

# INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR ENDING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

December 10, 2020  
Meeting Minutes



# OPENING REMARKS & INTRODUCTIONS

The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz, Lieutenant Governor  
State of Connecticut



# Opening Remarks and Introductions

- Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and welcomed all Council members and guests.
- Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz acknowledged the administration's appreciation for the members' service on this Council, their service every day to keep Connecticut residents safe, and for ensuring that we are operating the state government at the very highest level for our constituents.
- Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz reiterated that the role of the Council is particularly important as our school system and our students continue to adjust to different ways of teaching and learning. We know now more than we ever did before how responding to change is more of a challenge for some than others. It's our goal at the council to work very collaboratively in offering equal access to resources and services and to closing the performance gap and thanked everyone for being in attendance today.

# Member Agencies

Roll Call – Kari Sullivan, State Department of Education

- **Office of the Lieutenant Governor:**  
The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz, Lieutenant Governor, Chair; Cherie Phoenix-Sharpe, General Counsel; and Grace Carlos, Intern, Three Rivers Community College
- **Connecticut State Colleges and Universities:** Dr. Stephen Hegedus, Dean of Education, Southern Connecticut State University; and Sean Bradbury, Senior Director of Government Relations and External Affairs
- **Department of Administrative Services:**  
Doug Casey, Executive Director, Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology
- **Department of Children and Families:**  
Vannessa Dorantes, Commissioner; Jodi Hill-Lilly, Deputy Commissioner; and Matt Foley, Superintendent, Unified District #2
- **Department of Economic and Community Development:** Glendowlyn Thames, Deputy Commissioner
- **Department of Housing:** Shanté Hanks, Deputy Commissioner
- **Department of Public Health:** Dr. Mario Garcia, Public Health Improvement Manager
- **Department of Social Services:** Astread O. Ferron-Poole, Chief of Staff and Peter B. Hadler, Director of Program Oversight & Grant Administration
- **Judicial Branch:** Patricia Nunez, Program Manager
- **Office of Early Childhood:** Beth Bye, Commissioner
- **Office of Policy and Management:** Holly Williams, Fiscal and Program Policy Section Director
- **State Department of Education:** Dr. Miguel A Cardona, Commissioner; Charlene Russell-Tucker, Deputy Commissioner; John Frassinelli, Division Director; Kari Sullivan Custer, Education Consultant; and Matthew Falconer, Education Consultant
- **Guests:** Skip Kodak, Executive Vice President, America's Market Group; and Jennifer DuBuisson, The LEGO Group

# Agenda

- I. **Opening Remarks and Introductions**  
*The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz*  
*Lieutenant Governor, State of Connecticut*
- II. **Follow-up from Last Meeting Discussion**
- III. **Special Presentation**  
*Skip Kodak, Executive Vice President*  
*AMS Mkt Group, Americas*
- IV. **Agencies' Response to AGTF Master Plan**
  - a. *Early Care and Education*
  - b. *Inside the Schoolhouse: Use of Curriculum in Closing Achievement Gaps in Low Performing Schools*
  - c. *Inside the Schoolhouse: Creativity and Innovation and the Achievement Gap Synopsis Results*
- V. **Next Steps**
- VI. **Closing/Meeting Adjourned**

# Follow-up from Last Meeting

Topic	Notes
Additional written commentary in response to policy recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provided by DPH, OEC, and DCF</li></ul>
Teen pregnancy prevention program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Received follow-up information from DSS, specifically on their teen pregnancy prevention program, which provides at-risk middle and high school students with structured supportive and safe environments and helps them acquire the tools they need to help them avoid early parenting.</li></ul>

# Follow-up from Last Meeting

Topic	Notes
DRS additional information on income tax credit	<p>Information was received from the Department of Revenue Services (DRS) regarding the policy recommendation to ensure income tax-based assistance for workers including the state's existing refundable state Earned Income Tax Credit (EIT) to supplement low-wage earning parents. We understand from DRS that in addition to the EIT, which mirrors the federal EIT, Connecticut also offers the following things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Property tax credit for Connecticut residents who made qualifying property tax payments on eligible properties enabling them to claim a credit against their Connecticut income tax liability.</li><li>• Income tax exemptions for teacher pensions.</li><li>• Beginning in the taxable year 2019, the taxpayer is allowed a subtraction modification of 25 percent of the income they receive from the teachers retirement system when they calculate their Connecticut adjusted gross income.</li><li>• Subtraction modification for pension and annuity income for the taxable year beginning January 1, 2019, individuals with a federal filing status of “single/married filing separately” or “head of household” with a federal annual gross income (AGI) for the taxable year of less than \$75,000 or “married filing jointly” with a federal AGI of less than \$100,000 will be able to subtract 14 percent of any pension or annuity income received from the taxable or the taxable year when calculating Connecticut AGI.</li><li>• DRS also provides free taxpayer assistance via numerous channels and will be offering video-conferencing appointments for taxpayers to meet with trained DRS professionals remotely.</li><li>• The agency works in conjunction with community and civic organizations to ensure that assistance is delivered to all taxpayers at the local level. Organizations include: local senior centers; IRS-sponsored volunteer income tax assistance (VITA) programs; Committee on Aging organizations; Veterans Affairs offices for retired military; AARP; legal aids; state representatives offices; Better Business Bureaus; local libraries; and local community centers.</li></ul>

