



CONNECTICUT COMMISSION FOR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

December 2, 2024

1:00 – 2:30 PM

MINUTES

Commission Members in Attendance

Raymond, Mark — Commission Chair and Chief Information Officer, DAS-BITS
Baillie, Colleen — Director, West Haven Public Library (Connecticut Library Association)
Casey, Doug — Executive Director, Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology
Cohen, Burt — Staff Attorney, Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel
Johnson, Barbara — Instructional Technology Coordinator, Colchester Public Schools
(Connecticut Association of School Librarians)
Salvatore, Tony — Co-President, CT Federation of School Administrators (Speaker of the House)
Schander, Deborah — State Librarian, Connecticut State Library
Smith, Josh — Superintendent, Region 15 Public Schools (Connecticut Association of Public
School Superintendents)
Stanco, Bart — CEO Advisor and Executive Partner, Gartner (Office of the Governor)
Suh, Grace — Chief of Staff, Office of Workforce Strategy (Department of Economic and
Community Development)
Toomey, Carol Quinn — Managing Director, Connecticut Public Service, Accenture (President
Pro Tempore of the Senate)
Uche, Chinma — Math and Computer Science Teacher, CREC Academy of Aerospace and
Engineering (Connecticut Education Association)
Widness, Jennifer — President, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges
Williams, Holly — Section Director, Education and Workforce Development, Office of Policy
and Management (OPM)

Others in Attendance

Castiglione, Paul — Associate Education Consultant, Connecticut State Department of
Education (CSDE)
Kocsondy, Ryan — Director, Connecticut Education Network (CEN)
Parisi, Irene — Chief Academic Officer, CSDE
Racamato, Victoria — Assistant to the State Chief Information Officer, DAS-BITS



Welcome

State Chief Information Officer and Commission Chair Mark Raymond welcomed members and attendees to the December 2, 2024 meeting. He noted that CT-N was providing coverage of the meeting via live stream, now available as an archived video at <https://ct-n.com/ctnplayer.asp?odID=23927>. Mark acknowledged the contributions of Governor Jodi Rell, who passed away November 20. She served as governor from 2004 until 2011 and served the state in that role as well as Lieutenant Governor and as a member of the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA). Among her contributions, she was instrumental in creating CEN, which ensures equal access to broadband for all learners.

Mark also shared that two individuals will no longer serve as Commission members. Commission Vice-Chair and UCONN CIO Michael Mundrane has assumed the role of CIO for the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU). Mark thanked Michael for his contributions to the Commission and CEN. Tom Dillon will also no longer serve on the Commission, having made the difficult decision to step down because of other obligations. Tom served as chair of the Infrastructure Advisory Council and made a tremendous impact on the Commission's work, especially as a champion of the eduroam platform that streamlines Internet access for learners across institutions.

He concluded his welcoming remarks by noting the election results and the start of a new federal administration in January. Regardless of what happens on that front, he assured members and viewers that the Commission would continue its mission of leveraging technology for all learners and educational organizations in Connecticut. With digital tools and approaches more in demand than ever, the Commission will continue to serve in the critical role as the State's educational technology advisor. Ensuring equal access to educational opportunities has always been the right thing to do, and he thanked the members for their ongoing commitment to this mission.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

As the first order of business, Mark welcomed a motion to approve the [minutes of the Commission's September 9 quarterly meeting](#). Burt Cohen offered the motion, with a second from Josh Smith. With no discussion, the motion carried with no opposition. Barbara Johnson and Tony Salvatore abstained, given their absence from the September meeting.



Model Digital Citizenship Curriculum

Mark welcomed Irene Parisi, the CSDE's Chief Academic Officer, and her colleague Paul Castiglione, who serves the CSDE as an Associate Education Consultant and Curriculum Coordinator, to share progress regarding the model digital citizenship curriculum. They guided Commission members and other meeting attendees through a [brief set of slides](#) available on the Commission's Website.

