

**Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children
Regular Meeting on August 22, 2019
MEETING MINUTES – DRAFT FOR APPROVAL**

1 Call to order

A meeting of the Mayor's Cabinet for Young Children was held on August 22, 2019 at Hartford City Hall, Room 100. The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m.

2 Roll Call

2.1 Attendees

Luke Bronin, Mayor and Co-Chair; Leslie Torres-Rodriguez, Superintendent and Co-Chair; Liany Arroyo, Director of Health & Human Services; Paul Dworkin, Executive Vice President, Office of Community Child Health, CCMC; Kimberly Oliver, Director of Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation and Staff; Paula Gilberto, United Way of Central & Northeastern CT; Richard Sussman, Director of Early Childhood Investments/HFPG; Jane Crowell, Assistant Director of Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation and Staff; Thea Montanez, Chief of Staff; Marie Jarry, Director of Public Services, Hartford Public Library; Barbara Jo Warner, Director, Capitol Child Development Center

2.2 Members Not in Attendance

Leslie Carrillo, McKinney-Vento Liaison; Minal Kulkarni, Parent

3 Approval of Minutes

Motion by Paul Dworkin, second by Paula Gilberto

All voted in favor. No one opposed. No one abstained. Motion passed.

4 Administrative Updates

4.1 Staff Report

4.1.1 New initiatives

FirstSchool is a nationally recognized school reform framework designed to promote the educational alignment between preschool and the early elementary grades based on research and data driven practices. Hartford's FY20 FirstSchool Initiative will be rolled out in the next few months by a team of approved City and Hartford Public Schools (HPS) classroom observers certified by FirstSchool to measure the experiences children are exposed to in their classrooms. HPS will observe PreK-3 grade classrooms and the City will assess community-based school readiness classrooms. Educators will receive FirstSchool data profiles representing classroom settings, curriculum content, student approaches to learning and approaches to teaching essential to building strong early learning environments where children find themselves smart, capable and confident. Often settings change drastically between grades causing some children to struggle with such challenging transitions and unrealistic expectations. FirstSchool supports educators to facilitate gradual releases of control to help children become more independent and confident in their learning. Superintendent Torres-Rodriguez added that this initiative provides a seamless transition and foundation to the major actions in the HPS Strategic Plan's Guided Reading approach. Cabinet members will be presented with aggregated data profiles in the late Fall.

Bloomberg Philanthropies/What Works Cities has awarded the City of Hartford a three-year grant to replicate Providence Talks, an early literacy program for young children, families and educators. A national press release will be issued by Bloomberg Philanthropies within the next month followed by Hartford's local press release announcing Hartford Talks. Bloomberg and LENA representatives have been invited to a subsequent release in October to present to Cabinet, Council, providers and other key

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stakeholders in the City. Hartford Talks highlights LENA Grow a professional development model that targets teachers and children enrolled in their classrooms with a pilot being implemented at Women's League Child Development Center and King's Chapel Early Care & Education Center. LENA Home (The Village's Words Count program) focuses on home-visitors and families of young Hartford children. LENA Start, a model that supports parents and children in parent groups, has garnered possible interest from the Library, recreation playgrounds and Family Centers. Over the three-year period, the City will receive over \$600,000 between the LENA technology devices as well as the supports needed to administer the program. Hartford Talks aims to reach about 800 children and has enough LENA recorders and vests to enable expansion.

Harvard's Lectio Institute, a training workshop on an early literacy framework was convened last year with over 50 attendees from a wide-range of agencies supporting early literacy. The four original funding partners- the City, United Way, Fund for Greater Hartford and Hartford Foundation for Public Giving continue to voice support in bringing Lectio back to Hartford to re-engage stakeholders in expanded literacy landscape mapping and to coordinate efforts to achieve expected outcomes related to Campaign for Grade Level Reading. Updates will be provided to members in upcoming meetings.

Member resignation: Kim Oliver informed members that Kimberly Mansfield has a new employment position and her employer sees it as a conflict of interest to continue being a member of the Cabinet, therefore Kimberly has submitted her resignation from the Mayor's Cabinet. Per By-laws resignation is effective immediately.

Community Renewal Team (CRT) Grace Street facility: An update on the transition of Community Renewal Team (CRT) Grace Street facility closure was provided to members. There have been multiple communications between the City and CRT and funds were secured for the transition through July and August. Of the approximate 69 children receiving services, 30 are transitioning to kindergarten and will therefore not need school readiness services in September. CRT held two informational sessions for parents and City staff provided families with a list of other available school readiness programs throughout the City. At the second session, Mayor Bronin and Chief of Staff Thea Montanez, Superintendent Torres-Rodriguez, and Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Commissioner Bye attended to assure families that there were many other programs with vacancies and that their fees would not increase. There will be a follow up with parents to ensure children have been placed.

4.2 Co-Chair Reports

Mayor Bronin reported that it is important for the Cabinet to stand by its decision and focus on an effective transition for the Grace Street families and children. He reminded members of their obligation to reflect on where we can do things better. Therefore, Mayor Bronin reported that he had requested the OEC to review the City's procurement process. In response, the OEC stated that Hartford fulfilled its responsibility in adhering to OEC directives and requirements. Nevertheless, Mayor Bronin is requesting a deeper review as Hartford moves this initiative forward.

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5 Business Agenda/Action Items

5.1. Recommendation to create a taskforce of the Mayor's Cabinet to focus on the RFP process and the Rubric by which organizations are scored including requests for an independent review of the Rubric, increase parent participation on the Cabinet and instituting a more formalized process with regard to notifications.

Superintendent Torres-Rodriguez, Barbara Jo Warner from Capitol Child Development Center and Marie Jarry from the Hartford Public Library volunteered to sit on the Taskforce.

5.2. Develop a meeting schedule:

September/October: Retreat
November/December: Regular meeting
2020: Quarterly meetings

6 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:31 p.m.