# Follow-up from Last Meeting

Topic	Notes
Digital Divide	<p data-bbox="517 475 703 505">Lt Governor:</p> <ul data-bbox="517 515 1760 772" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="517 515 1760 586">• Shared follow-up conversations are planned as a result of Deputy Commissioner Hanks raising the issue at the last meeting.</li><li data-bbox="517 591 1760 733">• Acknowledge the governor's announcement from just last week that 141 000 laptops were delivered to students grades k-12 making CT the first state in the country to provide access to learning devices to all pre-k to 12th grade students in need of devices.</li><li data-bbox="517 738 1257 772">• Closing the digital divide is a top priority for us.</li></ul> <p data-bbox="517 776 1058 806">Deputy Commissioner Shanté Hanks:</p> <ul data-bbox="517 816 1769 1339" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="517 816 1769 1002">• Follow-up meeting held with Doug Casey, members of the DOH team, including Commissioner Seila Mosquera-Bruno, to discuss family engagement, how DOH can be of assistance to the team to help get this information out to families and the community. Some ideas that were discussed and could be implemented rather quickly:<ul data-bbox="614 1006 1769 1192" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="614 1006 1553 1041">○ DOH providers - getting information out to property managers</li><li data-bbox="614 1045 1769 1116">○ Faith-based organizations - reaching out to them to help put the message on the ground</li><li data-bbox="614 1120 1717 1192">○ Printing and using postcards as social media push may not work for folks without internet</li></ul></li><li data-bbox="517 1196 1667 1268">• We have explored a number of ideas and we're in conversations now about getting the message out.</li><li data-bbox="517 1272 1769 1339">• Scheduled an upcoming meeting with the CSDE so that we can learn what they've done thus far and how we can be of some assistance.</li></ul>

