



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



October 17, 2011

Arne Duncan
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
Department of Education Building
400 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Kathleen Sebelius
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius:

Our enclosed Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application represents the product of unprecedented collaboration among eight Connecticut State agencies, the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet and the Connecticut Head Start Association Collaboration Office. These agencies and other partners formed Connecticut's RTT-ELC Leadership Team. The RTT-ELC Leadership Team and seven work groups, which include senior-level representatives from each of the Participating State Agencies, commit to supporting the successful implementation of this initiative (evidenced by the Memorandum of Understanding signed by each Participating State Agency). We also received over 80 letters of support for our RTT-ELC State Plan on behalf of more than 150 diverse Connecticut organizations.

The RTT-ELC Leadership Team and work groups engaged intensively for several months to ensure that our RTT-ELC State Plan builds upon and aligns with the work already underway within and among state agencies to support young children and their families. Many of the components are in place to achieve our shared vision.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC State Plan capitalizes on the building momentum towards the development of a coordinated, comprehensive system for Connecticut's young children. The Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet, first established in 2005, is charged with developing a high-quality, comprehensive system of early childhood education among the wide array of early childhood programs in the state (including Head Start, state-supported Child Care and School Readiness). In July 2011, the Connecticut General Assembly approved landmark legislation, Public Act 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development," which mandates the continued development of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development through increased collaboration among relevant Connecticut state agencies. Governor Dannel P. Malloy, via Executive Order, established a State Early Childhood Office to create a culture of change and to integrate the RTT-ELC State Plan into the existing transformative efforts outlined in Public Act 11-181.

Our proposed RTT-ELC State Plan will improve the quality of early learning and development and substantially narrow the achievement gap for Connecticut Children with High Needs. Connecticut will accomplish this by accelerating ongoing efforts to strengthen state systems and supporting communities to work collaboratively to better meet the needs of high-need children and families through improved service coordination and quality improvements. **Our ambitious overall goal is to achieve a dramatic increase in the percentage of children with high needs who enter kindergarten ready to succeed, and to cut in half the percentage of children unprepared for school.**

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Strengthen local early childhood councils as they develop and implement comprehensive early childhood plans for every year (birth to age 8) to meet the developmental needs (including health and family support) of every child – reaching 90% of high-need children in our state. This public-private endeavor builds on long-standing partnerships with committed philanthropic partners.
- Institute a comprehensive Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (T-QRIS) with incentives for early learning programs in every setting (including family-based providers and family, friends, and neighbors) to participate. We expect more than 4,000 early learning programs to participate in our T-QRIS by 2015 and we propose to facilitate a T-QRIS Learning Community with neighboring states.
- Revise our Early Learning and Development Standards to address all developmental domains and promote use in every setting.
- Promote healthy eating, nutrition and physical activity in early learning programs by dramatically expanding health consultation to programs and integrating State Department of Education and Department of Public Health programs and resources that build off our successful model for school-age children.
- Develop and implement a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, complemented by a progression of credentials that expand on long-standing articulation agreements between two and four year colleges and a greatly enhanced Professional Registry that captures the entire early childhood workforce and educator-specific data on competencies and credentials.
- Enhance Connecticut's current Kindergarten Entrance Inventory to address all essential domains of school readiness and meet the highest psychometric standards, and to inform kindergarten instruction and system improvement at the state and community levels.
- Develop a federated data network to incorporate standardized early childhood data across key state agencies to facilitate the use of data for decision making and system improvement at both the state and community levels.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is proud to lead this statewide, collaborative effort to close the preparation and readiness gaps that contribute to our unacceptably high achievement gap. The process of developing our RTT-ELC State Plan has – by engaging every state agency and system that touches young children – already infused new ideas and a collaborative spirit into our efforts to create a high-quality, comprehensive system.

We know it will not be easy and realize Connecticut's stark achievement gap reflects the challenges confronting 80,000 of our children every day. The faces and fates of our youngest and most vulnerable children will drive us to succeed.

Sincerely,



Stefan Pryor
Commissioner of Education

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2-1-1 Child Care



For more information: Dial 2-1-1 or 1-800-505-1000 | www.211childcare.org | www.ctunitedway.org

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06010

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of United Way of Connecticut's 211 Child Care to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Initiative. This application will build on various statewide efforts to develop a robust continuum of support for children ages 0-5 to help them thrive in school and beyond.

211 Child Care is Connecticut's Statewide Child Care Resource and Referral Service. Using our comprehensive database of all licensed and licensed exempt child care facilities, we provide information, education and referrals to parents on identifying and locating quality child care. Over 90,000 parents utilize our services annually. Additionally, 211 Child Care provides training and technical assistance to Connecticut's early care professionals. We provide these services to 700+ child care center based, licensed family child care home, and kith and kin providers annually. Our services are free and offered in multiple languages to Connecticut residents. 211 Child Care is offered in conjunction with other programs administered by United Way of Connecticut that provide services to high need populations. These services include: HUSKY Infoline, Birth to Three and Help me Grow through the Child Development Infoline and Care 4 Kids Child Care Subsidy program.

211 Child Care Staff partners with community based programs to provide trainings, outreach and technical assistance site visits to early care professionals and parents. Technical assistance site visits are provided on-site in family child care homes and centers. We participate in many national, statewide and regional stakeholder groups including the Early Childhood Alliance, CT Charts a Course, School Readiness Councils, Care 4 Kids Advisory Committee, State Advisory Council Data and Early Learning Guideline Workgroups, Discovery Communities and Child Day Care Council. We represent the State of Connecticut on a National Level with the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA).

211 Child Care actively participated in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) planning work group in 2008 and most recently in response to this application. As the Resource & Referral agency for Connecticut, 211 Child Care's work with families to identify elements of quality early care and education service is a key component of our services. A QRIS would provide Connecticut with a tool that would greatly assist families in their selection process. The professional development and improvement offerings and incentives for early care professionals through QRIS would expand and enhance the services available to these individuals. 211 Child Care works with Kith and Kin providers to provide orientation sessions to early care as a career option and technical support to navigate the licensing system. Additional supports offered to Kith & Kin providers with QRIS would significantly increase the success of this goal.

