

DRAFT Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet Operating Guidelines: May 2008 through June 2009

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet (hereafter, Cabinet) was created in statute in the Connecticut General Assembly's 2005 legislative session. Its resources and responsibilities have increased since being established. In addition, in February 2006 Governor M. Jodi Rell established a partner entity -- the Governor's Early Childhood Research and Policy Council (hereafter, Council) -- to assist and support the work of the Cabinet. Responsibilities of the Council are specified in Executive Order #13.

The purpose of these "Cabinet Operating Guidelines" is to clarify operational relationships between the Cabinet and the Council and to confirm responsibilities, management and working structures of the Cabinet.

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SECTION I. Responsibilities of the Cabinet

The statutory responsibilities of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet, as amended in the 2007 session of the Connecticut General Assembly, are to:

1. Advise the Commissioner of Education on policies and initiatives to meet the school readiness goals established in Section 10-16o of the Connecticut General Statutes (below);
2. Conduct a statewide-longitudinal evaluation of the school readiness program beginning July 1, 2008 (in consultation with the Department of Social Services and the Department of Education), to examine the educational progress of students from pre-kindergarten programs to Grade 3, inclusive;
3. Develop budget requests for the early childhood program;
4. Promote consistency of quality and comprehensiveness of early childhood services;
5. Develop and implement an accountability plan for early childhood education services not later than December 1, 2008, and annually thereafter; Providers of early childhood education that receive state funding shall employ the program measures developed under this plan;
6. Consult with OPM and SDE to “consider the development of data sharing agreements between state agencies and analyze whether the data can be combined to assess the progress of children toward school readiness;”
7. Consult with the Commissioners of the Department of Social Services and the Department of Education, as those agencies develop a multi-year agreement to define the duties and responsibilities of their Departments to establish and implement an integrated school readiness plan;
8. Develop minimum standards and a range of higher standards of quality for all early care and education programs receiving state funding by December 1, 2008, and report on quality plan annually;
9. Develop, in consultation with the Office for Workforce Competitiveness, a quality workforce development plan for school readiness. Report on the plan no later than December 31, 2008, and annually thereafter.

In addition, the Cabinet shall allocate and manage such funding as is made available for its use by the State of Connecticut or other sources, including philanthropy.

Section 10-16o specifies that the state shall encourage the development of a network of school readiness programs pursuant to section 10-16p to 10-16r, inclusive and 17b-749a¹ in order to:

¹ Section 10-16p defines a “school readiness program”, identifies SDE as the lead agency for school readiness programs, sets standards, and defines grant programs. Section 10-16rq establishes required elements of school readiness program, sets cost parameters, and authorizes a waiver process by which towns may request altered hours of service. Section 10-16r defines the composition and duties of local

1. Provide open access for children to quality programs that promote the health and safety of children and prepare them for formal schooling;
2. Provide opportunities for parents to choose among affordable and accredited programs;
3. Encourage coordination and cooperation among programs and prevent the duplication of services;
4. Recognize the specific service needs and unique resources available to particular municipalities and provide flexibility in the implementation of programs;
5. Prevent or minimize the potential for developmental delay in children prior to their reaching the age of five;
6. Enhance federally funded school readiness programs;
7. Strengthen the family through: (A) Encouragement of parental involvement in a child's development and education; and (B) enhancement of a family's capacity to meet the special needs of the children, including children with disabilities;
8. Reduce educational costs by decreasing the need for special education services for school age children and to avoid grade repetition;
9. Assure that children with disabilities are integrated into programs available to children who are not disabled; and
10. Improve the availability and quality of school readiness programs and their coordination with the services of child care providers.

SECTION II. Responsibilities of the Council

Executive Order #13 states that the Council shall:

1. Advise the Early Childhood Education Cabinet, established pursuant to Public Act 05-245, on research findings, policy solutions, and strategic financing opportunities related to investments in early childhood initiatives;
2. Recommend way to build and support a network of early childhood researchers across Connecticut's educational systems, including academic scholars at business and other professional schools;
3. Engage Connecticut's academic researchers (including, but not limited to, the Connecticut School Readiness Program and local School Readiness Councils) in design of a longitudinal study of children's development and review existing research that evaluates early childhood programs;
4. Examine, from a business perspective, possible strategies to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Connecticut's early care and education "industry";

and regional school readiness councils. Section 17b-749a authorizes subsidies for child care services and grants to school readiness providers.

