



MEETING MINUTES

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

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

Members Present	9/6/23	10/4/23				
Jess Bialecki	•	•				
Steven Cousin	o	o				
Mary Derwin	•	•				
Daniel Diaz	o	o				
Vanessa Diaz-Valencia	•	•				
Karen Dubois-Walton	•	o				
Eliza Halsey	•	•				
Jennifer Heath	•	•				
Billy Johnson	o	o				
Soma Mitra	o	•				
Robin Moore-Evans	•	o				
Leonora Netter	o	•				
Averi Pakulis	o	o				
Tamesha Robinson	•	•				
Allyx Schiavone	•	o				
Galit Sharma	o	o				
Kioamary Sotillo	•	•				
Susan Taddei	•	•				
Elisabeth Teller	o	o				
Carmelita Valencia-Daye	•	•				
Lynn Wiener	o	•				
Sadie Witherspoon	o	o				
<i>Percent in attendance:</i>	55%	55%				

Staff: Denise Duclos, Kerry Oberg

Beth Bye, CT OEC Commissioner, shared a powerpoint and an overview of the draft Blue Ribbon Panel's Plan. The Panel has been meeting since April 2023 to develop a 5-year plan with the key pillars being equity, affordable access, provider stability, family voice and community-based decision making. See [Blue Ribbon Panel Plan Sept 20 version](#) for full plan

Improving Child Care Accessibility

Some strategies to improve quality and increase access for low-middle income families are:

- Expand eligibility for child care subsidies to 100% of SMI and limit copays to 7% of family income.
- Address the concerns of benefit cliffs to help families who make more than 100% SMI
- Address access issues, especially care for infants and toddlers and children with special needs.

Childcare Funding

- Invest in high-quality child care
- Combine State, Federal and local funding
- Look at how other states have maximized funding streams

Early Learning Sector: Teacher Pay and Unifying Framework

- Increasing certified teachers
- Implement a unifying framework for equitable pay for professionals in both schools and early childhood settings which values the CDA and a career path with increased compensation and considers grandfathering to recognize past efforts.
- Value the crucial role family childcare providers make to meet parent needs and ensure they are not excluded from the unifying framework

Simplify Early Childhood Systems

- Move to a single state-funded system with local governance
- Use a common needs assessment to understand local differences and improve the data and information system to better serve families.
- Shift from market rate to full cost of care funding over a five-year period
- Explore new funding streams

Discussion highlights:

How will all these efforts get funded? The OEC is talking to other states to find out their approaches, and thinking about what will work for CT. While cannabis tax is one way, there are others vying for this money too so need to consider many strategies and keep in mind the difficulty of aligning costs with recommendations.

Is the panel considering adding wraparound services (like Head Start has) as part of the model for what high-quality care should include? These services are valuable, and would increase the cost. There is funding from the legislature to study the impact of combining home visiting and early childhood education. But OEC is looking at funding local programs to develop more supports for coaching—especially helping family day care.

Is there a possibility of utilizing community non-profits as the fiscal agents for School Readiness so providers can be paid in a timely manner? Beth indicated that as a no-cost solution this could be considered.

How can we address the inequities in education levels between certified teachers and child care system? Beth responded (some ideas outlined in section **Early Learning Sector**). Other ways to increase qualifications of the child care workforce where there are language barriers is by increasing Spanish classes in the lab schools.

Any other questions or suggestions can be emailed to Eloisa.Melendez@CT.gov

SCHOOL READINESS

Restoration of SR Spaces:

Vanessa, in her role as Interim School Readiness Liaison, submitted to OEC that New Haven wants all our SR spaces back. Jennifer outlined OEC's requirements for restoring spaces (see attachment #1 of meeting docs for OEC process) and discussed the grid of projected enrollment for September and October (attachment #2 of meeting docs for enrollment projections). IF New Haven can maintain an average of 85% (months of June, September and October) we will get back 25% of spaces/funding. Restoration will continue on a rolling basis so we will have future opportunities to apply for return of our spaces.

How to increase the amount of funding/space returned?

- Council can move spaces from under-enrolled programs to those programs that are full and can add more spaces immediately.
- Council can use funding not expended last year to help programs recruit families.

Strategies to Increase Enrollment in SR Funded Programs:

Jennifer outlined the strategies considered last year and the funding allocated. Other ideas discussed: connecting waitlisted families getting information on programs with openings and maybe, this can be something the family recruiter takes on.

Motion: to spend the money not spent for this purpose in the previous year (\$12,100).

Motion moved, 2nd, motion passed with all present voting YES.

Policy regarding non-resident children attending in a SR funded space: (See attachment #4 of council meeting docs.)

The Council adopted this policy last year in December; it expired in August, and needs to be revisited. This version of the policy was edited to update the timeline for FY24. The policy would apply to FD, SD, ED spaces.

Motion to adopt the policy of allowing non-resident families to enroll in SR funded space as presented.

Discussion: Priority for programs should always be to enroll New Haven families. However, extending this policy would help given the very low enrollment and our need to restore spaces taken back by OEC last April.

Motion moved, 2nd, motion passed 8 yes, 1 no, 3 abstain.

Provider request for additional SR space:

Calvin Hill requested one additional SD space for a New Haven resident. Vanessa Diaz-Valencia, NHPS Director of Early Childhood Programs offered to give up one NHPS space to Calvin Hill.

Motion: Accept NHPS' offer of transferring one SR space from NHPS to Calvin Hill

Moved, 2nd, motion passed: 8 yes, 4 abstained.

Update on the status of the School Readiness Liaison position:

Vanessa reported that the agreement to move the liaison position to UW went to the Board of Education's Finance and Operations Committee and passed out of committee. Next step is it goes to the Board for approval on October 10

Meeting adjourned 5:35pm