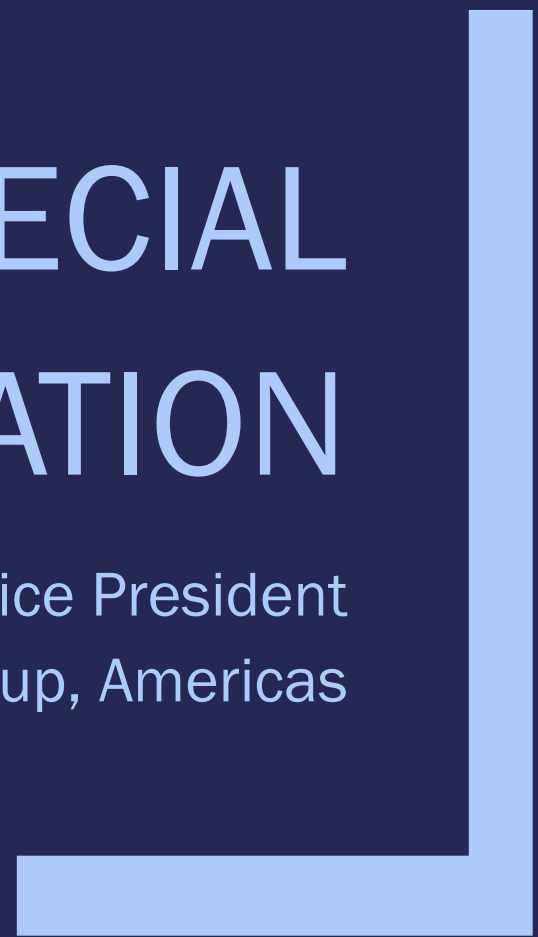


# Follow-up from Last Meeting

Topic	Notes
Digital Divide (continued)	<p>Doug Casey, Executive Director, CCET, DAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Device divide has essentially been closed in Connecticut;</li><li>• Now we're chipping away at the connectivity divide - it's important to note that the Governor has made provision for an internet connection for every student in the state who needs it;</li><li>• Outreach efforts are going on through the Office of the Governor including: television; radio; social media; and old-fashioned postcards;</li><li>• Supply side is there. Now we're trying to drive the demand side of raising awareness among parents that if they don't have internet at home, it is free this year and they should pursue that with their schools;</li><li>• Orientation and backup information provided to schools to support parent requests and connecting them to internet providers; and</li><li>• Looking into identifying parents that have applied for energy assistance through the community action agencies to they have internet connectivity.</li></ul> <p>Vannessa Dorantes, Commissioner of DCF, offered, through the chat, to share outreach with families and providers connected with DCF.</p>

# SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Skip Kodak, Executive Vice President  
AMS Mkt Group, Americas



# Skip Kodak, Executive Vice President AMS Mkt Group, Americas

Lt. Governor introduced guest speaker, Skip Kodak Executive Vice President, AMS Mkt Group, Americas, and provided council members with a brief bio of Mr. Kodak's tenure with The LEGO Group and her delight in having him as a private sector partner, and stated:

- *LEGO has been an active a member of our Corporate Leadership Circle that supports our Council On Women And Girls, particularly advocating for affordable and developmental child care and for child care to be more available and accessible.*
- *In June, The LEGO Group donated \$4 million to support organizations that teach children and families racial tolerance and address the opportunity gap that faces children of color in our educational system.*
- *Connecticut is grateful for LEGO's partnership and corporate leadership.*

# Skip Kodak, Executive Vice President AMS Mkt Group, Americas (continued)

Mr. Kodak introduced his colleague, Jennifer DuBuisson, and shared LEGO's perspectives on critical opportunities to close the achievement gap in Connecticut, including:

- *importance of prioritizing early childhood development through equitable access to high quality, play-based child care.*
- *working together, both public and private sectors, can help to close the achievement gap in our state by reducing learning loss.*
- *and significantly improving outcomes for children and their families.*
- *set the stage for future dialogues not just with The LEGO Group but with the broader private sector.*

# Skip Kodak, Executive Vice President AMS Mkt Group, Americas (continued)

Mr. Kodak recognized his appreciation and understanding that people aren't always responsible for the circumstances they live with and when you look at why that could be and we and we examine the underlying commercial, social, and governmental systems that are tilted against equality and access for all and his desire for us to see what we can do to address these equity issues.

He shared three elements that are absolutely critical for all children to achieve their full potential:

- *access to care in their communities, so it's local and it's available.*
- *every child care center provides high quality play-based learning.*
- *proactive measures are taken to significantly reduce logistical and financial barriers to low-income communities, especially in communities of color for high quality child.*

LEGO believes that there are three shifts that could be made to improve child outcomes:

1. *Integrate both short-term and long-term learning goals into instructional design using evidence-based approaches that foster problem-solving, creativity and critical thinking.*
2. *Prioritize culturally responsive, student-centered learning that uplifts learners experiences, knowledge, learning needs, and communities.*
3. *Prepare teachers to guide students through learning experiences and that includes self-discovery and make measurable progress towards learning goals.*

# Skip Kodak, Executive Vice President AMS Mkt Group, Americas (continued)

LEGO can also play a role to support curriculum and teachers and has:

- *invested in teacher professional development programs for next generation science standards in CT.*
- *partnered with horizons international to develop culturally responsive curriculum.*
- *funded the Proteus organization and a program called [EmbraceRace](#).*

Mr. Kodak closed with expressing The LEGO Group's commitment to Connecticut as a corporate citizen and large employer - not only because of the monetary contributions the private sector can offer but simply to share expertise, research, and employee desire to volunteer to make a difference.

The Connecticut private sector can play an important role in active advocacy for federal and state support for low-income households to access child care. He also expressed the belief that equity needs to be at the foundation of all that we do inside or outside of the schoolhouse.

