

**Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care**  
**June 14, 2023 Panel Meeting Minutes**

Panel Members in attendance: Audette Bisailon, Emily Byrne, Maria Del Pilar Vargas, Chris DiPentima, Jamie Eden, Dr. Monette Ferguson, Diana Jepsen, Dr. William Johnson, Katherine Lantigua, Courtney Larkin, Karen Lott, Rep. Kathleen McCarty, Garrett Moran, Kailyn Nadeau, Fran Rabinowitz, Carmelita Valencia-Daye

**Welcome/Introduction to Panel Meeting:**

Eloisa Melendez, Lead Planner and Manager of the Blue Ribbon Panel, Office of Early Childhood, and Commissioner Beth Bye called the meeting to order and shared the meeting agenda and objective:

- Focus on workforce and quality
- Sharing goals/guideposts from the Workforce and Quality Workgroup
- Hear from Rhian Allvin on the Unifying Framework
- Breakout groups where Panel members can consider recommendations, ask questions, have discussions, etc.
- “Pressure is a privilege”

Commissioner Bye introduced Rhian Allvin, Chief Executive Officer, Brynmor Holdings, to discuss the Unifying Framework.

- Developed over 3 years by a task force of 15 leading national organizations, representing early childhood field members across different states, settings, age bands, and stakeholders.
- The United States must:
  - Fund necessary supports
  - Establish realistic timelines
  - Provide increased compensation that reflects the value, importance, and return on investment generated by early childhood educators’ highly skilled work
- Vision of the Unifying Framework: Our vision is that each and every child, beginning at birth, has the opportunity to benefit from high quality, affordable early childhood education, delivered by an effective, diverse, well-prepared, and well-compensated workforce.
- Grounding in the Unifying Framework
  - Early childhood educators hold a license to practice in their state at one of three levels:
    - Early Childhood Educator I (120 training hours)
    - Early Childhood Educator II (Associate’s Degree)
    - Early Childhood Educator III (Bachelor’s Degree)
  - These educators will be prepared to be accountable for the following responsibilities:
    - Planning and implementing learning experiences that promote social-emotional development, physical development, health, cognitive development, and general learning competencies for each child served

- Establishing and maintaining a safe, caring, inclusive, and healthy learning environment
- Observing, documenting, and assessing children's learning and development
- Developing reciprocal, culturally responsive relationships with families and communities
- Advocating for the needs of children and their families
- Advancing and advocating for an equitable, diverse, and effective early childhood education profession that is well-compensated
- Engaging in reflective practice and continuous learning
- Post-presentation discussion, covering such topics as:
  - Structure surrounding competency in certification and coinciding compensation
  - Opportunities to engage high school students to earn credits to use at local community colleges to advance their careers in the industry
    - Provide high school counselors with information on this opportunity
  - Incorporating equity into this framework
  - The need for credentialing to ensure safe and quality development

Commissioner Bye introduced Deb Flis, Coefficient Quality Director of the Office of Early Childhood Quality Workgroup, and Deb Adams, Education Professional at the Office of Early Childhood, to present the recommendations for the Blue Ribbon Panel.

Deb Flis highlighted the Power to the Profession Unifying Framework and noted the alignment with the goals of this workgroup.

- The framework gives clarity on what needs to happen in order to move our field forward, set realistic timelines, and provide good compensation for the highly-skilled work of child educators.

The shared presentation covered three specific areas of focus. Recommendations around each of these areas included:

- Professional pathways and technical assistance
  - Restructure CT ECE credentialing and certifications systems
  - Use the NAEYC Professional as the basis for designing OEC-developed and/or sponsored professional development pathways
  - Fund the Professional Pathways and Technical Assistance System
    - Lack of faculty
- Compensation
  - Existing CT compensation schedule report
  - Adopt the three educator level roles (ECE I, II, III)
  - Strategies for improved benefits (PTO, healthcare, dental and vision, retirement, etc.)

- Importance of the structure of the profession so that the public is aware of the need and the importance of childhood educators
- Recruitment and retention

*Recruitment*

- Expand the info of ECE as a good job in high school or even before then
  - Apprenticeship to bring folks from other fields into ECE
- Leverage directors as leaders who serve as the face of recruitment in their programs
- Implement marketing strategies to attract people to the field

*Retention*

- Include retention-focused benefits in the compensation package (PTO, healthcare, dental and vision, retirement, etc.)
- Follow/adopt payscale that has mobility and steps for experience with ongoing professional development
- Create career pathways that use partnerships with colleges to give credits for degrees or credentials

Deb Adams concluded the presentation by speaking to the importance of compensation being addressed, because if it is not addressed, other recommendations cannot happen.

Meeting attendees were broken out into two breakout groups.

**Breakout Session Discussions:** *\*separate documents*

**Concluding Remarks:**

Commissioner Beth Bye concluded the meeting, thanking Panel members and members of the public for their time, and encouraging them to take some time with the recommendations and continue to send in feedback via a form on the OEC website. Commissioner Beth Bye acknowledged the recommendations will continue to evolve as this process continues. In looking forward to the upcoming meetings, Commissioner Bye expressed Governor Lamont's gratitude for attendees' willingness to participate.