

INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR ENDING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP
Hartford

Draft Minutes of Meeting (Subject to Revision)
January 26, 2012

Call to Order

Lieutenant Governor Wyman called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. The meeting was held in room 1A of the Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut.

Members present: Stefan Pryor, Commissioner, Department of Education
 Michael Meotti, Executive Vice President, Board of Regents for Higher Education
 Donna Cambria, Department of Children and Families
 Roderick Bremby, Commissioner, Department of Social Services
 Kip Bergstrom, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Economic and Community Development
 Jeffrey Beckham, Department of Administrative Services
 Leah Grenier, Office of Policy and Management

Presentors: Mario Cruz, Principal, Smalley Academy
 Anita Fazio, Assistant Principal, Smalley Academy
 Laoise King, Vice President of Educational Initiatives, United Way of Greater New Haven, Boost!
 Jennifer Heath, Executive Vice President, United Way of Greater New Haven

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Proposed Focus of the Council

Stefan Pryor, Commissioner of Education, discussed the purpose of the committee as defined by P.A. 11-85. The Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap must:

1. assist the Achievement Gap Task Force in the development of the master plan to eliminate the academic achievement gaps in Connecticut;
2. implement the provisions of such master plan, and, if necessary, make recommendations for legislation relating to such master plan to the joint standing committee of the Connecticut General Assembly (CGA) having cognizance of matters relating to education; and
3. meet at least quarterly.

Commissioner Pryor discussed the Community Schools Model as focus for the council. The roots of the Community School Model are in Connecticut with Edward Zeigler at Yale. The Community School Model is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. A unified focus on academics, services, supports and opportunities leads to improved student learning, stronger families and

healthier communities. Schools become hubs of the community, open to everyone, all day, every day, evenings and weekends.

Community Schools represent a strategy, not a program. Partners and stakeholders come together to agree on a set of results for children that they will achieve together. They develop a coordination system to share leadership and connect children and families with opportunities, services and resources. They share accountability for results. They transform schools and communities. Research supports that Community Schools make a positive difference in student achievement, behavior and attendance, family involvement, and community engagement with public schools.

III. Community School Model

Presentation – Mario Cruz and Anita Fazio, Smalley Academy, New Britain

Smalley Academy is a K-5 school located in New Britain. Smalley Academy is one of the lowest performing schools in the state and is a recipient of the federal school improvement grant. Mario Cruz, principal at Smalley, and Anita Fazio, Assistant Principal, presented about the school's community school model. The school has a health clinic, which provides medical, dental and mental health services to students. There are several external partners and non-profit organizations involved with the school. There is a community health organization, Urban Oaks Farm, United Way, New Britain Youth Theatre, New Britain Police, YMCA, YWCA and NRC. The school offers a Saturday academy, summer academy and extended day program. Mr. Cruz discussed that the challenges he is facing are engaging more parents and to have people who live in New Britain but not near the school to be more involved. Mr. Cruz discussed that there is an outreach program, where bilingual staff are going to the home for visits.

Presentation-Laoise King and Jennifer Heath, Boost!, New Haven

Laoise King, Vice President of Educational Initiatives, United Way of Greater New Haven, Boost! and Jennifer Heath, Executive Vice President, United Way of Greater New Haven, presented about the partnership with New Haven public schools and the city of New Haven around community schools as part of the *New Haven School Change Initiative*. Boost! provides wrap-around services in five schools in New Haven: Barnard Environmental Studies Magnet School, Clinton Avenue School, Augusta Lewis Troup School, Wexler-Grant Community School and Metropolitan Business Academy. The plans are to add five more schools this year. The services fall into four broad domains: physical health, social and behavioral health, family support and engagement, and social engagement/extended learning time. Boost! provides students 1 ½ hours of academics and ½ hour of activities after school. Boost! provides technical assistance in these schools with needs assessment/planning, communication, coordination, accountability and resource development. There is a Boost! coordinator assigned to each school

IV. Members Discussion

Members commented on the two presentations as well as the importance of ensuring that agencies work collaboratively to close the achievement gap and that all agencies are represented in the discussion.

V. Next Steps

The group will convene again in one month to continue the discussion of council member involvement in the Community Schools Model. A work group will be established to target this initiative. It is important to consider all agencies in this work.

VI. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for February 29, 2012, from 9-11 a.m., at the Legislative Office Building, room 1A.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m.