We are also pleased that the RTT-ELC proposal will facilitate a more cohesive early learning and development system through the creation of the Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development, as well as additional Committees and enhancement of the Cabinet's existing infrastructure. These actions will:

- Support the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181;
- Promote understanding of the Early Learning Standards among childcare providers (including family care providers, kith and kin) and parents;
- Promote awareness of workforce training opportunities (e.g. the Early Childhood Teacher Credential program) among early childhood educators, including family caregivers, kith and kin;
- Advise the development of new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation through continued participation on the Cabinet's Data Committee;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

211 Child Care and the United Way of Connecticut enthusiastically support Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiatives, and we look forward to working with our partners to help our young children reach their potential.

Sincerely,



Sherri Sutera
Senior Vice President Child Care Services
United Way of Connecticut

CC: Richard J. Porth, President/CEO

**Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, Inc.**

338 Main Street, Niantic, CT 06357

Telephone: (860) 739-3089, V/TDD or 1-800-445-CPAC, Fax: (860) 739-7460

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the commitment of the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center to improve the developmental, functional and early outcomes of all young children in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development"*.

The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC) is Connecticut's federally funded parent training and information (PTI) center. CPAC operates as a statewide nonprofit organization offering information and support to families of children with a disability, special health care needs or chronic illness, from birth through age 26. CPAC is committed to the idea that parents know their child best and can be the most effective advocates for their children.

CPAC is staffed by parents of children with disabilities who have training in, and personal experience with disability issues and special education law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Part C and Part B, Section 619. In addition to the direct work and supports provided to families, CPAC staff provides in-service training and technical assistance for community based early childhood providers, public school personnel, early intervention providers and others throughout the state on issues related to the equal access, participation and benefits of inclusive programming for young children with disabilities.

CPAC staff and Board members serve on numerous statewide committees and various organizations, including those related to early childhood e.g. LULAC Head Start Education/Disability Advisory Committee, CT Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Council and Steering Committee thereby ensuring a voice at the table for young children with disabilities and those with special health care needs and their families. CPAC's active advocacy and involvement at the state, regional, and local level represents the needs of young children with disabilities and their families in accessing opportunities that will promote positive developmental outcomes and close the achievement gap at kindergarten entry for children with disabilities.

CPAC will help to ensure that Connecticut's RTT-ELC project meets the needs of all young children, ages birth to five, with disabilities and special health care needs and the needs of their parents by:

- providing readily accessible information to parents and providers via their toll-free phone number, through e-mail, and/or their website;
- having bi-lingual staff available to assist parents and provide translated materials;
- providing in-service training and technical assistance to community based early childhood programs on topics such as: family involvement; parent-professional partnerships; inclusion of children with disabilities and special health care needs, including the provision of individualized accommodations and modification; and cultural competence, among other topics;
- providing information, support and assistance to the families of young children with disabilities to help them advocate for their children to make sure their child's needs are met across the range of early childhood options and opportunities that are available; and
- promoting access to high-quality programs early learning and development programs for children with disabilities by participating in the development and implementation of policies at the state, regional, and local levels.

Yours,



Nancy B. Prescott
Executive Director
CT Parent Advocacy Center



Connecticut Head Start Association

October 7, 2011

The Honorable Dannel P. Malloy
Governor of Connecticut
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

The Connecticut Head Start Association (CHSA) enthusiastically supports Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative. As a coalition of Head Start Directors, CHSA members have been addressing the needs of high need children since 1965, and we look forward to being an active partner in this effort to improve early childhood outcomes.

One of the nation's leading investments in early childhood education, Head Start programs provide comprehensive education, health, nutrition, parent involvement, community engagement, and family support services that have been shown to clearly improve long-term educational attainment, social-emotional development, and health outcomes of high need children. CHSA's members serve over 7,000 high need children (e.g. low income, developmentally disabled, English language learners) through 26 Head Start and Early Head Start programs statewide.

CHSA has strong partnerships at the state and local levels of Connecticut's early childhood care and education system, including the State Department of Education, local school districts (including all of the 19 Priority and more than 30 Competitive Districts that have large high need youth populations), School Readiness Councils, and Discovery Communities, among others. CHSA President/Chair David Morgan serves on the state's Early Childhood Cabinet, and has been intimately involved in the development of initial crosswalks of state standards for early childhood education and the Head Start Child Development and Learning Framework.

We are pleased that Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will improve continuity and quality across early childhood care and education programs. Our efforts fully support the comprehensive and integrated approach defined in the RTT-ELC application. CHSA will contribute to the successful implementation of the following RTT-ELC projects: 1) the development and implementation of a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS); 2) the development and use of Early Learning and Development Standards; 3) improved health-related training and assessments; and 4) development of integrated data collection systems. Specifically, CHSA will:

- Assist in the development of a tiered QRIS system (including participation on new Early Childhood Cabinet QRIS Task Force Committees as appropriate);
- Identify and facilitate linkages to additional resources to expand high quality early learning and development programs;
- Continue to participate in the Early Childhood Cabinet's Early Learning Standards Committee to assist in the alignment of Early Learning Standards with the Head Start Framework;
- Promote provider participation in the QRIS system (including Head Start and Early Head Start programs);
- Provide educational resources from the Head Start model for health and mental health standards;
- Increase early screening and mid-level assessments in Head Start and Early Head Start programs as appropriate;
- Incorporate new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Facilitate links to private and philanthropic resources to promote long-term project success as appropriate;

We estimate the value of our in-kind contributions to the RTT-ELC project at \$28,800 over the four-year grant period.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will improve the lives of Connecticut's high needs children and support the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*". CHSA is pleased to be an active partner in these efforts and look forward to helping you realize the vision of this application.

Sincerely,

David Morgan – Chair of the Connecticut Head Start Association



ALL OUR KIN INC.

A SAFE AND LOVING PLACE WHERE PARENTS AND CHILDREN CAN LEARN

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of All our Kin, Inc. to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

All Our Kin trains, supports and sustains community child care providers in order to ensure children and families have the foundations necessary for future success. We invest in children's first teachers through innovative teaching and learning models that support and engage child care providers from all walks of life and at every stage of their personal and professional development: from parents and caregivers to professional educators and businesspeople. Our programs focus on the needs of 1) *parents* without child care choices; 2) *children* without safe, healthy early educational experiences; and 3) *home-based providers* without the education and supports they need to provide high-quality care to create a more equitable system of early care and education for all of Connecticut's children.

