

MAYOR'S CABINET FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Operating Procedures and Bylaws

Name of Organization

The name of the organization shall be the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children.

Declaration of Purpose

The purpose of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children is to:

- Make recommendations to the Mayor and the Superintendent of schools on issues relating to Hartford's early childhood initiative;
- Foster partnerships among providers of early childhood programs;
- Assist in the identification of the need for quality early childhood programs for children between the ages of birth to eight years that promote the health and safety of children and prepare them for formal schooling, and the numbers of Hartford children without such services;
- Identify existing and prospective resources and services central to the priorities of Hartford children and families;
- Facilitate the coordination of the delivery of services to children and families, including referral procedures;
- Exchange information with other school readiness councils, the community, and organizations serving the needs of young children and their families;
- Make recommendations to the Superintendent concerning transition from preschool to kindergarten practices and/or policies;
- Encourage and value parent and public participation and involvement;
- Enhance federal, state and locally funded early childhood opportunities;
- Promote the development and sustainability of quality, easily accessible, affordable and accredited early childhood programs.

Composition of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children

The Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children shall include:

- The Mayor, or his designee;
- The Superintendent of the Hartford Public Schools, or management level staff person as his/her designee;
- The Mayor, or his/her designee and the Superintendent, or his/her designee, shall each assume the responsibility of Co-chairs to the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children and shall hold voting privileges.
- The Superintendent of the Hartford Public Schools and the Mayor shall appoint representatives from some of the following groups:
 1. municipal leaders and employees such as community social workers, and public health officials;
 2. parents and parent advocacy groups;
 3. Hartford Public Library;
 4. Regional Office of the Connecticut Department of Social Services and/Children and Families;
 5. Hartford Head Start agency;
 6. Family Resource Centers;
 7. Non-profit and for-profit child care centers;
 8. Connecticut Birth To Three Program;
 9. Family Day Care Provider;
 10. Organizations that train or credential early childhood providers;
 11. Higher education institutions and hospitals in the area, and local community organizations, and foundations.

Members of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children shall be representative of the racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity of Hartford.

Officers

The Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children shall have two co-chairs appointed by the Mayor, the mayor or his/her designee, and the superintendent or his/her designee. The co-chairs shall be responsible for:

- oversight of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children operations;
- ensuring that all policies established by the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children are fully implemented;
- appointing members to the Cabinet.

Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation Director and Assistant Director of the Division for Young Children

The Director and Assistant Director, appointed by the Mayor or his/her designee, shall function as staff to the Cabinet and shall be responsible for attending Cabinet meetings, attending Task Force and Committee meetings, managing the Cabinet's daily operations inclusive of fiscal management as well as developing and implementing its long-range plans. In addition, the Director and Assistant Director are responsible for the local coordination, program evaluation, and administration of the City's early childhood initiative. In addition, the Assistant Director facilitates Network meetings and acts as the local School Readiness and Child Day Care liaison between Hartford and the State Office of Early Childhood.

Terms of Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children Members

Members shall be appointed for five-year terms with the ability to be re-appointed.

Responsibilities of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children Members:

Within the stated purpose of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children, members of the Cabinet shall also:

1. Contribute to the success of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children by Co-chairing or participating in Committees and/or Task Force Groups to help carry out the work of the Cabinet and ensure city-wide input;
2. Research, discuss, and review issues to strengthen the decision-making process;

3. Contribute to the development of key partnerships and collaborative efforts;
4. Contribute to the establishment of performance standards as defined by Public Act 97-259, and, on an ongoing basis, monitor Hartford's performance of the various components in accordance with the performance standards;
5. Advocate for new or revised City/State policies and programs that are necessary to the development of a coordinated, comprehensive early childhood system that ensures equitable access for all young Hartford children and their families, and
6. Attend all Cabinet meetings. When attendance is not possible, members must notify the Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation's Director. Regular attendance is crucial to the work of the Cabinet; therefore, consistent absenteeism by a member may result in his or her removal from the Cabinet. This would enable the Mayor and Superintendent to recruit a representative who is able to attend the meetings regularly and contribute to the work of the Cabinet.

