Welcome/Initial Remarks:
Eloisa Melendez called the meeting to order and shared the objective of the session: The OEC Systems workgroup to share initial recommendations, and elicit feedback and solutions from the Blue Ribbon Panel.

Workgroup Context:
- Commissioner Bye shared additional information about today’s session.
  - The Systems workgroup overlaps with the equity and access discussions the Panel has been having.
  - Trying to simplify and streamline the systems to make them work for families, programs, and communities to support the economy.
- Systems is the third of four interdependent work groups presented to the Blue Ribbon Panel.
  - These workgroups can be adjusted once final recommendations have been made by the Blue Ribbon Panel.

Systems is the third of four interdependent workgroups presenting to the Blue Ribbon Panel

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Early Care and Education Systems are moving toward alignment with remaining complexity.

**ECE Systems**
Moving towards alignment with remaining complexity

**Before**
- State Department of Education
  - School Readiness
  - Part B – Special Education Preschool
  - Quality Improvement
- Office of Higher Education
  - Workforce Registry
  - Accreditation Support
- Department of Social Services
  - Care 4 Kids
  - CDC – Child Daycare
  - Home Visiting
  - Facilities, CHEFA
- Department of Developmental Disabilities
  - Part C Special Education - Birth to Three
- Department of Public Health
  - Child Care Regulations and Inspections
  - WIC – Women, Infant and Children Nutrition

**2014 OEC Created**

**After**
- Office of Early Childhood
  - School Readiness
  - CDC – Child Daycare
  - Care 4 Kids
  - Workforce Registry
  - Accreditation Support and Quality Improvement
  - Child Care Regulations and Inspections
  - Background Checks
  - Part C Special Education – Birth to Three
  - Home Visiting
  - Universal Nurse Home Visiting
  - Facilities
- State Department of Education
  - Part B – Special Education Preschool
- Department of Social Services
  - Medicaid
  - IMPACT
- Department of Public Health
  - WIC – Women, Infant and Children Nutrition

Footnote: Governor Malloy established the Office of Early Childhood in 2013 by Executive Order. The OEC was established in statute in 2014.

- Complexity of System from Three Perspectives

### Complexity of System from Three Perspectives

#### Teacher
- Licensing:
  - Head teacher requirements
- Legal:
  - Background checks
- Registry & Professional Development:
  - Higher Education Access Requirements
  - Development Opportunities in ECE, EEC, SR Councils, CAEYC, NAPCC
- Standards and Assessment:
  - Early Learning Standards and Assessment in ECE
- Birth to Three:
  - If child needs supports

#### Director
- Licensing & Accreditation:
  - Director requirements
  - Regulations (E License)
  - ECE & RESICS (support)
- Legal:
  - Background checks (BCIS)
- Registry:
  - For Staff
- United Way:
  - Care 4 Kids
- School Readiness:
  - SR Councils for grants
- CDC Funding:
  - Grants and contracts
- Head Start & Early Head Start
  - Special Education pre-school

#### Parent
- United Way:
  - Care 4 Kids
  - 211 to find care and check on licensing inspections
- School Readiness:
  - Local SR Council process for enrollment in SR program
- CDC Funding:
  - Enrollment process; program recruitment
- Head Start & Early Head Start
  - Enrollment
- Public school pre-school
  - Birth to Three:
    - Enrollment, if needed
Draft Recommendations to the Blue Ribbon Panel: presented by Jill Marini and Cathy Lenihan

- Grounding the Panel in Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory
  - Viewing child development as a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment
  - Keeping the child in mind (what they need, where they live, their families, and communities)

- Systems goal: build an equitable, efficient ECE system that is informed by current data and that fosters the sustainable provision of high-quality programs and services for young children and their families in Connecticut

- The workgroup has drafted recommended strategies to the Blue Ribbon Panel according to three key categories:
  - Funding Systems
  - Governance
  - Program Enrollment & Operations and Data & Outcomes

- Funding Systems Recommendations:
  - Consolidate the number of state-funded ECE funding sources from five (School Readiness, Child Day Care, Smart Start & Smart Start for Recovery, State Head Start Supplement, Care4Kids) to one.
  - Fund programs by classroom, based on blocks of time (informed by local community needs).
  - Deploy unified state funding to programs through State of Connecticut Purchase of Service (POS) contracts, rather than the current mix of grants and POS contracts; distribute payments directly to programs, quarterly in advance of service provided, rather than through contractors/fiscal agents.
  - Appoint regional ECE governance bodies (aligned with intermediary regional governance structure in Governance recommendations) to assess unmet need for high-quality ECE by community every three years; and develop an annual plan for local disbursement of state funds allocated to communities in alignment with demonstrated needs and local assets.
  - Convert the funding structure to reflect the true cost of care rather than market rates.