Guiding this work is the [Connecticut State Board of Education Five-Year Plan](#), which calls for the CSDE to develop a rigorous curriculum that prepares students for life, learning, and work. The specific charge for the CSDE to develop, in collaboration with the Commission, a digital citizenship curriculum came out of Connecticut Public Act 21-159 (see [Section 145](#)).

Goals for the work are that all students and teachers would become responsible, ethical, and empowered digital citizens by implementing a curriculum that integrates seamlessly with other subjects. Irene also highlighted the goal of having skills development taking place both at school and at home through healthy and engaged family outreach.

The CSDE approached the development of the model digital citizenship curriculum as it has done with other subjects, with materials available from the State's open education resources (OER) site (see [GoOpenCT.org/hubs/ctmodelcurricula](#)). Irene and Paul have convened a design leadership team, including K – 12 leaders and library media specialists; inventoried existing [digital citizenship resources](#); and engaged in a rubric-based, standards-aligned review of these materials. She thanked Commission members serving on the design leadership team, including Doug Casey, Barbara Johnson, and Deborah Schander.

That team has made significant progress toward the goal of releasing the model curriculum in January 2025. Irene saw an opportunity through Go Open CT to build off the model curriculum with crowd-sourced materials that districts have developed, including lesson plans, instructional videos, etc., leveraging the OER platform and pedagogies. Paul highlighted the platform features that would support these efforts, including groups where teachers can review and co-create instructional materials.



Commission members thanked Irene and Paul for their efforts and the progress update. Burt Cohen asked for a definition of “digital citizenship.” Irene shared the definition that the CSDE has used, coming from the [International Society for Technology in Education \(ISTE\)](#): “Digital citizenship is the ability for students to recognize the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of living, learning and working in an interconnected digital world, and they act and model in ways that are safe, legal and ethical.”

Mark noted the aggressive timeline of approximately six months between enacting PA 21-159 and delivering a statewide model curriculum. Irene agreed that the schedule was short and pointed out that districts have been integrating digital citizenship instruction as a standalone set of practices and part of core teaching and learning for years. The assets the design team reviewed — some of which will likely be endorsed — have undergone significant vetting, field testing, and refinement.

Josh commended the CSDE for its work and encouraged the CSDE to create a crosswalk of skills and standards across subjects, helping teachers to integrate digital citizenship into subjects like mathematics, social studies, and language arts. He also underscored the importance of parents and families to support digital citizenship outside of school. He asked how Irene and the design team have engaged families in the work. Irene noted CSDE Commissioner Russell-Tucker’s work in engaging her [Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement in Education](#) in this work. She also referred to the scoring rubric that required materials to include modules that families can use to reinforce digital citizenship at home. Post-launch, the CSDE will also engage with family and community groups for their feedback.

Chinma Uche noted both the importance of teacher training and the significant constraint to time on educators. The model digital citizenship curriculum holds great promise, but schools must create time for teachers to master skills and design ways of integrating technology into lesson plans. She also encouraged the CSDE to clarify how the digital citizenship curriculum would dovetail with the model computer science curriculum. She felt students need to understand how advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence are developed and how to use them effectively.

Irene thanked Chinma for these comments and provided highlights of the curriculum rollout, including possible support through the six regional education service centers (RESCs). Schools should look for ways of integrating digital citizenship training for teachers during dedicated professional development days. The CSDE will also offer



office hours to help school leaders and educators effectively implement the curriculum. Chinma encouraged the CSDE to engage the teachers' unions with the rollout.

On behalf of the Connecticut Association of School Librarians (CASL), Commission member Barbara Johnson thanked Irene and Paul for their efforts. School library and media specialists (LMSs) often provide initial and ongoing teacher training and student support in the area of digital citizenship. She expressed concern for schools that have eliminated LMS positions and pointed to the annual CASL conference as a venue to support the digital citizenship curriculum. Ryan Kocsondy encouraged Irene and Paul to present at the May 2025 CEN conference on this topic.

