



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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QUESTIONS FOR NOMINEES TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (CGS §§ [10-1](#), AS AMENDED BY PA [12-116](#); [10-3A](#); [10-4](#))

- Consists of 10 voting members who serve staggered four-year terms, the commissioner of higher education and the chairman of the technical high school system board who serve as nonvoting *ex-officio* members, and two nonvoting student members who serve one-year terms.
- Recommends candidate for education commissioner to the governor.
- Has general supervision and control of the educational interests of the state, including preschool, elementary, and secondary education; special education; and vocational education. The educational interests of the state, as defined by law are that (1) each student have an equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences; (2) each school district finance, at a reasonable level at least equal to the state's minimum expenditure requirement, an educational program designed to achieve this end; (3) in order to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation, each school district provide educational opportunities for its students to interact with students and teachers from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds and

may provide such opportunities with students from other communities; and (4) statutory mandates relating to education within the State Board of Education's jurisdiction are implemented.

- Sets state educational policy in collaboration with the governor and the General Assembly.
- Appoints five members to the 11-member technical high school system board.
- Authorizes charter and interdistrict magnet schools.
- Adjudicates complaints against local boards of education that fail to implement the state's educational interests.
- Serves as the final administrative appeal board for issuing and revoking teaching certificates and other educational credentials needed to work in Connecticut public schools.

QUESTIONS FOR NOMINEES

1. Last session's education reform act (PA 12-116) made significant changes in education law regarding low-performing schools (Commissioner's Network and Alliance Districts) and teachers (performance evaluations and teacher preparation). How have these changes impacted the State Board of Education and what actions have the board taken in regards to them?
2. Last year the legislature enacted a law creating a new board for the technical high school system – separate from the State Board of Education. How well is that board functioning so far and how does the state board interact with it?

3. Last year, Connecticut, along with more than 30 other states, was granted a federal waiver from the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. In its place, the state had to commit to new standards to measure student achievement including using a District Performance Index or DPI for each school district. How do the new standards compare to NCLB and how may they impact education in Connecticut?
4. This year the governor is proposing the creation of a new Office of Early Childhood, which, if adopted, will have control over the state's early childhood programs, including a number that are currently under the State Department of Education (SDE). Does moving early childhood out of SDE limit the role the State Board of Education will play in a critical area, early childhood education?
5. In light of last year's education reform measures (mentioned in questions 1-4 above), how can the SBE best provide leadership to improve education in our state?
6. Some have said Connecticut's education funding system is "broken." Do you agree? What changes would you like to see in how Connecticut funds education?
7. Connecticut has been identified as having the largest academic achievement gap between racial and economic groups. What is the most important step Connecticut can take to close this gap?
8. Do you think standardized test results should be the basis for making decisions about student promotion? Should Connecticut require students to pass a high school graduation test?
9. Each year the state struggles, and usually fails, to meet the mandates of the *Sheff v. O'Neill* settlement to reduce racial and economic isolation for Hartford students. How can the state reverse this outcome? Should the state require Greater Hartford suburban towns to accept more Hartford students as part of the Open Choice program, which is now voluntary?
10. What education policies should the state adopt to address the shortcomings that employers continually cite in the job readiness of the state's high school graduates?

11. Given the current economic situation, both municipalities and state agencies will be experiencing budget cuts. Are there education programs that you believe should not be reduced or eliminated? If so, what are they?
12. Do you agree with those who advocate teacher tenure reform? Do you think the changes made last year as part of PA 12-116 are sufficient?
13. Do you think Connecticut should make it a goal to provide pre-school for all children? How would you prioritize early childhood education among other education goals for the state?
14. What role do you think charter and interdistrict magnet schools should play in Connecticut's overall public school system?
15. Are there geographical or functional areas that you have identified where school districts could benefit from adopting cooperative agreements? If so, what are they and how can the SBE encourage school districts to move in this direction?
16. Connecticut's public school system has seen a dramatic increase in the numbers of students with limited English proficiency. What measures can the SBE take to support school district efforts to address the specialized educational needs of these students?

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