

INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR ENDING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP  
Hartford

Minutes of Meeting  
July 18, 2023. 1:00 p.m.  
[Meeting Recording](#)

**I. Opening Remarks and Roll Call**

The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz, Lieutenant Governor, State of Connecticut, called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. and welcomed all attendees to the July 18th meeting of the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap. She introduced Kari Sullivan Custer to conduct Roll Call.

Roll Call:

Kari Sullivan Custer recorded the following agency personnel present:

Office of the Lieutenant Governor: The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz, Lieutenant Governor, and Christine Jean-Louis, General Counsel

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU): Dr. Stephen Hegedus, Dean of the College of Education at Southern Connecticut State University

Department of Administrative Services (DAS): Doug Casey, Executive Director, Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology (CCET)

Department of Children and Families (DCF): Michael Williams, Deputy Commissioner; Matt Foley, Superintendent of Schools

Department of Economic and Community Development: Tekowa Omara-Otunnu, Manager for Arts Education

Department of Housing: Shante Hanks, Deputy Commissioner

Department of Public Health: Miriam Miller, Policy Director

Department of Social Services: Andrea Barton Reeves, Commissioner, and Talitha Coggins, Manager, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives

Connecticut Judicial Branch (JUD): Patricia Nunez, Program Manager, Court Support Services Division

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE): Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner; John Frassinelli, Division Director; Chlo-Anne Bobrowski, Education Manager; Eric Scoville, Communications Director; and Kari Sullivan Custer, Education Consultant

Office of Early Childhood (OEC): Elena Trueworthy, Deputy Commissioner; and Maggie Adair, Director, Government & Community Relations

Office of Policy and Management, Holly Williams, Fiscal and Policy Section Director, Education and Workforce Development

Lieutenant Governor reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives set forth. She shared that the focus of today's meeting will be an informal roundtable discussion on legislative updates and future Council goals.

She shared that we welcome the active engagement of our Council members, and we will continue to follow the format of our previous meetings where we will address policy recommendations from the 2014 Master Plan and seek input from Council members. She invited participants to ask questions or share anything that you would like to add.

## **II. Acceptance of Minutes and Follow-up from Last Meeting Discussion**

Lt. Governor shared that the Council last met on March 7, 2023. The minutes of that meeting were circulated to the Council in draft form for your review. We did not receive any edits or comments to the minutes.

Participants were invited to make suggested changes at this time. Seeing and hearing none, Lt. Governor asked for any objections to the minutes as final? Seeing and hearing no objections, the March 7, 2023 minutes were accepted as final.

## **III. Informal Roundtable Discussion re. Legislative Updates and Future Council Goals**

Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz invited all agency representatives to provide updates of new legislation from the 2023 legislative session. Each agency provided a brief overview. Details of the discussions are available in the [meeting recording](#).

Topics included:

Judicial Branch: Collaboration and partnership with DCF and the new Juvenile Justice Education Unit

DAS: Indoor air quality grants and Evergreen initiative

DCF: Children's behavioral health oversight committee, lowering the age children can stay home alone; diversion legislation and community-based interventions; interventions to stop kids from further involvement with juvenile justice system; and re-entry plan for students in Juvenile Justice Educational Unit.

DECD: No report currently.

CSDE: Continued funding for LEAP; right sizing of legislation for behavioral health grants; English learner bill of rights; implementation of special education work; continued focus on literacy; FASFA completion; scholarship grants to support recruitment and retention of diverse workforce; 7 new committees or groups – bringing total to 57; kindergarten entry age; and higher education research collaborative.

DOH: Collaboration with LEAP; expansion of housing partnership with OEC and Head Start

DPH: Bond funding (\$12 million) for community gun violence preventions; updates to lead statutes; licensure card category for music therapists; licensure category for birth centers;

certification pathway for douglas; infant mortality work group; and universal home visiting program.

OEC: raising the care for kids' subsidy rates by 11% each year for all provider settings; protective services for families experiencing homelessness, as defined by McKinney Vento, foster and adoptive children and families; raises in the school readiness and child daycare contract rates; a parent cabinet; \$2,000,000 passed for local early childhood collaboratives; and change in the kindergarten age entry for children.

DSS: Community health worker bill and justice involved waiver with Medicaid.

CSCU: Prioritizing minority teacher recruitment and retention; new residency programs; elevating paraeducators into the teaching profession at many levels; scholarship grants for teachers; chancellor is convening a working group to address the needs of the state, especially in areas of teacher preparation and education.

OPM: State budget, revenue, and bonding package; influx of resources for special education, early childhood, ECS, our primary K through 12 public financing mechanism, but it also includes an infusion of \$150 million in the next year of the biennium in K through 12; new data analytics department.

Susan Bysiewicz, Lt. Governor expressed that these topics are a good way to segue to our next part of our discussion, which is to turn our attention to the future goals of this Council. Topics discussed included:

- Maintaining technology - since the technology is going to need upgrading;
- Sustaining services that are making a difference - high dose tutoring and home visiting, so that we don't go backwards;
- Universal meals;
- Summer learning programs, museums, swimming lessons;
- Documenting the learning gaps, how they are measured, and assessments being used (future topic);
- State Board of Education Five-year Plan;
- Recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee (OEC);
- Taking an early, preventative approach – prenatal, birth through early care, and education system;
- Partnerships across multiple agencies that are breaking down silos of what children and families need, e.g., education, housing, food, and comprehensive wraparound services;
- Development of digital learning skills; and
- Artificial intelligence - equipping our students and teachers to understand how to use new technology.

## **I. Next Steps**

Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz provided an overview of the next steps going forward. The next quarterly meetings are on Tuesday afternoons including September 19<sup>th</sup>, and December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

She reported that we tentatively have the rollout of the EdSight data portal by the CSDE and OEC will share its thoughts on the importance of the continuity of learning between grades.

She invited members to offer any suggestions for guest speakers who can provide a particular insight on topics related to the Council's work.

## **II. Closing/Meeting adjourned**

Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz expressed her and the Governor's appreciation of all the work put forth in this legislative session. We appreciate your time and talent and dedication, and we will see you next time. Thank you so much for your participation in our Interagency Council meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

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