

State of Connecticut

Blue Ribbon Panel Structure and Planning



April 2023

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Introduction to the Blue Ribbon Panel



- The Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care was initiated by Governor Lamont's Executive Order.
- The Panel is charged with developing a strategic plan for a child care system that works for families, providers, and Connecticut's economy.
- The Panel will outline a data-driven, actionable, 5-year strategic plan for Connecticut that supports family needs, business needs, and prioritizes equitable access to early care and education.

**** The objective is to develop an equitable, high quality, and sustainable system that ensures that every child has a quality educational foundation that will prepare them to grow, learn, and succeed.*

The crisis in early childhood care and education calls for long-term, creative, inventive thinking that will lead to durable solutions

The Early Childhood Care and Education system is challenged by issues such as access, affordability, and quality

- Parents do not have access to the care they need at a price they can afford. Parents face challenges in being able to work and children lack high-quality early education
- The current market prices for child care are lower than the actual cost of quality child care; this depresses provider wages and reduces quality
- Reduced quality has implications for children's school readiness and well-being, as well as for parent productivity at work
- Like other states, Connecticut's Early Care and Education sector is experiencing significant workforce shortages due to low wages

Connecticut is positioned to make progress in early childhood care and education

Connecticut's Strong Foundation

A state agency dedicated to improving the lives of young children and families

State investments, coupled with federal investments that enhance child care access

A strong early childhood ecosystem –with established, high-functioning philanthropic, advocacy and non-profits resources

An innovative, model Quality Improvement System launched in 2022

Significant federal funding for early childhood and education system research and planning; progress has been made to build on through Blue Ribbon planning

Six years of Federal Preschool Development Funding that produced critical data and systems planning efforts that will support Blue Ribbon Planning

**** Highly ranked as a great place for families; the state can build on this foundation with a strong Child Care and Education plan to build an improved ECE system that reaches more families, improves the quality, and lifts up the early childhood profession as vital infrastructure.*

Building on this foundation, the Blue Ribbon Panel is poised to deliver a truly aspirational plan for Connecticut's early childhood care and education system

OEC Established Vision for Early Childhood:

All families in Connecticut will have access to an equitable and community-driven early education and care system that improves outcomes for children and families. To achieve long-term sustainability, this system will be grounded in recognition of the full cost of a professional and well-compensated workforce providing high-quality care.

Blue Ribbon Planning will be guided by the following long-standing OEC pillars



Equitable System/
Increased Access



Community Voice



Outcomes Oriented



Invest in ECE Workforce
/Provider Stability

Project Scope

Early care and
education system
for 6 weeks through
5 year-old children



**Blue Ribbon Panel
members represent:**

parents, early
childhood education
professionals,
business leaders,
school age child care
higher education
professionals, public
school leadership and
legislators.

From all regions of
the state.

- Sen. Eric Berthel
- Audette Bisailon
- Emily Byrne
- Shawn Coyne
- Rep. Jeffrey Currey
- Chris DiPentima
- Jamie Eden
- Dr. Monette Ferguson
- Diana Jepsen
- Dr. William Johnson
- Katherine Lantigua
- Courtney Larkin
- Karen Lott
- Althea Marshall-Brooks
- Rep. Kathleen McCarty
- Sen. Douglas McCrory
- Garrett Moran
- Kailyn Nadeau
- Fran Rabinowitz
- Jessica Sager
- Melissa Turner
- Carmelita Valencia-Daye
- Maria Del Pilar Vargas

Project Guideposts



We will **engage community members and expert advisors as partners throughout** to inform the work and to get feedback and ideas and potentially also alignment with emerging plans.



In the interest of efficiency, we will also be **asset rather than deficit-based**— building on work completed and in process and seeking best practices or models from Connecticut or other geographies.

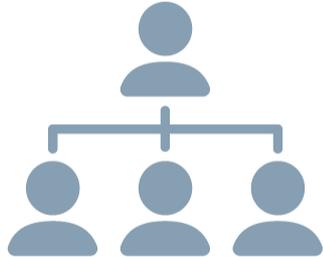


We will seek to be **innovative and transformative** while still delivering actionable, time-bound recommendations to develop a system that is responsive to the needs of the state's children, families, businesses, and communities.



As we plan for **a system that meets the needs of every child**, we will **prioritize equity first** in initial investments and implementation.

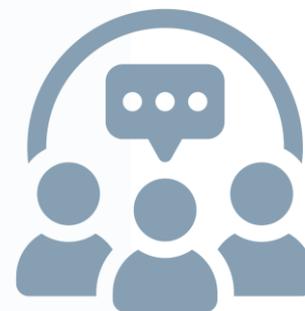
Project Roles and Structure



1. Commissioner Bye will lead the work and OEC team members will lead some of the critical workstreams, building off the foundation that exists.
2. The Blue Ribbon Panel will play a critical review and advisory role by asking questions and providing feedback, meeting every four to six weeks on average to discuss specific topics and plans that emerge from the work.
3. Supported by the OEC leadership and consultants, workgroups will be tasked with moving the work forward between meetings and providing the full panel with timely analysis and options to consider.
4. The Early Childhood Cabinet, the Parent Cabinet and the OEC External Steering Committee, as established ECE advisors, will provide their expertise, input and feedback on the emerging plans that will be put forward to the Panel.

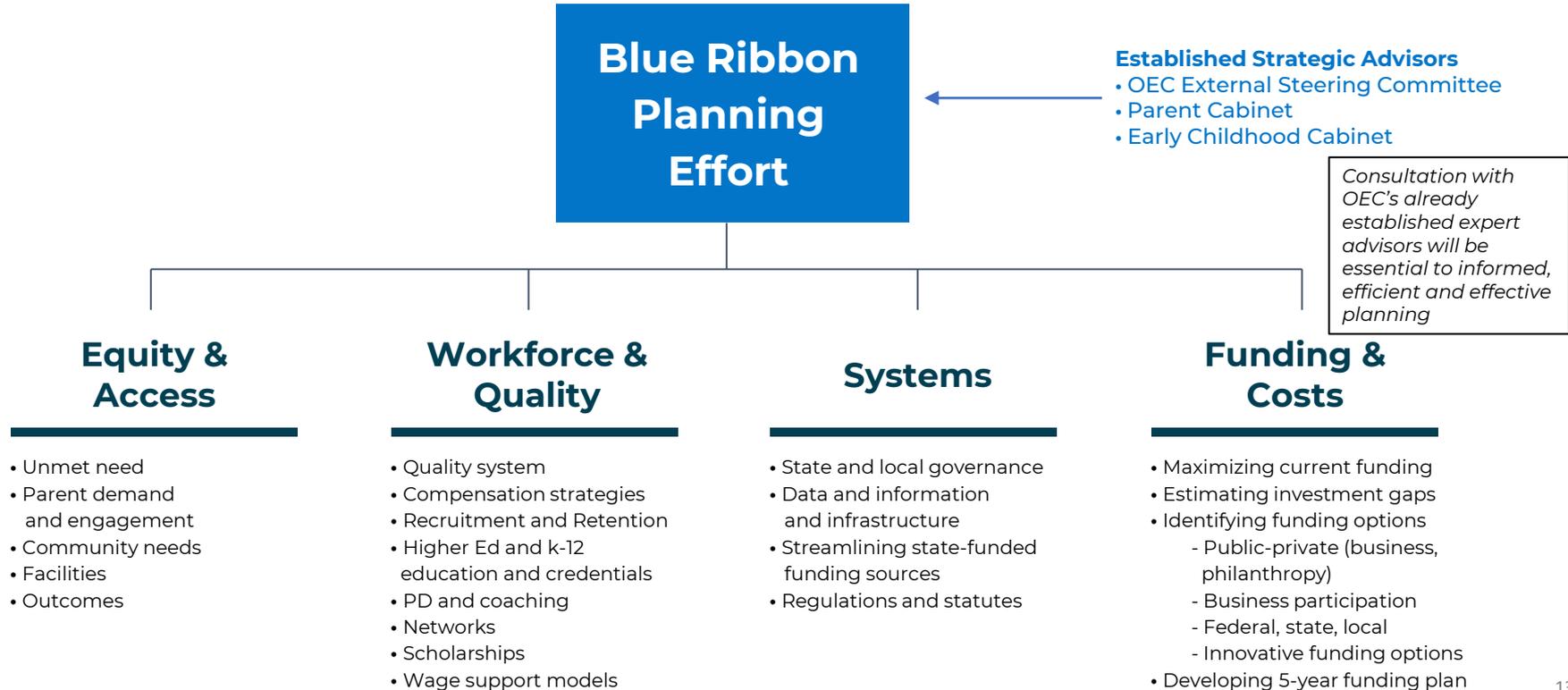
Reflecting its importance to the Blue Ribbon Panel, stakeholder and expert input will be gathered multiple ways

1. Concerted outreach effort to reach panel members, ECE stakeholders and experts, business leaders and government and community leaders with relevant feedback communicated to workgroups. The Early Childhood Cabinet, External Steering Committee, Parent Cabinet and other organizations will be met with regularly
2. A series of five public listening sessions, one preceding each workgroup panel meeting and one in November to solicit feedback on the draft plan
3. A half-day feedback and information session about early childhood workforce challenges
4. Workgroup outreach to experts and stakeholders as needed to inform workgroup recommendations



Blue Ribbon Planning is divided across four interdependent workgroups, informed by established strategic advisors

EXAMPLE OF
WORKSTREAMS:



Workgroups will be tasked with making recommendations to the panel

In preparing for the panel deep dive, workgroups will prepare:

Problem/opportunity statement:

description of current state issues and opportunities to be addressed in the Blue Ribbon Plan

Goal/s:

clearly delineated, actionable goals related to addressing the problem and opportunity statement

Promising strategies:

recommendations of high impact and innovative strategies or levers to achieve these goals building from current work or best practices here or in other geographies

Based on input from the panel, the public and other expert advisors, workgroups will provide detail on the following for the most promising strategies:

System changes:

related structural, programmatic, administrative or regulatory changes that will need to be made to the current system

Investments:

estimates of associated potential costs (to be analyzed in concert with financial modeling team)

Timeline:

expectation of equity-focused rollout for a five-year horizon

Outcomes:

expected outcomes to be achieved; baselines where possible; and returns on investments as applicable

Timeline	Phase	Description
March-May	Planning and launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning, timelines, roles and resourcing • Workgroup prioritization, scoping and launch • Outreach and communications planning
May-July/August	Goal and Recommended Strategy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workgroup development of problem/opportunity statement, goals and promising strategies building on current initiatives and best practices
August-September	Outlining and Drafting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimates of investments, timeline, expected outcomes, and structural changes • Plan integration, financial modeling and drafting
October-November	Socialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socialization and revision
December	Plan submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final plan approval

The Blue Ribbon Panel Meeting Timeline

