



CT Early Childhood Cabinet Meeting Minutes

May 3, 2023, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.
In Person Meeting - Zoom Virtual Meeting

ATTENDANCE

Member Name	Statutory Designation	Present
Susan Bysiewicz <i>Lieutenant Governor</i>	Lieutenant Governor, or Designee Cabinet Co-Chair	A
Beth Bye <i>Commissioner, Office of Early Childhood</i>	Commissioner of Early Childhood, or Designee Cabinet Co-Chair	P
Holly Williams <i>Section Director, Office of Policy & Management</i>	Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or Designee	P
Andrea Barton Reeves <i>Commissioner, Department of Social Services</i>	Commissioner of Social Services, or Designee	A
Shelly Nolan <i>Director of Women’s Services, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services</i>	Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services, or Designee	P
Vanessa Dorantes <i>Commissioner, Department of Children and Families</i>	Commissioner of Children and Families, or Designee	P
Dr. Shante Hanks, <i>Senior Advisor, Department of Housing</i>	Commissioner of Housing, or Designee	P
Jordan Scheff <i>Commissioner, Department of Developmental Services</i>	Commissioner of Developmental Services, or Designee	P
Charlene Russell-Tucker <i>Commissioner, Department of Education</i>	Commissioner of Education, or Designee	A
Marc Camardo <i>Supervisor, Department of Public Health</i>	Commissioner of Public Health, or Designee	P
Lesley Mara <i>AVP, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities</i>	President of the Board of Regents, or Designee	A
Karen Pascale,	Director of the Connecticut Head Start State Collaboration Office	P

<i>Director, CT Head Start State Collaboration Office, Office of Early Childhood</i>		
Steven Hernandez, Esq. <i>Executive Director, Commission on Women, Children & Seniors, and Equal Opportunity</i>	Executive Director of the Commission on Women, Children & Seniors, or Designee	A
Julie Giaccone <i>CCDF Administrator, Office of Early Childhood</i>	Administrator of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990	P
Bryan Klimkiewicz <i>619 Part B Coordinator, State Department of Education</i>	Responsible for administering grants received under Section 1419 of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	P
Louis Tallarita <i>State Coordinator, Bureau of Health, Nutrition, Family Services, and Adult Education, State Department of Education</i>	Responsible for coordination of education services to children and youth who are homeless	P
Marlene Padernacht <i>Title I Coordinator, State Department of Education</i>	One who is responsible for administering the provisions of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Act	A
Eva Bermudez <i>CSEA/SEIU Local 2001</i>	Representative of the Connecticut State Employees Association	P
Eliot Brenner <i>Executive Director & Trustee, Klingenstein Philanthropies</i>	Representative from the philanthropic community	P
Patricia Bryant-Beausoleil <i>Director & Early Childhood Coordinator, Putnam Family Resource Center</i>	Representative from a public elementary school with a prekindergarten program	P
Karen Rainville <i>CT Association for the Education of Young Children</i>	Representative of an association of early education and childcare providers	P
Edie Reichard <i>Director, Sleeping Giant Day Care</i>	Representative of a state-funded child care center	P
Caroline Austin <i>Parent</i>	Parent of a child attended a school in an education reform district	A
Kimberly Oliver <i>Director, Dept. of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation, City of Hartford</i>	Member of a Board of Education for a town designated as an Alliance District	A
Cathy Battista <i>Director, Meriden Family Resource Center</i>	Representative from Family Resource Centers	P
Ruth-Ann Bucknor	A parent recommended by a parent advisory group	P
Kiobenit Grullon <i>Family Child Care Provider</i>	A licensed family childcare home provider and a member of a staffed family childcare network	P
VACANT	Representative from the Head Start Association	
VACANT	Representative from the business community	
VACANT	Parent of a child attending or attended a School Readiness program	
VACANT	A representative of a local provider of early childhood education	



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ATTENDANCE

A. Welcoming Remarks and Introductions

Commissioner Beth Bye opened the meeting, recognizing the members of the Early Childhood Cabinet and the public that were in attendance.

A. Updates and Announcements

Dr. Shante Hanks has a new role as a Senior Advisor at the Department of Housing

Karen Pascale has a new role as Director, CT Head Start State Collaboration Office, a position appointed by the Governor. The CT Head Start State Collaboration Office is housed at the Office of Early Childhood.

Karen Rainville announced Save The Date for the CAEYC conference, which will be in person October 28 at Tunxis Community College. A reception will be held the evening before to recognize early childhood staff achievements across the State.

Shelly Nolan announced the DMHAS 2nd Annual Conference will be held on June 2 addressing LGBTQI; registration info to follow.

Commissioner Beth Bye – Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care form on the child care workforce will take place on May 11 at Norwalk Community College. The forum will feature Dr. Junlei Li from Harvard Graduate School of Education and Erica Phillips from the National Association for Family Child Care. Special thanks to Dr. Monisha Gibson for her work to make this event successful.

Eloisa Melendez, newly hired at the OEC, will be the lead person for Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care. Eloisa was previously employed with the Women's Business Development Center, focusing on the child care field.

Commissioner Dorantes discussed the collaboration between the Department of Children and Families and the Office of Early Childhood's Head Start Collaboration Office at the Child Welfare League of America's National Conference. She said it is an opportunity to collaborate and partner in community to support the children and families who touch both DCF and Head Start. This Head Start Collaborative has grown to include over 120 participants.

B. Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care

Commissioner Beth Bye and Elena Trueworthy updated the Cabinet on the structure of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care. The panel will develop a five-year actionable strategic plan for the child care

system. Some of the challenges of the system that the panel will tackle are access to care, affordability, quality, and workforce challenges.

C. Lab Schools

Deb Flis, Elsa Jones, and Deb Watson gave an overview of the Lab School Investments initiative which supports Early Childhood Education programs and their teachers. The initiative involves providing funding and professional development to support the early childhood workforce. It also brings together the ECE teams all the Lab Schools and the higher education institutions where the schools are located.

D. Care 4 Kids Parent Portal

The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood has implemented a parent portal to make it easier for families to manage their Care 4 Kids child care benefits. The portal allows parents to apply for Care 4 Kids, renew benefits, and manage care interactions online. The goal is to make early childhood education more accessible to families in Connecticut using technology. Before the parent portal, applications were done on paper and documentation was submitted by mail, fax, or drop box.

E. Kindergarten Age

The Legislative is discussing a bill that would change the start date of kindergarten in Connecticut from January to September. The bill was introduced in the Education Committee, but it did not get voted out of Committee. Commissioner Bye said the bill is not dead and could be revived in another bill. She said that until Connecticut has universal preschool, OEC does not support the change of date.