

Early Childhood Education Cabinet Meeting

June 24, 2010 • 9:30-11:30 A.M.

Department of Transportation

2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington

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
Karen Foley-Schain (for Claudette Beaulieu) 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	
Dona Ditrio Director, New Opportunities, Inc.	Representative from Head Start Agency		David Title Superintendent, Bloomfield Public Schools	Representative of the Local Education Agency	X
Marisol Estrada-Soto Parent	Parent of child attending school in Priority District		Anne Louise Thompson Dept. of Education	Representative of the State Agency Responsible for Programs under 619 or Part C of the IDEA	
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
Linda Goodman Dept. of Developmental Services	Representative of Entity Determined Relevant by the Governor	X	Elaine Zimmerman Executive Director, Commission on Children	Executive Director of the Commission on Children	X
Kathy Guay Director, Office of Policy & Management	Secretary of the Office of Policy & Management Designee	X			

Documents Received:

The following documents were distributed:

- Summary of public hearing comments on the Strategic Report
- ARRA grant matching funds grid

A. Welcome and Introductions:

John Rathgeber opened the meeting at 9:40 A.M.

B. Review of Minutes

The minutes from the May 27, 2010, meeting were approved.

C. Strategic Report Public Hearings

Public hearings were held in Norwalk and Hartford to elicit comments on the Strategic Report of the ARRA Head Start grant. For those who could not attend either hearing, comments could be posted on the Cabinet website until Friday, June 18 at 5:00 P.M. The comments from both the hearings and the website were compiled into one document and will be posted on the Cabinet website. It should be noted that a large percentage of the comments collected came from those who were upset that the Department of Social Services-funded centers did not have a dedicated paragraph under Programs and Services. This has been corrected.

Cabinet members will review the comments and revise the report. The report will be finalized and posted on the Cabinet website.

Eileen Ward shared her concerns that the workforce section of the grant is not clear enough and that individuals are assuming changes in qualifications will take place right away. Kathy Guay reinforced this concern by stating that once qualifications are raised, the costs of compensation will be raised as well, potentially driving programs away. Harriet Feldlaufer added that accountability levels have increased, and the public wants to see positive results. In order to achieve these results, individuals need to begin looking at early childhood education as a *profession*, and therefore, quality must be raised. John Rathgeber stated that the workforce priority must be structured in a way that demonstrates the raising of qualifications is a long-term goal and not a new statutory requirement. Mr. Rathgeber also recommended that the Cabinet revisit the section on workforce to ensure this message is clear.

D. Early Childhood Conference - PEW

John Rathgeber stated that the Cabinet received an extension from PEW to host a statewide early childhood education conference in early October. Elaine Zimmerman and others will provide support. Eileen Ward suggested that this conference be held in a location close to Fairfield and reminded the Cabinet that Governor Rell originally spoke about early childhood at Fairfield University. The Cabinet will see if Fairfield University would be willing to host this conference.

E. ARRA Grant Application Update

Harriet Feldlaufer reported that the State Department of Education (SDE) must be the fiduciary of the grant according to legislation. Linda Goodman questioned the payment of indirect costs. Kathy Guay stated that generally, the grant will not allow for the payment of indirect costs, and traditionally, the Office of Policy Management will not waive it. Ms. Guay also stated that the U.S. House and Senate are looking at unspent dollars to possibly reallocate funds as they are trying to provide aid to states and offset any additional deficit.

Elaine Zimmerman stated that there were positive conversations about partnering with the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA) Education Foundation and the Connecticut Council of Philanthropy. Regardless of fiduciary, it is important to maximize this partnership to expand the support for high-quality early childhood education.

Kathy Guay noted that though relationships with businesses and organizations are important, having a state agency as the fiduciary creates problems in terms of creating partnerships as a contracting process must occur.

In response to questions of how the grant funds will be used, John Rathgeber reported that the funding must go towards the four priorities of the Strategic Report, and that though the original plan was to have the funds support the development of systems, with the SDE being the fiduciary, there may be some barriers. Ms. Feldlaufer added that because of this new information, the funds will likely be used for two part-time positions which would help begin leveraging partnerships and developing systems around the four goals. These positions would be for the time period of the grant and would be considered durational.

Ms. Feldlaufer also reported that a designated individual from the fiduciary must be named to act as the conduit to national conversations and conferences around early childhood education. Ms. Andrea Brinnel currently serves in this capacity. Commissioner Mark McQuillan will be asked to make a final recommendation to Governor Rell for this designation.

The Cabinet has begun the grant writing process. The Governor's office has been contacted and is expecting the grant to be submitted by the deadline. A requirement of the grant is that the Strategic Report be sent to the Governor's Office and the Head Start Collaboration Office prior to the grant being submitted. The deadline for submission of the application is August 1, 2010.

Betsy Morgan stated that she is concerned that the Governor must designate a state agency for the Maternal Child Health Program, and has not yet done so. She is concerned that this is a technicality that could potentially slip through the cracks. That application is due July 1, 2010. Karen Foley-Schain reported that the original understanding was that the Department of Public Health (DPH) would automatically be the applicant agency, but since then, an announcement has come out stating that the Governor has to make the official designation. Kevin Sullivan added that DPH is currently working on the grant application.

F. ARRA Grant Matching Funds

A match of 70 percent, or \$1.36 million over 3 years, is needed for the ARRA grant application. This non-federal share must support the four goals of the Cabinet, and cannot be used for any other state or federal matches. The description and purposes of these funds must also be identified. A grid with current available matching funds was distributed and is posted on the Cabinet website.

Harriet Feldlaufer reported that after speaking with the SDE fiscal office, manager salaries are not encouraged to be used for matching funds. However, there are Early Literacy funds of \$150,000 and Community Planning funds of \$427,500 that are available, totaling approximately \$600,000 in available funds for the non-federal match from the SDE.

G. Public Comments

Jeff Daniels from the Graustein Memorial Fund stated that the Strategic Report must be aligned with the funds intended to be used as a match. If the Early Literacy and Community Planning funds are used as a match, the work must be addressed directly in the Strategic Report.

Sue Tenorio wondered if letters of support were required as part of the grant application. Ms. Brinnel stated that she hasn't seen anything in the requirements regarding letters of support, but third party agreements are part of the application.

H. New Business

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 A.M.

I. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 27, 2010 from 9:30-11:30 AM at the State Office Building on in Middletown.