Three hallmark programs highlight our unique approach to engage family child care providers and family, friend and neighbor caregivers:

- **The Family Child Care Tool Kit Licensing Program.** All Our Kin reaches out to unlicensed family, friend and neighbor caregivers, providing materials, mentorship and support to help them meet health and safety standards, fulfill state family child care licensing requirements, and become part of a professional community of child care providers. The Tool Kits include application materials, health and safety supplies, vouchers for first aid training, and curriculum materials such as educational toys and high-quality children's books.
- **The Family Child Care Mentor Project.** Once a participant receives her family child care license, she begins work with a skilled master teacher who visits her program and offers individual coaching and support specifically for new child care providers. The mentor covers a range of basic educational topics, including an overview of how children grow and learn, how to design curriculum, choosing appropriate materials, and family engagement.
- **The Family Child Care Network.** The provider then transitions to the Family Child Care Network, which offers educational mentorship, professional development, advocacy and leadership opportunities, and a network of relationships with other family child care providers. The Family Child Care Network is a high-touch program built on best practices in early childhood consultation and teacher mentoring grounded in the Connecticut Early Learning Guidelines. It brings resources, information and support directly into providers' homes to raise the quality of care in their licensed, home-based childcare programs.

All Our Kin also plays an important role in the state's existing system of early learning and development resources. In 2006 and 2007, in partnership with the CT Department of Social Services, All Our Kin piloted the use of the state's Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers as a tool for coaching and consultation in family child care programs, working with providers in greater New Haven. In 2010-2011, All Our Kin partnered with the Department of Social Services to expand the

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pilot, providing training in the Early Learning Guidelines, together with follow-up coaching and consultation visits, to family child care providers and family, friend and neighbor caregivers across the state. All Our Kin's co-director, Janna Wagner, has served on the Early Learning Standards Committee of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet since June 2011; this committee helped develop the standards that will serve as the foundation for RTT-ELC's intent to create a birth-5 continuum of Early Learning Standards that align with the Head Start Framework, K-3 Standards, among other projects.

In addition, the development of a three-tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System for early care and education providers, increased use of health and mental health standards, increased access to early care education career ladders, and improved data protocols will result in stronger supports for family-based caregivers, kith and kin, as well as higher quality care and education options for children ages 0-5. We are committed to advancing these projects, and commit to the following activities in support of Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative:

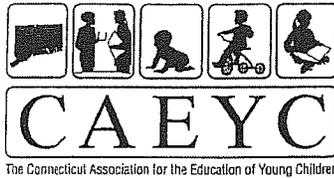
- Support the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181;
- Continue to serve as a resource for local capacity building, especially family care, kith and kin, as appropriate;
- Participate in the development of a comprehensive tiered QRIS (including possible participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet's new QRIS Task Force) as appropriate;
- Advocate for maximum participation the QRIS among local and regional child care providers and educators, including family child care providers and family, friend and neighbor caregivers;
- Assist in the revision of Early Learning Standards through continued participation on the Cabinet's Early Learning Standards Committee;
- Promote understanding of the Early Learning Standards among family care providers, kith and kin, and parents;
- Promote awareness of workforce training opportunities (e.g. the Early Childhood Teacher Credential program) among family child care providers and family, friend and neighbor caregivers;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

In addition, we are willing to provide quality enhancement services in support of the application's goals, including the provision of training, coaching and consultation, and licensing support to family child care providers and family, friend, and neighbor caregivers across Connecticut.

We estimate that our in-kind contributions will total \$38,400 over the four-year grant period. Connecticut's RTT-ELC will greatly advance the coordination of early care and education systems for family caregivers, parents, and young children. We look forward to working with you to achieve these important goals.

Sincerely,


Jessica Sager
Executive Director



October 12,, 2011

The Honorable Governor Daniel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds

The Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC) strongly supports Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

The Connecticut affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the nation's premier early childhood care and education accreditation organization. NAEYC is unparalleled in its commitment to helping the early childhood community develop and adhere to the highest possible quality of care for young children, especially high need children.

CAEYC has been an active partner of state, regional, and local efforts to improve quality care and education for children ages 0-5. We are committed to improving the quality of program for young children, offering high quality professional development opportunities to early childhood professionals; most recently training more than 600 providers on The CT Early Learning Guidelines including providers who work directly with children with special needs. In addition we are offering scholarship opportunities to family home providers, individuals who work directly with high needs families, so they may attend out annual conference and other professional development events.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative aligns well with CAEYC's goals to improve the standard of care for young children. We are pleased that RTT-ELC projects will build on our existing efforts to coordinate Early Learning Standards and will build a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) statewide. Coordinated data collection and workforce projects are also efforts CAEYC enthusiastically supports. We will assist in the successful implementation of these projects by:

- Supporting the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education;
- Serve as a technical assistance resource for local and regional collaboratives to build capacity as appropriate;
- Advise in the development and implementation of a tiered QRIS system and participate in the new Early Childhood Cabinet QRIS Task Force as appropriate;
- Identify additional resources to expand high quality early learning and development programs;
- Help create a B-5 continuum of standards through participate in the Early Childhood Cabinet's Early Learning Standards Committee to as appropriate; and
- Participate in the Early Childhood Cabinet's Workforce Committee as appropriate to advise the development of the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework for early care educators and caregivers.

CAEYC is a leading advocate of high quality care for Connecticut's children. We look forward to partnering with you in this exciting initiative.

Very Truly Yours,

Karen Rainville
 Executive Director



AFT Connecticut
AFT, AFL-CIO

Healthcare
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October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

On behalf of AFT Connecticut and its members, I am writing to confirm our ongoing commitment to Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) proposal. The proposed RTT-ELC project will increase the number of high-need young children enrolled in high-quality early learning and development programs, in large part by providing early education providers with the resources and technical assistance they need to better serve high-need children and their families.

Our national affiliate, AFT, has been a leading voice for the early childhood education workforce. No national union has a stronger track record than AFT in defending the rights of all educators, including those who work with infants, toddlers, and preschool students. We understand that early childhood professionals set the stage for a lifetime of learning. We recognize the critical link between the quality of early learning experiences for young children and their ability to succeed throughout their academic careers.

We believe that providing universal access to high-quality, affordable early childhood education is the single most effective tool we can use to close Connecticut's achievement gap and improve student outcomes overall. Yet we have failed to build the capacity needed to create this model. The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge would afford our state a new opportunity to focus our efforts in a collaborative and sustainable way to ensure that each child has the same access to excellent early learning opportunities.

AFT Connecticut stands ready to partner with all stakeholders in this process and looks forward to participating in policy discussions to ensure that the voices of educators are represented when decisions are made. We estimate the value of these collaborative partnerships to be significant over the duration of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project.

I encourage the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health & Human services to support Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application.

