



QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT 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, two nonvoting student members who serve one-year terms, and the president of the board of regents for higher education and the chairman of the technical high school system board who each serve as nonvoting *ex-officio* members.
- 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; adult 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 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 are the major issues you would like the SBE to address during your term? As a nonvoting member, how do you plan to influence the board's deliberations?
2. In Connecticut, the Smarter Balanced tests have replaced the Connecticut-developed mastery tests. Last year all school districts administered the Smarter Balanced tests and the results will be used to help rank school districts. The new tests are considered more challenging, and some critics feel that they ask students questions on material that they only recently have been taught or, in some cases, have not yet been fully exposed to. Can you comment on this? What has been your experience with the new tests?
3. This year Connecticut will have 11th grade students take the SAT instead of the 11th grade Smarter Balanced test. As a current student, do you think this switch makes sense? Do you think the SAT will be a fair measure of students' knowledge of the Common Core?
4. How much emphasis should be placed on test results in Connecticut schools today? Have you seen a lot of "teaching to the test"?
5. What is your experience with the new Common Core State Standards? How is your school implementing them? Have the standards changed anything in your education?
6. In recent years 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?
7. When students use free education apps and websites, such as Edmodo and Khan Academy, do they think about how the personal information they enter into the app or site is being used?
8. In the aftermath of the Newtown tragedy, what do you think is the single most important thing SBE can do to improve school safety in Connecticut?

9. After the Newtown tragedy, many people called for school districts to hire school resource officers (i.e., police officers) at every school. What is your opinion of this practice? Does an officer's presence impact a school's learning atmosphere?
10. Over the past five years, the legislature passed several acts to strengthen state law on school bullying, including banning cyberbullying (i.e., bullying through means such as Facebook, Instagram, or texting). From your view as a student, do you think the state and school districts are doing enough to combat bullying in schools? Do you think these laws have had any impact?
11. Besides bullying, are there other types of discipline problems that regularly interfere with school? Should schools decide how to address these problems themselves, or are new state laws needed?
12. Does Connecticut encourage high school students to explore all post-graduation options, including: four-year colleges, community and technical colleges, and trade and apprenticeship programs?
13. 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?
14. Do you think there should be a required high school course on personal finance? Do you feel high school students understand the various aspects of personal finance, including how to manage debt and credit cards?
15. Do you think state law should be changed to require that students be at least five years old to attend kindergarten (under current law they can start before they reach age five)?
16. Should soda and junk food be sold in school? Should the law be different for elementary and high schools?
17. Should students have more opportunities to earn high school credit for courses or activities they take outside the classroom, including on-line and college courses? How can the state ensure that the courses maintain high academic standards?

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