

Early Childhood Education Cabinet Meeting
 April 22, 2010 • 9:00-11:00 A.M.
 Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA)
 350 Church Street, Hartford

ATTENDANCE

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

Documents Received:

The following documents were distributed:

- Screenshot of Early Childhood Education Cabinet Website (www.ctearlychildhood.org)

A. Welcome and Introductions:

John Rathgeber opened the meeting at 9:10 A.M. Cabinet members introduced themselves.

B. Review of Minutes

The minutes from the March 25, 2010, meeting were approved.

C. Invited Speaker – David M. Nee, Executive Director, William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund

Mr. Nee suggested a renewed focus on the quality, outreach to parents and early childhood as a priority. Given the state's severe budget constraints, resources will need to be placed in areas that can truly make a difference.

Mr. Nee reported that in January 2008, 23 communities were funded through a public-private partnership of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet, the Graustein Memorial Fund, the State Department of Education and the Children's Fund of Connecticut. The grant has been extended from 2010-2014, with 17.5 million to be spent over 5 years. The new grant period is 24 months. All plans are created using Results Based Accountability methodology (RBA) which encourages communities to focus on low-cost and no-cost options.

Communities have expressed the need for CT to have a vision and plan to help enroll children to reach their potential. Community involvement, effective communication and support for advocacy will be critical.

Mr. Rathgeber added that the Cabinet had identified governance as a critical issue in the NGA grant application and asked if there were any other resources available.

Eileen Ward stated that the United Way 211 Child Care survey showed that 90% of the programs have a much higher capacity than can be filled. Mr. Rathgeber reminded the Cabinet that parents choose whether their child will attend preschool; it is our job to give them information about the importance of early education.

Dona Ditrio stated that many families have one or both parents not working, and therefore, are not sending their children to child care due to economic issues. Staffing is also an issue due to budget constraints.

Deb Adams stated that there is an approximate population of 80,000 3- and 4-year olds, with 10,000 of those children being in the School Readiness program. In the Priority School Districts, there are 33,000 children enrolled in programs, with 5,800 children still in need of care. She also stated that School Readiness slots are able to cross district boundaries.

D. Reports

ARRA Grant Workgroup Update

Families/Home Visitations Workgroup: (Dawn Homer-Bouthiette, on behalf of Elaine Zimmerman)

Goal: To foster a partnership among families and communities in the early years.

Major strategies:

- 1.) To create a system/continuum of home visitation services
- 2.) To educate professionals in the importance of parents as partners
- 3.) To promote parent leadership
- 4.) To provide comprehensive parent education in the early years

The workgroup was very diverse; Karen Foley-Schain added that everyone came together trying to link and move toward parent leadership. It was recommended that the group reach out in a more formal way to parents. David stated that there is a Parent Trust Fund RFP essentially ready to go. Karen Foley-Schain

was unsure that it could get done within this legislative session seeing as though the money would have to be spent within the year allocated (within 2 months), but would look into it. There was clarification that the money must be encumbered within the year allocated.

Data Workgroup: (Lynn Johnson, on behalf of Linda Goodman)

Goal: To increase quality and accessibility of early childhood data across agencies.

Major strategies:

- 1.) To assign unique identifiers (SASIDs) from birth, or, for those not born in Connecticut, identifiers will be assigned by the first early childhood program the child enters.
- 2.) To develop (or use an existing) data architecture project that will enable data to be controlled by each agency for privacy purposes, but matched in an unduplicated manner across agencies for purposes of aggregate data as well as child progress.
- 3.) Until Strategies 1 and 2 can be completed, to increase the amount of quality of aggregate state agency data that is available and accessible by the public.

Ms. Johnson stated that there is data out in different places, but that the sharing of data is the real issue. Prior to the next meeting on May 7, Linda Goodman will be meeting with other state agencies to gather information about their data systems.

Maria Synodi added that much of the discussion within the workgroup was about identifying resources that are currently available. The resources list was referred to as the "Treasure Chest."

Representative Beth Bye asked where the dollars are coming from for the data systems. David Nee answered that there is a state longitudinal data system grant to which we've responded and received some funding. There are three phases to this grant, and we are currently in the third phase. John reminded the Cabinet that data collection is expensive, and we need to make sure we are looking at subsets of data that can be deliverable.

Representative Bye, as well as Lynn Johnson, both mentioned the importance of not requiring parents to continuously submit the same data. Mr. Nee stated that there are powerful new systems coming online as part of a nationwide consortium in which data is available to the public on the Internet to make data analysis much more accessible.

Professional Development/Workforce Workgroup: (Joan Parris)

Goal: To have a highly qualified workforce for ALL children birth to 5 in all settings in an effort to close the gap between publically and non-publicly funded programs. (The group also addressed the capacity issues in higher education to assist the workforce on credentials and degrees.)

Major strategies:

- 1.) Change licensing requirements regarding the workforce for newly hired teachers
- 2.) Scholarship money for ALL staff funded from a commitment by all state agencies to serve children
- 3.) Legislative advocacy to remove the gap between publicly funded programs and other programs where children are
- 4.) Make higher education more accessible to a greater number of early childhood workers; fit coursework into the work day; and have licensed subs
- 5.) Incentives and early exposure to the field

There was discussion around licensing being the key to making some changes to increasing the credential requirements for the workforce. There is a need to make higher education more accessible to more early childhood workers, fitting it into the day, so that workers could get their degrees during work hours.

Eileen Ward added that the coursework must most importantly be **relevant** to the actual work.

Early Learning Standards Workgroup: (Michelle Levy, on behalf of Harriet Feldlaufer)

Goal: By September 2013, to produce a comprehensive set of early learning standards, birth through age 5, aligned with the K-12 Standards.

Major strategies:

- 1.) To review all current Connecticut learning standards documents
- 2.) To review selected current national and international learning standards (research, documents, etc.)
- 3.) To develop a rubric to review other standards
- 4.) To improve and engage cross-sector stakeholders throughout the process

There needs to be a focus on all domains of development, while still thinking about some of the content areas. The standards will also need to be aligned to current systems, NAEYC standards, Head Start outcomes, etc., and will need to be communicated to a wide audience so they are accessible to families.

Lynn Johnson questioned parent involvement in the ARRA grant process. Joan Parris stated that she thought there would be outside focus groups as opposed to bringing parents in to this process at this point. It was pointed out that the Cabinet does not currently have the resources to conduct focus groups at this time, and that parent involvement would need to come from public hearings and information found on our website.

E. Website

At the last Cabinet meeting, it was decided to move forward with the current website and simply update information. The website is in the process of being updated and is now a more accurate reflection of the current work of the Cabinet. An e-mail will be sent to the EC listserv to encourage people to visit the revised site.

F. Discussion

An update was given on the NAEYC PDI Institute. Representative Beth Bye is unable to attend as the State Advisory Council representative. Dona Ditrio will be the representative.

G. Public Comments

David Wasch thanked the Cabinet for the work they have done and emphasized the statement made regarding opportunities that come about when budgets aren't available. He mentioned that when the last increase in budgets came through, we weren't prepared and reinforced the idea that now is the perfect time to resolve any issues that weren't resolved correctly last time before the possible mad rush of funds become available.

Darlene Ragozzine also thanked the Cabinet and shared her excitement about the fact that many members of the ARRA grant workgroups are also a part of the PDI team. Having the same members on both groups will ensure the work is integrated, and that the same issues are being worked on at the same time. Ms. Ragozzine also posed the question of whether those who were invited to be part of the ARRA grant

workgroups, but who missed the first meeting, could still attend the second meeting on May 7. Mr. Rathgeber stated that it would be unfortunate to limit resources and that those who wish to attend the second meeting, and had been invited to the first should be able to, as long as they are respectful of the work that had already been done and the time that had been spent. Those committee members who were unable to attend on April 16 and would like to attend the May 7 meeting should contact Andrea Brinnel.

Jeff Daniels stated it may be valuable to take a look at a prior process on the criminal justice information system coordinated by OPM. Also, that though quality is mentioned in all of the ARRA grant workgroup goals, it doesn't necessarily have a home in any of the four. He cautioned that the match commitment for the ARRA grant will need to be over all three years and to be prepared if those dollars disappear due to budget mitigation plans. Mr. Rathgeber said that an initial inventory had been done and that the Cabinet feels secure in those funds being available for all three years.

H. New Business

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 A.M.

I. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 27, 2010, from 9:00-11:00 A.M. Location TBD.