



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 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 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 State Board of Education (SBE) to address during your term?
2. In Connecticut, the Smarter Balanced test is replacing the Connecticut Mastery Test. The State Department of Education (SDE) field tested the Smarter Balanced test last year and it will be used by all school districts this year. The 2014-2015 school-year scores will be used to rank schools and districts. The new test is considered more challenging and some complain that it asks students questions on material that they only recently have been taught or, in some cases, have not yet been exposed to. Can you comment on this? What has been your experience with the new test?
3. Do you think there is too much emphasis on test results in Connecticut schools today? Are teachers spending too much time “teaching to the test”?
4. What do you think of the new Common Core State Standards? How are they being implemented in the school district where you live?
5. In recent months 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 and does the SBE have a role to play in that?
6. 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?
7. After the Newtown tragedy, many people are calling for school districts to have school resource officers (i.e., police officers) at every school. Do you think it is appropriate to have them at every school? Does their presence impact a school’s learning atmosphere?

8. Over the past four years the legislature passed several acts to strengthen state law on school bullying, including banning cyberbullying (i.e., bullying through means such as Facebook, blogs, or texting). 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 over the last four years?
9. By law, starting with the graduating class of 2020, 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 our students for careers and college?
10. 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?
11. In light of the recent scandals involving one charter school management company in Connecticut, do you think the SBE needs to be more active in providing charter school oversight?
12. Do you think state law should be changed to require that students be at least five years old to attend kindergarten?
13. Do you think banning the sale of soda and junk food in school is a good idea? Should restrictions for elementary and high schools be different?
14. 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?

JM:tjo