

Scope of Study

Educator Professional Standards Boards

In Connecticut, the State Board of Education carries out all aspects of teacher and school administrator (i.e., educator) certification through its administrative arm, the State Department of Education (SDE). These functions include setting certification requirements, overseeing educator preparation, and issuing and revoking certificates for the roughly 54,000 certified educators employed in Connecticut.

The 1985 Governor's Commission on Equity and Excellence in Education report gave rise to the 1986 Education Enhancement Act, which raised teacher salaries and standards. That report also recommended transferring certification-related functions from SDE to an autonomous professional standards board, asserting, "Teachers must be in control of standards of excellence in their profession and must be held accountable to them." In 1989, legislation was introduced to create such a board with an educator majority, with some representation of teacher preparation program faculty and the public. A public hearing on the bill was held during the 1989 legislative session, but the proposal was not reported out of committee. Instead, separate teacher and administrator advisory councils comprising educators and public members (without educator majorities) were established over the next few years via P.A. 90-324 and P.A. 92-262.¹

The councils are charged with advising the State Board of Education on a range of educator-related issues, including certification requirements and professional discipline standards. Besides the councils, SDE also seeks and receives feedback on its proposals through ad hoc informal committees, which similarly includes teachers, administrators, school board representatives, and educator preparation program personnel.

Based on a 2004 report, about half of all states have a model similar to Connecticut's, with formal advisory boards providing guidance or review of the education department's professional standards efforts. Important aspects of a regulating body, including level of autonomy, composition, and the scope of subjects covered, vary considerably among educator boards. For example, boards may deal comprehensively with many certification issues or may narrowly focus on a single aspect of educator standards (e.g., ethical standards).

AREA OF FOCUS

This study will identify and describe various professional standards board options used in other states, and analyze these options for use in Connecticut. As part of the analysis, the study will explore how regulation of educators through a professional standards board would compare to Connecticut's regulation of other licensed professions.

¹ See C.G.S. Sec. 10-144d (teachers) and C.G.S. Sec. 10-144e (administrators)

AREAS OF ANALYSIS

1. Briefly review and describe Connecticut's current system for regulating educators (e.g., how standards are set and enforced), including activities of the current advisory councils.
2. Examine how other licensed professionals in the state are regulated and compare those professions to teaching.
3. Identify educator regulation models used in other states.
4. Investigate various models' association with positive or negative impacts, if any, on the teaching profession and statewide education systems, in other states.
5. Assess the advantages and disadvantages of professional standards board models.

AREAS NOT INCLUDED IN THIS STUDY

This study will not examine the substance of Connecticut's teacher certification requirements or comprehensively assess SDE's performance of its teacher certification functions. Both tasks were accomplished through the program review committee's December 2008 report, *Teacher Certification Program Implementation*.