



MEETING MINUTES

September 6, 2023 ~ 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

United Way of Greater New Haven (in-person meeting)

Members Present	9/6/23					
Jess Bialecki	•					
Steven Cousin	o					
Mary Derwin	•					
Daniel Diaz	o					
Vanessa Diaz-Valencia	•					
Karen Dubois-Walton	•					
Eliza Halsey	•					
Jennifer Heath	•					
Billy Johnson	o					
Soma Mitra	o					
Robin Moore-Evans	•					
Leonora Netter	o					
Averi Pakulis	o					
Tamesha Robinson	•					
Allyx Schiavone	•					
Galit Sharma	o					
Kioamary Sotillo	•					
Susan Taddei	•					
Elisabeth Teller	o					
Carmelita Valencia-Daye	•					
Lynn Wiener	o					
Sadie Witherspoon	o					
<i>Percent in attendance:</i>	55%					

Staff: Denise Duclos, Kerry Oberg

I. Welcome & Introductions (20 minutes)

Jennifer welcomed members.

Members introduced themselves.

II. Updates and Announcements (10 minutes)

Announcements:

Carmelita Valencia Daye discussed the Blue Ribbon Panel and the upcoming public sharing of the Draft Plan Outline. Meetings are scheduled for:

- Monday, Sept 11, 11:30-1:30 at Housatonic 900 Lafayette Blvd, Bridgeport
- Tuesday, September 12, 4:30-6:30 at Mattatuck Museum, 144 W Main St Waterbury
- Wednesday, September 13, 2-4pm on Zoom in Spanish, English translation

- Thursday, September 14, 9-10:30, on Zoom, in English.
- The Panel will meet September 20th, 9am-1pm, place TBD, and November 1, 9-10:30am and will be virtual.

Karen Dubois Walton chairs the CT State Board of Education and shared the Board is trying to create linkages between prek and K-12. The Board is also looking to redesign the structure of educator certification in CT. In each case, the Board is looking for feedback to help guide its work. OEC Commissioner Beth Bye is on the Board. Board is also looking for input on what issues are important to you and will be asking for input on other issues of interest. Ct residents, teachers and administrators can leave their thoughts/comments on the Thought Exchange <https://tejoin.com/scroll/989612972>. All contributions are anonymous. It may take you as little as 5 minutes to participate and you may return to add new thoughts or rate the thoughts of others as often as you like.

Eliza Halsey handed out appointment letters to members who are renewing their term on the Council.

Jess Bialecki announced the Early Childhood Resource Center (ECRC) is back - both in person and on Zoom. One collaboration with Gateway will bring the co-author of "Trauma and Young Children" to speak on the topic: Part 1 Sept 28 on Zoom, Part 2 Oct 19 in person. The first 50 participants who register and attend both parts will receive a free copy of the book, as well as a related children's book. To receive mailings about ECRC events, please email creatingkids@snet.net.

III. Discussion to inform Council plans for FY24 (60 minutes)

Participants broke into 2 groups to discuss key issues facing children, families and the organizations serving them. The 2nd issue discussed the Council's role in addressing the issues raised and logistics of Council meetings. A summary of each groups' deliberations:

Programs/Provider concerns

1. Many families cannot find child care for infants and toddlers. The lack of spaces for them is due in large part to the low reimbursement rate that does not fully cover the cost of care.
2. Question as to why are prek programs under enrolled. We need data such as numbers of children birth to 5 years, in order to better understand the issues.
3. The center-based programs directors identified the following concerns:
 - Challenges finding qualified staff
 - Delays in receiving payments makes operating programs difficult
 - The change in the age a child can enter Kindergarten will put more stress on the childcare system.

Discussion about the Council:

SR Liaison

1. Need a new SR Liaison that will support SR programs with SR issues, working with families and be a conduit for state info reaching providers.
2. The Liaison's roles and responsibilities are spelled out in OEC policy. See https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_C-01_School-Readiness-Council-Membership-Responsibilities-and-Role-of-the-Liaison-final-2.6.22.pdf
3. Recommendation to move the Liaison position to UWGNH and hire someone ASAP

4. Need a Provider meeting ASAP. **Next Step**: Vanessa will arrange a meeting with providers to occur in September.

Council's role

1. Unclear if Council is about children birth to eight or is solely focused on School Readiness.
See above link for Council responsibilities.
2. Council needs to keep providers updated on issues related to school readiness such as the progress made in hiring a new Liaison.
3. Council voice is needed to help resolve the delay in getting SR payments.