

Early Childhood Education Cabinet Meeting

February 24, 2011 • 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

State Department of Education

SERC Community Room

25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown

ATTENDANCE

John Rathgeber Chairperson, CBIA	Chair, Representative of Business or Philanthropic Community	X	Patricia Rehmner Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Services	Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Designee	
Catherine Abercrombie Representative	Member of the House of Representatives	X	Kevin Sullivan Dept. of Public Health	Representative of State Agency responsible for Health or Mental Health Care	X
Peter Palermino (for Claudette Beaulieu) Dept. of Social Services	Representative from State Agency Responsible for Child Care	X	Senator Andrea Stillman State Senator	Member of the State Senate	X
Marisol Estrada-Soto Parent	Parent of child attending school in Priority District		David Title Superintendent, Fairfield Public Schools	Representative of the Local Education Agency	
Harriet Feldlaufer Dept. of Education	Representative of the State Education Agency	X	Maria Synodi (for Anne Louise Thompson) Dept. of Education	Representative of the State Agency Responsible for Programs under 619 or Part C of the IDEA	X
Linda Goodman Dept. of Developmental Services	Representative of Entity Determined Relevant by the Governor	X	Eileen Ward Director, Children's Community Development Center	Representative of Local Providers of Early Childhood Education	X
Kathy Guay Director, Office of Policy & Management	Secretary of the Office of Policy & Management Designee	X	Grace Whitney Head Start Collaboration Officer	State Director of Head Start Collaboration	X
Joan Parris Director, Early Childhood Education, Norwalk CC	Representative of Institutions of Higher Education	X	Elaine Zimmerman Executive Director, Commission on Children	Executive Director of the Commission on Children	X
Vacant	Representative from Head Start Agency				

Documents Received:

The following documents were distributed:

- Minutes from the December 22, 2010, meeting
- NCSL Fact Sheet on Health Reform
- Families and Home Visitation Work Plan
- Workforce/Professional Development Work Plan
- "Education Policy for Action Series" Report by Anne T. Henderson
- "A Randomized Controlled Trial of Child FIRST: A Comprehensive Home-Based Intervention Translating Research Into Early Childhood Practice"

A. Welcome and Introductions

John Rathgeber opened the meeting at 8:40 A.M. He introduced the two newest members of the Cabinet, Representative Catherine Abercrombie and Senator Andrea Stillman. Senator Stillman is a co-chair of the legislature's Education Committee.

B. SAC Priority Area – Families/Home Visitation

Elaine Zimmerman presented on the Cabinet's Family/Home Visitation priority area. This particular priority area has the opportunity to receive immediate grant funding as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act signed by President Obama which designated 1.5 billion dollars as mandatory funding for high-quality, evidence-based voluntary early childhood home visitation. This grant appropriates \$100 million for FY 2010, \$250 for FY 2011, \$350 million for FY 2012, \$400 million for FY 2013, and \$400 million for FY 2014. It a competitive grant system, however, it is a system where all 50 states could receive money as long as the quality of each state's system is clearly demonstrated in their state plan. This plan must show the trends and impacts of the program as well as a comprehensive needs assessment. This needs assessment has already been completed and can be found at on the Cabinet's website under Meeting Documents for February 24, 2011. (www.CTearlychildhood.org).

Elaine Zimmerman stated that within the next three months, a home visitation system will need to be developed based on the integration of our best Health and Human Services (HHS)-approved programs, not just one program individually. It should be noted that this priority area will partner with the health department because they are the executive branch agency that will receive the funds. Programs that are not currently on the HHS-approved list will have 30 days to become approved. Ms. Zimmerman noted that Child FIRST is one of the programs not currently on the approved list, and stated that because it is a medical model that is already receiving Medicaid, it is imperative we get them approved within the 30 days. Dr. Darcy Lowell, director of Child FIRST, added that it is a very specific, rigorous process to get a program approved, but feels confident that it can, and will be done. An article co-authored by Dr. Lowell, titled "A Randomized Controlled Trial of Child FIRST: A Comprehensive Home-Based intervention Translating Research Into Early Childhood Practice" was also distributed to Cabinet members.

A handout from the National Conference of State Legislatures further summarizing this grant information was distributed to all Cabinet members and can be found on the Cabinet's website (www.CTearlychildhood.org)

Ms. Zimmerman then distributed copies of the families/home visitation work plan. A copy of this work plan can be found on the Cabinet's website (www.CTearlychildhood.org). The four major strategies are to:

- 1.) Educate professionals in the importance of parents as partners.
- 2.) Provide a comprehensive system of parenting education.
- 3.) Promote parent leadership.
- 4.) Create a system/continuum of home visitation services.

As part of the discussion, Ms. Zimmerman asked that each Cabinet member as well as present community members write down what they plan to do personally and as part of their agency or organization to support this work.