# Council Response/Questions

- Lt Governor expressed that she and the Governor agree that equity and inclusion are absolutely critical to everything that we do.
- Commissioner Cardona – expressed his gratitude for the presentation and the donations made earlier from LEGO where every first grader in Bridgeport and Danbury received a LEGO set. The smiles on the faces of the 5 and 6-years olds when they were engaging with LEGOs was heartwarming at the beginning of the pandemic. A great example of “it takes a village.” Thank you for putting our kids first in Connecticut.
- Commissioner Bye – expressed that the presentation was music to her ears – the work that LEGO does is great; and thanked Jennifer for helping OEC reach out and engage businesses to help build an improved early childhood system.
- Commissioner Bye also invited both Mr. Kodak and Jennifer to take part with the combined work of the Governor’s Workforce Council, the Council on Women and Girls, and the Lt. Governor’s, to engage business around child care and the business’ role and help reimagine child care in our state. Mr. Kodak responded that, “yes, they would be very pleased to be part of the conversation”
- Lt. Governor shared that there is work at the federal level to secure addition funding for child care – a massive infusion of money to expand early childhood programs as we have lost so many of those spots. We appreciate your leadership. It’s going take state public policymakers, federal funds and private sector working together to figure this out.

# AGENCIES' RESPONSE TO THE AGTF MASTER PLAN

Review of Agency Responses





# Early Care and Education

*Every child is school-ready upon entry to kindergarten.*

Policy Recommendation	Responding Agencies	Notes
<p>Increase wages of early care and education professionals based on years of education and practice. Ensure that early childhood teaching is valued and that professionals with bachelor's degrees do not 'jump ship' for a higher salary in elementary school.</p>	OEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lowest wage professionals in our state and tend to be women.</li><li>• OEC undertaking wage study and full cost of care analysis as part of systems reform.</li><li>• Compensation Schedule legislatively mandated PA 19-61 due.</li><li>• NAEYC Power to the Profession leading a national effort on wages and credentials.</li></ul>
<p>Create an assessment system that sets baselines and institutional targets and produces evaluative information that can be used to adjust teacher training and classroom practices. Select and implement a formative Kindergarten Entry Assessment tool to help inform teachers about a child's starting point.</p>	OEC SDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• OEC has ELDS for all ECE programs and Sparkler Screening for subset.</li><li>• SDE uses Kindergarten Entry Inventory for all entering K students.</li><li>• Another important point is that Sparkler Screening connected with 211 child info line. 211 is a great partner for families. Inventory is there for families to use at home.</li></ul> <p>CSDE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Universal tool to guide our actions.</li><li>• Six domains are part of the assessment including social-emotional and guidance on how to do this in a virtual space.</li></ul>

# Early Care and Education

*Every child is school-ready upon entry to kindergarten.*

Policy Recommendation	Responding Agencies	Notes
<p>Enforce legislation requiring by 2020 that all early childhood head teachers must hold a bachelor's degree in early childhood degree programs approved by the State Department of Education.</p>	<p>OEC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Date pushed to 2029 through legislation.</li><li>• Lack of compensation makes it hard to get those degrees.</li><li>• Higher education preparation to help meet this recommendation.</li><li>• CSCU – put in a proposal for \$2.4 million to work in this area. CT is a finalist.</li></ul>
<p>Create a Pre-k through third grade literacy approach. Stress early literacy, beginning in early care settings to increase language exposure and expand time devoted to literacy. Implement the Ed. Reform law in reading, PA 12-116, to ensure a transition plan in oral language and vocabulary development between the early care provider and the kindergarten teacher, and to develop and provide practical literacy courses for both pre-service and practicing providers in language development and early literacy.</p>	<p>SDE, OEC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literacy focus in ELDS – sent to all preschool programs.</li><li>• OEC funds PK-3 leadership academy, brings together public/private teachers for a study with UCONN – advancing learning through those years.</li><li>• CSDE- Continuity of curriculum and programming is a priority – later in slides. EC programming is a priority in the agency – as it is the foundation of learning.</li><li>• Changes in curriculum, PK-3, CSCU can provide updates (<i>follow-up</i>) professional development framework for teachers and teacher preparation.</li></ul>

