

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)  
Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) Meeting Minutes  
June 10, 2015  
9 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
CSDE, Room 307 A/B

**PRESENT:** Sarah Barzee, Miguel Cardona, Sheila Cohen, Paula Colen, Randy Collins, Bruce Douglas, Everett Lyons, Shannon Marimón, Gary Maynard, Patrice McCarthy, Karissa Neihoff, Catherine O’Callaghan, Melodie Peters, Robert Rader, Mark Waxenberg, Dianna R. Wentzell

**ABSENT:** Stephen McKeever, Joseph Cirusuolo

**FACILATATOR:** Mary Broderick

***Welcome/Introductions***

Commissioner Dianna R. Wentzell began the meeting by welcoming everyone and acknowledging the importance of the work of this committee. While changes may occur over the year, “we appreciate the time and commitment of this group.” The Commissioner reminded everyone of the work of the Talent Office and thanked Sarah Barzee and Shannon Marimón for their efforts. She thanked Mary Broderick for facilitating the meeting and turned the meeting over to her.

***Discussion of Meeting Goals and Introductions***

Mary recapped her role as a neutral facilitator who is there to ensure that all voices are equally shared. She reviewed the meeting objectives: to discuss norms, processes going forward, understanding of rubric validation process, updates and subcommittees.

Members introduced themselves and their organizations. Mary welcomed Miguel Cardona as a new member of PEAC.

Shannon Marimón showed a video clip from the CSDE Coherence Conference held in February 2015 and shared an excerpt on the conference from the Talent Office Newsletter. This provided an opportunity to celebrate the work we all do.

Mary invited Patrice McCarthy to share updates. Patrice said that the only legislation that will have an impact on the educator evaluation and support program is the provision on the composition of the professional development and evaluation committees, which has been changed to require at least one teacher representative and at least one administrator representative selected by their respective bargaining unit.

### ***Review of Meeting Minutes***

No comments were made. Minutes from the meeting held on March 30, 2015 were accepted. Mary stated that this process will continue to be a practice to ensure everyone has a record of the meetings.

### ***Review of Norms***

Mary reviewed the slightly-modified norms. All agreed and the norms were adopted.

### ***Discussion on Consensus***

Members were asked to consider the pros and cons of a consensus-building approach to making recommendations/decisions.

A discussion followed regarding the importance and disadvantage of consensus. Several members expressed concerns that consensus sends a message that everybody is in agreement with the issue. Several members felt that because the public and education community can rally around an issue, and the perception of consensus is complete agreement, it was important to always work toward full agreement of the PEAC. Others voiced concern that consensus does not always represent the voice of the individual but should represent the voice of the larger constituency represented by each association/organization. Additionally, some expressed reservation about consensus stating that one group could block total consensus, resulting in an unfair process. Commissioner Wentzell recommended the use of the options/tools to reach consensus, which were displayed by Mary on the PowerPoint slide. She further stated that consensus and unanimity are not the same thing. It was suggested that if consensus could not be reached, then it would go to a vote. Mary Broderick reviewed the techniques for decision-making and reminded everyone of the rules regarding voting: each association/organization can cast only one vote when a vote is taken. The group agreed to these rules and to using a vote when consensus cannot be reached.

### ***Membership on PEAC***

Mary reiterated that the statute calls for one member from each association/organization (specifically identified are: the Board of Regents, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, the Connecticut Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut). The Commissioner has the prerogative to add additional members s/he deems appropriate. Commissioner Wentzell shared the decision to appoint Miguel Cardona based on statutory language which requires membership of someone “with expertise in performance evaluation processes and systems.” Sarah Barzee explained that Randy Collins is representing CAPSS (as a second member, in addition to Joe Cirusuolo) and Catherine O’Callaghan is representing the Board of Regents. Melodie Peters raised the question of

allowing additional members to join the discussion of issues in order to maintain the richness of the discussion. It was agreed that certain discussions could include other members.

