

State Board of Education
October 1, 2014 - Meeting Summary
By Mike Galluzzo, Co-Director, CAS Principals' Center

Policy and Legislation Committee Meeting:

Alternative School Report: a multi service provider-based committee has met two times. Forty-three states have developed definition for alternative schools. In September, AIR published a report on the alternative school programs. The committee is in an information gathering phase. They are looking to develop guidelines for programs I the state. They are looking at eligibility and exit guidelines and establish a coding system for consistent program data reporting. Goals of the study includes: to better understand the number of students in the many programs, to understand their needs and entry and exit criteria. There was a committee member question about funding for these programs. There was a question about certified and other staffing.

Charter School Policy Report: The Annenberg Center at Brown has developed a paper, "Public Accountability for Charter Schools, Standards and Policy Recommendations for Effective Oversight". Committee Chair spoke to the interest of the Board in the accountability system for Charter Schools- including greater transparency. Morgan Barth reported and provided documents which describe the actions which the CSDE has taken since the Governor directed the department to conduct a review of Charter programs. New requirements will be enforced at the time when charter contracts are up for renewable, at a minimum of every five years. A question about attrition was raised, including why students leave and where they go and do we collect that data.

See related handouts:

http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/Fact_Sheet_SDE_Oversight_of_Charter_Schools.pdf

http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/Public_Accountability_for_Charter_Schools_Report.pdf

http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/CT_Charter_School_Stats.pdf

Chronic Absenteeism Report: Disaggregated data was provided for the Alliance Districts by subgroups.

Adjourn to the full Board Meeting.

State Board Regular Meeting:

Public Comment: Dean from Sacred Heart: 8.8% of US students scored at the highest rate on PISA while 25% score at the lowest. He spoke to the shortage of minority teachers. 40% of CT students never experience a minority teacher in their school experience. He spoke to the need to expand incentives. He recommended regionalizing hiring.

Agenda:

New Trade: Biotechnology. Nivea Torres, Superintendent of Technical Support reported. The program is proposed for the Norwich Tech School. Support for the program was unanimous.

Agricultural Science and Technology graduates.

CAPSS/CAS Student Voices Video: Joe C. and Janet G. introduced the video competition students. I spoke a few words on behalf of CAS. The presentation

included viewing of videos as well as comments by the students.

Steve Adamowski spoke about the New London Schools state take-over. He gave a brief overview of the history which led to the take-over – funding issues, and dysfunctional governance. He is guided by the charge to look to developing a regional solution. He is working with the staff on a district strategic operating plan which he stated is approximately half-way there. He commented on aspects of the work.

Board members require ongoing development work. There is massive turn-over of membership based on two year limits to service. The Charter needs revision.

While more stable financially as the result of Alliance funds. Five years of no budget increases has affected programs. Unions have cooperated, asking for increases at the rate approved for overall funding by the city council.

He cited growth in student learning, while specifically citing Winthrop School which has demonstrated gains in closing the achievement gap in some areas.

In response to questions about what has worked in the success of one of the schools, he stated that the research supports dual language programs are the most effective methods for improving ELL achievement, better than SYOPS (sp?), bilingual and other ELL models. It also leads to multilingual students who persist in language study in middle and high school.

Commissioner's Report: Developing Tomorrow's Professionals Program. He introduced Dr. Hogue who has been a member of the department for five decades. Through his program, they interviewed thousands of students. They selected criminal judgment as the number one profession that they would choose to enter if they were to complete college-that is what they know. One goal is to broaden their frame of reference for thinking of their futures. Their mentors work with these disadvantaged males, offering study skills and counselling for college readiness and success. Students in the program have received over one million dollars in grants for college. Their students have excellent attendance and engage more fully in all of school life including their academic programs, student government and athletic activities. There are seventy students in the program. Funding started under grants and now under CSDE funding, but not as a line item.