

INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR ENDING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP  
Hartford

**Draft Minutes of Meeting**  
(Subject to Revision)  
October 11, 2018

**Call to Order**

The Honorable Nancy Wyman, Lieutenant Governor, State of Connecticut, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. The meeting was held in the North Plaza, Meeting Room D, at 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, Connecticut.

Member agencies  
represented by:

Jeffrey Beckham, Staff Counsel and Communications Director, Department of Administrative Services  
Nachiketa Bhatt, Education Consultant, Department of Children and Families (DCF)  
Michael Carone, Legislative and Regulations Analyst, Department of Social Services  
Leah Grenier, Principal Budget Specialist, Office of Policy and Management  
Bonnie Koba, Arts in Education Program Manager and Director of Higher Order Thinking (HOT) Schools, Department of Economic and Community Development  
Patricia Nunez, Program Manager, Connecticut Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division  
Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer, Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)  
Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner, Connecticut State Department of Education

Guests: Maggie Adair, Office of Early Childhood (OEC)  
Judy Carson, Connecticut State Department of Education  
John Frassinelli, Connecticut State Department of Education  
Jennifer Johnson, Office of Early Childhood  
Sheila McKay, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education  
Chris Pacileo, Northeast Charter Schools Network  
Kari Sullivan, Connecticut State Department of Education  
T.J. Williams, Commission on Women, Children and Seniors  
Rosa Rada, Commission on Women, Children and Seniors  
Peter Yazbak, Connecticut State Department of Education

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Participants were welcomed by Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman, and Commissioner of Education, Dianna R. Wentzell.

**II. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes from April 5, 2018.**

Minutes were unanimously approved.

### **III. Full, Equal and Equitable Partnerships with Families** *Connecticut's Definition and Framework for Family Engagement*

Presented by: Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer, CSDE; Judy Carson, Education Consultant, CSDE; and Jennifer Johnson, Director, OEC

The presentation provided an overview of Connecticut's new definition and framework for family engagement. This work has been a collaboration of the Connecticut Early Childhood Funder Collaborative, the Office of Early Childhood and the Connecticut State Department of Education. The objective was to co-create a common vision, definition and approach to family engagement for all agencies working on behalf of children and families. The result is a definition that has clear consensus from representative groups, including families. The following is the resulting definition:

*Family engagement is a full, equal, and equitable partnership among families, educators and community partners to promote children's learning and development from birth through college and career.*

The meaning and importance of the words full, equal, and equitable were discussed. This was followed by a review of the guiding principles and an overview of the shift from low to high-impact practices. Members were asked to consider, "what can you do to support high-impact school-family partnerships?"

### **IV. Agency Dialogue on Developing Full, Equal, and Equitable Partnerships with Families**

Charlene Russell-Tucker led a discussion with members on how the new definition and framework can be tailored to enhance other agencies' work. Ideas that were shared included:

- higher education has had a significant change in how new teachers are prepared for partnering with families;
- pre-K programs teach parents what it means to be engaged parents when students are school age;
- parent leaders are ambassadors of this work – they are the critical messengers; and
- communities of faith and community agencies are important partners in the role out and implementation of family engagement partnerships.

It was learned at a recent national conference that many states are just getting started in this work.

**V. CSDE Update**

Charlene Russell-Tucker provided an update on the CSDE initiatives:

1. **Project AWARE** – CSDE, in partnership with DCF, has received a five-year mental health grant from SAMHSA. The three objectives of the grant are to: 1) create awareness; 2) provide training; and 3) connect to service providers. The work will be focused in three school districts/communities: 1) Middletown; 2) Naugatuck; and 3) Windham.
2. **Connecticut School Discipline Collaborative** – CSDE is convening a cross-sector group of stakeholders, including data analysts, child behavior specialists, lawyers and out-of-state experts to address issues in the area of exclusionary discipline. The first meeting will convene on October 31, 2018.
3. **Trauma-informed Practices** – Understanding the impact of trauma on child development and student learning is the theme of an upcoming Alliance District Symposium.
4. **Chronic Absence** – Recently, the CSDE released the 2017-18 chronic absence rates on its data portal, [EdSight](#). The state, as a whole, has seen a slight uptick from 9.9 to 10.7 percent of students that were chronically absent. The causes of this increase and strategies for addressing it in the new school year were discussed.

**VI. Interagency Council Report 2012-18**

Members were provided with a draft summary report of the council’s work from 2012-18. The report will be sent to all members with a timeline for review and response.

**VII. Member Roundtable**

A roundtable discussion was facilitated and members provided an update on the work of participating agencies on behalf of children and families.

**VIII. Next Meeting**

To be determined.

**IX. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.