

Early Childhood Education Cabinet Meeting
October 15, 2010 • 9:30-11:30 A.M.
 Middletown State Department of Education
 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown

ATTENDANCE

John Rathgeber Chairperson, CBIA	Chair, Representative of Business or Philanthropic Community	X	Kevin Sullivan (for Norma Gyle) Dept. of Public Health	Representative of State Agency responsible for Health or Mental Health Care	X
Beth Bye Representative	Member of the House of Representatives		Joan Parris Director, Early Childhood Education, Norwalk CC	Representative of Institutions of Higher Education	X
Claudette Beaulieu (and Peter Palermino) Dept. of Social Services	Representative from State Agency Responsible for Child Care	X	Patricia Rehmner Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Services	Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Designee	
Marisol Estrada-Soto Parent	Parent of child attending school in Priority District		David Title Superintendent, Fairfield Public Schools	Representative of the Local Education Agency	X
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
Betsy Morgan (for Senator Tom Gaffey) Member of the Senate	Senator	X	Eileen Ward Director, Children's Community Development Center	Representative of Local Providers of Early Childhood Education	X
Linda Goodman Dept. of Developmental Services	Representative of Entity Determined Relevant by the Governor	X	Grace Whitney Head Start Collaboration Officer	State Director of Head Start Collaboration	X
Kathy Guay Director, Office of Policy & Management	Secretary of the Office of Policy & Management Designee	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:

- Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program PowerPoint presentation
- Press Release for ARRA Grant Funds

A. Welcome and Introductions

John Rathgeber opened the meeting at 9:32 A.M.

B. Review of Minutes

The minutes from the September 14, 2010, meeting were approved. However, Grace Whitney suggested that the “Representative from a Head Start Agency” role on the SAC membership be indicated as vacant to more accurately reflect the current membership. Further discussion regarding SAC membership was discussed in the “New Business” portion of the agenda.

C. Guest Speaker: Elizabeth Rose

Representative Beth Bye had recommended Elizabeth Rose, a local author, to speak to the Cabinet about her new book, *The Promise of Preschool*. Beth Rose is a professor of history at Central Connecticut State University who has done extensive research on the history of preschool and how past and current policies have shaped the face of preschool today.

“In *The Promise of Preschool*, Elizabeth Rose traces the history of decisions on early education made by presidents from Lyndon Johnson to George W. Bush, by other lawmakers, and by experts, advocates, activists, and others. Using this historical context as a lens, the book shows how the past shapes today’s preschool debate and provides meaningful perspective on the policy questions that need to be addressed as we move forward. *The Promise of Preschool* is a balanced, in-depth investigation into these and other important questions and demonstrates how an understanding of the past can stimulate valuable debate about the care and education of young children today.”

The Promise of Preschool does not advocate a specific stance, but offers a historical perspective of how early childhood education has developed over the past 45 years towards the rise of the publicly funded, universal kindergarten movement.

This book can be purchased at a local bookstore or online through Amazon.com.

D. ARRA Grant Status

Harriet Feldlaufer reported that \$747,251 in federal dollars has been posted to the state’s grant system. These funds include those from the ARRA Head Start Grant, as well as the supplement. A copy of the press release was distributed and will be posted on the Early Childhood Education Cabinet website (www.ctearlychildhood.org).

The RFP has been switched to a Personal Service Agreement (PSA), which was recently approved by OPM. Kathy Guay was thanked for her work on expediting this process. The PSA will be posted to the DAS portal. Andrea Brinnel will e-mail the PSA to all SAC members who are encouraged to share it with their colleagues.

E. PEW Conference Update

Elaine Zimmerman gave an update on the PEW Conference that is scheduled for December 3, 2010, at Fairfield University. Ms. Zimmerman reported that the goal for this conference is to have 60 business leaders in attendance, and she believes we already passed that mark. Strategic discussions will occur in

advance to ensure this conference has the greatest effect. The focus will be on return on investment and the achievement gap. Ms. Zimmerman also requested each Cabinet member submit the names of five people they would like to invite to this conference to Andrea Brinnel. Ms. Brinnel will e-mail the materials to all SAC members as soon as she receives them. These materials will also be posted to the Early Childhood Education Cabinet website, as well.

F. Home Visiting Grant Update

Rosa Biaggi, Chief of Family Health from the Department of Public Health gave a presentation on the Affordable Care Act for the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. This presentation was distributed at the meeting and can be found on the Early Childhood Education Cabinet website.