Deborah Schander and Doug commended the CSDE for their work. Doug tied past Commission-CSDE efforts to the digital citizenship curriculum. In 2017 – 19, the Commission adopted digital literacy skills for students, teachers, and education leaders (see www.CT.gov/ISTE). The CSDE provided initial seed funding to launch Go Open CT, which the Commission maintains for the K – 12 and higher education communities. And the Commission's work around digital equity will provide avenues for all residents — including K – 12 students — to develop digital citizenship skills.

Mark thanked Irene and Paul for their informative presentation and discussion on a topic that the Commission and CSDE have both championed for years. He invited them to return for a closer look at how the CSDE is leveraging Go Open CT to develop and share its model curriculum.

Report of the Executive Director

Following the CSDE presentation, Mark invited Doug to share highlights from his quarterly [Executive Director's Report](#), shared previously with Commission members. He began by providing updates on the Universal Service Schools and Libraries (i.e., E-rate) program. The E-rate program offset more than \$5M in Internet connectivity costs for schools and libraries in 2024. In September, Burt shared a [July 5th Circuit Court decision](#) that the funding model for E-rate is unconstitutional. Since then, Doug reached out to members of the Connecticut congressional delegation to raise awareness of the issue and determine possible interventions. As of this writing, the United States Supreme Court will likely hear oral arguments on the topic sometime in 2025.

On the topic of technology funding, Doug provided highlights from the recent Commission publication on [K – 12 devices and staffing levels](#). Based on survey responses



from approximately 30 percent of districts, the report shows steady levels of technology investments, though support levels remain extremely low (e.g., state average of one staff person per 670 computers).

Doug closed his updates with news about the State's Digital Equity Program (www.CT.gov/DigitalEquity). In late October, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) approved the Commission's application for funding under the Digital Equity Capacity Program. A subsequent award letter on November 26 from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) formalized the approval and allowed Digital Equity Program Manager Lauren Thompson and Doug to begin implementing the projects funded through that award. These include resident training, a competitive grant program to scale digital skills development, integrating digital equity resources into the state's 211 system, and creating regional working groups to further digital equity work.

In addition to the federal Digital Equity Capacity Program, earmarked for states and territories, the NTIA oversees the Digital Equity Competitive program, open to non-state agencies and community-based organizations. Holly Williams asked for additional details about that initiative. Doug stated that multiple entities in Connecticut had applied for funding before the September 23 deadline. Nationwide, the sum of all requested funds for the Competitive program is triple the allotted budget, pointing to the high demand for resources to expand digital opportunities. He also noted that the Commission's Digital Equity Capacity award would go toward an in-state competitive program. Details on that initiative will follow in the spring of 2025.

Digital Learning Advisory Council Report

Mark announced that both Commission advisory councils now had co-chairs. The addition of a second chair to each group will provide additional insights into agenda planning and offer a backup in the case of absences. He thanked Josh Smith for assuming the role of co-chair for the Digital Learning Advisory Council, especially given the absence of the other co-chair, Nick Caruso.

Josh provided brief remarks on the council's October 15 meeting, [minutes of which](#) are available on the Commission's Website. Members of the advisory discussed the state legislation calling for a pilot of AI use in schools (also in the aforementioned Public Act 24-159, in [Section 144](#)). Josh thanked Irene for discussing those suggestions at a subsequent meeting. All members agreed that the Commission, CSDE, and districts



need to consider the skills students today will need in the future as they design learning experiences that leverage emerging technologies such as AI.

Mark thanked Josh for his comments and service. On the topic of AI, he noted that the State is adopting a scenario-based approach to considering how best to use new technologies. Rather than thinking about single applications taken in isolation, he encouraged educators to consider a broad array of uses, as well as the risks and benefits associated with each.