# Early Care and Education

*Every child is school-ready upon entry to kindergarten.*

Policy Recommendation	Responding Agencies	Notes
Facilitate center based and family child care provider training in cultural competence with attention to research-based practice with bilingual children, from infancy through kindergarten.	OEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PDG Grant funding WIDA training, giving providers skills in working with bilingual families – 2019-2021.</li> <li>• Many more teachers trained during the pandemic.</li> <li>• Very specific and targeted for working with bilingual families – very fortunate to have the federal funding.</li> </ul>
Ensure that every early care and education setting has a family liaison to involve parents as assets in school readiness, early literacy and a developing partnership with the school house.	OEC, Head Start Collaborative Office, SDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Voice is critical in building high quality early childhood systems.</li> <li>• HS Collab runs Parent Council and also links with DCF.</li> <li>• Commissioner Dorantes reported that the Head Start collaboration is an example of a really strong public-private partnership and the constituent voice in terms of what it is we need to focus on in terms of the “whole child.”</li> <li>• OEC is establishing Parent Cabinet.</li> <li>• Challenge – finding a way to pay parents who participate for their many hours, everyone else is paid to sit there – looking for ideas for treating parents as experts – for their expert advice.</li> <li>• OEC systems reform requires more parent rep. on School Readiness Councils.</li> <li>• SDE led work on parents as equal partners <a href="#">Building Capacity (ct.gov)</a>.</li> <li>• CSDE, OEC and the Connecticut ECFC, joined with parents, educators and communities to co-create a common definition, framework and guiding principles for advancing state and local family engagement efforts across the state.</li> <li>• Charlene Russell-Tucker shared that the Commissioner’s Roundtable for Family and Community Engagement in Education – deliverables included working with OEC and other partners to come up with a definition for parent engagement. Full, equal and equitable partnership framework document is on line and was developed by families and with families and includes charts with High Impact Family Engagement guidance in different contexts.</li> </ul>

# Early Care and Education

*Every child is school-ready upon entry to kindergarten.*

Policy Recommendation	Responding Agencies	Notes
<p>Provide for an infant toddler system of care, employing best practices and training within both licensed centers, licensed family childcare and family, friend and neighbor care.</p>	<p>OEC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care for Kids (C4K) rates increased in 2019 for infants and toddlers.</li> <li>• Staffed Family child Care Networks expanding FCC slots for I/t.</li> <li>• CT still short 50,000 infant toddler spaces for parents who need it. (PreCOVID).</li> <li>• Greater progress in infant/toddler system of care but more to do. It's a real shortage area.</li> </ul>
<p>Ensuring that screening, assessment and monitoring of children's health and development occur where they are most likely to be seen, including in the home through a coordinated system of home visitation as well as pediatric visits.</p>	<p>DPH, OEC, DCF, DSS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home-visiting, DCF does some monitoring too.</li> <li>• Sparkler Launched.</li> <li>• Linked To 211 Child Development Infoline.</li> <li>• Home visiting, Ages and Stages Questionnaire.</li> <li>• Birth to Three evals. – one of the gaps, B to 3, high bar for needing services – children may be below developmentally but don't qualify for Birth to Three.</li> <li>• Made progress on screening and assessment but still a lot of needs in the communities.</li> <li>• DCF – while a lot of the assessments are child-focused, DCF is looking from a parental capacity focus – the full range of home visiting has to take into account both the needs of the child and the parent.</li> <li>• Strong partnerships – need to consider parent and child development</li> <li>• Bring agencies together around physical and emotional health assessments.</li> <li>• DCF - Children's Behavioral Health Plan has seen a redesign of how it is fiscally supported throughout the full continuum.</li> <li>• DSS – looking for federal funds to support this work with Medicaid.</li> </ul>

