

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

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

**Minutes
(Approved 6/3/2015)**

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 May 6, 2015.

I. Call to Order

Committee Chair Theresa Hopkins-Staten called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m. Also present were committee members Robert Trefry, Erin Benham, Maria Mojica and Terry Jones.*

Also present for all or part of the meeting were the following Department of Education staff members: Assistant to the Commissioner for Board Matters Pamela Charland; Chief Financial Officer & Acting Legal Director Kathy Demsey; Communications Director Kelly Donnelly; Chief of the Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services & Adult Education Services John Frassinelli; Education Consultant Shelby Pons; Education Service Specialist Susan Radway; 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 Ms. Mojica, the Committee unanimously approved the April 6, 2015, Legislation and Policy Development Committee meeting minutes.

*Mr. Jones arrived at 8:43 a.m.

III. Legislative Review

Chair Hopkins-Staten recognized Legislative Liaison Laura J. Stefon, who began the legislative review. Ms. Stefon reminded members that the legislative session, while nearing completion (the session officially ends June 3, 2015) is also at a critical stage. With nearly 800 bills pending or awaiting review the legislature will have to address many issues before it recesses, including the final status of these bills. Ms. Stefon also noted the appearances of Commissioner-Designee Dianna R. Wentzell and State Board of Education member Joseph Vrabely before the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee on April 28, 2015, where

each offered testimony in support of their appointment and re-appointment to their respective positions. Printed versions of their respective testimonies were also made available to committee members and staff present at this morning's meeting.

IV. State Board of Education Bylaws

Committee Chair Hopkins-Staten invited Pamela Charland and Kathy Demsey to summarize a proposed revision to the Board's Bylaws. Ms. Charland and Ms. Demsey explained the proposal to delegate to the Commissioner authority to apply for grant funds. They explained how this change would reduce the amount of time required on the part of staff in preparing additional materials for the Board and support the submission of applications in a timely manner. Committee members concurred and requested that they receive draft language reflecting this revision in advance of their next meeting.

V. Discussion of Educational Service for Vulnerable Students: Support for Pregnant and Parenting Teens Program

Bureau Chief John Frassinelli began the presentation on Educational Services to Vulnerable Students, with emphasis on the Supports for Pregnant and Parenting Teens program (SPPT). Mr. Frassinelli then introduced Education Consultant Shelby Pons and Education Service Specialist Susan Radway. SPPT is presently active in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain, New Haven, Waterbury and Windham.

Ms. Pons noted the vital need for the program as pregnant teens have traditionally been steered toward alternative or segregated programs or adult education, which increased the dropout rates in the regular schools and increased the pressures on adult education programs to address the needs of this class of students. She also noted that federal funds were available and put to use for the purpose of keeping pregnant and parenting students in their comprehensive high school. Ms. Radway added that a middle school pregnancy program is more difficult to implement but would be helpful if funding were available.

Handouts with supplemental information and data were distributed to members and staff for review.

Mr. Frassinelli noted the networking component to the SPPT and the participation of the Department of Social Services, the Department of Public Health, The Hispanic Health Council and Capitol Region as active partners.

Discussion ensued with members commenting and posing questions during and after the presentation. Chair Hopkins-Staten asked if the program participation extended to fathers, which it does, and for more details as to how the grant money allocated would directly affect educational achievement of the children of the teen parents by kindergarten. Chair Hopkins-

Staten also suggested the United Way and the Urban League as possible resources. Mr. Treyfry asked how program results might be quantified to better assess and identify areas of success to demonstrate the models' low cost, high impact design.

Chair Hopkins-Staten thanked all staff for their presentations.

Chair Hopkins-Staten, on behalf of the Committee, also thanked Paralegal Mark Shepherd, for his professionalism and the excellent job he has done recording the minutes for the Committee's meetings. She wished him well in all his future endeavors.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 a.m.

Prepared by:

Mark Shepherd, Paralegal