



Professional Development/Workforce Workgroup Summary

July 13, 2011 (9:30am-11:30am)

In Attendance: Merle Harris, Consultant; Deb Adams, SDE; Maria Synodi, SDE; Marilyn Parks-Jones, DPH; Karen Rainville, CT AEYC; Darlene Ragozzine, CT Charts-A-Course; Eileen Ward, CCDC; Regina Miller, EC Consultant; Julia DeLapp, ECSU; Hyacinth Douglas-Bailey, YMCA Greater Hartford.

Cabinet Co-Chairs: Joan Parris, Norwalk College; Alice Prichard, CT Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)

Cabinet Project Director: Sherry Linton-Massiah

Absent:

Susan Sponheimer, Head Start T/TA; Deb Resnick, CT Birth to Three

Discussion:

After a round of introductions and a review of overall workgroup membership lead by the co-chairs, the Project Director provided the group with an overview of the overall Cabinet membership and goals. The group was provided with a membership list of the Cabinet—informed of pending additions, and an organization chart of current structure of the Cabinet. A copy of Public Act No. 11-54 (Bill 927) was also shared, as it represents the guidance for the evolution of the workgroup's goal.

Co-chairs informed the group that the initial goal of the workgroup was amended to reflect the expectations of the legislation, as opposed to a focus on the entire ECE community.

A workgroup member cautioned the group not to only focus on teachers in state funded programs as outlined in the public act, as that would potentially drift from the charge of the Cabinet to increase quality of the entire early care and education system in our state. That message was reinforced in continued discussion that outlined the needs of professional supports in some all communities of our state, even in those areas that are often overlooked as having ample resources.

A workgroup member also brought attention to the last section (Sect 2.) of the bill calling for a retention plan for the current workforce not meeting the standards outlined, and the need to ensure that duplicative efforts do not come into play, if and when agencies begin to develop those plans. Assurance was provided that the agencies have yet to begin work on such a plan, and that the process will be monitored to ensure alignment with the workgroup efforts.

Co-chairs guided a review of the work plan strategies, activities, deliverables, accomplishments and status. A recommendation was made to include an action step in the first strategy, calling for regular communication with Higher Education to be informed of messages from the Administration regarding what efforts they may have in the works that affect feasibility to meet expectations of the legislation.

Alice reviewed the Charge to Committee with the group. No questions or concerns were raised.

Continued discussion around the first strategy of the work plan sparked sharing of existing resources and inventories of teacher qualifications and professional development opportunities. Charts-A-Course, a Higher Education assessment completed by Carlotta Schecter—outlining a career ladder for ECE professionals, and Charter Oak College were identified as having databases of programs and staff development status. Unfortunately, the databases are not linked. The assessment work by Carlotta Schecter has been managed by the Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative, but it was uncertain the extent to which that database is currently maintained and by whom.

The point was made that it is important to identify how information would reach constituents. The ECE list serve, the Charts-A-Course website, and the CT AEYC website were identified as possible vehicles for sharing information.

The challenge of tracking non-higher education directed professional development opportunities was also highlighted in the discussion of strategies. The benefits of developing a clearing house of professional development opportunities for the ECE community were remarked. Currently there is the option of tracking and linking training calendars of different organizations such as, CT AEYC, SERC, 2-1-1 Child Care, and the RESCS.

The point was stressed that teachers need incentives to pursue professional development and salary scales need to be implemented to reward professional growth. The importance of a wage study was also asserted. A work group member also reminded the group that it is imperative that attention is paid to the practicality and accessibility of teachers to participate in professional development, due to the cost to programs.

The group reviewed reports completed by Charts-A-Course outlining the status of teacher qualifications in ECE programs receiving state funding.

The discussion concluded with the focus on the need to raise the bar for all, beyond programs that are state subsidized. This may require increased attention to licensing as the starting point of accountability for program quality and staff qualifications. Some discussion took place on past efforts to increase licensing requirements and tracking of licensed-exempt programs.

Again, the point was stressed that, “We need to look at the whole picture.”

Adjourn

Next Meeting, August 10th 9:30 am@ SERC—same place as previous meeting.