5. Propose additional “return on investment” (ROI) studies necessary to evaluate and support early childhood care and education, quality improvement and expansion proposals;
6. Consult with the Cabinet in its preparation of the Cabinet’s Early Childhood Investment Plan, to be submitted to the Governor, regarding the expansion of high quality early childhood education services leading to the readiness for kindergarten of all Connecticut children upon entry into kindergarten; and
7. Consult with the Cabinet in monitoring the ongoing implementation of the Connecticut Early Childhood Investment Plan.

At its July 2007 meeting, the Cabinet requested additional assistance from the Council as follows:

1. Develop a strategic communications plan for the Early Childhood Investment Initiative
2. Provide project management for the development of the Cabinet’s legislatively mandated Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) plan and Quality Rating Scale. ²
3. Manage resources allocated by the Cabinet related to establishment of an early childhood research network and studies.
4. Conduct such cost, financing and management studies as requested.

SECTION III: Cabinet and Council Membership, Leadership and Collaboration

Membership on the Cabinet is established by law and includes 15 members, representing the Governor’s Office, state agencies, the Commission on Children, School Readiness Councils, Head Start Association, and the Co-Chairs of the Connecticut General Assembly’s Education and Human Services Committees. As designed by law, the Cabinet is co-chaired by the Governor’s Office and the Commissioner of the State Department of Education.

Membership on the Council is established by Executive Order #13, representing the business, philanthropic, higher education sectors, state agencies and local government, Connecticut’s workforce and economic development communities, K-12 and higher education leadership. In addition, the co-chairs and ranking members of the Connecticut General Assembly’s Appropriations and Finance Committees were invited to participate. The Council is co-chaired by three individuals named by the Governor from each of the business, philanthropic and higher education sectors.

Specific membership of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet and the Governor’s Early Childhood Research and Policy Council is shown in Appendix A. Co-Chairs for the Cabinet in SFY 08 and 09 are:

² The Cabinet is required, under Section 10-16s (d) (3) of the General Statutes to prepare and present to the General Assembly a plan for quality improvement in early childhood education by December 2008.

- Dr. Janice Gruendel (Governor's designee to the Cabinet)
- Dr. Mark K. McQuillan (Commissioner of the State Department of Education)

The three co-chairs of the Council named the Governor Rell are:

- Mr. John Rathgeber, President, CT Business and Industry Association
- Mr. David Nee, Executive Director, William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund
- Mr. Michael Meotti, Commissioner of the CT Department of Higher Education.

The chairpersons of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet and the Governor's Early Childhood Research and Policy Council meet on a regular basis, not less often than quarterly, to plan and coordinate activities of each body. Results of these meetings of the Joint Chairs will be reported at regularly scheduled meetings of both the Cabinet and Council.

SECTION IV. Office of the Cabinet

At its July 2007 meeting, the Cabinet approved funding for Cabinet staff. The State Department of Education, acting as the Cabinet's fiduciary agent, is hosting these positions – organized as the Office of the Cabinet – within its Central Office. Staff members assigned to the Office of the Cabinet are supervised by the Cabinet Co-Chairs.

The Office of the Cabinet will provide staffing support to Standing Committees, the Executive Committee, and working groups of the Cabinet as well as to the Cabinet as a whole. Responsibilities of the Office of the Cabinet will include but not be limited to:

1. Providing Cabinet meeting support;
2. Developing and monitoring of Cabinet budget documents;
3. Providing or securing staffing support for Standing Committees, the Executive Committee, and working groups of the Cabinet;
4. Developing reports, briefing papers, research reviews and other analytic materials;
5. Developing co-investment opportunities that support the goals and objectives of the Cabinet ;
6. Providing regular reports to the Cabinet on work in progress;
7. Liaison with the Governor's Early Childhood Research and Policy Council;
8. Liaison with other entities whose mission or resources are related to the goals and objectives of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet.³

³ Examples of other entities with common target populations or similar goals are the CT Child Poverty and Prevention Council, CT Youth Vision Team and Governor's P-20 Council.

