

Questions for State Board of Education Nominees

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

- Consists of nine voting members who serve staggered four-year terms; the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, the chairperson of the technical education and career system board, and the chief workforce officer, all of whom 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 finances 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; works with the State Department of Education (SDE), which serves as its administrative arm.
- 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

1. What issues do you believe SBE should prioritize during your term?
2. How would you explain curriculum design to parents and guardians who have questions about the creation of public school curricula? What advice would you give to those who seek more input in the curriculum design and oversight process in their local district?
3. In the 2024 session, the legislature made significant changes to the teacher certification laws and created the Connecticut Education Preparation and Certification Board with a broad charge of developing proposals to update Connecticut's laws to attract and retain more educators. How will these laws affect the teacher shortage? How will SBE work with the newly created board to make further improvements? What else can be done to address the shortage?
4. Last session, the legislature passed numerous special education reforms. What do you think are the most pressing issues in special education? Do you think the legislation addressed them? What other reforms do you think are needed to ensure all students with disabilities in Connecticut receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE)? Is there more the state can do to relieve the burden on local municipalities?
5. After a few high-profile cases, homeschooling has been thrown into the spotlight. Compared to other New England states (see OLR Report [2025-R-0078](#)), Connecticut has relatively little oversight with respect to homeschooling. Do you think the state should regulate homeschooling, and if so, how?
6. Governor Lamont recently released proposed legislation ([HB 5034](#)) aimed at reducing the amount of testing students have to do throughout the school year. It appears aimed at tests districts administer to gauge student progress toward learning objectives tested in statewide assessments. Do you agree with this proposal? How are students affected by these tests? How will schools ensure that children are progressing during the school year leading up to the state assessments?
7. The governor's [proposal](#) also seeks to redesign Connecticut's high school mathematics pathways to better prepare students for relevant careers. In what ways does Connecticut's mathematics education fall short? How can the state improve?
8. The governor also announced his support for a bell-to-bell ban on cell phones in schools ([HB 5035](#)). Last year, SBE released a [position statement](#) on cell phone use in schools but did not recommend a bell-to-bell ban for high school students. While it recommended that phones should be off during instructional time, it also said that high school students may be developmentally ready to take on ownership of managing phone use outside of instructional time. How do you think cell phones in schools should be regulated?

9. SDE recently released its report (completed by the State Education Resource Center (SERC)) on converting SBE into an advisory body and making the SDE commissioner the department head as required in [PA 24-81](#), § 121. SERC found that the “current governance structure creates overlapping responsibilities and fragmented authority” and “converting SBE into an advisory role would consolidate leadership..., improve responsiveness, and enhance coordination across agencies.” Do you agree with these findings? What impact do you think this change would have on public education in Connecticut?
10. What role should SBE have in addressing students’ social emotional development, especially in light of ongoing social and mental health issues still present following the post-COVID return to school?
11. In recent years, the legislature passed laws aimed at encouraging the recruitment and retention of teachers who are racial or ethnic minorities. What role do you think SBE should play in addressing this issue? Do you have additional legislative recommendations on 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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