Sincerely,

Sharon Palmer
President





October 14, 2011

Connecticut Education Association

Governance

Philip Apruzzese, President
Sheila Cohen, Vice President
Cheryl Prevost, Secretary
Jeff Leake, Treasurer
Kathy Flaherty, NEA Director
Thomas Nicholas, NEA Director

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Affiliated with the
National Education Association

Governor Dannel Malloy
State Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

The Connecticut Education Association (CEA) recognizes the critical importance of quality pre-K to the development of Connecticut's youngest children, and fully endorses and supports Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant application.

CEA is a strong advocate of public education and the need to focus on literacy skills, high-quality instruction and programs, and the importance of having highly qualified and certified teachers for our youngest children. We look forward to our continued integral participation in the progress our state has made toward enhancing early childhood education.

CEA is a professional association with a membership of more than 40,000 educators and a staff that includes doctors of education, experienced teachers, and experts in policies that affect teaching and learning. As you know, our staff and members continually bring research and experience to bear when advocating for higher standards for early childhood educators and providers. We believe in the empowering effects educational attainment can have on all children. We continually promote equal educational opportunities as a means to creating empowering conditions. We have a long history of promoting the expansion of early childhood education as one of the most significant steps toward closing achievement gaps that exist in our communities.

CEA has long been an active participant on state committees charged with reviewing certification regulations for all educators, including early childhood educators. CEA was a supporter and driver of legislative actions to improve early childhood educator credentialing and establish a rigorous professional certification. CEA has also participated on the Early Childhood Education Cabinet and Early Childhood Education Council offering educators perspectives on ways to better connect state goals to practice.

Consistent with our history, CEA has been a strong supporter of this Race to the Top Early Childhood application. We voiced our support on your early childhood panel early in the process and were a participant in the press conference announcing Connecticut's decision to apply for this grant. Since that time, we have provided input to the grant writing team on earlier drafts of the application, primarily with respect to professional development and meeting the challenge of attracting and retaining a high-quality early educator workforce.

CEA has also been an active participant in developing and supporting innovative early childhood education programs at the local level. In many towns across the state, our members serve in partnerships between school districts and early childhood education providers. Such partnerships are mainly implemented to carry out the state's School Readiness program. This program provides increased access to high-quality early childhood education in cities with traditionally low participation rates. Our members also work to coordinate services and provide assistance to other early childhood education programs.

One example of our participation is the innovative universal preschool program implemented in Stamford under your tenure as mayor. Our members have been instrumental in a partnership in Stamford which provides direct instruction to children in early childhood programs. Our members provide professional development, ensuring a connection to state standards. We are also instrumental in aligning state early childhood standards to the school district, connecting the early childhood curriculum to the work and expectations of Stamford's kindergarten teachers. The work our members do in Stamford is replicated in many urban districts across the state.

We strongly endorse Connecticut's application. It has the potential to positively impact student growth and development and help close the achievement gaps in our state. Connecticut deserves to be awarded this grant, because our hard work and innovation has the potential to be a model for other states seeking to establish effective early childhood education programs.

CEA will be an active participant in efforts to enhance our early childhood educator pipeline, as outlined in Section D1 of the grant proposal. We will lend expertise to the process of aligning early childhood standards with the K-12 system. CEA will continue to provide insight and assistance in the creation and implementation of professional development programs that ensure alignment and advance the connection between best practices and the classroom. As a member of the state's advisory council on educator standards, we will work to connect early educator training to the early childhood standards.

Sincerely,



Phil Apruzzese
President



Mary Loftus Levine
Executive Director

WILLIAM CASPAR GRAUSTEIN
M E M O R I A L F U N D

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106



The storyteller figure symbolizes the values of the Memorial Fund—educating, supporting and inspiring our children.

Dear Governor Malloy:

On behalf of 52 Discovery Communities across the state, this letter confirms the commitment of the Discovery network to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development".

Discovery began in 2001 as an initiative of the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. The communities participating in Discovery are supported by private and public sources at both the state and local levels. Federal administration and national philanthropic organizations have noted and often point to Discovery's work in early childhood education as a prime example of effective community engagement, planning and decision making on behalf of children. The great majority of Connecticut's high need children and families live in a Discovery community.

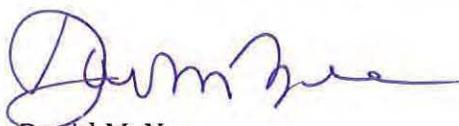
With the support of a partnership among the Memorial Fund, Connecticut Department of Education, and The Children's Fund of Connecticut, 17 of the Discovery communities have completed and are implementing a results-based, birth-to-age-eight community blueprint. By June 2012 another 21 will have completed such a plan. The local plans and the Discovery initiative are also supported by numerous local partners, United Ways and community funders. Projected results, focus areas and common measures of the first cohort of community plans have informed system change efforts at both the local and state levels. Statewide advocacy organizations partnering closely with communities persuaded state legislators to sustain funding for local governance in the state budget and to support the passing of Public Act 11-181.

The state's RTT-ELC planning and application builds on 10 years of existing efforts by Discovery communities and the state. The application recognizes and proposes to strengthen the relationships, processes and difficult work of hundreds of parents, early childhood providers, health advocates, and many other non-profit, civic and

business organizations. Connecticut is not starting from scratch. A robust and thriving network of communities is well positioned to take their efforts to scale to ensure that all children in Connecticut are ready for school by age five and successful learners by age nine.

Discovery communities are excited about this opportunity to formalize and strengthen our partnerships with the state to develop an early childhood system that promises to improve the life and education outcomes for all Connecticut's children. We look forward with great anticipation to our state's RTT-ELC application and to continued partnership with your office and the several state departments that have helped make this work happen in communities.

On behalf of the Discovery communities,



David M. Nee
Executive Director
William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund

List of Discovery Communities:

Ansonia	Groton	Shelton
Ashford	Hamden	Southington
Bloomfield	Hartford	Stafford
Branford	Killingly, Plainfield and	Stamford
Bridgeport	Putnam	Stratford
Bristol	Manchester	Thomaston
Chaplin	Mansfield	Thompson
Colchester	Meriden	Torrington
Coventry	Middletown	Vernon
Danbury	Milford	Wallingford
Derby	Naugatuck	Waterbury
East Hartford	New Britain	West Hartford
East Haven	New Haven	Wethersfield
Enfield	New London	Winchester
Granby	Norwalk	Windham
Greenwich	Norwich	Windsor
Griswold	Plymouth	



PEDRO E. SEGARRA
MAYOR

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Connecticut's Race to the Top Application – Early Learning Challenge Funds

Dear Governor Malloy:

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Hartford Cabinet for Young Children to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development".

