

**Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet
DRAFT BY-LAWS**

SECTION I: Membership on the Early Childhood Education Cabinet

Membership on the Cabinet is specified in statute:

- Governor, or the Governor's designee;
- Commissioner of the State Department of Education, or the Commissioner's designee
- Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, or the Secretary's designee;
- Commissioners of Social Services, Higher Education, Public Health, Children and Families, and Mental Retardation, or the Commissioners' designees;
- Co-Chairpersons of the Education and Human Services joint standing committees of the General Assembly, or the Co-Chairpersons' designees;
- Executive Director of the Commission on Children, or the Director's designee;
- A representative of a local or regional School Readiness Council, appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate; and
- A representative of the Connecticut Head Start Association, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

SECTION II: Cabinet Officers

As specified in statute, the 15-member Early Childhood Education Cabinet shall be co-chaired by the Governor's designee and the Commissioner of the State Department of Education.

SECTION III: Executive Committee

The Cabinet shall vote to appoint three of its members to serve on an Executive Committee that shall meet with the Co-chairs periodically to discuss long-term initiatives and the overall effectiveness of the Cabinet as a whole. In addition to providing a means to monitor the Cabinet's work, the Executive Committee may make decisions on behalf of the Cabinet, only if there is a compelling need to make a decision affecting its responsibilities before the Cabinet's next regular meeting. Executive Committee meetings may be called by any member of the Committee with 48 hours' notice. Decisions reached by the Executive Committee must be unanimous to be implemented and are subject to the provisions of Section XII below.

SECTION IV: Cabinet Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Early Childhood Cabinet, as amended in the 2007 session of the Connecticut General Assembly, are to:

- Advise the Commissioner of Education on policies and initiatives to meet the school readiness goals established in Section 10-160 of the CT General Statutes;

- Conduct a statewide-longitudinal evaluation of the school readiness program by 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;
- Develop budget requests for the early childhood program;
- Promote consistency of quality and comprehensiveness of early childhood services.
- Develop and implement an accountability plan for early childhood education services not later than December 1, 2008, and annually thereafter;
- 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;”
- 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;
- 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;
- 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, 2007, 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 V. Committees and Ad Hoc Working Groups

The Early Childhood Education Cabinet shall operate with four standing committees and such ad hoc working groups as it deems necessary to complete its mission. Standing Committees shall be:

- Birth to 9 Systems Committee (Goals 1 and 2)
- Building Local Capacity Committee
- Accountability Committee
- **Committee on Policy and Legislation.**

Each Standing Committee shall be chaired by at least one member of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet. Membership on the Committees and such ad hoc working groups as created by the Cabinet shall include Cabinet members as well as representatives of agency and other organizations necessary to accomplish the task of the committee. The Committee on Policy and Legislation shall hold regular meetings with legislators to keep them apprised of actions contemplated by the Cabinet and to take input on legislation or other matters affecting the Cabinet’s charge.

The Co-Chairs shall recommend individuals to serve as chairpersons of each standing Committee, who shall be approved by the Cabinet as a whole. Standing Committee Chairs will select the members of their committees and ad hoc groups, after consulting the Co-Chairs.

SECTION VI. Schedule of Cabinet Meetings

The Early Childhood Education Cabinet shall adopt an annual schedule of meetings and notify the general public of the schedule of meetings. All meetings of the Cabinet are open to the public. Special Cabinet meetings may be called by the Chairpersons of the Cabinet or upon request to the Chairpersons by three members of the Cabinet.

SECTION VII. Meeting Agenda, Minutes and Mailing Packets

The agenda shall be prepared in advance of the meeting by the Co-Chairs of the Cabinet, 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:

- Call to Order
- Consideration of Minutes
- Report of the Cabinet and Council Chairpersons
- Items Requiring Discussion
- Items Requiring Action
- Committee Reports
- Public Participation

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.

SECTION IX. Voting

Unless otherwise required, all questions pending before the Cabinet shall be decided by a majority of the voting 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.

Section X. 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, request proper identification 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.

SECTION VIII. Budget Adoption and Accounting

The Cabinet shall adopt an annual budget for the allocation of funding as provided by the CT General Assembly. Cabinet staff shall prepare quarterly financial statements 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. Requests of the Cabinet for funding need to show – explicitly – their relationship to the Cabinet’s short and long-range goals. At the discretion of the Chairpersons, approval for such requests may be voted upon electronically by members between regular meetings.

