

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education
FROM: Mark K. McQuillan, Commissioner
SUBJECT: Legislative Proposals for 2009 for Adoption

The following is a list and brief summary of the legislative proposals for 2009. These are the same proposals as you have seen before. However, where the State Board discussed a particular proposal at the Special State Board of Education Budget Workshop on November 17, 2008, and made recommendations for revision, there is an asterisk indicating that the recommendation has changed.

As before, this list includes both budget and non-budget proposals. Non-budget proposals are italicized and in bold. The budget proposals referred to in this document are the same as before, except for changes noted in Proposal C. Secondary School Redesign. The non-budget proposals will be presented to you separately.

A. Sheff

Implement the Comprehensive Management Plan developed to comply with the 2008 stipulation and order for Milo Sheff, et al. v. William A. O'Neill, et al., with increased funding and new and amended legislation as follows:

- Create a fund to support academic and social support programs along with summer school offerings in both OPEN Choice and Magnet School programs.
- For the OPEN Choice program:
 1. Create a base grant, e.g., of up to \$75,000, for each receiving district to use for purposes such as, but not limited to, professional development, student academic and social supports, and hiring a district program coordinator;
 2. Create a tiered system for providing grants to receiving districts. Districts with greater participation would receive more than those with less participation and the grants would increase over three years; and

3. ***Require suburban districts in the Sheff region to participate in the OPEN Choice program at a level to be specified by the Commissioner of Education based on district capacity.***

Proposal #3 is non-budget; SDE recommends approval with the addition of language to provide for possible financial sanctions for noncompliance.

- Fund the transportation of suburban technical high school students in the Sheff region to the technical high school in Hartford. Currently, there is funding to transport technical high school students in the Sheff region, but it can only be used to transport Hartford students to suburban technical high schools.
- As described in Item B, below, amend the magnet school operating grant formulas and increase grants for transportation to interdistrict magnet schools on a state-wide basis.

B. Interdistrict Magnet Schools

- Amend the formula for operating grants for host magnet schools to:
 1. Have the per pupil grants for out-of-district students attending host magnets relate more directly to the cost of educating a magnet school student by basing the grant amount in part on the Department's published two-year prior Net Current Expenditures Per Pupil (NCEP) average;
 2. Have the full cost of in-district students be borne by the host district and eliminate the 25% reduction to the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant for the host districts' students that are in their own magnet schools; and
 3. Specify that no tuition be charged for students to attend host magnets.
- Amend the formula for operating grants for magnet schools operated by regional educational service centers (RESCs) by determining the cost to educate a magnet school student, as described above, and have the state pay a percentage of that cost with the balance of the costs borne fully by the sending districts through tuition.
- Increase magnet school transportation grants by increasing the per pupil grant over a two-year period to more accurately reflect transportation costs being incurred by districts.
- ***Limit the annual budgets for magnet schools operated by RESCs to ensure reasonable tuitions for students attending these schools.***

Proposal is non-budget; SDE recommends approval.

- ***Suspend the approval of new interdistrict magnet school construction and operation, except for purposes of Sheff, until completion of a comprehensive statewide plan.***

Proposal is non-budget; SDE recommends approval with an additional statement that the statewide plan will be completed in two years.

- ***Eliminate the parent-pay option for part-time interdistrict magnet schools.***

Proposal is non-budget; SDE recommends approval.

C. Secondary School Redesign

- Implement the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee for Secondary School Redesign, which significantly change the requirements for the awarding of high school diplomas.

These recommendations (1) increase to 25 the total number of credits students must earn to be awarded a diploma, (2) compel students to take and pass specific core courses such as Algebra I, Geometry and Biology, and (3) compel all students to complete specific course requirements in three academic clusters: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); Humanities; and Career and Life Skills. Additionally, all students will be required to complete a “capstone experience” or senior demonstration project that offers evidence of mastery of essential skills and knowledge identified in each student’s individualized “success plan.”