Cabinet members shall not designate anyone to speak on behalf of them, the agency they represent, or to sit at the Cabinet table, without the pre-approval of both co-chairs prior to the meeting.

Conflicts of Interest

Cabinet members shall disclose to the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children any conflicts of interest that arise. Cabinet members may not vote on policies in which they have expressed a conflict of interest or on any application that would involve a conflict of interest. In the event that a Cabinet member questions whether a conflict exists, the issue shall be decided by a majority vote of the Cabinet members present and voting, provided that the Cabinet member in question shall not vote.

The Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation Director and Assistant Director shall have total discretion within the realm of their responsibilities to monitor and recommend programmatic changes following monitoring or auditing of funded schools/centers.

Communications with the Public

Communications with the public regarding Cabinet issues or matters shall be addressed by the Cabinet co-chairs, their designees and City's Communications Department.

Resignation of Cabinet Members:

The resignation of any elected or appointed member from the Cabinet shall be in writing addressed to the co-chairs of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children with a copy forwarded to the Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation. If no effective date is stated, the resignation shall be effective upon receipt.

Meetings of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children

The Cabinet shall have regular meetings on a schedule determined by the co-chairs. Reasonable notice of the date, time, place, and purpose of each meeting shall be given to each Cabinet member by mail, telephone, facsimile, overnight delivery service, electronic mail, or personally, a minimum of five days prior to the meeting.

The co-chairs may call special meetings of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children. Reasonable notice of the date, time, location, and purpose of each such meeting shall be given to each Cabinet member by mail, telephone, facsimile, overnight delivery service, or personally, a minimum of two days prior to the meeting.

Decision Making

Consensus shall be the goal of the Cabinet however, when this is not attainable, majority vote of those members present will be necessary to pass any resolution or action of the Cabinet.

Cabinet members shall each hold one vote except when appointed members represent the same agency. In this situation only one individual shall cast a vote on behalf of the agency or organization.

The vote of the majority represents the position of the Cabinet in reference to any particular matter brought to a vote. The Cabinet staff shall inform the co-chairs about the recommendations made by the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children.

Co-chairs shall vote on all Cabinet business except when a conflict of interest has been identified.

Voting and Quorum

At any given time, the presence of at least six voting members, including at least one co-chair shall constitute a quorum. Decisions of the Cabinet shall be made on a vote of a majority of those voting, provided a quorum is present at the meeting. In the event that vote is scheduled at a meeting in which a member cannot attend, the member may cast his/her vote electronically to the Director of the Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation. The Director shall inform attending members of the vote.

Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children Committees and Task Force Groups

Committees and Task Force groups shall be created by the Cabinet and appointed by the Co-Chairs of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children to address a broad range of topics relating to school readiness and early childhood.

The function of Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children Committees and Task Forces is to thoroughly research, discuss and analyze special issues or topics as identified by the Cabinet. Committees and Task Forces shall forward complete written analyses, drafted products/documents and/or progress reports to the Cabinet staff, at a minimum, two weeks prior to the scheduled Cabinet meeting in which the committee/task force is to present, in order to allow adequate time for Cabinet member distribution.

Committees and Task Force Groups shall make full use of the varied Cabinet membership expertise, time and commitment, inclusive of differing opinions or perspectives, in order to ensure quality recommendations, healthy discussions and shared outcomes.

Committees and Task Force Group Memberships:

Membership of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children committees and/or task forces shall, at a minimum, be comprised of co-chairs appointed by the Cabinet co-chairs and the Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation Director and Assistant Director. In addition, a parent representative and other individuals with expertise and/or experience related to the topic of the committee or task force should be included. Cabinet members may be appointed as co-chairs or as committee/task force members. Members shall be representative of the racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity of Hartford.