As a social worker previously employed in a Hartford early intervention program serving children birth to age three and their high risk families, I am well aware of the importance of early learning and development opportunities and their correlation to academic success. I applaud and wholeheartedly support you in your steadfast effort to secure this grant for our high need children and families.

As a Priority School District under the state's School Readiness Program, Hartford's Cabinet for Young Children extends beyond the legislated role of the School Readiness Council to oversee Hartford's early childhood initiative. All told, the various funding streams represent over 20 agencies who are annually preparing more than 3,000 high need children in center-based programs for academic success. In addition, the Cabinet oversees increased efforts to reach out to home-based, home visitation, and Kith & Kin providers in order to better coordinate resources and improve access to high quality services for approximately 3,000 additional children – birth through kindergarten – and their parents.

Hartford is singled out by national organizations as one of the poorest medium-sized cities in America with nearly 50% of children under the age of 18 at the federal poverty level. Fraught with economic disadvantages and social problems, over 94% of the Hartford student population is of minority status. Hartford has the highest percentage (41%) of adults at the lowest levels of adult literacy in Connecticut and 39% are without a High School Diploma. The unemployment rate (15.5%) is almost twice the State's rate and 97.6% of Hartford's school-aged children receive Free/Reduced-Price Meals (the highest rate in the State). Only 26.9% of the City's third graders are reading at or above grade level and more than 57% of K-12 students live in a non-English speaking home.

I am proud to say that an increasing number of preschool children are enrolled in our high-quality programs. However, much more needs to be done, particularly for infants, toddlers and children in home-based care. Despite the significant expansion of Hartford preschool center-based programs, a significant number of families choose Kith & Kin care in order to receive Care 4 Kids subsidies rather than enrolling their children in early learning programs. Therefore, an appalling number of high need children continue to enter kindergarten without a preschool experience and are unprepared for academic success. In order to address this issue, Hartford has launched pilot incentive programs that link licensed home providers (licensed and unregulated) to center-based programs. Although effective, funding constraints limit the number

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Fax (860) 722-6606



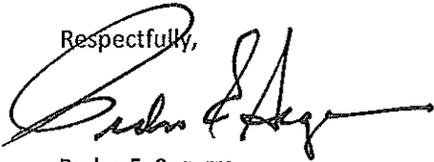
of children served. It is my hope that the State's Race to the Top initiative will strengthen these and other critical efforts at the local level to eliminate its school readiness gap.

We are pleased that the RTT-ELC focuses on our priorities for including a new Kindergarten Early Learning and Development Inventory (KELDI), comprehensive statewide early learning development system including a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement (QRIS) system and Early Learning Standards, and an enhanced data collection system to monitor outcomes in the long term. We will support the successful implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project in the following ways:

- Integration of RTT-ELC systems into SRC programs as appropriate;
- Connect early learning literacy programs (0-pre-K) and early elementary literacy programs (K-3) to ensure RTT-ELC impacts are sustained after age 5;
- Facilitate local integration of RTT-ELC and Hartford's Cabinet for Young Children's initiatives for coordinated service delivery, parent engagement efforts, and data sharing;
- Participate in the tiered QRIS system as a early childhood education provider;
- Encourage maximum program and community participation in the QRIS process (including kith and kin providers) using existing quality improvement efforts underway through our School Readiness programs;
- Continue to aggressively promote understanding of the Early Learning Standards among the community and parents;
- Actively assist in the revision of the KELDI as appropriate and its implementation in Hartford;
- Incorporate new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Continued facilitation of strong connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

Together we can help build a better future for Connecticut's children, giving them and their families the services they need to thrive. We look forward to working with you and all appropriate partners to achieve these important goals.

Respectfully,



Pedro E. Segarra
Mayor

Cc: State Senator John Fonfara
State Senator Eric Coleman
State Representative Marie Kirkley-Bey
State Representative Minnie Gonzalez
State Representative Douglas McCrory
State Representative Hector Robles
State Representative Kelvin Roldan
State Representative Matt Ritter



EDUCATION CONNECTION

A Regional Educational Service Center

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The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy

October 11, 2011

State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Torrington Local Interagency Coordinating Council to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development".

The Torrington Local ICC is committed to providing services to a multitude of families and children. We have been actively collaborating with the Torrington Superintendent's Birth through Graduation Project, a variety of community activities, providing parents of children with developmental delays direct services and community activities. We service children and families in high need groups including low income and English language learners, among others.

The Torrington Local ICC currently supports system change efforts at the State level through participation in a variety of different avenues. The Torrington LICC we hear from parents for needs in the community, these ideas are communicated to the CT Interagency Coordinating Council. These same needs and gaps in services are communicated to the director of Birth to Three at the state level. She holds a seat on the CT Early Childhood Education Cabinet, who's goal is to develop a high quality comprehensive system of Early Childhood Education among a wide array of programs which would include Early intervention. While coordination at the state level contributes to improved local collaboration, The Torrington Local ICC also contributes directly to the regional and local early childhood system by convening over 20 partner agencies that support families with young children on a monthly basis to align strategies and address areas in need of improvement.

The Torrington Local ICC has supported the development of Connecticut's RTT-ELC application by reviewing the draft proposal and offering feedback on the application through an online resource provided by the Early Childhood Alliance. The LICC dedicated a meeting that included parents and providers to discuss the application and summarize its local and regional strategies that would be beneficial to incorporate to the RTT-ELC application and future work. The LICC is pleased that the application focuses on our organization's priorities including children with developmental delays, low-income supports for families, and literacy.

The Torrington Local ICC will support the successful implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project by continuing to partner with the Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative (TECC). These two groups now share a common membership with a focus on similar strategies relating to families and children. The Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative's results statement is as follows: "All of Torrington's children from Birth through eight are healthy and successful learners." The TECC's Birth through Eight Plan has helped to shape strategies for the Growth and Development Work group and has helped to recruit new members.

We estimate the value of our in-kind contributions to the RTT-ELC project at \$22,500 over the four-year grant period.

The Torrington Local ICC is pleased to support Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant application and eagerly anticipates its positive impact on our young children and their families.

Yours Truly,

Janae Peluso, OTR/L
Chair, Torrington Local Interagency Coordinating Council



Colchester Public Schools

127 Norwich Avenue, Suite 202
Colchester, CT 06415

Karen A. Loisel
Superintendent of Schools

Phone (860) 537-7208
Fax (860) 537-1252

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Colchester School Readiness Council to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development"*.