- Governance Recommendations:
  - Create and fund a cohesive governance system that covers all towns and provides an opportunity for local partnership and collaboration to allocate state funding.
  - Design and fund an intermediary regional governance structure to support local bodies.
- Create support at the state level to bolster the capacity of local and regional governance bodies.
- Create a common needs assessment, with common data collection across local governance bodies.

- Program Enrollment and Operations Recommendations:
  - Create a unified navigation system that provides a central location for families and providers to access all necessary information for child care in the state of Connecticut.
  - Provide incentives to programs that utilize systems (i.e., navigation system, assessment system, business supports, and Care4Kids) to improve business practices.
  - Provide resources and supports for providers (informed by provider feedback loops) such as a shared services plan and onboarding supports for newly licensed programs.

- Data and Outcomes Recommendations:
  - Enhance and integrate existing data systems (i.e., Provider 360 Portal, Registry, etc.) to support the creation of a comprehensive data system for providers that unifies program data entry and invoicing processes for state-funded programs.
  - Streamline process for families to access child care information and availability.
  - Collect common needs assessment data from local and regional governance bodies, and provide data on OEC website.
  - Implement a statewide system to assess Connecticut children’s early learning and development from birth to age 5 that will be linked to the State Department of Education and local school kindergarten enrollment processes, by leveraging an existing platform.
  - Create a transparent statewide data dashboard to share aggregate operations data and outcome measures with the field.

Breakout sessions:

Room 1:
- Difference between true cost of care and market value
  - True cost of care is what it actually costs to run an early child care facility plus paying educators a livable wage
- Consolidation could provide a road for inclusion, but could also further exclude community-based providers that families rely on
- All of the current systems are daunting, need real structural change
- Discussion if these will be recommendations, mandates, or incentive-based
- The goal of these recommendations is not to be a burden to providers, but to streamline their business practices and ultimately make their businesses stronger
- Spell abbreviations out for those not entrenched in the field
- Pinpoint the negative feelings around the word “regionalization”
- How will these recommendations be cared for across differently funded and operated programs?
- Licensing is a good entry point for collecting information from all providers across all programs
- As Elevate is rolled out, it can be another entry point for collecting information from all providers across all programs
- Additional coaching needed for Family Child Care Centers to encourage licensing
- Emphasis on providing support to providers and Staffed Family Child Care Networks (SFCCN)
- Push for a marketing campaign that has a unified, cohesive, and coherent message in different languages
- Consider the lack of trust from providers in terms of sharing data; provider experience is critical in this area
- Deliverables requested:
  - Spell OEC abbreviations out for those not entrenched in the organization
  - Table that identifies the locus of authority over each recommendation (Federal, State, General Practice)
  - Examples from other states on presumptive eligibility for C4K programs to help fill classrooms faster

Room 2:
- Prioritizing governance structure, then data collection, then streamlining funding system
- Recurring issues for parents: unable to find what they need, not easy to understand funding
- Centralize and streamline
- Look at the variety of different supports needed and starting off on the right foot versus backfilling after a crisis
- Reduce the funding streams to have basic supports in place
- Importance of terms used across field (classroom is not used for family child care providers)
- Equity and access are vital components
- Importance of not creating a system that requires more work for parents and providers
- Statewide Parent Cabinet Advisory Body to learn how each level of the system thinks and how they are interconnected, and provide a voice of parents or caregivers
- In a 5-year timeframe, parental voice and engagement is high priority.
- Collect data to know what is working
- Stabilize funding so programs can be efficient
- Regional structure can help to gather more voices to the table and worth looking into, as long as all the bases and geographical areas are covered

Timeline & Wrap-up:
- Commissioner Bye expressed gratitude for feedback gathered from today’s meeting, encouraged Panel to share their thoughts or send in their questions, and offered setting up time to discuss offline.