



QUESTIONS FOR NOMINEES TO THE STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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STATE EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER (SERC) (CGS § 10-357A)

For decades, SERC (formerly known as the Special Education Resource Center) was a semiautonomous part of the State Department of Education (SDE). SERC relied on state and federal funding through SDE to provide professional development and information dissemination to educators, local districts, and families. The funding, and SERC's staff, grew over time. For more than 20 years, the Rensselaer Hartford Graduate Center served under contract as SERC's fiduciary, handling a variety of administrative matters, including payroll and employee benefits. Its current contract with SERC expires on June 30, 2015.

In 2010, the Auditors of Public Accounts recommended that SERC's legal status be clarified as either an independent entity or part of SDE. Last year, the legislature enacted [PA 14-212](#), which reconstituted SERC as a quasi-public agency created to assist the State Board of Education (SBE) with, among other things, programs and activities to promote educational equity and excellence. The act transfers most of the responsibilities of the former center to the newly reconstituted one and gives SERC most of the same rights, duties, and responsibilities as other quasi-public agencies.

The act permits the education commissioner to allocate funds to the reconstituted SERC to provide a range of services to local and regional boards of education, SDE, charter schools, state technical high schools, school readiness providers, and other education providers. It will continue to operate the SERC for SDE, which is funded with federal dollars and supports a library and other resources for special education teachers.

Board of Directors

- Exercises authority over the center, hires an executive director, and establishes policies and procedures
- Consists of the education commissioner, or her designee, and the 12 appointed members as described in Table 1 below

Table 1: State Education Resource Center Appointed Members

<i>Appointing Authority</i>	<i>Number of Appointments</i>	<i>Terms</i>
Governor	Four, with the consent of both houses of the General Assembly	Term of office of appointing authority or until a successor is appointed, whichever is longer
SBE	Two, with the consent of both houses of the General Assembly	Same as above
Senate president pro tempore	One	Same as above
Senate majority leader	One	Same as above
Senate minority leader	One	Same as above
House speaker	One	Same as above
House majority leader	One	Same as above
House minority leader	One	Same as above

- Subject to the existing state laws governing state quasi-public agencies
- Must adopt policies for personnel, affirmative action, budget adoption, and various business procedures

QUESTIONS FOR NOMINEES

1. What do you see as SERC's mission? Do you see its mission changing compared with what it has done historically?
2. Helping local districts with special education services and professional development have always been central to SERC's duties. Is the new board exploring ways SERC can improve in these areas?
3. Which policies and procedures should the board make its first priority to establish?

4. Is there a plan to phase out Rensselaer's role as SERC's fiduciary? Will SERC staff or an outside contractor perform the duties that Rensselaer previously handled?
5. As an independent entity, will SERC now seek grants and other funding streams on its own? What funding sources will SERC explore?
6. In the past, it appeared that SDE could simply tell SERC what it wanted SERC to do. Now, with an independent board, does the relationship between the two change? Have officials from SERC and SDE discussed how the two entities will work together given SERC's new status?
7. In the past, the Auditors of Public Accounts have criticized SERC for being intermingled with SDE in such a way that it was unclear to whom SERC employees reported (SERC or SDE). How does the new board plan to address this issue?
8. SERC has been criticized in the news media for granting no-bid contracts to SDE consultants. Under [PA 14-212](#), SERC must adhere to the competitive bidding laws that other quasi-public agencies must follow. What policy should the new board adopt regarding consultant contracts?
9. Is there any area in the field of education in which SERC should be more involved?

JM:tjo