

Questions for Nominees to the State Board of Education

By: John D. Moran, Principal Analyst
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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 education and career 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. The State Department of Education (SDE) serves as the SBE's administrative arm.
- Appoints five members to the 11-member technical education and career 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? Since you are new to the board of education, what do you hope to accomplish? Do you expect you will have a learning curve in your new role?
2. How do you plan to go about working with the new commissioner as a new member of the SBE?
3. What do you believe to be the greatest challenges students face today, and how can SBE support students in facing them?
4. Due to concerns about measles outbreaks in other parts of the country and decreasing immunization rates in Connecticut, some legislators have proposed removing the religious exemption for mandatory school-based immunizations ([HB 5044](#)). What is your position on this and do you think SBE has a role in this issue?
5. [PA 18-24](#) requires all school districts to include Holocaust and genocide education in their social studies curriculum. [PA 19-12](#) requires districts to provide education on African-American studies and Latino and Puerto Rican studies and [PA 19-128](#) requires districts to provide computer science as part of the required instruction.
 - a. While these subjects all have merit, what do you think about the trend of the state specifically mandating what local districts must teach? Is the state striking the right balance between creating statewide standards and maintaining local autonomy?
 - b. SBE is charged by law with approving statewide subject matter standards and preparing courses of study and curriculum guides. Does the legislature, by setting content and curriculum requirements, interfere with what has traditionally been SBE's purview?
6. In recent years, including last year's [PA 19-74](#), the legislature has passed laws aimed at encouraging the recruitment and retention of teachers who are racial minorities. What role do you think SBE should play in addressing this issue?
7. Four years ago, 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 this law and do you think it does enough to protect student data made available through school?

8. 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. Do you think student scores should be used for evaluating teachers?
9. By law, starting with the graduating class of 2023, 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 ([CGS § 10-221a\(c\)](#)). Do you think these new high school graduation standards will help prepare students for careers and college?
10. Over the past few years, legislators have introduced several bills 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 the 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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