CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO BE PROPOSED:
March 7, 2012

RESOLVED, that the State Board of Education authorizes the Commissioner of Education, working with the President of the Board of Regents for Higher Education (or their designees), to take necessary action to establish the Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC) to advise the State Board of Education in developing a system for the approval, quality, regulation, oversight, and accreditation of Connecticut educator preparation programs—including but not limited to performance in the classroom as determined by indicators such as teacher evaluations and student achievement data; program graduates' retention, turnover, and dismissal rates in their schools; new graduates' preparation for work in high-need districts; the effectiveness of the preparation programs' recruitment efforts among top tier university students; and structured feedback from school districts on the readiness and effectiveness of preparation program graduates— with the intention of:

- Better preparing teachers and school leaders;
- Ensuring educator preparation programs are well-aligned with the needs of Connecticut's schools and districts;
- Recommending reforms to the state's educator certification regulations so that state policies align with an outcome-based system of accreditation and oversight;
- Establishing rigorous standards for acceptance into teacher and administrator preparation programs; and
- Meeting objectives articulated in the materials presented to the State Board of Education.

The Council will meet over the next year as determined by the Co-Chairs and Council. The Council will provide updates to the P-20 Council once per quarter throughout the year they meet in an informational capacity. The Co-Chairs of the Council will present the overall recommendations to the State Board of Education for consideration and further action by April 2013.

Approved by a vote of _____ this seventh day of March, Two Thousand Twelve.

Signed: _____
Stefan Pryor, Secretary
State Board of Education

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education Members

FROM: Stefan Pryor, Commissioner of Education

DATE: March 7, 2012

SUBJECT: Educator Preparation Advisory Council

As our team has traveled around the state, many superintendents, principals, and teachers shared their concern that new teachers arrive on the job without the skills they need to be successful in the classroom. Similarly, new school leaders lack the practical training they need to manage effective organizations. Despite the best of intentions, our educators report a mismatch between what is taught in our state's education preparation programs and the skills and competencies that are actually needed to lead classrooms and schools. This sentiment is consistent with a national concern about the quality of our schools and colleges of education. In response, just this past month the U.S. Department of Education launched a multi-billion dollar effort to, among other things, improve the quality of such training programs nationwide.

In our efforts to improve the quality of our state's schools and close the achievement gap, the importance of well-trained and adequately prepared educators cannot be overstated. A large body of research shows that the single most important school-level factor impacting student achievement is the quality of a student's teacher. A similar consensus supports the notion that schools cannot be great without great leadership.

Given that the State Board of Education accredits all education preparation programs in Connecticut, we have an important opportunity and ability to improve the quality of prospective teachers and leaders. Yet at present, accreditation processes place a heavy emphasis on school inputs, such as program design and compliance with state regulations. This approach does not put sufficient emphasis on the quality of the graduates as measured by their ability to raise student achievement.

At the Governor's request, the Department proposes the creation of the Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC) to advise the State Board of Education in developing a system for the approval, quality, regulation, oversight, and accreditation of Connecticut educator preparation programs.

Council Structure and Membership:
Co-chaired by the Commissioner of Education and the President of the Board of Regents for Higher Education (or their designees), membership of the Council shall consist of one representative from each of the following associations:

- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education,
- Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents,
- Connecticut Federation of School Administrators,
- Connecticut Education Association,

- American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut, and
- Persons selected by the Co-Chairs including but not limited to representatives from teacher and administrator preparation programs in public and independent colleges and universities and from alternate route programs.

The Council will provide updates to the P-20 Council once per quarter throughout the year they meet in an informational capacity.

Charge of the Council:

Advise the State Board of Education in revising regulations and policies regarding standards and procedures for the approval and continued accreditation of Connecticut teacher and administrator preparation programs. The Council's work will be focused on:

- Available research regarding effective preparation of teachers and administrators;
- Reducing the reliance on input- and other compliance-based mechanisms of oversight and accreditation; and
- Shifting to a system of oversight and accreditation that includes multiple indicators of program performance such as
  - Performance evaluation of graduates in the years immediately following graduation, based on multiple measures including but not limited to indicators of student learning,
  - The quality of entering students as measured by academic achievement, personal accomplishments, recruitment efforts among top tier university students, and professional dispositions,
  - Feedback from school districts regarding the quality of student-teacher candidates,
  - Graduation requirements, including pass rates and attempts on Department-required exit examinations,
  - Rates of employment for graduating students, with consideration of employment rates in hard-to-staff and low-performing districts, and
  - Retention rates, both within districts and the education profession, for graduating students.

Final Report

The Council will meet over the next year as determined by the Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs of the Council will present the overall recommendations to the State Board of Education for consideration and further action by April 2013.

The recommendations of the report should aim to:

- Increase the rigor of teacher and administrator preparation programs;
- Hold teacher and administrator programs accountable for recruiting and preparing highly qualified and effective teachers and administrators;
- Provide guidance for the development and dissemination of indicators of the quality of teacher and administrator preparation programs;
- Establish rigorous standards for acceptance into teacher and administrator preparation programs;
- Elevate existing standards for obtaining a teacher or administrator certificate;
- Require high quality clinical experience as a part of teacher and administrator preparation programs;

- Link acceptance into administrator preparation programs to the results of teacher and other evaluations from prior service;
- Require use of measures to ensure the competency and effectiveness of teachers and administrators;
- Provide for effective implementation and enhancement of alternate routes to certification; and
- Recommend revisions to State certification regulations so that state policies are in alignment with an outcome-based system of accreditation and oversight.

Through the work of the Education Preparation Advisory Council, we hope to develop a new vision and strategy for improving the way we prepare educators so that all of our students have well-prepared teachers and school leaders.