Karissa Neihoff inquired about professional learning and said that questions are coming from districts regarding the requirements and roles of PDECs. Shannon Marimón responded that there would be updates on professional learning later in the meeting. A discussion on what evaluation and professional learning means for employment ensued. A key question raised was whether evaluation is a part of human resources management or an opportunity to help educators improve their practice through professional learning. Several members agreed that it is an opportunity to individualize or plan for group professional learning based on evidence gathering through the evaluation process. Robert Rader proposed that professional development always be an item on PEAC meeting agendas. Sarah Barzee responded in agreement with all of the comments. She said that, from the beginning, we have always said evaluation and support; “we never say evaluation without ‘support’.” She also acknowledged that the support has been slower coming, but it is moving forward. Professional learning should not only be based on evaluation, but should also be informed by district needs, as well as individual and group needs. If it gets us to build the capacity of educators then it is a win for everybody. Professional learning is the way to make this happen. Melodie Peters stated that, as profession, educators we have always thought of professional development as the pathway to professional practice, and people are beginning to realize this is the crux of evaluation. Mark Waxenberg said that it is now three years later, and we know more about what we are doing, but the original document (Guidelines) does not match this new understanding. The emphasis must be on the growth of teachers on an annual basis and not just evaluation of teachers. The focus in 2012 was very different than it is today. The Commissioner said that evaluation and support is about how we ensure we have an effective teacher in every classroom and effective leader in every school. We need to be reminded of these issues and keep our focus on the big picture. This Council needs to attend to some critical decision-making about how we implement the laws and ensure that our educators are effective.

Bruce Douglas suggested that the agenda should be made at the end of each meeting. Sarah responded by reminding everyone that the agenda topics were discussed for each of the quarterly meetings at the March 2015 meeting. She said that the CSDE will send out the agenda ahead of time to get input from the membership.

Miguel Cardona agreed that initially the focus of the evaluation system was on accountability, but the perception is changing, and support must come first by strengthening and being more explicit about the support. He reminded the group that we often talk about the teacher evaluation plan, but we can't forget about the administrators, because they are tied to one another. Sarah Barzee agreed that good leaders start with a vision and move toward that vision. We now have a clear vision on the entire continuum- recruitment, development, induction, support, evaluation and professional learning. With this vision, the Talent Office is developing a cohesive plan to support all of the continuum.

### ***Subcommittee Charge and Parameters***

Clarification on the tested grades and subjects and the relationship to the state test subcommittee was provided by Sarah Barzee. In 2015-16, state test data will not be required as part of evaluation. The subcommittee will be examining the assessments used to measure student growth and development. All is pending on reauthorization of ESEA and what happens in Washington. We will have to see where we are when final decisions have been made.

Members of the Educator Evaluation and Support Development Team will serve as the core of the subcommittees. Further discussion about how we will merge with existing committees, what the subcommittee membership will be, the topics, and the timeline still need to be finalized. The subcommittees will report back to the larger Council.

A discussion on the process for making decisions followed. The subcommittees will be advisory, and the standing Council (PEAC) will make final recommendations. A concern was raised that a subcommittee that has invested a lot of time in developing the work may find their work completely undone if the final decision rests with PEAC. Some expressed their concern over the frustration that a subcommittee might feel if their work were to be rejected. Not everyone agreed. It was agreed that PEAC members should learn from and appreciate the work of the subcommittees. The subcommittees bring their perspective to PEAC so that PEAC can be informed and make recommendations/decisions. It was agreed that it makes sense to listen to the expertise of PEAC which is informed by the work of the subcommittees and their recommendations. Mary Broderick emphasized the need for respect for both sub and standing committees. Therefore, it was decided that the subcommittees would give regular reports to PEAC. The Commissioner asked to have the subcommittee reports be a regular agenda item.

### ***Validation of the CT Rubrics***

Mary Broderick introduced Sandy Greenberg and Pat Muenzen, from ProExamination Services, to present information on the validation studies of the three CT rubrics used for observation of educators.

Shannon Marimón provided a brief introduction to the presentation and introduced David Levenduski, Principal, and Katie Lopez, Kindergarten teacher (both from Meriden Public Schools) who served on the *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching* validation committee.

Pat Muenzen gave a brief history on the ProExam's experiences with CT and their organization. ProExam has worked with CSDE since 1988 on validating the CT Competency Instrument (CCI), completing job analysis studies, and developing and validating the CT Administrator Test (CAT). Pat explained the purpose of validation and the process used in CT to validate the rubrics. She explained that multiple stakeholders are involved in the work. The main purpose of the validation study is to ensure that the rubrics lead to good feedback to grow and develop educators. She explained the need for reliability and validity. The judgments made using the

rubric must be the same, regardless of who is using the rubric. Additionally, the study will examine whether the rubric measures what is important to measure. In the coming year the validation study will continue to judge how well the rubrics measure, what is important and provide good feedback.

Pat described how stakeholders were selected, the validation process, and the guiding principles. Initially, the committees provided information on the areas that were troublesome and areas that were not addressed within the rubrics. Revisions were made and shared with the stakeholders, and then with focus groups and independent external reviewers. All feedback was reviewed and used to inform revisions to the rubrics. The rubrics will continue to be improved and refined through a cycle of continuous improvement. The language used in the rubrics must reflect all experience levels across all settings, grade levels, content areas, districts and positions. The rubrics should align to standards and provide clear descriptions of behaviors that can translate into actionable feedback.

