



Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet

Meeting of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet

August 29, 2013 • 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>Vice President, TEAM, Inc.</i> | Representative from Head Start Agency | X |
| Catherine Abercrombie <i>State Representative</i> | Member of the House of Representatives | X | 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 | X | Stefan Pryor <i>Commissioner, Dept. of Education</i> | Representative of the State Education Agency | X |
| Cathy Battista <i>President, FRC Alliance</i> | Representative from Family Resource Centers | X | Edie Reichard <i>Director, Sleeping Giant Day Care</i> | Representative of a State-funded Child Care Center | X |
| Peter Palermino (for Claudette Beaulieu) <i>Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Social Services</i> | Representative from State Agency Responsible for Child Care | X | 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 | |
| Geri Kogut (for Marisol Estrada-Soto) <i>Parent</i> | Parent | X | 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 |
| Janice Gruendel <i>Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Children & Families</i> | Commissioner of the Department of Children & Families | X | Elaine Zimmerman <i>Exec. Dir., Commission on Children</i> | Executive Director of the Commission on Children | X |
| Deb Johnson <i>Section Chief, Dept. of Public Health</i> | Representative of the State Agency Responsible for Health or Mental Health Care | | Vacant | Representative from the Business or Philanthropic Community | |
| Michelle Maggio <i>Parent</i> | Parent | | | | |

A. Welcome and Introductions

Leah Grenier called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m.

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the June 25, 2013 meeting were reviewed and accepted.

C. Cabinet Updates

Leah Grenier introduced herself as the newly appointed chairperson of the Cabinet. She also introduced Senator Dante Bartolomeo as a new member replacing Senator Andrea Stillman, and welcomed Stefan Pryor, Commissioner of Education, and Janice Gruendel, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families.

D. Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Update

Linda Goodman is the OEC lead for the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant that was released on August 28, 2013. The application is due by October 16, 2013. Linda reviewed the scoring rubric and noted that it very similar to the previous RTT competition with the exception of “sustaining gains into grade 3” as an invitational priority that will be scored and a new competitive priority focus on children in rural areas. The grant writer who worked with Maryland on their application has been hired and a project manager from CT Voices has also been engaged. Linda noted that if it had not been for the work of the current Cabinet and the OEC (formerly SDE) staff we would not be in a good position to apply for the grant.

The area of greatest weakness in the last application was QRIS and we are presently in a much stronger position. The EC data system is also in a much better place and does not require additional funding. Writing is expected to be completed in the next three weeks and then the draft will be sent to reviewers for feedback, adjustments will be made and then it will be sent to the Governor’s office. Myra Jones-Taylor assured that the work of the OEC will not be put on hold while the grant application is being prepared. She reiterated that RTT-ELC is a grant and that it does not cover all of the work of the OEC. Myra also stated that we would not be a good place for the application without the work of the Cabinet. A listing of accomplishments to date that have cognizance regarding the application will be posted on the Cabinet website. There will be a “by invitation only” meeting tomorrow (8/30/13) for external stakeholders regarding the grant application. Cathy Abercrombie asked about the feedback that was received on our previous application. It is posted on the federal website and it will be used to prepare the current application. The Governor’s Office will be convening a group of legislators and relevant commissioners to discuss MOUs. Lead writers for the grant are: Michelle Levy (standards and outcomes), Deb Adams (workforce), Andrea Brinnel (3 to 3) Linda Goodman (governance), Harriet Feldlaufer, Angela Hammond (data) and Deb Flis (QRIS).

E. Legislative Updates

Cathy Abercrombie gave a legislative update and noted how much influence the incident at Newtown had on the recent legislative session. “This Governor has done a great job standing behind his priorities and the legislation has been behind him.” She stated, “We have much to be proud of in Connecticut.” There will be a forum on home visitation later this fall. She complemented and thanked the Cabinet for its hard work and feedback. She also mentioned how positive it is that agencies are talking to one another and to legislators. Elaine Zimmerman noted that it is widely thought that Connecticut has some of strongest home visitation legislation in the country. There is also much work in this area being accomplished through public/private partnerships. Senator Bartolomeo provided copies of 13-178 “An Act Concerning the Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Health of Youths.”

F. OEC Updates

Myra Jones-Taylor spoke about the kick-off events for the OEC. They were all very successful. She updated the members about the current work with National Associations for Regulatory Administration (NARA) to improve licensing. There is a provider survey available on the DPH licensing website. The survey is anonymous and the results will be going directly to NARA. She asked that Cabinet members encourage providers to fill the survey out. There is also a review being conducted of early childhood regulations. The Early Childhood Information System is up and running. Myra complimented Marty Rose’s staff at SDE for their work on this system. The Early Childhood Leadership Team continues to

meet weekly. The planning team is now the implementation team. Peter Palermino asked if NARA is discussing family group daycare home vs. childcare center regulations. Deb Johnson noted this and will bring it into the discussion. Myra said that there are some key legislative recommendations that need to be addressed in the area of licensing. An area of concern is adequate enforcement of Connecticut's comprehensive childcare standards. Eileen Ward cautioned that we need to look at the survey results and should not merely add more of the same.

