

INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR ENDING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP
Hartford

Minutes of Meeting
- Draft -
September 17, 2024, 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 June 18, 2024, 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 Tracy Opoku, General Counsel

Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU):

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; Nicole Taylor MD, Director of Pediatrics; and Matt Folan, Superintendent of Schools, Unified School District #2; Stephanie Bozak, Psy.D., Behavioral Health Clinical Manager

Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD):

Department of Housing (DOH): Shante Hanks, Senior Advisor

Department of Public Health (DPH): Julie Vigil, Branch Chief

Department of Social Services (DSS): Talitha Coggins, Manager, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives
Connecticut Judicial Branch (JUD):

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE): John Frassinelli, Division Director; and Kari Sullivan Custer, Education Consultant

Office of Early Childhood (OEC): Lorna Thomas-Farquharson, Program Manager, Behavioral Health Initiative

Office of Policy and Management (OPM): Peter Hopko, Budget Specialist

Lieutenant Governor reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives set forth. She shared today's attendees will learn about the newly organized Kids Cabinet.

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

Lt. Governor shared that the Council last met on June 18, 2024. The minutes of that meeting were circulated to the Council in draft form for your review.

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 June 18, 2024, minutes were accepted as final.

III. **Governor's Kids Cabinet**

Thea Montañez, Senior Advisor, Office of the Governor, shared the focus of The Kids Cabinet is to focus on interagency initiatives to improve outcomes for children and families.

Three priorities were highlighted:

1. Promoting equitable policies to reduce racial and socioeconomic disparities.
2. Creating integrated systems of care through partnerships.
3. Maximizing resources by coordinating services and funding.

Ms. Montañez also presented data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and discussed issues such as homelessness, crossover youth, and opportunity youth.

Discussion on Homeless Children and Youth:

- 5,100 public school students were reported as homeless, many of whom are students of color or students with disabilities.
- Most of these students are in unstable housing situations, with a significant number being doubled up with family and friends.

Future Actions of the Kids Cabinet:

- Interagency planning teams are being set up to address issues such as homelessness, with a focus on developing and implementing operational plans.

This presentation and discussion can be [watched online](#).

IV. **Youth Social, Emotional, and Mental Health**

Presentation on Personal Technology Use in Schools:

- John Frassinelli from the State Department of Education presented on the policy guidance regarding personal technology use (cell phones) in schools.
- The new policy aims to restrict cell phone use to reduce distractions and improve student mental health.
- Discussion on concerns raised by parents about communication during school emergencies, such as active shooter situations.

This presentation and discussion can be [watched online](#).

V. **Next Steps**

Lt. Governor Bysiewicz invited suggestions for topics and speakers for the next quarterly meeting, scheduled for December 17th.

VI. **Closing/Meeting adjourned**

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.