



Digital Learning Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2025

Attendees

- Nick Caruso — Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)
- Doug Casey — Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology
- Jonathan Costa — EdAdvance
- Andy DePalma — EASTCONN
- Shaune Gilbert — ReadyCT
- Jody Goeler — Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)
- Irene Parisi — Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)
- Karen Skudlarek — University of Connecticut (UConn)
- Josh Smith — Region 15 Public Schools

Welcome

Advisory co-chairs Nick Caruso and Josh Smith welcomed members to the meeting. Josh began by framing the central topic on the agenda.

Enabling Innovation in Teaching and Learning

The Advisory Councils provide recommendations to the Commission, which serves as the educational technology advisor to the Governor, General Assembly, and State agencies. Josh and Doug Casey referred Advisory members to the 2018 "[Guidance on District Policy Revisions to Support Digital Learning](#)," shared before the meeting, to update that document given the significant changes in education since its publication. Doug emphasized the role of the Commission as enabling innovation and removing barriers to the effective use of technology in learning. Given the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) as the latest disruptive and enabling technology for teachers and learners, he welcomed input on how best to equip leaders and institutions to leverage these tools safely to support personalized learning — including changes to the policy guidance.

Ways of Effecting Change

Jonathan Costa shared a framework from a recent Pace University PhD student. AI can help make teaching more efficient, and it will lead to a disruption and reimagining of traditional practices, of what "school" can be. One will lead to the other. He encouraged the Advisory and Commission members to update and issue policy guidance that meets schools where they are and supports the innovative use of AI to accelerate and personalize learning. Andy DePalma agreed and saw AI as a central

feature of learning with technology moving forward. He encouraged guidance from the Commission to include a balance between the use of emerging tools and the protection of students against their misuse. For example, EASTCONN and EdAdvance have used AI tools in secure environments to protect against the misuse of student data and records.

The Advisory members shared advice on how to advance innovative teaching and learning practices. Jonathan emphasized the importance of relationships, with leaders turning to each other for advice and guidance, and educators depending on subject-matter experts. He suggested that Commission leadership meet quarterly with the Office of the Governor and General Assembly leaders. Investments of time in sharing updates with leaders will make them more likely in the future to turn to the Commission for advice regarding policy and statutory decisions. Irene Parisi underscored the importance of providing written and in-person testimony concerning proposed laws during each legislative session. Another option that Nick offered is to host an event with state leaders around the effective use of AI in learning.

Revisions to Policy Guidance

Irene expanded on the importance of relationships in the context of classroom learning. Rather than focusing solely on one-to-one computer programs and dependencies on educational software, for example, she sees trends among school leaders to emphasize the critical nature of in-person learning supported by strong relationships between students and teachers. She recommended addressing guidance in the “Instructional” (6000) series of policies, emphasizing intentional instructional design that leverages but does not center on technology. She encouraged using terms such as “blended” learning rather than “digital” learning.

In addition to encouraging the intentional and effective use of technology, Irene recommended addressing the needs of different student groups. Specifically, she pointed to the use of digital tools to support students with special needs. Karen Skudlarek agreed, pointing to technology’s role in allowing students with different physical and cognitive abilities to engage in learning experiences.

Irene recommended that revisions to the policy guidance address the needs of adult learners. She highlighted the typically older and slower technology resources afforded to adult education programs and the need to address infrastructure needs to support learning at all levels.

On a related note, existing contracts between the CSDE and Office of Workforce Strategy with the RESCs will build statewide capacity to develop AI literacy among adult residents. These initiatives are especially important given the termination of the national Digital Equity program in May, which the Commission was leading on behalf of



the State and which would have provided significant investments in adult digital literacy resources.

Several members discussed the importance of providing local school districts with sound guidance to enable decision-making at the local level. The topic of student devices came up, specifically regarding [House Bill 25-7009](#), which would have mandated cell phone restrictions. Josh, Doug, and others commended the existing [position statement and policy guidance](#) issued by the CSDE on the topic, and the Commission can continue curating and referring policymakers to such existing research rather than encouraging additional legislation.

In addition to specific revisions to the policy guidance, Irene suggested developing a flowchart to help districts align the use of technology with their strategic plans and portraits of the graduate. As context, Connecticut provides the most flexible high school graduation requirements of any state. Districts can use technology to create student-centered pathways to graduation.

For the next steps, Jonathan proposed summarizing the meeting's suggestions to inform revisions to the policy guidance, followed by an in-person meeting to finalize those changes. In addition, members could offer their suggestions through a shared document that lists additional content, revisions, and deletions to the 2018 policy guidance.

Nick and Josh thanked the advisory members for their insights and recommendations and adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:00 PM.