- Included as part of this initiative are recommendations that (1) there be alternate ways in which students can complete their requirements should they fail any of the required courses, (2) students be able to attend community colleges and other **public** higher education institutions under dual enrollment programs that are funded through the ECS formula and (3) students be able to complete a fifth year of high school if it is anticipated that five years will be needed for a student to complete the high school requirements as determined by the student’s “success plan.” *(Note: The word “public” was added in (2) for clarity.)*
- These recommendations will be phased in with approximately 25 school districts volunteering to start implementation in the **2011-2012** school year and all districts being required to begin the phasing-in of compliance in the **2015-2016** school year provided funding is appropriated to the Department of Education and local and regional school districts, as necessary. *(Note: In this bullet “2009-2010” was changed to “2011-2012” and “2013-2014” was changed to “2015-2016” to conform with the budget recommendations.)*

D. School Accountability

- Create a statewide system of professional development and technical assistance to improve the academic achievement of English language learners.
- Allow the State Board of Education to require that, subject to the Teacher Negotiation Act, (1) teachers participate in professional development or technical assistance to improve the academic achievement of English language learners and (2) teachers be provided with collaborative planning time, as accountability actions the State Board may require to improve student performance as a condition for removal of a school or district from the list of schools or districts designated as low achieving.

E. Early Reading Success and Family Literacy Grant Program

- Restore funding for the Early Reading Success (ERS) grant program.
- Specify that ERS grants be used for intensive early intervention reading programs and not for the establishment of full-day kindergarten or to reduce class sizes in grades kindergarten to three, inclusive.
- For those districts receiving ERS funds, require (1) the use of individualized reading plans, overseen by qualified literacy teams, to monitor student progress and student achievement, (2) that the needs of English language learners be identified and addressed, (3) the administration of a diagnostic survey to gather baseline data on teachers in grades kindergarten to three, inclusive, with respect to their knowledge of the goals and competencies identified in the Connecticut Blueprint for Reading Achievement and the use of such data in the delivery of professional development, (4) a school literacy team operated under the guidance of external literacy facilitators, and (5) a community-based program to support family literacy.
- Provide that the Commissioner of Education may require districts receiving ERS funds to provide certain programs (e.g., summer school, weekend classes) if a district in any year has failed to make satisfactory progress in improving the reading achievement of its students.

F. Educator Certification

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The proposed amendments related to certification and professional development for educators are based on the overarching principle that the development of high-quality educators, from pre-service to career, is grounded in evidence-based competencies focused on student need and facilitated through practical and team-based processes. The proposals establish the statutory framework upon which

revisions to the certification regulations can be made in accordance with this principle.

- *Expand interstate reciprocity for the awarding of educator certificates by (1) giving the Commissioner of Education the authority to establish or join interstate agreements to increase the recruitment and certification of teachers from other states and (2) undertaking an evaluation of the teacher examinations in nearby states to equate those examinations with Connecticut's. (Note: Subdivision (2) will require funding.)*

The proposal concerning interstate agreements is non-budget; SDE recommends approval.

- *Amend the educator certification statutes to include, but not be limited to, changes such as the following so that the certification regulations can be revised to expand teachers' abilities to instruct students with a wide array of learning needs, provide flexibility to facilitate new and more rigorous preparation programs and promote standards-based professional development:*

1. *Focus educator preparation requirements on competency-based completion standards which are embedded in teacher preparation coursework and align the statutes with competency-based requirements to be proposed in the regulations relating to new teaching endorsements for early childhood, elementary and secondary teachers.*

Eliminate certain discrete teacher preparation requirements (e.g., intergroup relations, computer information/technology, a course in special education, etc.) and instead specify that students in teacher preparation programs must complete training in competency areas contained in the Common Core of Teaching related to teaching students with diverse learning needs including, but not limited to, students with disabilities, English language learners, gifted and talented students and students with learning deficits.

