

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)  
Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) Meeting Minutes  
February 4, 2016  
CSDE, Room 307 A/B  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell, Sarah Barzee, Shannon Marimón, Eileen Howley, Sheila Cohen, Everett Lyons, Joseph Cirasuolo, Miguel Cardona, Robert Rader, Jan Hochadel, David Cicarella, Gary Maynard, Paula Colen, Mark Waxenberg, Patrice McCarthy

**ABSENT:** Randy Collins, Catherine O’Callaghan, Karissa Niehoff

**FACILATATOR:** Mary Broderick

*I. Welcome*

Commissioner Wentzell welcomed everyone. She said that this is an exciting time in education with the introduction of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and said that PEAC has important work to do. She thanked members for the pre-work that has already been done prior to this meeting.

Mary Broderick welcomed Eileen Howley as a new member of PEAC and then introduced the goals of the meeting: to review the role of PEAC, establish common expectations, and organize a plan for moving the work forward.

Mary Broderick reviewed the agenda.

Mark Waxenberg asked if the group would have the opportunity to discuss their (CEA’s) proposed guidelines document that was emailed out prior to the meeting. Commissioner Wentzell replied that we would have the chance to discuss in small groups, which was the plan for this meeting. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding whether PEAC would make decisions or vote on the CEA’s proposed guidelines.

Mark Waxenberg said that he wanted to have the opportunity to review the proposal with the whole group, and asked about a timeline for taking action.

Commissioner Wentzell and Mary Broderick explained that there is a process in place and a planned agenda for this meeting. Mark Waxenberg was insistent that PEAC should focus on the CEA plan. Mary Broderick explained that PEAC would not be taking any action today; this meeting would serve to organize and plan for the PEAC conversation going forward.

Commissioner Wentzell clarified that a collaborative process is important so that the entire group can be informed when making decisions, but PEAC members need the opportunity to have the discussion first.

It was clarified that everyone would consider the CEA proposal as they engaged in their small group discussions at this meeting. Sarah Barzee added, “We have a process to allow for all of the stakeholders to contribute, and we need to allow that process to work.”

Sheila Cohen expressed her concern that this process might go beyond the legislative session, and that is why they want to move this forward now. The Commissioner acknowledged their concern, and reminded everyone that “PEAC is the statutorily appointed group who makes the decisions. I can’t say what this group will make a decision on until we have the discussion.”

Joseph Cirusuolo raised the question of what authority the state has over the guidelines. The Commissioner explained that the state board has the authority and this group (PEAC) is advisory. He responded that PEAC could then make recommendations before or after the legislative session is over.

Mark Waxenberg raised the issue of the 4 levels of performance (exemplary, proficient, developing, below standard) which are outlined in state statute and said that the state board cannot modify this element because it is in the law.

This discussion caused the group to question what was in state statute and what is not. The group asked for clarification.

Sarah Barzee committed that the CSDE would provide a list of what is law and what is not to help make the distinction clear.

Sarah Barzee also shared the plan to monitor/audit implementation, which is statutorily required. Currently, the Talent Office has a survey ready to go and is planning to send it out soon. The information collected could be useful to this discussion. She reminded the group that we have had three years of implementation data that we can look at.

Commissioner Wentzell discussed the process the group would use to make decisions. She suggested, “We can go component by component, and if PEAC needs more information, we can ask for it.”

Mark Waxenberg questioned what data was needed to make a decision about state test scores being used as part of a teacher’s evaluation. Robert Rader responded, “We don’t want to make a decision on just one element.”

Paula Colen suggested that the discussion shift from content to process, and at the end of this session we could determine if more time or additional meetings would be needed.

Mary Broderick explain the plan for this meeting and brought the group back to the agenda for the meeting.

Joseph Cirusuolo suggested that the group should review the guidelines, component by component, and decide what the state board can change and what is in statute that can't be changed.

Mary Broderick next reviewed the norms and asked if everyone was still in agreement. All agreed.

## *II. Highlights of December 9, 2015, Meeting/Acceptance of Minutes*

Mary Broderick reviewed the minutes from the December 9, 2016, meeting and asked for comments or edits. None were made and the minutes were accepted by the members.

## *III. ESSA Update and Review Charge of PEAC*

Sarah Barzee reviewed the ESSA adoption and timeline and recommended that we “build on the good work that was started in 2012.”

Mary Broderick reviewed PEAC responsibilities as outlined in CGS 10-151d.

## *IV. Small Group Discussion and Share-out*

Mary Broderick introduced the activity for the remainder of the meeting. All PEAC members were asked to break up into three groups and discuss the following as pertaining to the evaluation work: what has worked well, what are areas for refinement, and what information do we still need to help make decisions? A CSDE person joined each table to record the conversation.

