



QUESTIONS FOR NOMINEES TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (CGS §§ [10-1](#); [10-3A](#); [10-4](#))

- Consists of 10 voting members who serve staggered four-year terms, the president of the Board of Regents for 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 a 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; adult education; and vocational education. As defined by law, the educational interests of the state are to ensure that (1) each student has 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 provides 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 within the State Board of Education's (SBE) 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. What issues do you believe SBE should prioritize during your term?
2. What do you believe to be the greatest challenge students face today, and how can SBE support students facing this challenge?
3. Recently there has been increased national discussion about doing more to protect student personal information from being used by private, for-profit companies. Do you think the state is doing enough to protect student information? What role should SBE play in that?
4. Congress recently passed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which, among other things, allows states to decouple student standardized test scores from teacher evaluations. Should Connecticut move forward with its plan to use student scores when rating teachers or take the opportunity to reconsider the practice now that the federal law has been relaxed?
5. Connecticut recently decided to allow 11th grade students to take the SAT in place of the Smarter Balanced assessment. Other states, such as Colorado, Delaware, and Montana have also dropped their high school consortium tests (e.g., Smarter Balanced and PARCC) in favor of a college entrance exams such as the SAT or ACT. Does this trend weaken the Common Core assessment consortia? Do you believe Connecticut should reassess using Smarter Balanced exams for grades three through eight as well?
6. Federal law (ESSA) requires school districts to maintain a 95% participation rate for standardized testing in grades three through eight and high school. Federal and state law remain silent, however, on whether parents have the right to opt their child out of testing. If a school district falls short of the participation threshold when parents opt their child out, how should the state respond?

7. By law, starting with the graduating class of 2021, all high school students will be required to (A) earn 25, rather than 20, credits; (B) pass five end-of-year examinations; and (C) complete a senior demonstration project in order to graduate. Do you think these new standards for high school graduation will help prepare students for careers and college?
8. The General Assembly currently has a minority teacher recruitment task force to study the recruitment, preparation, and retention of minority teachers in the state. What are some ways SBE can assist state higher education institutions and school districts with attracting and retaining minority teachers to the profession?
9. Over the past few years, several bills have been introduced to narrow the age range of kindergarten children upon enrollment. State law currently allows parents to enroll their children as early as age four years, eight months and as late as age seven (CGS §§ 10-15c & 10-184). What are your thoughts on enrolling these age groups in kindergarten?
10. What is the most important special education issue currently facing the state? What role should SBE play in addressing this issue?
11. Connecticut has an array of school choice options, ranging from themed magnet schools to charter schools and Open Choice seats in participating districts. How should the state measure the success of these programs? Where is there room for improvement?
12. Last month, leaders from the Newtown School District came before SBE to ask for assistance with ongoing trauma recovery. Besides monetary support, what are some ways the state can assist a district like Newtown with student and staff mental health issues, school security, and risk assessment?

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