David Levenduski and Katie Lopez shared their experiences with the validation committee. “You often don’t have the opportunity to discuss good teaching with other educators across districts and content areas. It was a most valuable experience. The conversations were powerful. There was a lot of analysis.” Participating on the committee helped David understand the rubric and how it affects teachers. He emphasized the importance of the support provided in their district (Meriden). He said that he sees the rubric as a living document, and it will be good to go back after a year of using it and see what can be revised based on new understandings.

Katie share how valuable the experience of being on the committee was for her. She felt she was a part of the process, rather than being told from the top down, which made it more meaningful. Having the chance to contribute to the rubric that would be used to evaluate her was extremely valuable.

Karissa Neihoff asked what support looks like in their district. Dave said support in Meriden includes: availability of the administration, discussions about what effective practice should look like, discussion of why the district is using this instrument, inclusion of every stakeholder in the conversation, discussion on how to work with teachers on what effective teaching looks like and how to improve on specific areas, and having teachers take on leadership roles in their buildings.

Catherine O’Callaghan thanked David and Katie for bringing the voice of the field to PEAC. David emphasized that the rubric is not subjective, provides a universal language and a collective understanding that every educator can grow.

Melodie Peters stated that a collaborative effort is the key, and on this point, Meriden has received national recognition for the work they do. The key is the collaboration and addressing issues as they arise in respectful ways. It is about professionally developing. She asked for the

electronic version of PPT slide deck. Shannon Marimón stated that it would be provided through a follow up email.

Sandy Greenberg presented on the next steps for the validation study. Validity, honesty, and reliability are the focus of ProExam's work. Sandy explained the process and activities that will be conducted over the next two years: Fairness reviews, reliability reviews, focus panels with users and post-observation surveys. A bias study will also be conducted.

105 districts implemented the *CCT Rubric for Effective Teaching 2014* in 2014-15.

Bruce Douglas asked if teachers have become comfortable with videotaping lessons. Shannon Marimón responded that we don't have that information.

Shannon Marimón shared some quotes from the leader rubric validation committee and the student and educator support rubric validation committee.

Melodie Peters asked how observers are trained. She expressed concern about subjectivity and ensuring that the unions are included in the process.

Sandy Greenberg replied that the surveys will ask about training and preparation for conducting observations. Participants are randomly selected from all districts that use the rubric, including a cross-sampling of the state. Sandy also explained that the committees have included membership from all stakeholder groups, including the unions.

Shannon Marimón said that the CSDE would coordinate with PEAC regarding the feedback collection to support the rubric validation process.

Catherine O'Callaghan asked if the review include inter-rater reliability. Pat responded that it will be a part of the next phase of the validation study.

Mark Waxenberg stated that, "99% of the evaluation is based on the subjectivity of another evaluator. I am hopeful that this process will make the rubric less subjective." He proposed eliminating the word evaluation from the guidelines and focus on the growth, stating that there needs to be buy in and believability in the document that is being used. The subjectivity will always be there but the field is now more focused on moving toward professional growth, unlike in 2012 when the focus was on evaluation.

Sarah Barzee clarified that earlier in the meeting the Council agreed to move toward continuous improvement of the process, but the aim is not to eliminate evaluation.

The Commissioner restated the legislative mandate both supervision and evaluation involve what leaders and teachers need to learn to improve, but each have distinct features. It is more about how we do the work. The work has not changed, but how we do the work can improve. "I am consciously saying leaders first because it is important to cultivate relationships in order to grow

any educator. We care greatly about supporting leadership growth. Evaluation is not going away.” Sheila Cohen said that evaluation is still considered a negative in many places. Although it is working in Meriden, it isn’t working that way everywhere.

Miguel Cardona said, “Climate eats strategy for breakfast.” Leadership is important. If the system is going to work, the climate has to support that.

Mary thanked David and Katie for their presentations and suggested everyone move on to the next topic on the agenda.

### ***CT Guidelines for Educator Evaluation- Updated Document***

Shannon Marimón explained that the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation needed to be updated to include the changes and flexibilities that PEAC recommended and the State Board of Education Adopted in 2014. There are no substantive changes. The main goal with this new version was to connect the three disparate documents within a single document. PEAC was asked to review the document and ask any questions.

