

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ADVISORY COMMITTEE for EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION REGULATION REVISION

Thursday, October 16, 2008

8:30am – 1:00pm

ITBD

New Britain, CT

MINUTES

Members Present

Mark McQuillan, Moderator: Paula Schwartz, Linette Branham, Carol Clifford, Jackie Colon, Ania Czajkowski, Joanne Ellsworth, David Erwin, Janet Finneran, Margaret Mary Fitzgerald, Linda Goodman, Bob Hale, Robert Hiscox, Andrew Lachman, Margaret Liu, Kelly Lyman, V. Everett Lyons, Edward Malin, Marion Martinez, John Mattas, John Mattera, Mary Monroe-Kolek, Carole Pannozzo, Teddy Sablon-Tauris, Jay Voss, Jacqueline Wasta

Members Absent

Steven Adamowski, Karen Baldwin, Earle Bidwell, Roch Girard, Jonas Zdanys

Staff Present

Lol Fearon, Sharon Fuller, Jacqui Kelleher, Georgette Nemr, Katherine Nicoletti, Nancy Pugliese, Anne Louise Thompson

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:40am

Overview of Meeting Agenda

Moderator Paula Schwartz welcomed the advisory group back and had everyone introduce themselves and organization affiliation since some members did not attend the first meeting. The agenda for the meeting was distributed.

Review of Minutes from September 25, 2008

Minutes were approved by all in attendance with no changes offered.

Discussion after minutes

As a follow-up to requests at the previous meeting, several data reports or reports were distributed for discussion including:

- *Durational Shortage Area Permits for 2000-2007* including breakout by subject area and a second by school district. It was noted that retired teachers who were serving as teachers were not included in the list. It was also noted that New Haven, Hartford, Bridgeport, Waterbury, Stamford and the Technical high school represented the highest number of DSAPS. It was pointed out that since these represent the largest districts in the state, as a percentage of their teachers it is not as high a number.
- *K-12 Students and Pre-School in Regular Class, Resource Room and Separate Classroom Settings by Disability Type* including breakout by disability category of the percentage of day that special education students spend in a regular or separate classroom in public school districts.
- *Using Scientific Research-Based Interventions: Improving Education for all students – Connecticut's Framework for RTI*. Advisory members were encouraged to read the report after hearing the presentation by Mike Wasta.

The moderator, Paula Schwartz, also distributed a copy of and discussed an electronic survey that CEA had distributed to its members on October 14, 2008. The moderator acknowledged that CEA had the right to send out the survey, but questioned why it was distributed before the presentation of key elements of certification changes for regular and special education teachers. The survey lacked any contextual information about the rationale of the various proposals and how it will impact current teachers which had caused several teachers to contact the SDE and their own superintendents with questions about impact on their own certification. Linette Branham of the CEA agreed to revise the survey as needed.

Presentation by Michael Wasta, External Consultant to SDE and former Bristol Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Wasta presented a brief outline of their work in Bristol around Data Drive Decision Making (DDDM, based on the Connecticut Accountability for Learning (CALI) initiative) and how they have been slowly implementing beginning stages of the RTI model of providing tiered interventions to struggling learners and not waiting until they have failed and identifying them for special education. The special education model of identifying students at the point of failure and providing individualized instruction in a separate setting has not worked as evidenced over the last 30 years. It was believed that if you placed students with learning disabilities into a small class with highly trained special education teachers and assistants that students would do better. This was done without evidence that this model would work. Now as we have examined the evidence of the special education model, it simply wasn't working at all. Special education students are not performing better and the resource room model didn't work. Students left their peers, or were sent out of districts and did it thoughtlessly. 15 years ago went to full inclusion, sent some students to Wheeler Clinic whose approach is that students would be integrated back into their school setting. Regardless, we could not overcome lower expectations once students were identified for special education. Identifying students with learning disabilities should stop and as should referring students to special education. CAPSS survey of average cost to evaluate a student for special education services is \$5,000/per student. We need to stop the nonsense of labeling because of our failure to do a better job teaching struggling learners.