SECTION V. Cabinet Committees and Working Groups

For the balance of SFY 08 and SFY 09, the Early Childhood Education Cabinet will – in addition to working as a committee of the whole -- operate with:

1. A Standing Committee on Local Capacity
2. A Standing Committee on Accountability, and
3. A number of time-bound, project-specific working groups as needed.

Standing Committees. The standing committees will be chaired or co-chaired by at least one Cabinet member and staffed by the Office of the Cabinet and/or entities on contract to the Cabinet. Membership on the standing committees will include Cabinet members and stakeholders interested in or affected by the charge of the Committee and the goals and mission of the Cabinet as a whole. The Cabinet will allocate fiscal and other resources to the Office of the Cabinet to assure appropriate levels of support for the two Standing Committees.

The *Standing Committee on Local Capacity* is responsible for guiding the Cabinet's work to support and strengthen the role of families and communities in the positive and age-appropriate development of their young children. This shall include but not be limited to guidance on community leadership and strategic planning, parent and family leadership and engagement, co-investment opportunities through state and local resource development, public-private partnerships, and best practices.⁴

The *Standing Committee on Accountability* is responsible for guiding development and annual submittal of the Cabinet's legislatively-mandated *Accountability Plan*⁵; coordinating and tracking implementation of the plan; guiding data development work; serving as the reporting structure for implementation of the Cabinet's quality improvement mandates, including the use of quality improvement resources allocated to the Cabinet; and linking formally with the Early Childhood Research Network.

Working Groups. The Cabinet will designate project-specific, time bound working groups as needed to advance the goals and objectives of its systems frameworks⁶ and the Connecticut Early Childhood Investment Plan(s). The Cabinet may also allocate fiscal and other resources to the Office of the Cabinet to assure appropriate levels of support for these working groups.

Leadership of the working groups will include at least one Cabinet member or member designee. Membership may include Cabinet members as well as representatives of agencies and other organizations necessary to the task of the working group. Working groups at the present time include: PreK-K facilities development; ECE workforce development; B-3 systems development; K-3 systems development.

⁴ As of March 1, 2008, the Cabinet has received philanthropic co-investments in excess of \$1 million and has allocated \$1.34 million of its own funding for local capacity building and parent leadership initiatives.

⁵ The Accountability Plan, authorized in Section 10-16s (d) (1) of the Connecticut General Statutes, is due to the General Assembly no later than December 2008 with annual implementation reports thereafter.

⁶ These include: Ready by Fine, Fine by Nine; First Words, First Steps; K-3 Systems Framework.

SECTION VI. Council Structure

The Governor’s Early Childhood Research and Policy Council annually establishes the operating committees and working groups necessary to meet its mandate. Currently, the Council has three standing committees and a working group.

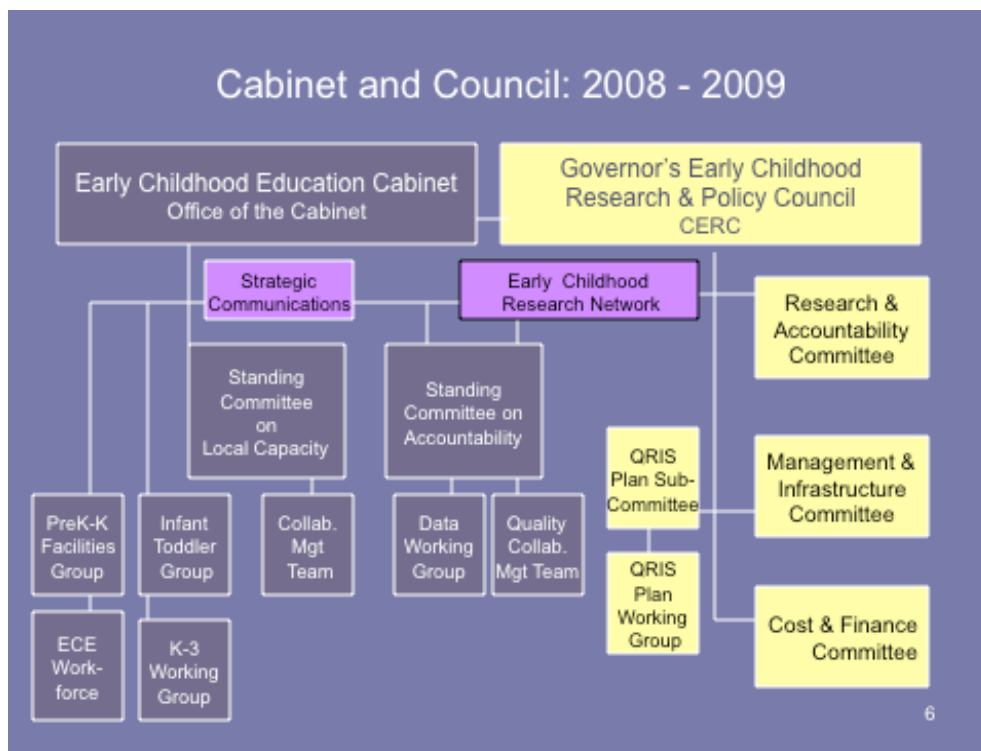
The *Standing Committee on Cost and Finance* will provide cost modeling and financial projection needed to update and reissue the Early Childhood Investment Plan, Part I of which was released in November 2006.