After Ms. Biaggi's presentation, Grace Whitney, on behalf of the Cabinet, congratulated Rosa and the Department of Public Health for their work on the needs assessment.

G. Retreat

Karen Ray of Karen Ray Associates joined the Cabinet via iChat in preparation for the Cabinet Retreat to be held on Friday, October 29, 2010, at CBIA in Hartford. Karen Ray will be offering consulting services to include designing, facilitating, and building capacity of the Cabinet. John Rathgeber welcomed Ms. Ray and explained that although Connecticut has multiple delivery systems and programs for early care and education, these systems do not necessarily work together efficiently. The SAC's goal is to focus on children so they have all the care and education they need to succeed.

During a phone conversation several weeks ago, Karen Ray had asked a few of the SAC members to offer their expectations of the retreat. She asked that those who did so, share their response with the group. Harriet Feldlaufer shared that we have a large agenda with many agencies and organizational requirements, and that even though we have many agencies and advocacy organizations serving children, there are many turf issues to work through. Peter Palermino requested that Ms. Ray make sure we do not go off course from the four priority areas we identified. Grace Whitney added that despite the fact we're in hard times and might not be able to make sweeping policy changes, there is still a lot we can gain if we work together as a team and create decision-making processes that help move us along. Karen Ray stated that her impression was that there is a lot of hope among the members of the SAC, and that people are looking to make our systems more effective. She stated that as a group, there will be discussions around collaboration and trust to address turf issues, and the identification of low-hanging fruit in order to feel a sense of accomplishment.

Karen Ray then asked that each Cabinet member fill out a survey prior to the retreat so that she could gather background information beforehand in order to better plan for the day. Responses can be sent directly to Karen, or to Andrea.

H. New Business

Head Start Membership

As previously discussed during the approval of minutes, with the resignation of Dona Ditrio from the Cabinet membership, an appointment for a representative from a Head Start agency needs to be made. As the work of the Cabinet is being funded by Head Start, it is critical to have a seat filled by a representative from a Head Start agency.

Originally, a letter from the Commissioner of Education was sent to Representative Larry Cafero requesting that he use his appointment powers to replace Ms. Ditrio. No action has yet been made. Grace Whitney had requested in writing that the Governor appoint someone to replace Ms. Ditrio on an ex-officio basis due to the fact that appointments can take a long time; however, Mr. Rathgeber stated that the plan of action is to have a small working group put forth recommendations on legislative changes to the SDE for them to be forwarded to OPM. (Kathy Guay confirmed that these changes must be submitted by the SDE because the Cabinet is sitting within the SDE for administrative purposes.) Parallel to this work, both John Rathgeber and Commissioner McQuillan will engage Representative Cafero and request he appoint someone who meets the legislative requirements to fill Ms. Ditrio's seat on the Cabinet.

Calendar of Meeting Dates

John Rathgeber requested that Andrea Brinnel send an e-mail to Cabinet members to ascertain their best availability for future meetings.

Commission for Educational Achievement

John Rathgeber stated that the Commission for Educational Achievement for Connecticut, on which he serves, will be announcing its 64 recommendations on the 19th of October. Recommendations focus on governance, school leadership, effective teaching, and finance. Mr. Rathgeber also stated that though not an original focus for recommendations, early education and care showed up as an essential quality to closing the achievement gap. It is the hope of this Commission that these recommendations will influence the actions of the next gubernatorial administration.

Budget

Kathy Guay reported that by statute, OPM, in concert with OFA is putting together consensus revenues for the upcoming biennium. Though we are moving in a positive direction, we are still looking to have a 3 billion dollar deficit out of the 18 billion dollar budget. Ms. Guay stated that she wants to make sure all of the SAC work is put into context while we face the most significant fiscal problems in our generation.

Child Care Plan

Peter Palermino reported that DSS has received federal guidance towards developing their two-year child care plan. This year, the Office of Child Care is asking for new information about quality and early learning guidelines. Currently the plan is a draft and is still under review. Mr. Palermino stated this will more than likely be an ongoing agenda item, and he will work to keep the Cabinet updated.

Infant/Toddler Packets

Linda Goodman reported that she a packet of information about infants and toddlers from 0-3. She reminded Cabinet members of the importance of infants and toddlers and wants to ensure they stay on the agenda, as well as preschoolers.

I. Public Comment

There being no public comments, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 A.M.

J. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 30, 2010, from 9:30-11:30 AM at the State Department of Education in Middletown in the SERC Community Room.