

INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR ENDING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP  
Hartford

Minutes of Meeting

December 13, 2022. 1:00 p.m.

[Presentation Slides](#) and [Meeting Recording](#)

**Opening Remarks and Roll Call**

The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz, Lieutenant Governor, State of Connecticut, called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. This was a virtual meeting that was broadcast live on CT-N.

Lieutenant Governor reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives set forth. She shared that the focus of today's meeting will be on students in state care and the Fatherhood Initiative with representatives from the Department of Children and Families and the Judicial Branch,

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.

After the presentations, we will discuss next steps, including a review of our 2023 meeting schedule and topics.

**Roll Call:**

Kari Sullivan Custer recorded the following agency personnel present:

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

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

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE,) Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner; John Frassinelli, Division Director, Bureau of Health, Nutrition and Family Services; Kari Sullivan Custer, Education Consultant, Bureau of Health, Nutrition and Family Services

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

Department of Children and Families (DCF): Michael Williams, Deputy Commissioner; Matt Foley, Superintendent of Schools; Glen Worthy, Education Administrator, Juvenile Justice Education Unit; Tina Mitchell, Assistant Superintendent, Juvenile Justice Education Unit; John Tarka, Assistant Superintendent, Juvenile Justice Education Unit

Department of Public Health: Mario Garcia, Public Health Improvement Manager

Department of Social Services: Astread O. Ferron-Poole, Chief of Staff

Office of Policy and Management: Holly Williams, Director, Fiscal and Program Policy Section

Office of the Lieutenant Governor: Christine Jean-Louis, General Counsel

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

Lt. Governor share that the Council last met on September 16th of this year when we reviewed the growth of the state’s housing and childcare initiatives and the draft annual report to our state legislature.

The minutes of the September 16, 2022, meeting were circulated to the Council in draft form for your review. There was one correction made on slide #20 to correct the agencies that will be facilitating today's discussion from Department of Housing and Office of Early Childhood to Department of Children and Families and the Judicial Branch. Beyond that correction, we did not receive any other 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 September 16, 2022, minutes were accepted as final,

Lt. Governor introduced Dr. Worthy from the Department of Children and Families to kick off the next presentation.

**II. Oversight and Administration of Education in Juvenile Justice Facilities**

Dr. Glen Worthy began with introductions to his new assistant superintendents, Tina Mitchell and John Target. The team provided background on the formation of the Juvenile Justice Education Unit Team. Public Act 21-127 tasked DCF with assessing the education programs for youth involved with the Juvenile Justice System and required the establishment of a new unity within DCF, that will analyze the educational records, perform needs assessments, and track the educational progress of individuals in the juvenile justice population.

Dr. Worthy and his team provided an overview of the programs and services, progress to date, challenges the system is facing, and an overview of their progress and plans for success in the future.

Dr. Hegedus shared that the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is re-establishing the summer academy work that has happened at Hillhouse and working with the new office of College and Career Readiness at New Haven Public Schools. They are planning to continue this work in the New Haven region as well.

Doug Casey shared that DAS announced that morning that they received \$750,000 to develop a statewide digital equity plan that includes covering populations that are incarcerated in state facilities.

Commissioner Russell-Tucker shared the agency’s commitment to partnership on behalf of all of our students. She also shared an update on what’s happening in social emotional learning to support the healthy development of students.

John Frassinelli shared that SDE has identified individuals to serve as juvenile justice liaisons in 20 districts. Also, SDE is ensuring that any credits earned at a juvenile justice

facility are accepted when students return to their district. Mr. Frassinelli acknowledge the work and collaboration with Patricia Nunez from JUD to support all of the facilities including improvements in technology.

Patricia Nunez reported that the judicial branch is very excited and has been collaborating immensely with Dr. Worthy since he began at DCF. She continues to look forward to working with him, John Tarka, and Tina Mitchell. Lastly, she reported that JUD recently did a training for their new pupil service specialists.

Details of the presentation and discussion are available in the [presentation slides](#) and [meeting recording](#).

### **III. Fatherhood Initiative**

Deputy Commissioner shared how DCF has changed its model to create a well-being system for all children, in particularly for those children who enter DCF care. We're changing the narrative: when children enter our care, DCF is committed to make sure that they are better off than they were before they came in. Quality of life and children's well-being is divided in several domains from health and wellness to mental health to social connections and clearly education and academic achievement. It's one of those domains that we have for children, who we not only have in foster care, but also children that we interact with that are still with their families. All of our work has really taken off to be a family strengthening organization and a child well-being organization and finding ways to enhance the well-being and the strengthening of families has been some of the techniques we've been using.

The active engagement of dads in the process ensures that we know who the dad is, not just the mom. We ensure that the dad has an opportunity to be heard and participate in the service planning and to ensure, most importantly, the safety of the child going forward. They have found that increased and engagement of dad has shown a reduction in repeat maltreatment.

Deputy Commissioner also talked about the benefits and positive outcomes when children are placed with a relative, they know.

Details of the presentation and discussion are available in [meeting recording](#).

### **IV. Next Steps**

Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz provided an overview of next steps going forward. The calendar for 2023 will have quarterly meetings on Tuesday afternoons including March 7<sup>th</sup>, June 20<sup>th</sup>, September 19<sup>th</sup>, and December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The topic for the March meeting will be respiratory illnesses and kids, Staff will work with the DPH and other agencies needed to present on this topic. She encouraged

participants to reach out if they had any insights on topics or guest speakers for this meeting.

The topics for future meetings in 2023 will include Department of Social Services, work on Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) and Fatherhood Project, SDE's rollout of the EdSight data portal and, finally, the Office of Policy and Managements use of ARPA funds to close the achievement gap.

**V. Closing/Meeting adjourned**

On behalf of Governor Lamont and herself, the Lt. Governor thanked everyone for their participation and good work. She wished each a wonderful, safe, happy holiday season.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

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