

**Regional School District #4
Chester – Deep River – Essex**

July 30, 2007

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Boards of Education Meeting Design

“We, the schools of Chester, Deep River, Essex and Region 4, engage all students in a rigorous, challenging, and cohesive educational program.”

The above statement is the first sentence of the Mission Statement for the Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 school districts. A key expression vital to our mission is the phrase “cohesive educational program.” The development of a cohesive educational program pre-kindergarten through grade twelve is a fundamental condition for educational excellence.

In an effort to improve regional cohesiveness, the Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 Boards of Education established a cooperative arrangement to conduct several joint meetings beginning in August 2007. The joint Board of Education meeting structure was established to accomplish tasks of mutual interest and benefit to the individual Boards of Education and essential to the development of a cohesive educational program. In particular, improving continuity in curriculum development, policy advancement, and a systematic review of strategic goals with a regional pre-kindergarten through grade twelve perspective are the primary charges of the joint Board of Education meeting.

Goals

Joint Board of Education meetings will enhance regional cohesiveness, propel advancements in governance, and improve overall student performance in three general ways:

- Support mission-driven governance

The Boards of Education of Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 endeavor to work together as multiple Boards of Education to support the Districts’ mission and strategic goals. High-achieving school districts intentionally align school goals, district goals, and Board goals to cultivate a mission-driven organization. The Boards and the Superintendent shall work as a unified team to implement a shared vision for the education of all children pre-kindergarten through grade twelve.

- Facilitate effective and efficient management

The Joint Board of Education meeting design strives to diminish cumbersome and inefficient governance practices such as inadequate planning and implementation time, inefficient reporting, and fragmented management. The meeting design reduces redundancy and facilitates regional collaboration. The Boards of Education of Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 strive to implement decision-making processes with a pre-kindergarten through grade twelve line of sight on matters of mutual interest and benefit to the individual Boards.

- Focus on student achievement

School districts of distinction engage in a systematic method for monitoring strategic goals with a focus on continuous school improvement and student achievement. The meeting design leads to more efficient and effective goal-setting, review, and planning. The Boards of Education of Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 commit to assess progress on the Districts’ strategic goals through organized, systematic agenda planning.

Boards of Education Meeting Design

The Boards of Education meeting design emerged directly from the Districts' strategic goals. A committee composed of representatives from the Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 Boards of Education investigated alternative designs for board meetings. The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education as well as the Districts' attorneys provided valuable technical assistance.

The meeting design provides a format for presentation, review, and decision-making on matters of mutual interest and benefit to the Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4 Boards of Education with an expanded regional pre-kindergarten through grade twelve perspective. In addition, the meeting design maintains a format by which the individual Boards address discrete district issues, duties, and responsibilities. The meeting design essentially alternates the individual and joint Board meetings on a monthly basis each with a distinct focus and agenda.

Joint Board meeting focus

Regional PK-12 strategic focus
Curriculum development and continuity
Policy advancement
Joint PK-12 committee work

Individual Board meeting focus

Individual District focus
Individual school improvement plans
District finance reports
Distinct issues

More information on the Boards of Education meeting design, agenda template, and schedule will be posted on the District website at www.region4schools.com

Summary

The development of a cohesive educational program is a fundamental condition for educational excellence. The Boards of Education meeting design is a crucial initial step in the development of governance practices to support this goal. School districts that effectively raise student achievement exhibit pre-kindergarten through grade twelve continuity, strong Board/Superintendent leadership and teamwork, and mission-driven practices. The new meeting design, beginning in August 2007, provides a structure for mission-driven decisions with a pre-kindergarten through grade twelve line of sight while maintaining a format for the individual Boards to address distinct district issues and responsibilities. The creation of governance practices that are mission-driven and learning-focused with a pre-kindergarten through grade twelve line of sight are vital steps necessary to establish the conditions for true educational excellence for the children of Chester, Deep River, and Essex.

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Chester, Deep River, Essex, and Region 4