standards.

Holly Williams raised the question of how schools are preparing students for higher education, and how colleges and universities may need to shift curriculum to prepare students for an AI-infused workplace. There are some pockets of innovation, according to Jonathan, based on his work with institutions of higher education in the state. Challenges remain in changing the form and outcomes of college, given its emphasis on long-form literacy, which AI can replicate effectively. In the realm of adult learning, Grace Suh commended EdAdvance for their work in supporting non-traditional learners through programs from the Office of Workforce Strategy. AI-powered tools can accelerate and personalize learning, especially for individuals with learning differences.

John Elsesser called on the Commission to provide guidance to school districts amid concerns about how AI may disrupt learning and workforce readiness. Mark welcomed the suggestion and sought input from other members. Josh emphasized the need to create safe spaces for innovation and to reconsider real versus assumed constraints in the education system. Nick called on the Commission to "talk louder" to amplify its voice with legislators and strengthen relationships that underscore its advisory role. Tony Salvatore stated that the Commission's role is to diagnose current challenges in education before imposing solutions. Ryan Kocsondy pointed to CEN as "AI-ready" for providing the necessary safe, high-capacity network to support the use of emerging technologies.

AI and Digital Learning Advisory Council Report
Mark called on Nick and Josh to present an update on the October 8 meeting of the AI and Digital Learning Advisory Council, minutes of which were previously circulated to Commission members. Josh noted a new member to the advisory council, Cathie Drury, Technology Director for Coventry Public Schools, and a 2024 recipient of the CEN Outstanding Leader Award. Work continues within the group to refine the AI Guidance the Commission published earlier this year (www.CT.gov/AIforSchools), in partnership with other agencies. On the topic of digital opportunity, the group identified a need to support adult learners' technology needs and to use school resources for that purpose. Doug has launched a survey collecting input from districts on whether they share technology resources for K – 12 as well as adult and continuing education.

Infrastructure Advisory Council Report
Commission member Colleen Bailie co-chairs the Infrastructure Advisory Council and provided a summary of the October 6 meeting of that group. As reflected in the advisory minutes, advisory members discussed the feasibility of offering gently used computers to residents to help address the lack of computers in many households. Topics included where to source the computers, how best to ensure they contain no sensitive data before handoff to residents, and expectations for ongoing technical support. The group identified high school and college students to provide technical and training support. The group will flesh out the specifics of a model program at its next meeting.

CEN Report
CEN Executive Director Ryan Kocsondy provided highlights of his quarterly report, available from the Commission's Website. Projects funded through the American Rescue Plan Act are underway. Outcomes will include expanded middle-mile connections, symmetrical 400-megabit-per-second (Mbps) connections along the network backbone and handoff locations; connections to charter schools, libraries, and municipalities; and the creation of high-speed wireless networks in communities across the state. All of these initiatives must be completed by the end of 2026. In response to a question from Burt, Ryan stated that award notifications for the Community WiFi program would come out in early 2026. Josh and Mark commended Ryan for his efforts to ensure the network's capacity to meet the needs of students and educators.

The Cyber Nutmeg conference took place in October, with attendance large enough to warrant a larger venue in 2026. Ryan closed his report by encouraging members to nominate colleagues for the Outstanding Leader Award (ctedunet.net/cola/).

Public Comment
Mark welcomed input from any non-members in attendance. None offered any questions or comments to the Commission.

Scheduled 2026 Meeting Dates
Mark shared the planned dates for next year's meetings, with the venue indicated in parentheses:

- March 2 (Virtual)
- June 1 (In Person)
- September 14 (Virtual)
- December 7 (In Person)

Before adjournment, Tony Salvatore asked members and others in attendance to remember the twenty children and six adults who were killed thirteen years ago in the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown.

Adjournment
Mark welcomed a motion to adjourn, offered by Nick and seconded by Chinma. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Casey, *Executive Director*
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