

## **Report to the CETC Youth Committee: Connecticut's Early Childhood Investment Initiative November 14, 2006**

The Early Childhood Investment Framework, *Ready by 5 and Fine by 9*, was released by the CT Early Childhood Education Cabinet and the State Department of Education in October 2006. The 28-page report is available online at -- [www.ecpolicycouncil.org/docs/ready5\\_fine9.pdf](http://www.ecpolicycouncil.org/docs/ready5_fine9.pdf) -- as well as from the Department of Education in hard copy.

### *Local Listening Forums*

Between early September and early October, 14 Local Listening Forums were hosted by United Ways throughout Connecticut and attended by nearly 1000 citizens. Comments were generally very positive as to the goals and priorities of the Framework; specific questions and issues raised are now being consolidated by the United Way of Connecticut and will be reported at the next meeting of the Cabinet. Information is online at -- [//ecforums.communityresultscenter.org/](http://ecforums.communityresultscenter.org/)

### *Cabinet Next Steps*

The Cabinet has established five working groups for the present state fiscal year, with members taking leadership roles on each. The working groups will expand beyond Council members to include interested individuals, organizations and sectors over the year. Working groups are:

1. Framework Goal One: All children reaching age-appropriate developmental milestones through age five
2. Framework Goal Two: All children reach the kindergarten door with the knowledge, skills and behaviors necessary for early school success
3. Framework Goal Three: Children make significant educational progress in the K-3 years and achieve reading mastery by the 4<sup>th</sup> grade
4. Working Group on Building Local Capacity
5. Working Group on Statewide Management Challenges

### *Results-Based Accountability (RBA) Framework*

By agreement with the Appropriations Committee of the CT General Assembly, the RBA framework and process will be applied to Goal Two (for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year) and Goal One for the first year. Staffing assistance in adoption of the RBA framework is being provided by the Charter Oak Group. The Cabinet will present to the Appropriations Committee on both goals at a special RBA hearing on February 13, 2007.

### *Annie E. Casey Partnership*

The Cabinet has entered into an 18-month partnership with the Annie E. Casey Leadership in Action Program (LAP) to focus on "turning the curve" on children's school readiness over this period, based on the better use of existing resources coupled with policy, practice and program changes that can be made across agencies at the state and local levels. LAP will be associated with Goal Two and will likely launch in February 2007, with establishment of a strong public-private state-local working group. It is also likely that one or two communities will join with us as full partners. The Cabinet allocated \$75,000 to support this work and has leveraged an additional \$175,000 in philanthropic contributions.

### *Progress on the Early Childhood Investment Plan*

The Early Childhood Research and Policy Council, supported by the United Way of CT and a small group of staff and consultants, is moving forward to prepare the draft Investment Plan for Council review on November 28, 2006. The Plan is due to the Governor by December 8, 2006. Working through three Committees – Cost & Finance, Management & Infrastructure, and Research and Accountability – the Council is:

- Addressing cost issues for the Cabinet's 10 top priorities
- Completing a scan of financing strategies in use in other states and municipalities
- Preparing a set of recommendations on improving state data structures and processes
- Completing an analysis of seven options for improved statewide governance of the early childhood investment initiative
- Proposing establishment of an Early Childhood Research Network
- Preparing a policy brief on development of a new Quality Rating System.

*Data Infrastructure Issues.* As we have found to be true in terms of youth systemic transformation, data gathering, analysis and sharing issues must be addressed if we are to: (a) produce aggregate data useful for improved statewide and local strategic planning, (b) enhance program performance and accountability, and (c) improve client by client case coordination and service delivery. The Research and Policy Council's Data Subcommittee will propose linkages with the state's evolving CT Health Information Network and the new CT e-Health initiative. In addition, the group is looking at the intersect of these new health information systems and the State Department of Education's Public School Information System (PSIS). Two business leaders on the Council are guiding this effort: Mary Franco, Vice President of Norwalk Hospital and President of the Norwalk Hospital Foundation, and Marie O'Brien, CEO of the CT Development Authority.

### *DECD Connections*

In January 2004, then Lt. Governor Rell challenged the child development community to get together with the state's economic development community to find a common language and share workforce and other development issues. In September 2006, the first meeting between the Cabinet and Council representatives and the Department of Economic and Community Development was held. Conversation focused on how the early childhood investment work could draw upon the expertise and ongoing development opportunities of DECD with regard to both workforce and capital expansion.

### *Governor's Summit on Early Childhood Investment*

The January 2007 Governor's Early Childhood Investment Summit is now entering the active planning phase. Logistics for the Summit will be managed by the United Way of Connecticut. More details will follow shortly.

### *Public Television Early Learning Documentary*

CT Public Television is completing a one-hour documentary on Early Learning Investment, to be broadcast in early February 2007. The producer, Boyd Productions of West Hartford, has interviewed key Connecticut and national experts on the challenges and opportunities of early investment. This work is funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Graustein Memorial Fund.