

## Co-Chairs Report to the Cabinet: February 11, 2008

### **National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy, Harvard University**

Governor Rell directed Connecticut to submit an application for consideration as one of several states to be selected for participation in the National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy. This institute is hosted by the National Governors Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, and Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child. The symposium will be held in late June. Costs associated with attendance are being covered by a grant from the Buffet Foundation to the NGA. States selected will be notified in early March.

Connecticut's application, submitted on February 5<sup>th</sup>, will be posted online at – [www.ecpolicycouncil.org](http://www.ecpolicycouncil.org) – under the February 11 Cabinet meeting. If selected, Connecticut will send an 8-person bi-partisan, cross-branch team. Team members are: Cabinet Co-Chairs Gruendel and McQuillan, Kathleen Guay (OPM), David Nee (Graustein Memorial Fund), Judge Christine Keller (Judicial Branch), CT General Assembly Representatives Diana Urban and DebraLee Hovey, and Vincent Siberon (Executive Director of ASPIRA CT).

### **Fiscal Update**

The Office of the Cabinet will work with state agency members (and partners) of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet over the next three weeks, to prepare a detailed fiscal update on expenditures through the end of February and estimated expenditures through the end of June 2008, based on the budget allocation plan adopted by the Cabinet in July 2007. We will report back to the Cabinet with this detail at the March 10, 2008 Cabinet meeting.

### **Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS) Development**

The QRIS forum to launch development of the legislatively-mandated QRIS Plan, due to the CT General Assembly in December 2008, was held on February 7, 2008 and was well attended. National experts Anne Mitchell, Louise Stoney and Reeva Murphy attended and facilitated the open meeting. A smaller group of individuals (invited to be broadly representative of constituencies of interest) met for the balance of February 7<sup>th</sup> and all of February 8<sup>th</sup> to begin work on QRIS development. These working sessions were again facilitated by Mitchell, Stoney and Murphy. The William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund hosted the meeting at its Hamden offices. We are grateful for their support.

Ongoing TA will be provided by Reeva Murphy (National Child Care Information Center), Stoney and Mitchell. Support related to necessary data development and analyses will be available from the Public Consulting Group, beginning now. Working sessions are planned on a monthly basis, and two additional open forums will be scheduled over the coming months, the first to bring into Connecticut several representatives from states that have built a successful QRIS. While the QRIS proposed plan must, by legislative mandate, address center-based early care and education, there is strong interest from the working group to figure out how to include attention to licensed family daycare as well. A web presence will be set up and resource materials will be posted regularly. We will also develop a system of email updates so that everyone interested in this process is fully informed as the effort moves forward.

The timetable and approval process for this work follows:

- Funds were allocated to support this work at the July 2007 Cabinet meeting
- This work is hosted by the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council
- There will be regular updates to the full Research and Policy Council and to the Cabinet
- The proposed design of the QRIS will be presented to the Council in September (if at all possible) and then to the Cabinet for review beginning at its October 2008 meeting
- Final Cabinet adoption is targeted for November 2008, but can occur no later than December in order to comply with our legislative mandate to submit to the CT General Assembly in December 2008
- Upon adoption of the QRIS by the Cabinet, implementation work will be guided by the Cabinet's Standing Committee on Accountability.

Interim Project Manager for the work is Joyce Staples, Office of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet. You can reach Joy at: [joyce.staples@ct.gov](mailto:joyce.staples@ct.gov). Per the strong recommendation from Mitchell and Stoney, a QRIS project manager will be named in the very near future. H/she will work on the project through June 2009.

### Data Matters

Utilizing funds allocated for data systems and interoperability work by the Cabinet in July 2007, the Office of the Cabinet has engaged Public Consulting Group (PCG), a national management consulting firm, to assist us in data analysis and systems work. Public Consulting Group currently works in Connecticut under an existing DAS contract with its EdSmart division. Over the past several years, PCG has provided significant data analyses for the State of Connecticut through (a) the NGA Transitioning Youth with Disabilities Initiative and (b) the OWC/BRS-DSS/DMHAS Data Interoperability Project. On January 31<sup>st</sup>, a broad group of commissioners agreed to continue the Data Interoperability Project, led by the Commissioners of Social Services, and Mental Health and Addiction Services. Many of the agencies on the Early Education Cabinet are also represented on the Data Interoperability Project along with leadership from other agencies including the Department of Information Technology, Office for Workforce Competitiveness, and the Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch.

We are finalizing a scope of work with PCG to include an immediate look at Cabinet population, systems and program templates, data development (indicators), research agenda items, and no-cost/low-cost action priorities from the Cabinet's RBA 2006, 2007 and 2008 RBA packages. Additionally, we have asked PCG to extract and summarize data and data systems references in the following Cabinet and Council reports:

- Ready by Five, Fine by Nine: CT's Early Childhood Investment Framework (July 2006)
- The CT Early Childhood Investment Plan, Part I (November 2006)
- First Words, First Steps: CT's Infant-Toddler Systems Framework (draft, January 2008)
- K-3 System's Framework (draft February 2008).

PCG will work closely with The Charter Oak Group as well as Cabinet agencies on the RBA analyses. PCG will make a substantial report to the Cabinet on its initial work at the March 10, 2008 Cabinet meeting. We expect that these next stage analyses will contribute significantly to the work of the Cabinet's Standing Committee on Accountability in development of our legislatively mandated Accountability Plan, due to the CT General Assembly by December 2008.

We have also asked PCG to provide data and data systems support to the QRIS initiative and to the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council over the coming months. One other early focus for the PCG work will be to look at various data elements collected and tracked across Cabinet agencies (and their partners) related to children born in 2006-07 (the Cabinet's Ready by Five initial cohort) living in circumstances that create a high level of vulnerability for age-appropriate development. This work -- to be linked with the Cabinet's ongoing *First Words, First Steps* deliberations -- will allow the Cabinet to respond to the directive by Governor Rell that we report on the status of this cohort (babies born in 2006-07) to her by June 2008. Collection and analysis of these data will also be very helpful to the Child Poverty and Prevention Council and to the CT Youth Vision Team, both of which are focused on young parents (and their young children) who are living in poverty.

Technical assistance by PCG will be available to Cabinet agencies throughout this work. As one example of how we could structure this evolving work within and across agencies, the State Department of Education is establishing a virtual data team to participate in this work with the Office of the Cabinet. The SDE team will be co-chaired by Dr. Barbara Beaudin and Associate Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker. A partnership with similar teams within other Cabinet agencies would be most welcome as we move forward.

As part of the Cabinet's Standing Committee on Accountability, the Office of the Cabinet will chair an interagency Data Matters Working Group to guide and support this work. Interim manager for the work is Marcus Rivera, Office of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet. You can reach Marcus at: [marcus.rivera@ct.gov](mailto:marcus.rivera@ct.gov).