SRBI is the answer with 3 tiers of intervention. Have been working with Doug Reeves as well as serving on accountability teams working with the 12 "needs improvement" districts. Worked with DDDM teams of teachers working together (based on work of Dillon & Williams, Marzano, etc). What we learned is if you assess more, then what do you get? Better performance. Jean Andrews, principal of Hubbell School in Bristol, who has 600 students. No assistant principal. All students are fully included. One pulled out for support or instruction. 100% of her special education kids reached proficiency.

SRBI/RTI works because it is based on teams of teachers looking at data, giving kids what they need. Critical component for making this work is TIME. Time spent in teams is as valuable as teaching time. Can't be asking teacher to do it for free. Must provide training to analyze data to help students labeled or not labeled. Some obstacles: administrators and board of education. We now have good evidence that this works and we still don't do it [move to SRBI/RTI model].

Before starting instruction, 20% of kids know info/curric. Teachers get it. Especially at high school teachers. For example, can have two groups in class, right off the bat, 10-20% in trouble. We have got to intervene right away, when we know that they aren't learning. "Wait to fail" model doesn't work. % of students referred to special education who get identified: 90%. Referral=identification. One caveat about the SRBI/RTI model is that this cannot be a special education initiative. This model must serve all students. Has to be a general education initiative.

Ev Lyons: Most parents are not advocates of having their child labeled. Jay Voss asked how time issues were worked out. Ev Lyons shared that Bristol created an early release program on Wednesdays with input of central office and teacher's union. Teacher contract for 6 PD days but teacher's union took 3 days and turned it into early release days, at least 2/month. Staff grouped into subject area data teams to analyzed data from assessments and disciplinary teams freshman/sophomore students, get time to work and collaborate together.

Mike Wasta: It took 2 years to create the 100 minutes for collaboration. After debriefing on process, teachers wanted more time for data teams. For example, 10th grade biology team had phenomenal results in student

growth because they took their lunch time together, met everyday as a team to discuss student achievement. Teachers found that they could not meet “too much”. Another example involved an early intervention by the high school algebra team. 12 students were identified as having weaknesses and certain to fail. Created a pool of funds to have teachers do the intervention themselves based on their own data. Team planned if they could get kids to come afterschool for an hour, they could remediate their skills. Pre-assessment indicated possible failure. Parents asked to sign the form only if they don’t want child to come. Only one signed form not involving child in intervention program. All other students were able to achieve at desired levels as a result of this teacher driven intervention program.

Mary Kolek: Teachers need to be retooled constantly, not just in content. Looking at certification proposal and it is compelling, better preparation of teachers, more professional development coherence.

Mark McQuillan: this is team-based, need to build internships, it will completely shape what we can do.

Mike Wasta: Old rules were: some learn, some don’t. The new rule is: our actions determine outcomes of students. Need to put away silo thinking. Toyota taught us how to build a car through team work. Regarding certification, be very flexible. In working with University of New Haven, I recommended training candidates to: work in teams, work with assessment data, solve problems, change instruction on a dime. Look at skills we really need—new set of skills. The problem with RTI, the pipeline is filled with identified kids. We will need staff available to support these students. During transition, going to have to overstaff until we have identified kids out of the pipeline. If we can stop identifying kids, we save \$5000/student and the staff time for instructional support. One reason we got good with \$\$ in Bristol is that we didn’t have it.

Bob Hale: In light of secondary school reform can’t separate the certification changes.

Carol Clifford: About teams, have to train every teacher?

Mike Wasta: Started 10 years ago with summer academy. Never had outside trainers. Administrators didn’t have a choice to participate with teacher leaders. Outside trainers teams of teachers and administrators, principal had to be on that team. Teams got further training in every initiative. Go to do it yourself, not enough \$\$ for outside trainers. Bristol AFT union president, “got it” was with us in every way.