SECTION IX. Decision- Making Protocols

As a policy-making body, the Cabinet shall develop, disseminate, and oversee the implementation of policies and/or decisions reached by a majority of the voting members. Because the Cabinet represents many constituencies and several agencies, the Cabinet will adhere to the following protocol for making decisions on policy, budget items or other such matters as may affect different groups throughout the state:

Process

1. All budgetary questions or policy decisions must undergo two votes: the first to endorse the concept, policy, or decision proposed; the second to confirm the decision, after sufficient time has elapsed between meetings.
2. Budgetary questions or policy matters shall be voted on by the full Cabinet, but no vote shall be taken unless the question or policy is placed on the agenda by a Cabinet member one week prior to the publication of the agenda. In the instance when an emergency vote must be taken, without adequate time to present it before the full Cabinet, the matter may be referred to the Cabinet’s Executive Committee for a vote of approval.
3. All Cabinet members are free to submit budget items or policies to the Co-chairs for inclusion in the agenda, and as the need arises, the Co-chairs may convene ad hoc committees to assist in the formulation of budgetary or policy matters. Ad hoc committees may be staffed with members outside the Cabinet to allow for expedient completion of the work needed to bring such items to the governing body.
4. All decisions reached by the Cabinet shall be final and cannot be altered unless by a later vote of the membership.

Dissemination

1. Within 10 days of voting approval of a policy or budget decision, the Co-Chairs shall disseminate via email and hard copy the outcome of the vote and accompanying

documentation to all members of the Cabinet, the Office of the Cabinet, the Bureau of Early Childhood Education at the SDE, and other such bureaus and/or organizational units in other state agencies (e.g., DSS, DPH, etc.) In addition the Co-Chairs will take steps to disseminate the Cabinet's decisions to the following individuals, groups and/or community organizations:

- The Governor's Office
- The Co-chairs of Education Appropriations
- The Chief Financial Officer of the SDE
- Policy and Research Council Co-Chairs
- Any Agency head, or Commissioner affected by the outcome of the decision.
- Any Town and Municipal leaders and/or child advocate groups affected
- Any non-profit or charitable groups affected
- Any education stakeholder groups affected

For the sake of convenience a standard dissemination list shall be generated and added to as the need arises.

2. In addition to disseminating the content and dollar figures attached to the decisions made by the Cabinet, the notification of indicate the date or dates when the decision will go into effect, as well as the individual(s) or group(s) tasked with carrying it out.

Oversight and Administration of Decisions

1. It is the assumption of the Cabinet that budgetary and/or policy decisions will be processed in accordance with the above, and members and/or groups affected by the votes taken by the Cabinet will have had ample time to review and comment on items brought to a vote. Nonetheless, circumstances may arise when a decision is reached without adequate consideration of the concerns of one or more parties.
2. In such an event, any agency or member affected by the vote shall have one week upon receipt of the decision to request a reconsideration of the vote and shall request in writing the Co-Chairs bring the issue to the next Cabinet meeting for reconsideration. Under such circumstances, the party or parties requesting a reconsideration of the vote must be present and offer reasons why the vote should be changed.
3. In the event that a week passes and no appeal is made for reconsideration, the decision will be final unless a member of the Cabinet chooses to request reconsideration.
4. All agencies, individuals, and/or groups affected by the Cabinet's decision(s) shall abide by the decision reached and take steps to implement the decision. Such groups and/or individuals may request technical or financial assistance from the Cabinet, the Office of the Cabinet or the Bureau of Early Childhood Education, if such assistance is warranted and needed.

5. Once the Cabinet has made a policy or budgetary decision, it 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 cross Cabinet agencies, a formal memorandum of agreement as to the roles and responsibilities of members for implementation shall be written and available upon request. In the event that a difference should arise between agencies over the terms of the memorandum or any other matter, the agencies will refer the dispute to the Executive Committee for mediation, whose resolution shall be final.

SECTION X. Joint Working Relations with the Governor’s Early Childhood Research and Policy Council

As specified in Executive Order #13 issued by Governor M. Jodi Rell in February 2006, the following members of the Cabinet shall sit on the Governor’s Early Childhood Research and Policy Council:

- o Commissioner of Education
- o Governor’s Designee to the Cabinet
- o Commissioner of Higher Education
- o Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management.

The Cabinet may refer items to the Council on as needed basis and may request such advice and analyses as required to conduct its work. The Cabinet may also awards funds for Council use as part of its annual budget adoption process.

A schematic of the Cabinet –Council structures and relationships follows:

