



Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet

Meeting of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet

April 24, 2014 • 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Middletown State Office Building

ATTENDANCE

Member	Member Type Required by Federal Statute		Member	Member Type Required by Federal Statute	
Leah Grenier, Chair <i>Principal Budget Specialist, Office of Policy & Management</i>	Secretary of the Office of Policy & Management Designee	X	David Morgan <i>Director, TEAM, Inc.</i>	Representative from Head Start Agency	X
Catherine Abercrombie <i>State Representative</i>	Member of the House of Representatives		Joan Parris <i>Director, ECE, Norwalk CC</i>	Representative of Institutions of Higher Education	X
Dante Bartolomeo <i>State Senator</i>	Member of the Senate		Laura Post, Senior Director, <i>Strategic Planning & Insights, LEGO Systems</i>	Representative from the Business or Philanthropic Community	X
Cathy Battista <i>President, FRC Alliance</i>	Representative from Family Resource Centers	X	Stefan Pryor <i>Commissioner, Dept. of Education</i>	Representative of the State Education Agency	X
Peter Palermino <i>Program Manager, Dept. of Social Services</i>	Representative from State Agency Responsible for Child Care	X	Edie Reichard <i>Director, Sleeping Giant Day Care</i>	Representative of a State-funded Child Care Center	X
Patricia Bryant -Beausoleil <i>Director, Putnam Family Resource Center</i>	Representative from a Local Education Agency		Maria Synodi <i>Special Education, Dept. of Education</i>	Representative of the State Agency Responsible for Programs under 619 or Part C of the IDEA	X
Marjorie Chambers <i>Dir., Dept. of Public Health</i>	Representative of the State Agency Responsible for Health or Mental Health Care	X	Stephen Tracy <i>Supt. Unified School District #2, Dept. of Children and Families</i>	Representative from the Department of Children and Families	
Marisol Estrada-Soto <i>Parent</i>	Parent		Eileen Ward <i>Director, Children's Community Development Center</i>	Representative of Local Providers of Early Childhood Education	X
Linda Goodman <i>Director, Birth to Three, Dept. of Developmental Services</i>	Representative of Entity Determined Relevant by the Governor	X	Grace Whitney <i>Director, Head Start Collaboration Office</i>	State Director of Head Start Collaboration	X
Michelle Maggio <i>Parent</i>	Parent		Elaine Zimmerman <i>Exec. Dir., Commission on Children</i>	Executive Director of the Commission on Children	X

A. Welcome and Introductions

Leah Grenier called the meeting to order at 9:38 a.m.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the February 27, 2014, meeting were reviewed and accepted. Peter Palermino and Marge Chambers requested their titles be changed in the Cabinet attendance portion of the minutes.

C. Cabinet Updates:

A donation was made by Cabinet members to the Special Olympics on behalf of David Title's son Jack who recently passed away.

Head Start Advisory Appointment:

Connecticut General Statute (C.G.S) 10-16n, subsection (c), calls for the Cabinet to designate a member to the advisory group. Andrea Brinnel has been serving in this role for many years and has now officially been designated to represent the Cabinet.

Public Private Partnerships Workgroup:

This workgroup is co-chaired by Leah Grenier and Richard Sussman from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Enfield's Key Initiatives to Early Education (KITE) was highlighted as well as Help Me Grow program founded by Paul Dworkin, M.D. At their workgroup's next meeting, there will be discussion on home schooling.

Age 3 to Grade 3:

Harriet Feldlaufer and Karen List distributed copies of the Framework for Planning, Implementing and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches by Kristie Kauerz from the University of Washington and Julia Coffman from the Center for Evaluation Innovation. This framework highlights cross-sector work, administrator effectiveness, instructional tools, learning environment, data-driven improvement, family engagement and continuity and pathways.

This framework can be found at the following link: [http://depts.washington.edu/pthru3/PreK-3rd Framework Legal%20paper.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/pthru3/PreK-3rd%20Framework%20paper.pdf)

The 3 to 3 work group began in 2010 when a group from Connecticut went to a four-day Harvard Institute facilitated by Kristie Kauerz. The group has developed an action plan with one goal: to raise awareness in Connecticut about early learning and development across the entire early childhood continuum "age 3 to grade 3".

On April 8, the Governor's PreK-3rd Grade Policy Symposium took place at the Mark Twain House in Hartford. Speakers included Dr. Lynn Kagan, Dr. Kristie Kauerz and Dr. Steve Tozer who focused on three areas: (1) early learning and development standards – birth to age 5; (2) the continuum of PreK to grade 3; and (3) public school leadership necessary to support the continuum of early childhood. A video of this symposium can be found on the CT-N Connecticut Network.

