

Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care
April 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Blue Ribbon Panelists in Attendance:

Senator Eric Berthel; Audette Bisailon, Director of the ROSCCO After School Activity Program; Emily Byrne, Executive Director of Connecticut Voices for Children; Shawn Coyne, Vice President of Human Resources for General Dynamics Electric Boat; Representative Jeffrey Currey; Chris DiPentima, President and CEO of CBIA; Jamie Eden, Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Communications for Boehringer Ingelheim; Dr. Monette Ferguson, Executive Director of the Alliance for Community Empowerment; Diana Jepsen, Community Member and former Communications Specialist for several Fortune 500 companies, including GE, United Technologies, Cigna, and Covidien; Dr. William Johnson, Co-Chair of the Connecticut Early Childhood Funder Collaborative and Director of Educational Strategy for the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund; Katherine Lantigua, Program Director for Katherine Lantigua Family Child Care; Courtney Larkin, Vice President of Government Relations for Travelers; Karen Lott, Executive Director of the Women's League Child Development Center; Althea Marshall-Brooks, Executive Director of Waterbury Bridge to Success Community Partnership; Representative Kathleen McCarty; Senator Douglas McCrory; Garrett Moran, Former Chairperson of the Governor's Workforce Council and Former President of Year Up; Kailyn Nadeau, Co-director and Teacher for the Norfolk Early Learning Center; Fran Rabinowitz, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents; Melissa Turner, Chief Human Resources Officer for the Yale New Haven Health System; Carmelita Valencia-Daye, Professor in Early Childhood Education for Gateway Community College; Maria Del Pilar Vargas, Member of the Office of Early Childhood's Parent Cabinet and Educational Coach for Licensed Family Child Care Providers for United Way

Speakers/Presenters: The Honorable Ned Lamont Governor of Connecticut; The Honorable Beth Bye, Commissioner, Connecticut Office of Early Childhood; Dr. Dan Wuori, Senior Director of Early Learning, The Hunt Institute; Dr. Valora Washington, Founder and CEO, CAYL Institute; Dr. Cynthia Osborne, Founder and Executive Director, Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center; OEC Deputy Commissioner Elena Trueworthy; The Honorable Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz; Eva Bermúdez Zimmerman, Director of Child Care & Organizing, CSEA SEIU; Jane Baird, Senior Director of External Relations, CCMC; Marinda Monphilston, Member, OEC Parent Cabinet

Welcome and Charge to the Panel:

The Honorable Beth Bye, Commissioner, Connecticut Office of Early Childhood called the meeting to order and introduced The Honorable Ned Lamont Governor of Connecticut.

Governor Lamont welcomed and thanked the Blue Ribbon Panel members. He shared his vision and charge:

- Highlighting the importance of child care - to give the very best opportunity for a child to start a life.

- Spoke to the panel's charge to connect with experts and come up with innovative ways to maximize dollars to have the greatest impact for children.
- The charge is to take care of more children in a more effective and affordable way throughout the state of Connecticut.
- Spoke to the need for various stakeholders to take part in the solution; i.e. corporate community.
- Goal is to make Connecticut the most family-friendly state in the nation.

Introductions, Committee Roles, and Timeline:

Commissioner Bye introduced Dan Wuori, *Senior Director of Early Learning at The Hunt Institute*.

Dan Wuori led a roundtable introduction of Blue Ribbon panelists before giving a high-level understanding of Hunt Institute's role. The Hunt Institute supports educational policy and serves as a resource to the nation's leaders.

Leading for Young Children:

Commissioner Bye introduced Dr. Valora Washington, Founder and CEO, CAYL Institute.

Dr. Washington presented CT: Architects of Change for the Next Generation of Children, Families, and Early Childhood Educators

- Dr. Washington spoke to the importance of child development and the historical shift that has happened over the past 40 years, related to what we understand about child development. Now we have data that shows that the birth to five years shape the rest of a child's life, and we need to act on this knowledge.
- Presentation touched on key guidelines for the panel members to do this work:
 - Persist - Focus on adaptive work
 - Reform - Think about sustainable innovations
 - Transform - Think about sustainable funding beyond COVID dollars
 - Reframe - Change the narrative around child care
- Focus areas should include: Equity, Workforce, Systems, Financing
- Left the panel with the vision to develop a new solution: "System is broken across the nation. Can't go back to normal – normal never worked for us." "There is no preexisting answer – we need to create the answer."
- Q&A with Blue Ribbon Panelists
 - Topics discussed:
 - How other states are handling child care
 - Continuum of education
 - The paradox of compensation/affordability

Building a World Class System for Connecticut Families: Perspective and Lessons from Across the Nation:

Commissioner Bye introduced Dr. Dan Wuori, Senior Director of Early Learning, The Hunt Institute, and Dr. Cynthia Osborne, Founder and Executive Director, Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center.

