

INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR ENDING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP  
Hartford

**Draft Minutes of Meeting**  
(Subject to Revision)  
April 7, 2016

**Call to Order**

The Honorable Nancy Wyman, Lieutenant Governor, State of Connecticut, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. The meeting was held in Conference Room 307A of the State Office Building, Hartford, Connecticut.

Member agencies  
represented by:

Michael Carone, Legislative and Regulations Analyst, Department of Social Services  
Christopher Leone, Superintendent of Schools, Department of Children and Families  
Bonnie Koba, Arts in Education Program Manager and Director of Higher Order Thinking  
(HOT) Schools, Department of Economic and Community Development  
Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer, Connecticut State Department  
of Education  
Robin Tousey-Ayers, Health Program Associate, Children and Youth with Special Health  
Care Needs, Department of Public Health (telephone)  
Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner, Connecticut State Department of Education

Guests: Laura Downs, Attendance Works  
David Kennedy, Achievement Gap Task Force, United Way of Coastal Fairfield County  
John Frassinelli, Connecticut State Department of Education  
Jaquita Monroe, Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division  
Kari Sullivan, Connecticut State Department of Education  
Iris White, Connecticut State Department of Education

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

The Honorable Nancy Wyman, Lieutenant Governor, State of Connecticut

**II. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes from January 21, 2016**

The Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap will consider the Minutes from the January 21, 2016, meeting at its next meeting on October 6, 2016.

**III. Review of Chronic Absence Prevention and Intervention Guide for Schools and Districts**

Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief Operating Officer  
Connecticut State Department of Education

Laura Downs, Senior Fellow, Attendance Works

Charlene Russell-Tucker opened the presentation with an overview of the requirements of Public Act 15-225, an [Act Concerning Chronic Absenteeism](#). This legislation requires

that the Connecticut State Department of Education, in consultation with the Interagency Council for Ending the Achievement Gap, develop a chronic absenteeism prevention and intervention plan for use by local and regional boards of education to reduce chronic absenteeism and should include:

- information describing chronic absenteeism, definition of chronically absent child and causes of chronic absenteeism;
- information about the effect of chronic absenteeism on a student's academic performance;
- description of how family and school partnership with community resources, such as FRCs and YSB, can reduce chronic absenteeism and improve student attendance; and
- a means of collecting and analyzing data relating to student attendance.

The purpose of this presentation is to engage members in a facilitated overview and discussion regarding the purpose and overall approach to the development of the guide.

Laura Downs, Attendance Works, facilitated a presentation and discussion regarding the guide that included the following sections of the guide:

- What is chronic absence?
- Why are students chronically absent?
- Why is it an important issue in Connecticut?
- How do we know if it is affecting learning in our district?
- What can a district do to improve attendance?
  - District attendance teams
  - Student attendance teams
  - Implement a system of tiered supports
- Who else can be involved?

Participants engaged in discussion and provided feedback on the presentation that will be considered for inclusion in the guide.

#### **IV. Achievement Gap Task Force Update**

David Kennedy, Achievement Gap Task Force, United Way of Coastal Fairfield County

David Kennedy proposed that at future Council meetings the Achievement Gap Task Force provide a written report on the status of "legislative" initiatives/activities that align with the Master Plan. The purpose of this report is to keep members up-to-date and connected to this work.

#### **V. Member Updates**

Charlene Russell-Tucker provided an update from Housing Commissioner, Evonne Klein, who could not attend, that the State of Connecticut received federal recognition

for effectively ending veteran homelessness as of the end of 2015. The Department of Housing is also preparing to announce a round of funding to support homeless youth.

Commissioner Wentzell discussed the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the accountability requirements. We are currently in a transition year and Connecticut has included chronic absence as one of our accountability indicators. In 2018-19, ESSA will expand to address youth who are homeless.

**VI. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on October 6, 2016, at 3 p.m., at the State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Room 307A.

**VII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.