

**Early Childhood Education Cabinet Meeting**

*December 22, 2010 • 9:30-11:30 A.M.*

*State Department of Education  
25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown*

**ATTENDANCE**

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

**Documents Received:**

The following documents were distributed:

- Minutes from the November 30, 2010, meeting

**A. Welcome and Introductions**

John Rathgeber opened the meeting at 9:34 A.M.

**B. Review of Minutes**

The minutes from the November 30, 2010, meeting were approved.

**C. PSA Status**

Harriet Feldlaufer reported that three PSA applications were received and were reviewed by a four-person team. EASTCONN, one of the six Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) in Connecticut, was chosen to be the fiduciary. The PSA was signed by EASTCONN and is now at the Attorney General's office for approval. The job posting for the SAC project manager position will be posted in early January.

**D. PDI Representative**

Joan Paris was unable to meet with Department of Higher Education Commissioner, Mike Meotti, and therefore, no new information and/or updates were able to be reported. Since the next NAEYC National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development (PDI) meeting will be June 12-15, 2011, in Providence, Rhode Island, this discussion has been tabled for an upcoming SAC meeting. PDI is designed for educators and program administrators who provide professional development for the early childhood workforce. Peter Palermino recommended that the work of the PDI team be meshed with the SAC's workforce workgroup.

**E. Legislative Proposal Update**

As part of the Department of Education's legislative proposal packet, two proposals were included from the SAC. These proposals include the appointment of a Head Start representative to the SAC membership, as well as a change of the representative of the state agency responsible for health or mental health care from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to the Department of Children and Families. Copies of the formal legislative proposal were distributed to SAC members upon request.

**F. New Business**

Merging Monitoring Systems

Grace Whitney reported that she and Deb Adams (SDE) had recently attended the first of three conferences in Washington, DC around the topic of merging monitoring systems. Ms. Whitney stated that conversations at the federal level are moving quickly which is very encouraging considering this huge feat. Deb Adams added that she was very encouraged by the conversations at the federal level and looks forward to having our own discussions for creating a unified system in Connecticut.

Governor's Transition Team

John Rathgeber reported that Representative Cam Staples and Dudley Williams, co-chair's of the Education Working Group of Governor Malloy's Transition Team, had requested input from many education stakeholders on a variety of areas, and have put forth recommendations which include early care and education, as well as the move toward universal Prekindergarten.

### Summary on Business Forums

John Rathgeber reported that he felt the two business forums around were favorably received and sparked positive conversations around investments in early childhood. Though there were not as many business leaders in the audience as hoped, Mr. Rathgeber is optimistic that those present will help to spread the word.

Peter Palermino posed the question of how to keep the business sector interested in the workgroups as we move forward. John Rathgeber stated that since the workgroup meetings will be very intense, the average business leader may have a hard time committing to this level of work, and therefore, it is essential that we are able to identify individuals from business departments to act as their supports.

### **G. SAC Priority Area Update – Early Learning Standards**

Harriet Feldlaufer reported that a 13-member voluntary team developed a draft plan for the adoption of the early learning standards. The over-arching goal is that by September 2013, Connecticut will adopt comprehensive and multi-domain early learning standards that reflect a progression of skills birth through age 5, aligned with K-12 standards. The team was also mindful of the fact that the Child Care and Development Fund Plan should be incorporated.

The five strategies for this adoption of early learning standards are:

1. Conduct review of current standards and research on early learning.
2. Involve and engage cross-sector stakeholders throughout the process.
3. Engage leadership to ensure the promotion of the understanding and buy-in of the early learning standards and their relationship to K-12 education.
4. Develop a document outlining early learning standards for children ages birth to age 5 in all areas of development, designed for appropriate use with all children, including those with disabilities and dual-language learners.
5. Plan for implementation and professional development.

Ms. Feldlaufer asked that the SAC members divide into groups of four to review the activities, actions, deliverables and accomplishments for the strategies assigned to them. After the small group discussion took place, a large-group discussion was held to share the input and feedback to further the development of the plan.

Representative Beth Bye reported that the alignment of birth-5 and K-12 systems should not sound like they are two separate systems. Ms. Feldlaufer reported that national experts who developed the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) chose to not include prekindergarten, however, Michelle Levy of the Department of Education stated that there is currently work being done to show how the CT Preschool Curriculum Framework and Grade-Level Expectations are aligned with the CCSS.

Linda Goodman reported that in her small-group, they discussed broadening the stakeholders to include multiple leadership areas mentioned in the plan. Ms. Goodman also reported that deliverables should reflect policies signed off by multiple agencies, perhaps in the form of an MOU.

John Rathgeber emphasized that there needs to be “marketing” for families in which they, as the consumer, can feel comfortable and gain more knowledge of the plan. Many parents do not trust state agencies or large institutions and therefore, when we attempt to include parents, we need to be very aware of the language that is used. He also stated that it may be wise to somehow merge the work of the standards group with the work of the workforce group as professional development comes alive through our workforce.

Members of the SAC were then asked to share on note cards their personal and/or organizational interests for adopting early learning standards in Connecticut. They also put in writing their personal and organizational commitments.

#### **H. Public Comment**

Darlene Ragozzine stated that she and Deb Adams discussed having the next PDI workgroup meeting be after the next SAC meeting (January 27, 2011). Kim Keiser from National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC), who is working with the PDI team, is able to attend on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Grace Whitney requested that the change in kindergarten entry age be added to the agenda for the next meeting as this change impacts not only School Readiness programs, but many other systems, too.

#### **I. Next Meeting**

The next SAC meeting will be held Thursday, January 27, 2011, from 9:30 – 11:30 AM at the State Office Building in Middletown, in room MCR3. SAC members and guests were requested to enter the building by the back door. In order to maintain security in the building they will be let in by an SDE staff member.