As a Competitive Grant Municipality under the state's School Readiness Program, Colchester's School Readiness Council implements three School Readiness programs, and has prepared over 100 of Colchester's children for educational success in the last five years. The Council is comprised of local leaders strongly invested in the success of early learning and development in our town.

The Council also contributes directly to the regional and local early childhood system via participation in the Collaborative for Colchester's Children. In 2008, the Collaborative launched a significant early childhood development planning effort to help ensure that the educational, health and familial support needs of Colchester's more than 1,100 children ages 0-5, including low income, developmentally disabled, and English language learners, are sufficiently met. Over the past two years, we have been able to establish partnerships to bring Head Start and Early Head Start into our community to support some of our neediest families. As well, we have partnered with agencies that deliver a fully subsidized Child Development Associate Training Certification program into our community to improve local teacher qualifications.

The Colchester School Readiness Council has supported the development of Connecticut's RTT-ELC application through participation in PreK-3 continuum of learning forum and participation in preliminary QRIS designing sessions, and is pleased that the application focuses on our organization's priorities including a new Kindergarten Early Learning and Development Inventory (KELDI), comprehensive statewide Early Learning Standards, and an enhanced data collection system to monitor outcomes in the long term.

The Council will support the successful implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project in the following ways:

- Integrate RTT-ELC systems into SRC programs as appropriate;
- Connect early learning literacy programs (0-pre-K) and early elementary literacy programs (K-3) to ensure RTT-ELC impacts are sustained after age 5;
- Facilitate local integration of RTT-ELC and the Collaborative for Colchester's Children initiatives for coordinated service delivery, parent engagement efforts, and data sharing;
- Participate in the tiered QRIS system as a early childhood education provider;
- Encourage maximum program and community participation in the QRIS process (including kith and kin providers) using existing quality improvement efforts underway through our School Readiness programs;

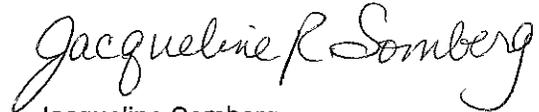
- Promote understanding of the Early Learning Standards among the community and parents;
- Assist in the revision of the KELDI as appropriate;
- Implement the refined KELDI locally;
- Incorporate new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate;
- Assist other Connecticut communities with the planning and implementation of their early childhood plans.

We estimate the value of our cash and in-kind contributions to the RTT-ELC project at \$21,500.00 over the four-year grant period.

Very Truly Yours,



Karen A. Loiselle
Superintendent of Schools
Colchester School Readiness Chair
Chair



Jacqueline Somberg
Principal
Colchester School Readiness Co-
Chair

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Connecticut Birth to Three Interagency Coordinating Council (the Council) to improving early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

The Council advises and assists the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to perform its responsibilities under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including identifying sources of fiscal support for early intervention services and programs, assigning financial responsibility to the appropriate agency, and promoting interagency agreements. The Council also assists participating agencies in the development of standards and procedures under Part C of IDEA, and works with DDS and the State Department of Education regarding the transition of children with disabilities to services provided under sections 10-76a to 10-76h, services provided under section B of IDEA. Finally, the Council makes recommendations to improve collaboration among state agencies and ensure timely and effective service delivery.

The DDS staff and one ICC member who have been directly involved with the RTT-ELC application through participation on the RTT-ELC Leadership Team and on the work groups that have guided development of specific components of the state plan have kept the Council informed about their activities. Council members are thrilled that the application focuses on providing high-quality early learning opportunities to high-need young children, including those with disabilities. Given its work across state agencies, the Council has been particularly pleased with the highly collaborative nature of the RTT-ELC planning process.

The Connecticut Birth to Three Interagency Coordinating Council will support the successful implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project by building on the collaborative spirit of the RTT-ELC proposal development process to continue to strengthen connections among state systems and advisory bodies. The Council will:

- Consider enlarging and adjusting its membership to become the State Infant-Toddler Home Visiting Advisory Group. We believe the Council could accomplish this while continuing to meet its statutory membership requirements.
- Explore the development of a formal relationship to the State Advisory Council (SAC) on Special Education. We believe this would enable the SAC to increase its focus on infants and toddlers and home visiting.
- Investigate other collaborations that may serve to expand and enhance services to children.
- Continue to work on finding children, especially those who are generally underserved, who can benefit from the wide range of services for which they are eligible.

The Council stands behind Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge proposal and eagerly anticipates its impact on our young children.

Yours,



Mark A. Greenstein, MD
 Professor of Pediatrics: Divisions of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics and Clinical Genetics
 University of Connecticut School of Medicine
 Chair: Connecticut Birth to Three Interagency Coordinating Council





October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Funds

The Connecticut Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) is pleased to support Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application. The proposed project promises to strengthen state systems and support communities to work collaboratively and better meet the needs of high-need children and families through improved service coordination and quality improvements.

Through RESCs, every school district and community in Connecticut has access to high quality, cost-effective collaborative programs and initiatives. RESCs were created more than 30 years ago by legislative mandate to help districts communicate and collaborate. Some years later, a formal Alliance of Connecticut's six RESCs was established. RESCs are public education agencies whose main purpose is to "furnish programs and services" to Connecticut's public school districts. RESCs' cost efficient, cooperative efforts have saved money for Connecticut school districts and have enabled schools to expand services beyond what they could have accomplished alone.

The RESC Alliance works with the Departments of Children & Families, Corrections, Education, Mental Health & Addiction Services, Mental Retardation, Public Health, Social Services and Board of Education & Services for the Blind (BESB) and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) on statewide issues and projects such as Technology Training, Beginning Educator Support Training, and Early Reading Success.

In the critically important area of early care and education for children ages birth through five, the Early Childhood RESC Alliance assures that services and support are available to public and private programs throughout the State. It is the mission of the Early Childhood RESC Alliance to: catalyze program improvements to achieve the highest quality early education and care for all children; support teachers, child care providers, and program leaders to meet the needs of diverse children and families; contribute knowledge, expertise and leadership to meet standards of excellence while assisting individuals, programs and communities to meet their identified goals. The Early Childhood RESC Alliance provides services and supports including Preschool Curriculum, Assessment and Learning; Strategic, Data Driven System Planning; Universal Access to Preschool; Local Early Childhood (School Readiness) Councils; Community Collaboration; Continuous Quality Improvement, and Transition Into Kindergarten.