# Early Care and Education

*Every child is school-ready upon entry to kindergarten.*

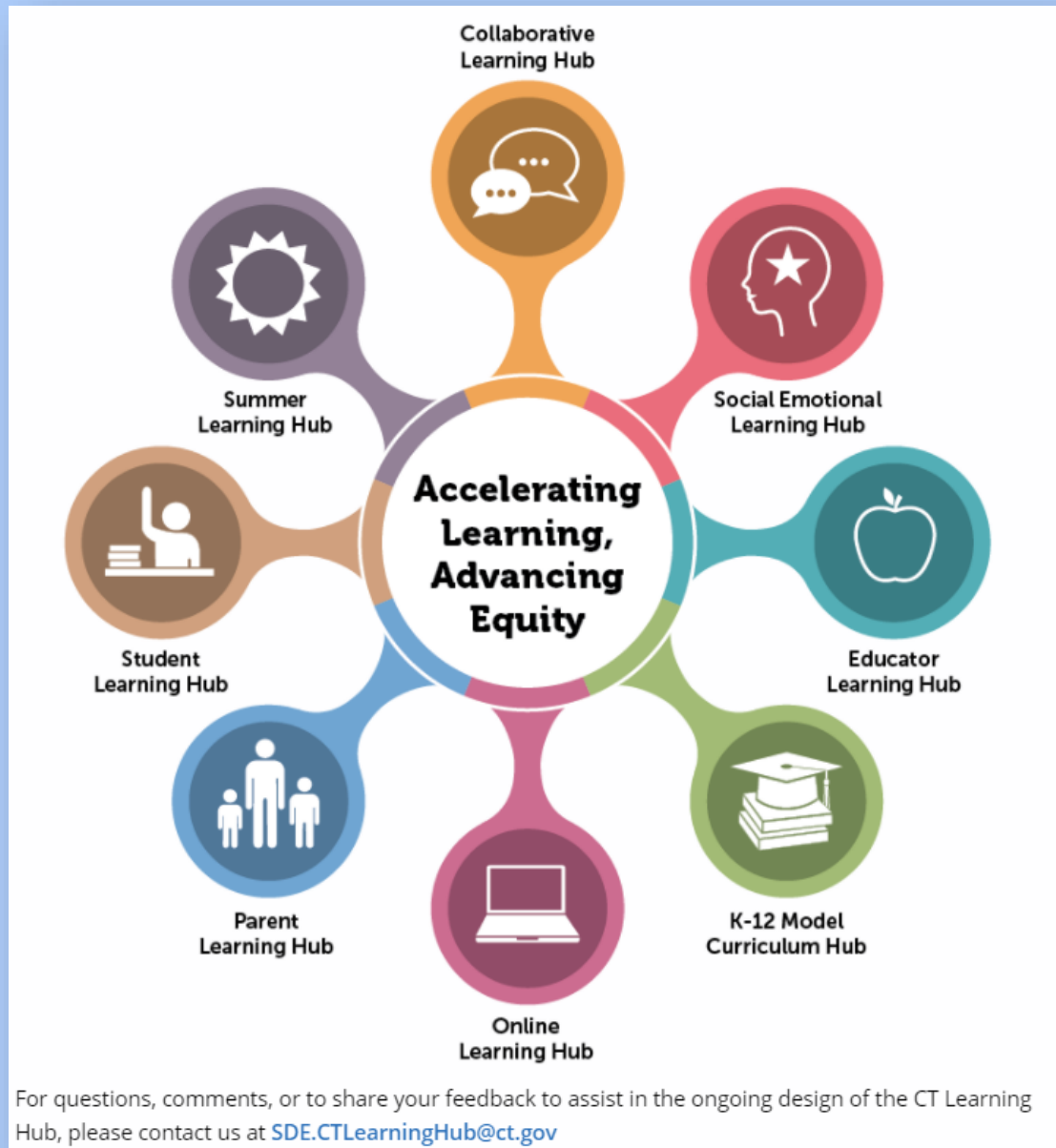
Policy Recommendation	Responding Agencies	Notes
<p>Build up regional training and supports for various kinds of care and access to provider training in quality, adequate resources, supports and to become part of a pipeline of accreditation and licensing. Use the Regional Accreditation Facilities Project for this.</p>	<p>OEC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2020, OEC launched expanded Accreditation Support Project in 6 regions.</li> <li>• Expanded Family Child Care Networks.</li> <li>• Great progress – led in the 1990’s and has more to do.</li> <li>• COVID relief - OEC pays all accreditation fees.</li> </ul>
<p>Improve routine and high level oversight of early care and education programs. CT has high standards but very low oversight. Sites, both center and family child care, need to be visited at least once a year for child safety.</p>	<p>OEC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OEC now able to complete one unannounced licensing visit each year to each program. Great progress here.</li> <li>• November 2020, launched consumer-friendly website with 211 posting licensing inspection reports for parents back 5 years.</li> </ul>
<p>Using info-finder, public health service providers, and Social Service Providers, create a campaign to increase the number of students with limited target language exposure access to early childcare services and language-developing family support. Monitor access until 2020 to assess impact of campaign.</p>	<p>DSS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home visiting 2020 RFP seeking to focus on prenatal to age 1. \$19 million in support for families prenatal to age 5.</li> <li>• Going forward perhaps – public health campaign about child development.</li> </ul>

# Inside the Schoolhouse: Use of Curriculum in Closing Achievement Gaps (continued)

*Model curriculum is available for schools and districts with persistent achievement gaps.*

