

Questions for the State Board of Education Student Nominees

By: Heather Poole, Principal Analyst
February 7, 2025 | 2025-R-0043

State Board of Education (SBE) ([CGS §§ 10-1](#), [10-3a](#) & [10-4](#))

SBE consists of 14 members: nine voting members who serve staggered four-year terms; two nonvoting, current high school seniors who serve one-year terms; and the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, the chairperson of the Technical Education and Career System board, and the chief workforce officer who serve as nonvoting, ex-officio members.

The board has general supervision and control over preschool, elementary, and secondary education; special education; adult education; and vocational education. It also oversees the duty of boards of education to implement the “educational interests of the state,” which by law require the following:

1. each student has an equal opportunity to receive a suitable program of educational experiences;
2. each school district finances at a reasonable level an educational program designed to achieve this end;
3. each school district provides its students educational opportunities to interact with students from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds; and
4. statutory mandates within SBE’s jurisdiction are implemented.

Other SBE duties include setting educational policy in collaboration with the governor and legislature; adopting statewide subject matter content standards to fulfill graduation requirements; authorizing charter schools; adjudicating complaints against local boards of

education; and serving as the final administrative appeal board for the issuance and revocation of teaching certificates and other educational credentials.

Questions for Nominees

1. How do you plan to represent the interests of students in all grades while serving on SBE? Do you think it will be a challenge for a high school student to make a difference on the board?
2. What do you think is the most important issue that the board should address during your term?
3. Every year, legislators consider proposals to add new mandatory subjects to be taught in public schools. Do you think there are any missing subjects or classes that all students should take?
4. There are many reports, especially since the pandemic, of students struggling with mental health issues. Are schools and the educational system doing enough to help students cope with stress and other mental health challenges?
5. While it has been about five years after the pandemic started, the disruption to school had significant and lingering effects on students' learning. What effects have you seen among your peers? What more can be done to help students catch up?
6. SBE recently released a [position statement and policy guidance](#) on the use of cell phones in schools, recommending that school districts fully restrict them for elementary and middle school students and limit their use during the day by high school students. How do you think cell phones affect students' learning and social interaction? Do you think cell phones should be banned in schools?
7. The CT Mirror [reported](#) that teachers on average currently spend over \$650 a year on their own supplies. How do you feel about the availability of supplies necessary to be successful in the classroom?
8. In your experience, what qualities does an outstanding teacher have? How can Connecticut encourage more students to explore teaching careers?
9. Besides teachers and principals, what other staff members have a major impact on students? How can SBE help support these staff members?
10. One of SBE's duties is to ensure that each school district gives its students opportunities to interact with students from other racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. Do you have any ideas about what schools can do to increase these opportunities?

HP:co