

## Recommendations to the Early Childhood Cabinet on the Creation of a Standing Committee related to Local Capacity Building

May 12, 2008

The recommendations articulated below are respectfully submitted by the following planning group members:

- Laura Downs, Project Manager, Local Capacity Building Grant
- Harriet Feldaufer, SDE, (Cabinet Local Capacity Collaborative Management Team)
- Lynda Fosco, EC Cabinet Member, School Readiness Councils Network
- Dawn Homer-Bouthiette, Commission on Children
- Judith Meyers, EC Cabinet Member, Rep. Villano
- Elizabeth Morgan, EC Cabinet Member, Sen. Gaffey
- Carmen Siberon, William C. Graustein Memorial Fund, (Cabinet Local Capacity Collaborative Management Team)
- Joyce Staples, EC Cabinet Staff, (Cabinet Local Capacity Collaborative Management Team)
- Malia Sieve, Planning Group Staff, United Way of CT/Community Results Center

### Background

At the March 2008 meeting of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet, the Cabinet Chairs requested that a small group of interested Cabinet members and other key stakeholders form in order to determine the purpose and membership of a Standing Committee related to local capacity building. This group was charged with making recommendations back to the Cabinet by its May 2008 meeting. This group met on April 25<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup> to discuss this and make the recommendations articulated below.

### Statement from Group:

Through the discussions of this group, we referenced the Investment Plan as it related to the State Roles and Responsibilities in Local Partnerships, in addition to building on the work already undertaken by the Ad Hoc Local Capacity Group<sup>1</sup>. As such, the group believes that this Standing Committee's foremost role is to facilitate state and local planning of services and supports for families with young children in order to coordinate and align state, local and private resources, and program and policy development.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below reflect the consensus reached by the above listed small group members.

#### Standing Committee's Name

We recommend that this group be called the *Standing Committee on State and Community Partnerships*. The name emphasizes the mutual responsibility of the state and community to achieve the Cabinet's results for young children. We believe that a strong value of this Standing Committee is respect for the differing roles state leaders, local leaders, and parents play and the differing perspectives they bring, which contribute to achieving positive results for young children. This partnership and value should be reflected in its name, membership and functions.

#### Purpose

The *Standing Committee on State and Community Partnerships*, as standing committee to the Early Childhood Education Cabinet, exists to facilitate state and local planning of services and supports for families with young children to coordinate and align resources. The purpose is left broad in order to

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<sup>1</sup> The Ad Hoc Local Capacity Group was a group of Cabinet representatives, the Graustein Memorial Fund, and consultants to plan and implement the state's public-private partnership related to early childhood local capacity building grants.

accommodate the growth of our understanding of early childhood systems development<sup>2</sup> as the Cabinet moves forward. We propose that the Standing Committee charge should include the following:

1. Receive and synthesize the results of the local Councils'<sup>3</sup> early childhood community plans to:
  - a. Assess barriers / challenges related to systems development;
  - b. Research models / best practices related to systems development based on the assessment of community plans;
  - c. Provide reports to the Cabinet regarding:
    - i. Progress made by local Councils;
    - ii. Barriers/challenges local Councils face in achieving their goals as it relates to the alignment with the state;
2. When it is necessary, make recommendations to the Cabinet of policy changes in order to better align state resources to support early childhood systems development;
3. Identify co-investment opportunities to the Cabinet for public-private and state-local partnerships; advise the Cabinet on investments related to early childhood systems development, including leadership development;
4. Receive updates on state and local entities working on Cabinet-sponsored early childhood systems development, such as the Local Capacity Building Collaborative Management Team, the Parent Trust Fund and other funded initiatives, in order to ensure coordination;
5. Facilitate ongoing opportunities for dialogue among communities, the Cabinet and state agencies to support the coordination of systems; and
6. Continue to review as a group its understanding of systems development in order to inform the Cabinet, accept new information and learnings, and improve practice.

### Membership

It is our recommendation that the membership of this Standing Committee be approximately 18 people, with a minimum 50% representation of community leaders (i.e. champions of early childhood systems development).

*(During this discussion, there was some disagreement regarding whether membership should build from the existing Ad Hoc Local Capacity Group and whether to include a representative of from the early childhood affinity group of philanthropy.)*

*State Membership* - Membership should include Cabinet representatives from the following:

- State Department of Education
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Children and Families
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Developmental Services
- Commission on Children
- 2 Legislators or their designees

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<sup>2</sup> Systems development refers to the development of a seamless, accessible system of services that is responsive to family needs encompassing the areas of early care and education, social, emotional, behavioral and physical health, and family supports.

<sup>3</sup> Local Councils are defined as entities within any town or group of towns that has/have formed to address the needs of families with children birth through eight years old, regardless of whether they receive School Readiness funds.

*Community Membership*

- 2 parent representatives from statewide parent leadership groups (1 parent must be a representative of families with children with special needs)
- School Readiness Council Network representative
- 7 local leaders in early childhood (examples may include, but are not limited to, a Council chair, physician, chief elected official, other elected official, School Superintendent, representative of philanthropic organization, leaders of non-profits, local advocate)

*Resources*

- Staffed by Cabinet Staff – The role of this staff person would be as a working member of the Standing Committee to ensure coordination and collaboration across Cabinet efforts and provides information for decision-making.