Infrastructure Advisory Council Report

Given Tom Dillon's departure from the Commission, Mark thanked Kerri Kearney for her service as the new chair of the Infrastructure Advisory Council. Doug echoed this appreciation, noting Kerri's insight in her role as the Information Technology Director for Manchester Public Schools.

At the [October 22 Infrastructure Advisory meeting](#), members addressed ways of ensuring the sustainability of school technology investments. The group discussed the CSDE's [Education Finance System](#) as a possible source for baseline measures. They acknowledged the imperfections that come with any reporting system and noted that current levels of staffing remain low in comparison with those in the private sector. Highlights from that meeting include recommendations on the use of AI in education and ways to further digital equity in Connecticut. Doug thanked the more than 30 members of the two advisories, leaders and practitioners whose insights help guide the Commission's work and further the [State Educational Technology Plan](#).

On the topic of AI, Jennifer Widness asked if a set of recommended policies or investments was forthcoming to members of the CGA, given the upcoming legislative session and the need to ensure that students have the skills they need for advanced learning and the workforce. Doug summarized past discussions across the state among various stakeholder and leadership groups. There remains a general consensus that teachers and education leaders must integrate AI into the curriculum in relevant, meaningful ways. He also pointed to AI and other innovations as still having a place within traditional policies and practices. For example, misuse of AI can be addressed by established plagiarism policies. From a governance perspective, he saw no need to create new groups to decide how new technologies should be leveraged, given the existence of entities such as the CSDE, Commission, CGA, CABE, CAPSS, and others. For



additional details on AI integration, he referred to the Commission's guidance at www.CT.gov/AlforSchools.

Mark welcomed the question and noted the Commission's role as the principal advisor on educational technology for the State in general and specifically to CGA and the Office of the Governor. He welcomed specific recommendations for those groups. There will likely be opportunities to offer testimony and other inputs regarding AI-related legislation in the 2025 session.

CEN Report

Following the advisory reports, Mark turned the floor over to Ryan Kocsondy, CEN's Director, for highlights of his [quarterly report to the Commission](#). The Network continues to provide exceptional value to institutions through distributed denial of service (DDoS) mitigation. The Connecticut Library Fiber Consortium, in collaboration with the Connecticut State Library, has expanded connections to libraries across the state.

Ryan encouraged members and attendees to submit proposals for the [CEN Annual Conference](#), taking place May 7 – 8 at the Connecticut Convention Center. Registration is now open for the event. In January CEN will host a series of [trainings on AI](#) by the Chief Technology Officer of the City of Stamford, Isidore 'Izzy' Sobkowski. Looking backward, he noted the strong turnout of more than 200 attendees at the October [Cyber Nutmeg conference](#), co-hosted with the Connecticut National Guard. Work is underway already for the 2025 Cyber Nutmeg event.

Progress continues under the "CEN Connect" suite of initiatives, including middle-mile upgrades, enhancements to CEN's core infrastructure, and the Community WiFi competitive program that will award funds to municipalities to build public wireless networks.

Mark thanked Ryan for the updates and asked for details around the [Massachusetts Green High Performance Compute Center](#). That collaborative, located in Holyoke, will offer participating universities and partners with state-of-the-art capabilities to support AI and other resource-intensive computing.

Public Comment

There was no public comment offered.



Scheduled 2025 Meeting Dates

Mark provided the scheduled dates for Commission meetings in the coming year:

- March 3 (Online)
- June 2 (In Person)
- September 1 (Online)
- December 1 (In Person)

The Commission will continue with the cadence of alternating in-person and virtual convenings.

Adjournment

Mark closed the meeting by thanking Victoria, Doug, and others who helped organize it, CT-N for video coverage, and Irene and Paul for their guest presentation and discussion. He welcomed a motion to adjourn, offered by Josh and seconded by Tony. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Douglas Casey'.

Douglas Casey
Executive Director

Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology

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