The RESC Alliance is prepared (if selected) to leverage its expertise, experience, and relationships with every community in Connecticut to support the successful implementation of the proposed Race to the Top – Early Learning challenge project. The RESCs hope to serve as regional coordinating hubs to support the delivery of training and technical assistance to local early childhood collaboratives, individual early care programs, and families.



Page 2

October 12, 2011

The RESC is specifically prepared to assist the RTT-ELC project by:

- Delivering and/or coordinating a broad range of technical assistance and capacity-building products and services to local early childhood collaboratives to enhance their ability to implement community early childhood plans. Local technical assistance and capacity building efforts will emphasize service coordination, service co-location, service integration, family engagement, and data sharing, among others.
- Providing professional development training to early childhood educators, with special emphasis on engaging family-based and kith and kin providers (who have historically been less involved in professional development compared to center-based providers).
- Disseminating information about opportunities associated with the planned Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to early childhood educators, including family-based and kith and kin educators.
- Disseminating information about new early learning and development standards to early childhood educators, parents, and families.

The Connecticut RESC Alliance is proud to endorse Connecticut's Race to the top – Early Learning Challenge application.

Sincerely,



Evan Pitkoff
Chair
Connecticut Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers

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Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 17, 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius:

We commend to you Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application. This application demonstrates the state's resolved commitment to the goals you both outlined when you launched this challenge on May 25, 2011. If funded, Connecticut's RTT-ELC proposal will accelerate ongoing work in the State to improve the quality of early learning education, to improve health, development and educational outcomes, to close the achievement gap for Connecticut children with high needs, and to build a competitive workforce for the 21st Century.

This Challenge builds upon decades of state investment in quality child care and early childhood education initiatives. Most recently (July 2011), the State enacted Public Act No. 11-181, "An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education and the Establishment of a Coordinated System of Early Care and Education and Child Development." This law serves as the bedrock for the State's proposed RTT-ELC initiatives to enhance the best components of our existing state and local systems while building capacity, increasing coordination, and bridging gaps to more fully support young children and their families. This Act requires alignment, and if possible, consolidation of existing early childhood education and child care programs and services for children from birth to age eight into a coordinated, comprehensive system. The goals of this aligned system are to reduce the academic achievement gap; increase participation in early childhood education programs; increase parent engagement, family literacy, and parenting skills; increase oral language development and social competence; and decrease special education placements.

Duncan/Sebelius
October 17, 2011
Page 2

Connecticut's RTT-ELC application reflects the State's longstanding commitment to address early childhood education challenges. As with Public Act 11-181, it was developed collaboratively with high-level representatives from each of the Participating State Agencies, early care providers higher education institutions, local and regional community leaders, private and philanthropic partners, and other leaders in the early care and education community.

We strongly support Connecticut's application and urge you to give it your full consideration.



Sincerely,

JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
United States Senator



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senator



ROSA L. DeLAURO
Member of Congress



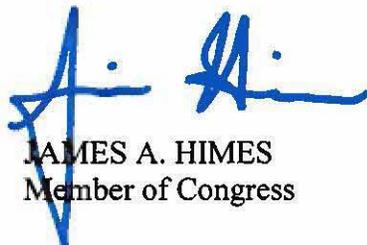
JOHN B. LARSON
Member of Congress



JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
Member of Congress



JAMES A. HIMES
Member of Congress

SLEEPING GIANT DAY CARE, INC.

11 Pine Street
Hamden, Ct.
(203) 776-5026

October 4, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of Sleeping Giant Day Care, Inc. to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning challenge initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development".

Sleeping Giant Day Care, Inc. is a state funded child care center which has been open for 31 years. Our primary goal is to give Hamden's (and nearby towns) low to moderate income working families a high quality education at an affordable cost. We follow the Department of Social Services sliding fee scale that starts at a tuition level of \$8.00/week. We have been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) since 2004. Our staff continues to meet all the requirements of NAEYC standards. Our current NAEYC accreditation expires in 2015. We received an Official Citation from the State of Connecticut General Assembly for 25 years of quality service in 2004. Many of our families, as well as some of our staff, are English as second language families. We provide an interpreter for non-English speaking families whenever necessary. We provide 80% of our children's nutritional needs through participation in the Child Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). We feed all the children in our program breakfast, lunch and pm snack at no cost to the families.

Sleeping Giant Day Care is involved in the system change efforts in many ways through our director. Our director is a member of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet, the CT Early Childhood Alliance, the State Funded Child Care Director's Group (currently their secretary) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) all organizations whose primary goal is the overall improvement of the early childhood care system at the state level.

Locally our center's director is a member of Hamden's Partnership for Young Children and Hamden's Administrator's Group both groups' goal is to improve the early childhood education system in Hamden. A coordinated system of early care and education at the State level will help to improve the system at the local level by coordinating funding sources, governing boards and establishing expectations of quality in programming.

Sleeping Giant Day Care has participated in the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge by participating in the public forum on September 8, 2011. We strongly believe the need for affordable quality programs in Connecticut are a must for us to bridge the achievement gap. The funds from the RTT-ELC will enhance the State's ability to make the necessary improvements to a coordinated system of early care and education necessary for the low to

moderate income families to fully participate in the education of their young children, therefore helping to improve the achievement gap.

Sleeping Giant Day Care will support the RTT-ELC by making sure we stay at the highest level of quality care expected of us through a QRIS. We are currently accredited by NAEYC and plan to maintain this accreditation. Currently the cost of maintaining accreditation for a five year period is around \$2050.00 which includes annual report fees, application of candidacy fees, and validation visit fees. We also help our staff to maintain their credentials by paying for courses for CDA's and tuition reimbursement for staff going to school for the associate and bachelor degrees. We believe quality programming is a necessity for running a quality education program.

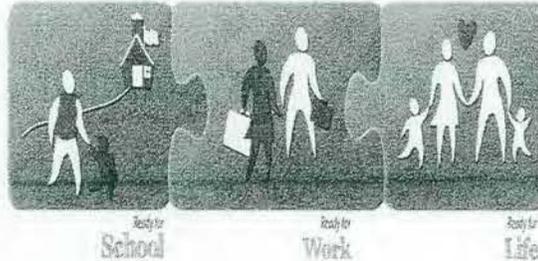
We fully support Connecticut in the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge.