The *Standing Committee on Management and Infrastructure* is currently serving as the reporting structure for the Quality Rating and Improvement System Plan development. The committee has created a formal public-private working group. In addition, this committee will provide leadership for the requested assessment of Cabinet operations and implementation of the Investment Plan.

The *Standing Committee on Research and Accountability* will provide guidance for the development and operation of the Early Childhood Research Network as authorized in Executive Order #13.

SECTION VII. Joint Cabinet – Council Collaborative Structures

Once established, the Early Childhood Research Network shall serve as a collaborative entity supported by both the Cabinet and Council. In addition, the Cabinet and Council will jointly establish a Joint Strategic Communications Network to guide, assist and leverage co-investment opportunities for strategic communications.



SECTION VIII. Meeting Agendas, Minutes and Reports

The Early Childhood Education Cabinet shall adopt an annual schedule of public meetings and notify the general public of this schedule. Special Cabinet meetings may be called by the Co-Chairs of the Cabinet or upon request to the Chairpersons by three members of the Cabinet. At least once in each fiscal year, the Cabinet will co-host a joint meeting with the Governor's Early Childhood Research and Policy Council.

The Cabinet's meeting agenda shall be prepared in advance of the meeting by the Co-Chairpersons, assisted by Cabinet staff. Members may submit items to be included on the agenda by email or by phone to Cabinet staff. The agenda for each meeting shall be transmitted to Cabinet members, electronically or by mail, three days prior to the meeting.

The order of the agenda may be set at the discretion of the Cabinet's Co-Chairpersons, and items for each regular meeting shall include consideration of minutes, reports by the Cabinet and Council co-chairs, committee reports, items requiring discussion or action, and other matters brought by Cabinet members or the public. Public comment will be sought throughout the meeting, as well as at the end of each meeting.

Materials for the meetings may be prepared by Cabinet staff or by Cabinet members, with the goal of electronic or mail distribution three days prior to the meeting. To the greatest extent possible, committee reports will be summarized in writing and submitted for dissemination prior to the meeting.

The actions taken by the Cabinet shall be recorded in its minutes. The minutes, along with the printed agenda and its back-up materials, shall constitute the official record of the Cabinet. Minutes and other records from Cabinet meetings will be posted to the Cabinet's website to ensure public access and retain a public record.

To the greatest extent possible, the Cabinet shall consider policy positions and reports proposed for adoption over a period of at least two meetings prior to taking a vote.

SECTION IX. Budget Adoption and Accounting

The Cabinet shall adopt an annual budget for the allocation of funding as provided by the CT General Assembly. Office of the Cabinet staff shall prepare quarterly updates on the utilization of Cabinet funds, as well as regular updates on Cabinet initiatives.

The Chairpersons of the Cabinet may, along with individual Cabinet members, submit requests for funds allocation or modification in advance of any regular meeting. Items proposed for funding shall be reviewed by the Cabinet in relation to the priorities and systems frameworks that it has established. In order to be considered, funding proposals must address how they will advance the Cabinet's goals, core values, and statutory responsibilities.