Policy Recommendation	Responding Agencies	Notes
<p>The CT State Department of Education shall develop or identify model curriculum documents aligned to the Common Core State Standards and national subject area standards for Grades K – 8, to be provided to districts with the greatest achievement gaps or lowest performance overall, for local adoption.</p>	<p>SDE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioner Cardona provided the background and historical context of the AGTF Master Plan.</li> <li>• <b>Establishment of District Health Framework.</b></li> <li>• Model curricula, resources, and materials have been created and provided by SDE for ELA, Math, Social Studies, Arts, Science, and CTE.</li> <li>• <b>K-12 Curriculum Design Framework is being created to support evaluation, development and renewal of local curriculum.</b></li> </ul>
<p>SDE shall provide fully developed model units of study within these documents, for each grade level, around the major concepts of the grade in alignment with the Common Core for implementation and replication at the school level. SDE will collaborate with local districts and RESCs to provide training and ongoing support, including debriefing with teachers, for schools with the greatest achievement gaps or lowest overall performance as they implement these model units.</p>	<p>SDE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Staffing Academics Office – filled the vacancy of Chief Academic Officer, which is critical to this work.</b></li> <li>• <b>Learning Hub – virtual hub of materials for students who are in remote learning – age appropriate and rigorous – high quality lessons for all students.</b></li> <li>• <b>Black &amp; Latino Studies Curriculum.</b></li> <li>• School Counseling Framework and SBE Position Statement – comprehensive for K-12 system for all students.</li> <li>• <b>Social Emotional Learning – K-3 curricular standards for SEL, working of grades 4-12. Landscape analysis of what is in place in districts.</b></li> <li>• Standardized Grade 3 reading.</li> <li>• Grade 3 Reading Initiative.</li> </ul>

# CT Learning Hub



# Inside the Schoolhouse: Use of Curriculum in Closing Achievement Gaps (continued)

*Model curriculum is available for schools and districts with persistent achievement gaps.*

Policy Recommendation	Responding Agencies	Notes
<p>School districts recognized as underperforming, or with persistent achievement gaps, will be encouraged and incentivized to undergo curriculum audits with SDE. Efforts should be made to encourage local and regional collaborations within this effort.</p>	<p>SDE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Opportunity Districts - Cross-divisional Team conduct curriculum audits and provide support in the selection of curriculum, training of staff, and ongoing technical assistance.</b> Start with support and add accountability. Working in partnership.</li> <li>• Districts will use the K-12 Curriculum Design Framework to audit local curriculum and prioritize review and renewal.</li> </ul>
<p>Require the State Department of Education to develop high-quality model K-5 curricula in reading and math with considerations for students learning English as a Second Language. Curriculum will be recommended to districts with limited resources, high transiency, and large achievement gaps.</p>	<p>SDE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital tools and assessment <b>resources are being procured</b> and included in the CT Learning Hub for all districts to access and implement.</li> <li>• <b>New position: Director of Equity and Language.</b></li> <li>• <b>Much more needed. Major focus.</b></li> <li>• <b>Discussion regarding using K-12 to PK-12 – note use PK-12 instead of K-12.</b></li> <li>• <b>John - Healthy and Balanced Framework curriculum updated will be from PK – 12.</b></li> <li>• <b>CSCU - endorse PreK-12 teacher certification now in some areas.</b></li> </ul>



# Inside the Schoolhouse: Use of Curriculum in Closing Achievement Gaps (continued)

*Model curriculum is available for schools and districts with persistent achievement gaps.*

Policy Recommendation	Responding Agencies	Notes
<p>Create and disseminate a robust menu of assessments aligned to model curricula. These assessments should include a variety of balanced formats including portfolios, performance tasks, oral presentations, art works, and other learning artifacts that encourage higher level thinking. Assessments should include scales and benchmarks to determine language proficiency development in addition to content mastery.</p>	<p>SDE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSDE Priority Standards for Essential Learning.</li> <li>• Formative assessments that are aligned to standards of success.</li> <li>• <b>Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs).</b></li> <li>• <b>Formative assessments have been made available</b> to align consistency across districts in rigor and expectations around standards.</li> </ul>
<p>The State Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community Development, shall ensure that all students have opportunities to learn in classroom environments that promote a culture of creativity and innovation, and creativity should be included as a criterion, assessment tool, and emphasis for the classroom.</p>	<p>SDE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of guidance to support reopening schools and the provision of remote and hybrid learning.</li> <li>• Technology supports – laptops and connectivity: <b>Everybody Learns.</b></li> <li>• Learning Hub provides the content piece.</li> <li>• Creating a playbook for students to promote creativity and innovation.</li> <li>• Charlene – partnering to reach families in a variety of ways – together.</li> </ul>

# Inside the Schoolhouse: Creativity and Innovation and the Achievement Gap Synopsis

*All students have opportunities to learn in classroom environments that promote a culture of creativity and innovation.*

