

## Questions For Nominees To The State Board Of Education

By: John D. Moran, Principal Analyst  
February 1, 2017 | 2017-R-0052

### 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. Last year a Superior Court ruling in the *Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding v. Rell* case found major aspects of Connecticut's education policy to be so lacking as to be unconstitutional. The case addressed areas of education funding, teacher evaluation, special education, and the state's response to failing school districts, among other things. While this decision is currently under appeal before the state Supreme Court and therefore some or all of the decision could be overturned, are there parts of the decision that you agree with? What role should the state Board of Education play in addressing some of these crucial areas?
4. Last session the legislature enacted [PA 16-189](#), An Act Concerning Student Data Privacy, to address concerns over student personal information being used by private, for-profit companies. Are you familiar with the new law and do you think it does enough to protect student data made available through school?
5. In 2015 Congress 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?
6. Recently President Trump issued an executive order delaying for up to 60 days the ESSA accountability regulations that the Obama Administration had finalized but had not yet gone into effect. Do you think the new administration in Washington will mean a new interpretation of ESSA? What might this mean for Connecticut?

7. Last year was the first year in Connecticut that 11<sup>th</sup> grade students took 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?
8. 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?
9. By law, starting with the graduating class of 2021 (although last session the legislature created an option for districts to delay this another year), 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?
10. 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?
11. What is the most important special education issue currently facing the state? What role should SBE play in addressing this issue?
12. 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?

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