The current statutory course requirements are not subject to a qualitative review by the teacher preparation programs whereas the Common Core of Teaching requires that preparation programs show demonstrable evidence of candidate competency in these current statutory requirements as well as more specific areas related to instruction, student assessment, classroom management and professional responsibilities.

Proposal #1, is non-budget for the SDE; SDE recommends approval.

2. ***Shift from seat-time-based continuing education units (CEUs) to comprehensive and ongoing professional development activities that are team-based, school-based and directly focused on student learning and the analysis of student learning data. The proposal will increase the total hours required for CEUs to align with neighboring states and require only graduate credits for issuance of the professional educator certificate. Professional development guidelines will provide broader options for designing and documenting CEUs for team-based activities relating to school improvement.***
- a. ***Specify that effective July 1, 2014, in order to receive the first professional educator certificate, an individual must have completed not fewer than 30 graduate credits beyond a bachelor's degree and 150 hours of CEUs. Currently, there is a requirement that such a person have completed 30 credits beyond the bachelor's degree, but the credits can be from either undergraduate or graduate coursework. There is currently no requirement that a person holding a provisional educator certificate have completed CEUs.***

It should be noted that (1) graduate credits can be used to meet the requirement to complete not fewer than 150 hours of CEUs and (2) there is no change regarding the requirements for a cross-endorsement, i.e., an individual can use both undergraduate and graduate credits in order to qualify for a cross-endorsement.

- b. ***Require that on and after July 1, 2014, to continue a professional educator certificate the individual must have not fewer than 150 hours of CEUs every five years. Currently the individual must have not fewer than 90 hours.***

****Proposals #2a. and 2b. are non-budget; SBE workgroup recommends that an individual complete 90 hours of CEUs to obtain a professional educator certificate and that there continue to be the requirement that holders of professional educator certificates complete 90 CEUs, provided the SBE may evaluate the implementation of the revised CEUs (as described in Proposal #2, above, and Proposal #2d., below) and may, if the SBE determines that the revised CEUs are being implemented successfully, adopt regulations to increase the number of hours of CEUs, not to exceed 150, for individuals to obtain or continue a professional educator certificate.***

- c. **Effective July 1, 2014, limit eligibility for a professional educator certificate to educators who serve in a Connecticut public school. If a person serves in a non-public school, they may qualify for and renew a provisional educator certificate, but professional educator certificates will no longer be issued to them and they will not be required to complete the CEU requirements that are being proposed.**

Currently, educators who serve in non-public schools are able to obtain a professional educator certificate without having to complete a planned program, the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) program, CEUs, or 30 credits of coursework. Under this proposal, they would still be eligible for a provisional educator certificate without having completed a planned program or the new induction program that will replace BEST, but they would not be eligible for a professional educator certificate.

Proposal is non-budget; SDE recommends approval.

- d. **Effective July 1, 2014, eliminate the statutorily specified subject areas for CEUs and require that professional development activities made available by boards of education for CEUs be (1) determined by each board of education, with the advice and assistance of the teachers the board employs, and (2) in accordance with statewide priorities and needs established by the State Board of Education.**

***Proposal is non-budget; SBE workgroup recommends approval with changes to Proposal d(2) to delete the term “statewide” and add language indicating that the priorities and needs are tied to student outcomes.**

- e. **On and after July 1, 2013, and every five years thereafter, require boards of education to submit to the Department of Education copies of their local teacher evaluation and professional development plans for review and approval. This will provide the Department with the opportunity to ensure that all districts meet State Board of Education guidelines for teacher evaluation and professional development.**

***The review and approval of such plans will require significant SDE staff time; SBE workgroup recommends that the SBE have the authority to review and approve these plans as accountability actions that the SBE may require to improve student performance as a condition for removal of a school or district from the list of schools or districts designated as low achieving. (Note: The SDE**

suggests that the legislative task force currently studying recommendations for a mentor assistance program consider requiring plans to provide for training and assistance for new teachers.)