Section 1.3 was discussed. There may not be a substantive change, but there was discussion about the Dispute-Resolution Process. Mark Waxenberg said that the superintendent, by law, would have to agree to the district plan. However, the CSDE should not interpret it to mean that a plan is not in compliance because the superintendent isn’t the final decision maker.

Shannon Marimón clarified that the superintendent can designate who will make the final decision in the event that the process established does not result in a solution.

Paula Colen said that if the superintendent is signing off and agrees with the dispute-resolution process in the plan, that is sufficient, and it doesn’t need to say the superintendent is the final decision maker.

Sarah Barzee reiterated that the superintendent can designate another individual or group to make the final decision.

Next, the group discussed the title of the document. Melodie Peters responded that “Guidelines” is less harsh than “Core Requirements,” and the group agreed that Guidelines is the preferred title. It was decided that the document would continue to be referred to as the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation.

Sarah Barzee explained that these were the requirements when Shannon Marimón and she began working at the CSDE. The Guidelines have been used to review and approve all plans.

Sarah Barzee said that even though the requirement is in place, there have been some flexibilities allowed. Commissioner said that when districts request a variance, they still need to adhere to the Guidelines.

Mark Waxenberg replied that the ESEA may change things in the future.

Robert Rader questioned if Neag would still be involved going forward.

The Commissioner said, “It makes sense to think about what we would like to know and what is going on nationally...at the next meeting we should brainstorm what we want to know? If the context changes, then the focus of the study may change.”

Sarah Barzee shared that, nationally, there are studies being conducted and suggested it isn't necessary to duplicate or replicate them. Instead, PEAC could look at these studies and see what can be learned and brought back to CT.

### ***Professional Learning***

Linette Branham, CEA, was invited to join the conversation. Linette explained the process used to develop the *CT Standards for Professional Learning* and the *CT Definition for Professional Learning*. The CT Academy for Professional Learning, which includes members from each of the organizations, and a Professional Learning Advisory Council (PLAC), (Linette has been a member of both) has met several times over the past year to collaborate on and develop the standards and definition. The standards will be fleshed out in more detail in the coming months. The goal is to provide assistance to districts in developing their own professional learning plans.

Patrice McCarthy, who has been on the committee, shared how effective the process has been and the benefit of having all of the stakeholders involved. Gary Maynard, a member, also agreed.

Linette stated, “This has probably been the best work done by the CSDE, in collaboration with other stakeholders, since TEAM.” She explained consensus was defined by the group as, “something I can live with.” That is how the group was able to develop the standards and definition. Learning Forward Standards were modified to meet CT needs. PDECs need to know what their role is going to be. Training is an important issue. Training needs to be individualized by audience and role and needs to be consistent across the state in rollout of the standards. The trainings are under development and will be ready starting in fall 2015.

### ***Update on Plan Intake***

Shannon Marimón provided details on the status of the plans in review, approved, waivers, and outstanding plans. The deadline for plan submission was May 15, 2015. As of the deadline, 85% of the plans were submitted, compared to last year at this time when only 8% had been submitted.

A question was asked as to whether plans will be available online for others to review. Shannon responded that it is a decision that has not yet been made. The Commissioner said that this could be discussed further.



Sarah Barzee shared that plans have been made available upon request.

### ***Adult Educators***

Shannon Marimón explained that the ESEA waiver requirements didn't necessarily take into consideration adult educators and presented a proposal that the Guidelines for Educator Evaluation be optional as applied to adult educators.

It was agreed that this makes sense. Several members agreed that it has been an area that has been difficult to determine.

Sarah Barzee shared that there are some who have successfully implemented and others who feel that it is not possible to implement the system in its entirety but may be able to implement some components successfully.

Mary asked if anyone disagreed. No disagreement was voiced. Consensus was achieved.

### ***Calendar***

The proposed calendar of discussion topics was shared. Additional topics proposed would be incorporated into future agendas. Mary ask if there are any additional items. Mark suggested that ESEA may have implications on the work and should be added to the next agenda.

### ***Debrief Meeting***

Mary asked, "What worked in this meeting?"

Responses included: starting with a positive accomplishment, showing the video, and hearing the voices of practitioners.

Mary then asked, "What would you change?"

Responses included: adding subcommittee reports as a regular agenda item, as well as professional learning.

Sarah Barzee expressed gratitude for the voice and participation of Melodie Peters and Stephen McKeever's as part of PEAC. She presented certificates of appreciation, signed by Sarah and the Commissioner, to both, and welcomed Jan Hochedel who will take Melodie Peters' place, to PEAC.

Melodie Peters responded that it has been a pleasure to be a part of this group.

***Next PEAC meeting - Wednesday, September 16, 2015 from 9am-12pm.***