There was a motion put forward by John Rathgeber and approved by Cabinet members to have DPH move forward within the 30-day window to add Child FIRST, and any other programs that meets criteria for approval, to be added to the approved list of programs available for funding. There was also a motion to approve the families/home visitation work plan with the comments and suggestions addressed in the meeting. This, too, was voted on and approved by Cabinet members.

C. SAC Priority Area – Workforce/Professional Development

Joan Parris presented on the Workforce/Professional Development priority area. This presentation was distributed to members of the Cabinet and can be found on the Cabinet website (www.ctearlychildhood.org).

Ms. Parris asked Cabinet members to review the work plan and answer: (a) Do the activities align with the goals? and (b) Are the deliverables measureable and realistic?

Each member of the Cabinet, as well as present community members, were asked to write down their suggestions and recommendations, as well as what they plan to do personally and as part of their agency or organization to support this work.

As part of the workforce discussion, Harriet Feldlaufer recommended that the strategies and actions clearly reflect the enhancement of qualifications for the current workforce and that children from all settings should be included in this process; not just children in priority school districts.

Linda Goodman stated that she would like achievable strategies regarding home visiting added to this work plan. She added that as a first step, the collection and indexing of personnel standards from existing home visiting should be completed.

Peter Palermino stated that as the public hearings for the Child Care and Development Block Grant will be taking place in April 2011, he would like the workforce/professional development workgroup to help fill in some of the gaps within the plan.

There was a motion put forward by John Rathgeber and approved by Cabinet members to approve this work plan with the additional comments and suggestions.

D. Review of Minutes

The minutes from the December 22, 2010, meeting were approved. Grace Whitney stated that she would like to document the fact that Monica Bevilaqua from the Head Start Association has attended the last two Cabinet meetings, even though the minutes show a vacancy for this designation. John Rathgeber stated that the Cabinet is unable to name Ms. Bevilaqua as the representative from a Head Start agency due to the fact that this designation must be named by Representative Larry Cafero, however, members of the community are encouraged to attend and participate in the Cabinet meetings.

E. Fiduciary/Project Director

John Rathgeber reported that EASTCONN had advertised the job for the Cabinet’s project director, and 41 applications were submitted. Of these applications, 16 candidates were deemed qualified by a review team. Interviews will take place within the first two weeks of March and an offer will be made to the most qualified candidate. It is intended that the project director be announced at the March meeting.

F. Leadership Team

The Cabinet’s Leadership Team (John Rathgeber, Harriet Feldlaufer, Andrea Brinnel, Peter Palermino, Linda Goodman and Joan Parris) have been working on formalizing the chairs and co-chairs for each of the Cabinet’s priority area workgroups. The model that was discussed is to have one of the co-chairs serve be a member of the Cabinet, and the other to be an external stakeholder. These chairs will need to come together and define the work plans for their designated area. Workgroups will consist of 10-15 people, with members of the community invited to participate. All work will be open and transparent.

G. Karen Ray

Karen Ray, of Karen Ray Associates, provides consultation on collaboration and coordination of public groups. She was invited to facilitate a day-long retreat with the Early Childhood Education Cabinet in October 2010 which was well-received by Cabinet members. Andrea Brinnel reported that Ms. Ray has reserved April 28, 2011, as a follow-up to the retreat and asked that Cabinet members check their availability before arrangements are made. Both Representative Abercrombie and Senator Stillman have stated they will more than likely not be able to participate due to the legislative session, but asked that the Cabinet move forward with this meeting.

The meeting will be a half-day long. The Cabinet’s Leadership Team will iChat with Karen Ray prior to April 28 to give Ms. Ray a sense of where the Cabinet stands, and in what areas they are looking for consultation.

H. Public Comment

Darlene Raggozzine from Connecticut Charts-a-Course thanked Joan Parris for her presentation on the workforce/professional development SAC priority area. She also thanked Kim Keiser for her work facilitating the Professional Development Institute (PDI) team. This team works nationally with other states around workforce issues. Ms. Raggozzine also reported that the Office of Workforce Competitiveness completed a Connecticut early care and education workforce report scheduled to be released on March 8, 2011 at 10:00 AM. The report contains the most recent data available on the early childhood workforce in Connecticut.

Linda Goodman is chairing the data SAC priority area work group and is looking for a higher education or industry data systems expert who would like to volunteer their services to be a co-chair for this committee.

Peter Palermino voiced his concern about the fact that in the newest report from Connecticut Voices for Children (Connecticut Early Care and Education Progress Report, 2010) many of the early childhood systems and programs in Connecticut were not reflected.

Linda Goodman distributed “Building Comprehensive State Systems for Vulnerable Babies: A Resource for State Leaders”, an article by CLASP. This article can be found on the CLASP website: http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/system_components.pdf.

Senator Stillman thanked the Cabinet for welcoming her and being such wonderful resources. She also took the time to thank Betsy Morgan for the work she has done on the Cabinet on behalf of Senator Tom Gaffey.

I. New Business

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:04 AM.

J. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 24, 2011, from 9:30 – 11:30 AM at the State Office Building in Middletown in the SERC Classroom.