Dr. Wuori and Dr. Osborne shared their expert advice with the panel and led a roundtable discussion with Blue Ribbon panelists.

- Current child care policy is based on the myth that learning begins in kindergarten and child care is simply a warm custodial place where kids are safe while parents work.
- Shared details on brain science and connections starting in a child's first years. Importance of child care as the most important learning environment for children.
- CT is the 5th most expensive state in the nation for child care.
- Shared national child care field data - turnover in field is 40% per year. Teachers are making \$13.22 an hour nationally.
- Dr. Wuori referenced a ReadyNation report on the lack of access to infants and toddlers creating a \$1.5 billion impact in CT. This fiscal impact is on parents in lost or forgone wages, employers in workforce challenges, and taxpayers in economic impact.
- Q&A with Blue Ribbon Panelists
 - Topics discussed:
 - How other states are handling their models and policies
 - Subsidies, programs, etc.
 - The role equity plays in child care
 - Compensation, availability, flexibility, etc.
 - The challenges and opportunities as a result of COVID-19
 - Consolidation of funding streams
 - Employers' role in child care

CT Early Childhood Landscape: *Commissioner Bye and Deputy Commissioner Trueworthy*

Commissioner Bye and Deputy Commissioner Trueworthy presented Landscape of CT Early Childhood Education System

Areas of Focus included:

- Early Childhood Education in Connecticut (ecosystem)
 - Challenges in Connecticut's early childhood education space
 - Connecticut's numerous, complex sources of funding for early childhood education
 - CT state-funded early childhood education programs

- State, federal, & jointly funded early childhood education
- Historical view of child care capacity in CT from 2013 - 2023
- Center-based child care ratios in US, CT and NAEYC Accreditation Standards
- Parent survey results
- CT's ECE costs compared to other high cost-of-living states
- Despite infant/toddler costs being more expensive pre-k costs, pre-k receives more funding
- Range in estimates for true parent demand for formal care for infants and toddlers
- Market rate funding flows
- UConn cost of care analysis vs current registry salaries, personnel costs
- Enrollment in regard to system stability
- Blue Ribbon Planning will estimate the costs and impacts of a range of potential strategies to address system wide issues and opportunities
- OEC
 - OEC Draft Vision
 - OEC All Funds Budget Overview 2019 - 2023
 - OEC Stabilization Efforts Advanced Strategic Pillars
 - Expanded Access to Care 4 Kids for Families
 - OEC Stabilization Investments
 - CT ECE Strengths

The Honorable Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz Moderating Respondent Panel: The CT Early Childhood Landscape:

Commissioner Bye introduced The Honorable Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz.

The Honorable Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz introduced panelists and led a discussion based on their unique points of view. Panel members included Eva Bermúdez Zimmerman, Director of Child Care & Organizing, CSEA SEIU; Jane Baird, Senior Director of External Relations, CCMC; and Marinda Monphilston, Member, OEC Parent Cabinet.

- Discussion with panelists
 - Topics discussed:
 - Each panelist defined their unique perspective within the child care field
 - Challenges within the child care system from each panelist's perspective
 - Panelists called out access to knowledge and resources, workforce shortage, and fragmentation in the field as key challenges
 - Aspects which are working within our child care system in CT
 - Panelists called out state's enthusiasm to solve problems
- Q&A from Blue Ribbon Panelists
 - Topics discussed:

- When to give resources to families regarding child care - as early as possible in pregnancy and a child's life
- Fragmentation of child care system in CT
- How would the panelists act as governor for a year

Concluding remarks: *The Honorable Beth Bye, Commissioner | Connecticut Office of Early Childhood*

Commissioner Bye concluded the meeting.

- Thanked the panel and guest speakers for attending and committing to this effort
- Reminded panel that experts are available at our disposal – we are not alone in this work
- “Pressure is a privilege”