Policy Recommendation	Responding Agencies	Notes
Response to overall Result Statement	DAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Doug Casey – there are so many wonderful exemplar programs across the state, e.g. Norwalk program.</li><li>• Keep reiterating the message of “get connected” and supporting those students.</li></ul>
K-12 districts and schools that show persistent gaps in academic achievement should provide rich and diverse arts and extracurricular programming that promotes innovation and creativity.	SDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 141,000 laptops to PK-12 students making CT first state in nation to provide access to all students in need.</li><li>• Student Voices to be Heard through <b>ThoughtExchange</b>.</li><li>• CSCU – vital role for higher ed to support the council’s efforts in PK to Gr. 12. Accountability for the higher ed. institutions too.</li><li>• Charlene recently on a call with other states, CT was recognized for its new attendance monthly data collection. We know attendance and engagement for our high need students – allows for us to get supports and community buy-in.</li></ul>



# Connecticut's Commitment to Equity and Measuring Student Learning in 2020-21

# Equity During a Pandemic

## Assessment



## Accountability

- ✔ **Assess ALL students** — state tests are the most accurate guideposts to our promise of equity for ALL
- ✔ Use test results to evaluate the full impact of the pandemic on student achievement and growth
- ✔ Use test scores with other data to provide holistic supports that are responsive to student needs and minimize negative effects of pandemic
- ✔ Administer state tests remotely when necessary — *many districts are already doing it*
- ✔ Use **short, small-scale, fine-grain tests** (e.g., interim blocks) before the state tests to help teachers inform instruction during the year

- ⊘ Do not report Accountability Index for schools based on 2020-21 data\*
- ⊘ Do not place schools in categories based on 2020-21 data\*
- ⊘ Do not use state assessment results in educator evaluation
- ✔ Continue to support schools that were previously identified for state support
- ✔ **Publicly report data** when feasible and defensible (including assessment, attendance, discipline, graduation, college-and-career readiness) to ensure transparency and support

\*Pending federal approval

### FACTS

- Connecticut students take about 3 to 4 hours total to complete the Smarter Balanced English Language Arts and Math assessments combined.
- Test sessions are flexible. Students can begin a test on one day, pause the session, and restart where they left off on a different day.
- Connecticut has supplied over **142,000 devices and thousands of connectivity solutions** through hotspots and cable connections to ensure all students can learn remotely.

## Addendum 12

### Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together

Connecticut State Department of Education



## Reimagining CT Classrooms: Planning the Instructional Time for Remote Learning in Hybrid and Full Remote Models

September 3, 2020

This addendum serves as guidance to support LEAs with planning for hybrid and full remote learning in response to the [Connecticut State Board of Education's resolution, passed August 11, 2020](#). The resolution authorizes guidance be issued to ensure that students are provided rigorous learning and engagement opportunities that are aligned with State standards and Board expectations, whether the education is in person or remote.

Whether onsite or remote, the optimal amount of time spent learning each day is determined by the need for learning, practicing, applying, exploring and demonstrating knowledge. It is imperative to keep all attention focused squarely on the quality of the teaching and learning that is occurring and removing all barriers that come in the way of it (e.g., device, connectivity, content, teacher expertise, unnecessary assessments, etc.). Time will vary depending on student strengths, needs and developmental level. When remote, it is important to consider family needs. Teachers should provide experiences and activities for the day and week of learning within a specified timeframe. All requirements for learning should be communicated in a timely manner to students and families through the district identified learning management systems or other forms of communication. Of note, in cases where a remote day is due to family choice, school districts should follow the [Temporarily Opting into Voluntary Remote Learning Due to COVID-19](#) guidance, where the approach may be different because the school continues to offer an in-person option to those families. And, the same engaged instruction principles apply for those that choose to opt into remote learning.

To reimagine CT classrooms, districts should plan to provide students with learning opportunities aligned to state and national educational standards, which move everyone closer to demonstrating mastery. Onsite and remote learning plans must include forward movement along standards aligned learning progressions or through grade level outcomes, as well as acceleration and reinforcement of prior learning and necessary intervention.

# Next Steps

- 2021 Meeting Schedule (all meetings will be held from 1 to 3 p.m.)

*March 17, 2021*

- Family Engagement
- Housing
- Inside the Schoolhouse: School Climate and the Achievement Gap

*June 23, 2021*

- Inside Higher Education: Leaders that Close the Gap: Administrator Preparation and Development
- Inside Higher Education: Highly Effective Teacher Preparation Programs
- Inside the Schoolhouse: Principal and Teacher Hiring and Retention for Schools that Demonstrate Persistent Gaps

*September 22, 2021*

*December 15, 2021*

# Closure/Meeting Adjourned

- Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.
- Watch the full meeting on YouTube at [\(531\) Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap - December 10, 2020 - YouTube.](#)