Bob Hale: Before cast things in concrete, must include in training of teachers secondary school reform components including student success plans, mentoring piece of students, data analysis, other components that are part of plan.

Mike Wasta: If stick to 4 years for preparation, can only do so much. When we started academy we did 3 weeks of training for reading specialist. 3 weeks wasn’t enough. Elementary had to work as cohorts.

Ed Malin: Beginning teachers are not master teachers; candidates need different prep and support in urbans.

Carol Panno: Bridgeport losing 50% of 1st and 2nd year teachers. We are working with Columbia/Teachers College, to support beginning teachers.

Mike Wasta: I consult with Windham and they are losing 80% of their new teachers.

Margaret Mary Fitzgerald: Certification regulations must be flexible and include data analysis, collaborative skills,. If pigeon hole it too much, make problem worse. For urbans, unions have to come to the table with administration.

Jay Voss: We can do it, start to focus on DDDM, have 25 school districts participating in Sec Sch Reform Pilot.

Kelly Lyman: I was trained 25 years ago, dual certification, in MA. Courses in special ed taught me how to teach. Effective necessary skills needed by beginning teachers. Pre-service competencies much of what Mike spoke about. Skills embedded in content courses. Collaboration missing from pre-service competencies.

Presentation of the Integrated Endorsements

Georgette Nemr and Nancy Pugliese presented the new Integrated Endorsements: Early Childhood (Grades PK-3, Elementary (Grades K-6), Secondary (Grades 6-12) and Special Subjects (art, music, PE, health, etc, Grades PK-12). See slide presentation. All new teachers would be assessed at IHE for demonstration of the pre-service competencies, embedded into the prep programs. Current certificate holders would not be required to meet these new standards or to reapply for their certification with these new standards. They would be grandfathered under the new regulations, as long as they meet the professional development requirements.

It was noted that the Pre-Service Competencies were developed by the IHEs in collaboration with stakeholders from teacher, administrator and SDE representatives. CEA said that they were not at the table, but it was pointed out that Maureen Honan represented then CEA vice-president Phil Appruzze, and John Altieri, represented AFT.

The middle school endorsement would be eliminated since there are only a limited number of programs still in existence and few candidates opting for this certification. The current proposal gives flexibility in grade 6 as to the endorsement needed. The group questioned whether this should also include grade 5. Concern was raised about the unique nature of the early adolescent and it was pointed out that the IHEs will provide experiences through internships and student teaching in both secondary environments.

Presentation of Special Education Intervention Specialist PK-12 and Special Education Support Teacher K-12

Nancy Pugliese and Georgette Nemr presented the new certification plans for Special Education. See presentation slides. Both endorsements would be at the Master's level. The Intervention Specialist would be required to have 18 credits in special education, as well as an endorsement in ECE, Elementary or Secondary content area. They would have diagnostic and assessment training and would facilitate the planning and placement team process. They would also have 9 credits in reading, similar to ECE and Elementary endorsement. The special education support teacher endorsement would allow out-of-state teachers who are prepared only in special education an entry point since 53% of our teachers in special education are from out-of-state. These teachers cannot provide primary instruction, but can provide other special education services. They also would need 18 credits in a planned program in special education, as well as 9 credits in reading. They would need six graduate credits in supporting intensive needs students.

Discussion focused on whether there is a need for two endorsements or whether there could be a provisional until the person meets all requirements. Some questioned whether colleges would want to have five year programs. The moderator suggested that members bring various scenarios to the next meeting for further discussion.

Everyone was asked to consider the proposals discussed today and to return to the next meeting with feedback or suggestions related to these proposals. In addition, we would revisit issues related to CEUs requirements, the needs for a subject area major for elementary education and allowing candidates to take more professional education coursework prior to admission into a teacher prep program as a recruitment tool.

Next Meeting:

Next meeting will be held October 28, 2008, at ITBD in New Britain at 8:30 a.m. After revisiting proposals from the October 16 meeting, we will concentrate on the proposed Educational Leadership Continuum.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Schwartz