SECTION X. Voting

Unless otherwise required, all items pending before the Cabinet shall be decided by a majority of the members present and voting. "Present" means physically in the meeting room or by electronic equipment as provided for in Section 1-200(2) of the CT General Statutes. A vote on funding authorization will be taken at Cabinet meetings. No vote taken at a Cabinet will be considered final without a quorum in attendance.

At the discretion of the Chairpersons, a vote on matters before the Cabinet may be taken electronically between regular meetings. A record of all votes will be included in the minutes of the Cabinet.

SECTION XI. Implementing Cabinet Action

The Cabinet will adopt such working agreements among its members as required to fulfill its legislative charge and the work agenda that it sets out annually. When policies are adopted that affect multiple Cabinet agencies, a formal memorandum of agreement will be drafted by the Cabinet setting out the roles and responsibilities of the Cabinet agencies that will carry out the policies.

In addition, Cabinet members will participate in a systematic process of public education and outreach to key stakeholders and constituencies in order to convey the work of the Early Childhood Investment Initiative, as well to solicit regular public input. This work shall be guided by an annual Early Childhood Investment Strategic Communications Plan created and supported by the Governor's Early Childhood Research and Policy Council, and the Joint Cabinet-Council Strategic Communications Network.

SECTION XII. Assessment of Cabinet Operations

Periodically, the Co-Chairs of Cabinet shall request the assistance of the Council to assess the operations, accomplishments and challenges of the Cabinet in relation to its mission, statutory responsibilities, and investments. Results of these studies will be incorporated as part of the Cabinet's annual Accountability Plan update, due to the Connecticut General Assembly in December of each year.

SECTION XIII. Public Participation

The Cabinet shall schedule time during each regular meeting and when practical at special meetings for public participation. During public participation, the Chairperson(s) shall recognize speakers and allot a reasonable time for each speaker. The Cabinet shall hear only concerns, views and opinions that are within the purview of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet.

**APPENDIX A:
A Listing of Cabinet and Council Membership**

Membership of the Cabinet and Council	
Early Childhood Education Cabinet 15 members specified in statute	Governor's Early Childhood Research and Policy Council 31 members appointed by the Governor as specified in Executive Order #13
Governor (or designee)	Governor's designee from Early Childhood Education Cabinet
<p>State Agencies (8)</p> <p>Commissioner, Dept. Education Secretary, Office of Policy & Management Commissioner, Dept. Higher Education</p> <p>Commissioner, Dept. Social Services Commissioner, Dept. Public Health Commissioner, Dept. Children and Families Commissioner, Dept. Developmental Services</p> <p>Executive Director, CT Commission on Children</p> <p>(Note: Each of these members may identify a designee.)</p>	<p>State Agencies (3)</p> <p>Commissioner, Dept. Education Secretary, Office of Policy & Management Commissioner, Dept. Higher Education</p> <p>(Note: Each of these members may identify a designee.)</p>
<p>Community/ Provider Representatives (2)</p> <p>CT Head Start Association representative (named by Speaker of the House)</p> <p>School Readiness Council local or regional representative (named by Senate President pro tem)</p>	<p>Community/ Provider Representatives (7)</p> <p>CT Association of Boards of Education (1) CT Association of Public School Superintendents (1) CT Education Association (1 leader) CT Chapter of American Federation of Teachers (1)</p> <p>CT Municipalities (3) (1 from each of municipalities with small, medium and large populations)</p>
<p>CT General Assembly (4)</p> <p>Co-Chairs CGA Education Committee Co-Chairs CGA Human Services Committee</p>	<p>CT General Assembly (8)</p> <p>Co-Chairs and Ranking Members of CGA Appropriations Committee (4) Co-Chairs and Ranking Members of CGA Finance Committee (4)</p>

<p>Note: Each of these 4 individuals may name a designee</p>	
	<p>Business and Industry (3) Three representatives</p>
	<p>Workforce/ Investment Sector (3) Director, Office for Workforce Competiveness President, CT Development Authority Director, CT Health and Education Facilities Authority (Note: Each may name a designee)</p>
	<p>Philanthropy (3) One each from the CT Council on Philanthropy; the United Ways Associations of CT; plus 1 undesignated</p>
	<p>Higher Education (3) One each from public higher education; private higher education or CT Conference of Independent Colleges; CT community colleges</p>