On May 20, 2014, a 3 to 3 leadership institute, "Closing the Achievement Gap: Getting PreK-Grade 3 Right" featuring Dr. Kristie Kauerz and will take place at CCSU, Memorial Hall in New Britain. Partnering with the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, this institute will focus on the implementation of the 3 to 3 framework.

Achievement Gap Taskforce:

A bill establishing an Achievement Gap Taskforce requires a plan for the state to end its achievement gap. A seven-year plan has been developed by experts from all domains and includes components on what needs to occur inside and outside of schools and higher education institutions with state involvement. It is important to note that this plan is not about education reform, but is strictly focused on the achievement gap. As part of the plan, there will be an Achievement Gap bill every year until the gap is narrowed.

QRIS:

Eileen Ward thanked Cabinet members and stakeholders for their comments and suggestions and reported that she has followed-up and had discussions with these individuals. Workforce remains a priority area as we look to be realistic in our expectations while raising quality of our early childhood programs. A main focus will be on those programs serving infants and toddlers as there are currently only 17% (approximately) of teachers with bachelor's degrees in these settings.

Moving forward there will be three priorities: (1) licensing; (2) early childhood guidelines; and (3) parent information and education.

Myra Jones-Taylor stated that Connecticut will first look to build a quality improvement system (QIS), with an aligned rating system being developed last. Currently, an internal team led by a consultant has started drafting a framework. The framework is scheduled to be completed by July 1.

A question was raised if the amount of money proposed will be sufficient to develop a QIS. Originally, the Governor had proposed \$3 million for quality enhancement, but recently, the Appropriations Committee cut this amount by \$1.7 million. If this amount is final, the overall plan will need to be scaled back and the majority of the quality enhancement money will be used to meet the requirements of the SEIU union contracts.

A Public information campaign directed toward parents about quality is currently under development. The focus of the campaign will not be specific to QRIS but on early childhood in general. Research has shown that quality improvement is very marketing-based and that states who have not chosen to educate parents and families have struggled to attain public buy-in. The QIS will need to be made universal with attention to cost, transportation issues and cultural sensitivity.

The role of magnet schools was also raised as a concern as many parents choose to send their children to magnet schools which are not part of the QIS.

Early Head Start, Child Care Partnership:

An announcement is anticipated from Head Start about the creation of a \$500 million dollar partnership opportunity from the federal government asking states, or individual communities within states, to apply to expand access to high-quality infant and toddler care. Connecticut has decided not to apply as a state but is asking communities to apply. Programs that apply must meet current the Head Start performance standards of 90% of families enrolled being at or below the federal poverty line.

Cabinet Proposed Legislation:

Maggie Adair distributed a handout which highlights the Cabinet's proposed membership requirements. This proposal has not changed since last spring.

Senate Bill 25 codifies the Office of Early Childhood and has much support.

Senate Bill 26 includes the Governor's proposal for the expansion of 1,020 spaces in School Readiness, a master plan for universal access to PreK, language around licensing moving to annual inspections, and moving youth camp licensing to the OEC. This bill was voted out of the Appropriations Committee but because of a technical fix cannot be voted on until April 29.

A new proposal calls for an expansion of public PreK (Smart Start). It is a \$200 million plan over 10 years (\$100 million over 10 years for bonding and \$100 million over 10 years for capital). There will be \$5,000 designated for each child and \$75,000 for bonding with the expectation that parent fees and other sources be used to supplement. If a public school does not currently have the capacity to expand, the use of a public library or local government facility will be permitted.

There was concern regarding the development of another state-funded preschool system, with many fearing that the overall goal to have a unified, coordinated system may be lost. Due to the nature this plan, there is also a feeling that the progress community programs have made is not good enough.

Elaine Zimmerman stated that the intent of this bill is not to alienate community programs but rather, to meet the needs of those children currently not receiving early care and education.

The bill did not go through a public hearing process. As a result, it will need to be attached to another bill to move forward legislatively.

D. Public Comment:

Jessica Stewart, Meriden School Readiness Liaison, thanked Eileen Ward for taking the time to follow-up individually with those who made comments and suggestions to the QRIS workgroup.

Sherry Sutera of 2-1-1 Child Care stated that private child care facilities are currently finding it challenging to fill their 3-5-year old spaces because parents are taking advantage of no-cost magnet schools. If a lower-cost alternative in public schools is developed, there is a fear that private programs serving 0-5 will no longer be able to serve infant and toddler due to the lost funding from preschool.

George Hensinger from Connecticut Parent Power raised concern about programs that will not be able to meet the 2015 legislation requirements for teacher credentialing. Programs who have teachers without bachelor's degrees will soon be forced to lay-off them off, and there is a concern that there will not be enough teachers who meet the 2015 requirements to replace them. This may create unemployment issues and will be a burden on many programs.

E. Adjournment / Next Meeting:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m. The next meeting will be held on June 26, 2014.