

## Meeting of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet

October 27, 2011 • 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Middletown State Office Building, Conference Room 3

25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown

### ATTENDANCE

| Member  | Member Type Required by Federal Statute                      |   | Member  | Member Type Required by Federal Statute   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| <b>David Title, Chair</b><br><i>Superintendent of Fairfield PS</i>  | Representative of a Local Education Agency                   | X | <b>David Morgan</b><br><i>Vice President, TEAM, Inc.</i>  | Representative from Head Start Agency   | X |
| <b>Catherine Abercrombie</b><br><i>State Representative</i>   | Member of the House of Representatives                       | X | <b>Joan Parris</b><br><i>Director, ECE, Norwalk CC</i>  | Representative of Institutions of Higher Education  | X |
| <b>Cathy Battista</b><br><i>President, FRC Alliance</i>   | Representative from Family Resource Centers                  | X | <b>Edie Reichard</b><br><i>Director, Sleeping Giant Day Care</i>  | Representative of a State-funded Child Care Center  | X |
| <b>Peter Palermينو</b><br><b>(for Claudette Beaulieu)</b><br><i>Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Social Services</i> | Representative from State Agency Responsible for Child Care  | X | <b>Andrea Stillman</b><br><i>State Senator</i>  | Member of the Senate  | X |
| <b>Harriet Feldlauffer</b><br><i>Chief, Bureau of Teaching &amp; Learning, Dept. of Education</i>                 | Representative of the State Education Agency                 | X | <b>Kevin Sullivan</b><br><i>Health Associate, Dept. of Public Health</i>  | Representative of the State Agency Responsible for Health or Mental Health Care             | X |
| <b>Linda Goodman</b><br><i>Director, Birth to Three, Dept. of Developmental Services</i>                          | Representative of Entity Determined Relevant by the Governor | X | <b>Maria Synodi</b><br><b>(for Anne Louise Thompson)</b><br><i>Chief, Special Education, Dept. of Education</i> | Representative of the State Agency Responsible for Programs under 619 or Part C of the IDEA | X |
| <b>Anzelmo Graziosi</b><br><i>Licensed Attorney</i>   | Representative from the Business or Philanthropic Community  | X | <b>Eileen Ward</b><br><i>Director, Children's Community Development Center</i>                                  | Representative of Local Providers of Early Childhood Education                              | X |
| <b>Leah Grenier</b><br><i>Budget Specialist, Office of Policy &amp; Management</i>                                | Secretary of the Office of Policy & Management Designee      | X | <b>Grace Whitney</b><br><i>Director, CT Head Start Association Collaboration Office</i>                         | State Director of Head Start Collaboration  |   |
| <b>Janice Gruendel</b><br><i>Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Children &amp; Families</i>                            | Commissioner of the Department of Children & Families        | X | <b>Elaine Zimmerman</b><br><i>Executive Director, Commission on Children</i>                                    | Executive Director of the Commission on Children  | X |
| <b>Michelle Maggio</b><br><i>Parent</i>   | Parent of a Child Attending School in a Priority District    | X | <b>Vacant</b>   | Parent  |   |

### Documents Received:

The following documents were distributed:

- Minutes from the September 22, 2011 meeting
- Project Director's Report
- IDEA Part C: The Connecticut Birth to Three System (PowerPoint presentation)

**A. Welcome and Introductions**

David Title opened the meeting at 9:36 a.m.

Leah Grenier, Budget Specialist for the Office of Policy and Management, Michelle Maggio, parent of a child attending school in a priority district, and David Morgan, Vice President of TEAM, Inc. were introduced as new members of the Cabinet.

**B. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the September 22, 2011, meeting were approved. Dr. Janice Gruendel and Senator Andrea Stillman abstained.

**C. Work Group Reports**

Since the last Cabinet meeting, all priority area work groups have been providing input into the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant application.

Data Systems:

In addition to the RTT-ELC application, the Data Systems work group is focusing on governance to ensure there is a connection between data collection efforts in communities and data collection efforts statewide. The work of local Data Collaboratives will also be reviewed.

Professional Development/Workforce:

The Professional Development/Workforce work group met October 20. A decision was made to form a subgroup that will review the work of the Registry and the extent to which the Registry may need to be expanded to include additional sectors. A crosswalk of workforce competencies and how they align must be completed.

Early Learning Standards:

The Early Learning Standards work group has been comparing Birth to 3 and K-12 domains to develop a plan to address gaps. The RTT-ELC grant application has pushed this work forward. A visual is included within the application to show overlap and gaps between domains. The work group has secured Cabinet funds to hire a consultant to assist with this work. Further details about this work will be available at the December 2011 Cabinet meeting.