Everyone was given the opportunity to select their groups. The groups were as follows:

Group 1- Eileen Howley, Paula Colen, Gary Maynard, and Miguel Cardona

Group 2- Ev Lyons, Robert Rader, Joseph Cirusuolo, Patrice McCarthy

Group 3- Sheila Cohen, Jan Hochadel, David Cicarella, Mark Waxenberg,

Following the group conversations, a member of each group was asked to report out.

Mary Broderick asked Shannon Marimón to record the group's responses as they shared out their work.

### Positives:

- System has focused discussion on teaching and learning
- Conversations focused on professional growth
- System makes student growth and learning the most important aspect of the plan
- System has compelled leaders to be much more focused on teaching and learning
- Focus on a definition of effective performance and not just incompetence
- Fosters common language about teaching around the CCT Rubrics
- Gradations of performance- not just good or bad
- Fosters much more collaboration between educators and evaluators
- Less variation in what we are defining as effective teaching practice and less variation in the evaluation system statewide
- Flexibility at state and district level to allow PDEC to have say in the process
- Culture of support
- SESS and others embraced under the work
- Overall increase in professional observation and feedback and face-to-face conversations about teaching and learning
- Waiver process to allow more flexibility

### Areas for Further Inquiry/Refinement:

- The role of state test data
- Number of performance designations- how is this decided
- Plan approval process
- Holistic approach to summative rating/reconsider the matrix
- Metrics and rating labels interfere with the conversation
- PDECs need to be a fair balance of stakeholder representation
- Assessments should not be mandated- PDECs should identify best way for the district to measure progress
- Allow the CSDE, with PEAC's input, to guide and facilitate the process
- Application of the matrix- percentages lead to formulaic evaluation, and the role of judgment is not significant
- Training of evaluators ensures calibration and a deep enough understanding of the rubric
- Time burden on evaluators and teachers
- More flexibility to districts in developing their plans
- Look at how well PDEC process is implemented and how effective it is

### Need for Further Information

- What is legislative and what is CSDE authority? Need a chart that illustrates this
- Best practices that are operating effectively and use their best practices as a guide
- Waiver districts report- how are the waivers working for them? What can we learn from them?
- Research on the effect # of performance rating levels/categories?

- How many instances are there where the local board made decision rather than reaching mutual agreement with the PDEC?
- Extent to which the eval system and the conclusions reached translated into PL activities?
- Evaluator results deem correct/accurate?
- Role of state testing in evaluation in other states? How has it been done? Does it work?
- What no longer needs to be waived?
- Best practices for dispute-resolution at the district and individual level?

## *V. Adjournment/Closing*

Mary Broderick reminded everyone that the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 9, 2016. The CSDE staff will prepare some of the information that was requested during the share-out portion.

Robert Rader suggested we find out what superintendents and administrators think about using state tests and other assessments. Commissioner Wentzell explained that our state board has requested that information. Some LEAs, in their plans, may have already agreed to use state tests. We want to find out which districts may have selected that as an appropriate data form. Mark Waxenberg inquired as to how we would gather information. Joseph Cirusuolo commented that very few districts are using state test data, so we can just ask them.

Jan Hochadel asked if it was possible to have another meeting prior to March 9th. Commissioner Wentzell suggested considering adding another meeting in April. Others agreed.

It was then suggested that we try and schedule a few meetings in April and May since there is a lot of work to do. Commissioner Wentzell agreed to share any information that the department can gather to ensure PEAC members have the necessary information and are not overwhelmed at the next meeting.

Miguel Cardona requested that a chart be developed to show what is in statute and what is not.

Shannon Marimón shared that the Partial-Year/Part-time Employment workgroup will have something to share at an upcoming meeting.

Commissioner Wentzell reminded everyone that it was important to prioritize what we will discuss in future meetings. Joseph Cirusuolo then suggested that we deal with the statutory requirements. Commissioner Wentzell explained that it is too late for the CSDE to submit a proposal to change legislation during this current legislative session.

Shannon Marimón stated that the number of performance designations may be the only area that would require a statutory change. She also said that the approval process may also require a statutory change depending on the direction PEAC proposes.

Mark Waxenberg repeated that the use of state test data needs to be addressed. Commissioner Wentzell reminded everyone that PEAC can advise the state board to make changes to the guidelines. Mark Waxenberg replied, “That is true, but the difficulty is the board can say no, so we (CEA) are bringing it to the legislature.” Commissioner Wentzell stated, “That would take it out of the hands of PEAC.” Shannon Marimón pointed out that there is more flexibility built into the process without having to go to the legislation, especially if a district chooses to take advantage of the waiver request process.

Mary Broderick closed the meeting by asking the group to share their thoughts on what worked and what could be done better.

#### What worked?

- Group process
- Good organization
- Level of preparation by members that led to a productive discussion
- Stuck to the norms

What could be done better? There were no replies.

The meeting was adjourned.