G. BUILD Update

Andrea Brinnel noted that the final report from BUILD regarding transfer of the workgroup work to the OEC has not yet been received. The final report will be posted on the Cabinet website. She asked that the BUILD recommendations be reviewed at the next Cabinet meeting.

H. Charts-a-Course Scholarships

Margaret Gustafson gave an overview about the CT-Charts-A-Course scholarships. Her summary is posted on the Cabinet website. The scholarships will be up and running for the spring semester. Peter Palermino asked that the OEC consider family childcare providers as future priorities are set.

I. Strengthening Families

Deb Watson, on behalf of Karen Foley-Schain, gave a broad overview of The Strengthening Families Network (SFN). The SFN leadership team will be meeting in October and Deb will forward a summary report of their work to the Cabinet. Strengthening Families is not a program, it is an approach. The key to this work is the Protective Factors Framework. DCF, The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, The Children's Trust Fund, and the DCF/Head Start partnership are important partners in this work.

J. Workforce

Deb Adams and Peg Olivera presented a draft of the CT Early Childhood Workforce Core Knowledge and Competency Framework (CKCs)—the content and skills that people should have when they go out into the early childhood workforce—what early childhood professionals should know and be able to do. The draft document is available on the Cabinet website under the Professional Development/Workforce work group page (<http://www.ctearlychildhood.org/professional-development--workforce.html>.)

The development has been a 2-year process that has involved over 200 people. It was noted that this work did not “build new standards” but coordinated and complied existing standards in a way that made sense and was informed by current literature. The CKCs are in draft form and the work will be continued to develop CKCs beyond the core for teachers in all settings (e.g. administrators, coaches, specialists, faculty & facilitators, etc.) This work will assist in developing a comprehensive professional development and technical assistance plan for the state. This work will help us significantly with the current RTT-ELC application.

K. Early Learning Standards

Harriet Feldlaufer and Michelle Levy updated the cabinet on the Early Learning and Standards (ELDS) Development workgroup. The results of the content validation study of the new ELDS were delivered last night from NAEYC and will be posted on the Cabinet website. Additionally, work is moving forward in an

effort to age validate the ELDS. William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund has provided funds to convene an expert group to develop an RFP. This work will also be reflected in the current RTT-ELC application. Michelle gave a brief overview of their revision process moving forward. There are some efforts being started with professional development regarding implementation of standards. SERC has done training with home care providers as well. Guidance/TA will be forthcoming regarding implementation of the standards and how the new standards and current assessments will fit together. UCONN is developing supplemental guidance for parents and providers. Work has begun on K-3 standards in areas that are addressed in the ELDS, but not in K-3. It is expected that the ELDS will be available to the public later this fall. Janice Gruendel noted that this is fabulous work and that it will inform the work that is currently being done on screening and assessment tools. She stated the importance of connecting the work of state agencies working with vulnerable populations. Connecticut is about to begin work with a national early assessment consortium.

Senator Bartolomeo asked if any parents were involved in the ELDS or CKC workgroups. Peg Olivera stated that drafts of the CKCs were shared and are also in the process of being vetted. Deb Adams stated that the core members of the writing group did have connections to parents and stated the importance of vetting the CKCs with parents. Senator Bartolomeo offered her assistance. Michelle Levy stated that the ELDS were developed by experts, but specific feedback was obtained from parents through focus groups “what will be meaning and helpful re: the ELDS.” Focus groups were held with many different stakeholder groups.

L. Health Promotions

Grace Whitney stated that a monograph on screening developed by the Health Promotions workgroup would be available at the next Cabinet meeting.

M. QRIS

Eileen Ward updated the group on the efforts of the QRIS workgroup. The group has been developing “criteria and indicators” for the QRIS with a very short period for completion as this work is needed for the RTT-ELC application. A final report of the workgroup is available on the Cabinet website. Eileen noted that the work of the other workgroups has helped to inform the development of a QRIS.

N. Home Visitation / Parent Engagement

Elaine Zimmerman announced that there will be a New England forum in partnership with Pew and NCSL looking at home visitation and integration with early care. There have been focus groups conducted with parents to gather information about how they can best be served. “The field cares deeply about parents but does not always see them as an asset”. These focus groups will assist in informing how to best provide home visitation services. The Fatherhood Audit will help agencies look at their practices to make sure they are not leaving out dads. There is a partnership with the Newtown parents related to a public information campaign about social/emotional development. The Kellogg Foundation has issued a grant on parent engagement and leadership in early care K-3. We are proud that in the media conversations regarding this grant Connecticut’s parent leadership efforts have been cited as a best practice.

O. Adjournment

With no public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 11:28 a.m.