Family Involvement/Home Visitation:

The Family Involvement/Home Visitation work group did not meet in October but has a meeting planned for November 9. The focus has been, and still is, on home visitation, as the group continues to review models in the state. It became clear at the last meeting that families are not aware of all of their home visitation options. The group continues to work on a family-friendly plan to articulate different home visitation models available to families. Also, as Connecticut faces a glaring achievement gap in reading, a connection between home visitation and literacy will be paramount in ensuring people who work in the home visitation field understand the importance of language.

Elaine Zimmerman reported that Connecticut did not receive competitive federal home visitation grant dollars. Though federal comments were positive, Connecticut was unable to meet the requirement of protecting the home visitation dollars tied to this grant. (At the time the grant was submitted, union negotiations had fallen through and Connecticut was facing an unprecedented budget crisis.)

Dr. Janice Gruendel, on behalf of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), reported that DCF is looking to provide funds to support home visiting.

More information on the four priority area work groups can be found in the Project Director's report on the Cabinet's website at: <http://www.ctearlychildhood.org/project-director.html>

**D. Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan:**

Connecticut's CCDF plan was approved. When the plan was written, goals that focused on the four priority areas were presented with the understanding that once work groups got underway, goals and objectives may need to be modified and/or enhanced. As the state must report on the status of achieving these submitted goals by December 2012, it is important to ensure the proper goals are set.

**E. Child Day Care Program Transition**

The OPM/SDE/DSS Study Group continues to meet bi-weekly with a focus on the following guiding principles:

- 1.) Put children and families first
- 2.) Be flexible and accountable
- 3.) Balance access, affordability, quality and coordination of care
- 4.) Prioritize needs of low-income families
- 5.) Build on strengths of current system, minimize weaknesses, maximize resources
- 6.) Value input from staff and stakeholders
- 7.) Keep interested parties informed and provide timely information

At last month's meeting, community leaders were invited to speak about different governance structures at the community level. The goal is to have a unified system of child day care and school readiness. A report of this group's findings and recommendations will be due to the Governor in January as part of Public Act 11-61. At the December 2011 Cabinet meeting, preliminary recommendations will be shared.

**F. IDEA Part C: The Connecticut Birth to Three System**

Linda Goodman, director of the Birth to Three System for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) gave an overview presentation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C. IDEA was originally passed in 1975 and currently has four sections:

1. Part A: General Provisions
2. Part B: Assistance for Education of all Children with Disabilities
3. Part C: Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities
4. Part D: National Activities to Improve Education of Children with Disabilities

IDEA Part C was passed in 1986 and encourages, not requires, all states to participate. Currently all states and territories are participating. Connecticut receives annual funding (approximately \$4 million per year). This amount is based on the state's population.

This overview presentation can be found on the Cabinet's website at:

<http://www.ctearlychildhood.org/presentations.html>

#### **G. Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC)**

The RTT-ELC grant application was submitted on October 19, 2011. A leadership team of 18 members led by Charlene Russell-Tucker, Associate Commissioner of Education, Liz Donahue, Office of the Governor, and Harriet Feldlaufer, Bureau Chief of Teaching and Learning for the SDE, and 12 participating agencies signed off on the grant, though only seven agencies were required to do so. The vision of Connecticut's application is "every child, every setting, every year." Connecticut requested funding for eight projects across five priority areas. The application includes leveraging of Public Act 11-181 and the opportunity of creating a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS).

Though not worth points, Connecticut responded to Invitational Priority 4: Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades, and Invitational Priority 5: Encouraging Private-Sector Support.

Additionally, 150 letters of support were included in the grant application. These letters of support were very specific and clearly delineated what each supporting entity would offer.

Executive Order #11 was created two days prior to the application's submission and creates an office of early care and development, the Early Childhood Office (ECO). Participating agencies will assign staff to ECO which will be a half-physical, half-virtual governing structure.

#### **H. Other Business**

David Title reported that CPTV will be airing a series on closing the achievement gap, starting in January. One of three parts of this series focuses on early childhood and early intervention. David Title was interviewed for this series and Wintonbury Early Childhood Magnet School in Bloomfield will be featured.

#### **I. Public Comment**

George Hensinger announced that Connecticut Parent Power, in conjunction with the 53 Discovery communities, is holding regional roundtables in which parents will be informed of what is currently happening in the State (i.e., establishment of the Early Childhood Office), and will be given an opportunity to voice all of their concerns and issues around early care and education.

Maggie Adair, Director of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance, stated that she was encouraged by Connecticut's RTT-ELC application and showed her support for the work moving forward.

**J. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

**K. Next Meeting**

The next Cabinet meeting will be held on December 22, 2011, at the State Office Building in Middletown, Conference Room 3, from 9:30-11:30 a.m.