- ***Strengthen the certification denial and revocation procedures and require boards of education to report to the Commissioner of Education when an employee with a certificate is dismissed from employment for cause.***

Proposal is non-budget; SDE recommends approval.

- ***Eliminate the requirement that individuals must successfully complete the PRAXIS I examination in order to become certified as administrators.***

Proposal is non-budget; SDE recommends approval.

- ***Prohibit a person whose certificate, permit or authorization has been denied, suspended or revoked from serving as a volunteer or being employed in a public school in order to ensure the safety of students.***

***Proposal is non-budget; SBE workgroup recommends approval with the deletion of the phrase “serving as a volunteer or.”**

- ***Require fingerprinting and criminal background checks of non-certified persons in schools who are student teachers or interns completing educator preparation requirements.***

Proposal is non-budget; SDE recommends approval.

G. School Readiness

- ***Continue into the next biennium the formula that was enacted in 2008 to distribute funds to the priority school districts for school readiness slots. The formula that was just enacted is only for this current fiscal year. It is working well in supporting more children in these programs and is a better use of state school readiness funds than had been the case under the old formula.***

H. Adult Education

- ***Remove language in the adult education statute that allows high school students to enroll in adult education classes without withdrawing from comprehensive high schools.***

***Proposal is non-budget; SBE workgroup recommends that this proposal be amended to provide flexibility. SDE recommends that high school students may continue to enroll in adult education with the approval of the school principal, but (1) such enrollment is allowed only for students sixteen years of age or older and is limited to two adult education classes or activities in a school year, (2) an individual student may be awarded for adult education classes not more than two high school credits towards graduation requirements and (3) such credits may only be awarded in proportion to the instructional hours required for high school credits and shall not exceed one-half high school credit for each adult education credit.**

I. Connecticut Technical High School Apprenticeship Tuition Rate

- ***Increase the \$100 cap on the apprenticeship tuition rate in the technical high schools to \$275. The statutory cap was set in 1992 and has restricted the Department's ability to cover actual program costs. However, please note that the State Department of Labor (DOL) administers the apprenticeship program. Consequently, the State Board of Education cannot move forward with this proposal until the proposal is approved by the DOL. That approval has not yet been obtained, but it is expected that it will be shortly.***

SDE recommends approval, but proposes that rather than have a specified tuition cap, the State Board of Education be given the authority to establish a tuition rate to cover the actual program costs.

J. On-line Coursework

- ***Allow a board of education to grant credit for on-line coursework only if the board of education has adopted a policy that meets certain requirements for the granting of such credit. Board of education policies will have to show at least how the board of education will ensure that each on-line course is rigorous and will (1) have a workload expected of students that is at a minimum equivalent to the workload expected of students in a similar course taught by a teacher in a classroom and (2) be taught by teachers or facilitators who are qualified to teach the course content and have received training in how to teach in an on-line environment.***

Proposal is non-budget; SDE recommends approval, but recommends that the courses must be either (1) taught by teachers who are certified in Connecticut or another state or (2) offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher Education or regionally accredited.

K. Minor Substantive and Technical Revisions

- ***Specify an allocation mechanism for the distribution of \$5M in bond funds that were authorized by the General Assembly in 2007 for school security grants to school districts.***
- ***Update the terminology in the General Statutes that refers to Connecticut's technical high schools. Currently, the statutes refer to them as "regional vocational technical schools."***
- ***Make the Department of Education's annual report to the General Assembly concerning charter schools a biennial report so that the information is provided concurrently with the preparation of the state biennial budget.***
- ***For administrative efficiency, eliminate duplicative reporting for districts that participate in the school breakfast grant program.***

All proposals in Item K. are non-budget; SDE recommends approval.

L. International Teacher Permits *(Proposal deleted; not necessary.)*

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