Sincerely,



Edie Reichard - Director

Child Daycare



Serving:

- Ansonia
- Bloomfield
- Branford
- Bridgeport
- Bristol
- Brooklyn
- Chaplin
- Danbury
- Derby
- East Lyme
- Enfield
- Greenwich
- Griswold
- Groton
- Guilford
- Hamden
- Hartford
- Killingly
- Manchester
- Mansfield
- Meriden
- Milford
- Naugatuck
- New Britain
- New Canaan
- New Haven
- New London
- New Milford
- Newington
- Newtown
- North Haven
- Norwalk
- Norwich
- Plainville
- Plymouth
- Southington
- Stamford
- Torrington
- Vernon
- Wallingford
- Waterbury
- Waterford
- Watertown
- West Haven
- Winchester
- Windham

October 4, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds.

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Connecticut State Funded Child Care Director's Forum, (the Forum), to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development".

The Forum represents the leadership of the State Funded Child Development Centers established pursuant to CGS 8-210. In 1968, Connecticut passed historic legislation making a long term commitment to support low and moderate income working families and children by financing a statewide network of quality child care development centers. The law provides a Grant in Aid Program to municipalities, human service agencies and or non profits to establish Child Day Care Centers to serve children of working families. Currently there are 102 Centers in Connecticut in 53 municipalities serving approximately 5,000 children each year.

For over forty years, the Forum has been dedicated to serving low income working families by providing high quality child care services including health and family support services. The Forum plays a unique role in advocating for state investment in quality child care and has championed systems reform initiatives including NAEYC accreditation, professional development, facilities development and ongoing quality improvement efforts.

In order to strengthen child care services in Connecticut, the Forum participates in public policy to expand child care services and foster quality improvement systems. The Forum believes strongly in a coordinated system to improve child care services and outcomes for children and helped develop and win passage of Public "Act 11-181 to establish an early childhood system including child care, early learning, health, mental health and family support.

The Forum is an active member of the State Early Childhood Alliance and a member is appointed to serve on the Early Childhood Cabinet. The Forum also is an active member of key organizations in Connecticut that form the underpinnings of the early childhood system, including CAEYC and Connecticut Charts A Course, the State Community College professional development system for early care and education staff. All State Funded Centers are NAEYC accredited and staff participates in the CT Charts A Course professional development career ladder through scholarships and career counseling. In addition, state funded child care centers are an integral part of Connecticut's School Readiness System and serve on local and regional School Readiness Governance Councils.

The State Funded Child Care Director's Forum is involved in the system change efforts at the state level in many ways. Representatives of the Forum attend legislative hearings, public forums and assist the Department of Social Services in development of the Child Development Block Grant state plan by hosting and participating in regional informational hearings. By state statute, state funded centers have a unique relationship with municipal government and garner support for quality child care from municipal government through in kind contributions and assistance with

administrative functions. Local partnerships will be critical to the success of the formation of a coordinated system of early care and education and the Forum can facilitate local involvement.

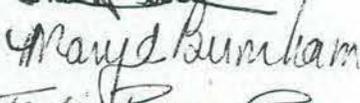
The Director's Forum is a key stakeholder in the development of the RTT-ELC grant and participates in the system's planning efforts on all levels. Members serve on the QRIS, Workforce, and Assessment sub committees of the Cabinet and have strong participation on local and regional early childhood collaboratives. The Forum testified at a public hearing hosted by the Early Childhood Cabinet and the Governor's Office on September 8th to share its views and expectations for grant funds. We strongly believe that affordable quality child care programs in Connecticut will form the bridge to school readiness and school achievement. The funds from the RTT-ELC will enhance the State's ability to make the necessary improvements to a coordinated system of early care and education and build on and enhance the existing early care and education programs in Connecticut.

The State Funded Child Care Director's Forum supports the goals and objectives of the RTT-ELC and will continue to work diligently with state and local partners to ensure Connecticut children are served in a high functioning coordinated system. The Forum will continue to help develop all components of the system and provide our expertise and years of experience to the process. As stated, State Funded Child Care Centers are NAEYC accredited and are closely monitored for quality by the State. Recent legislation moved jurisdiction for the Centers from the Department of Social Services to the Department of Education. Forum representatives serve on a Study Group with key state agencies to foster coordination and a seamless system for children birth to 8 enrolled in state funded early care and education programs. We believe this work will help inform the larger systems' goals included in PA 11-181 and the RTT-ELC.

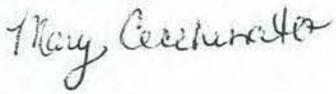
We fully support Connecticut in the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge and look forward to working with all stakeholders to ensure every child achieves his or her maximum potential.

Sincerely,
Forum Officers:

Kathy Queen 

Mary Burnham 

Edie Reichard 

Mary Cecchinato 



Where Learning Begins

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge funds

The Children's Community Development Center enthusiastically supports Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

Founded in 1979, the Children's Community Development Center (CCDC) is a non-profit, educational childcare center serving families with children from infancy through their preschool years. Since 1988 CCDC has been NAEYC accredited, providing enrichment and support to families and children who live or work in mid-Fairfield County, Connecticut. Today we serve 63 children in five different child and family centered programs, including families with low-to-moderate income levels and children with disabilities.

Our curriculum is play-based and developmentally appropriate. Decisions about activities presented to children emerge from the highest standards in the field of early childhood care and education and are negotiated by the expressed interests, passions and contributions of children. We recognize that the relationships that children form with teachers, peers and most-importantly their families determine the nature of their experience. We bring this expertise to the Early Childhood Education Cabinet, on which I've served since February 2010.

Statewide system improvements through Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will improve early childhood outcomes in all settings for all children and families in Connecticut. We are pleased to see RTT-ELC incorporate the Early Childhood Education Cabinet's existing efforts in the development of comprehensive integrated early learning and development systems that includes a three-tier Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), statewide Early Learning Standards, a well-trained workforce, and the creation of an integrated data system. We will participate in the successful implementation of these projects by:

- Continuing to participate as a member of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet to advise the development and local implementation of RTT-ELC projects as appropriate;
- Integrating RTT-ELC systems into existing education and literacy programs;
- Participating in the tiered QRIS as a early childhood education provider;
- Encouraging other providers to participate in the QRIS process (including family centers, kith and kin providers);



United Way Agency



Accredited by the
 National Academy
 of Early Childhood
 Programs

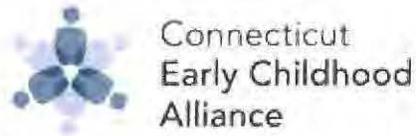
- Promote the understanding of Early Learning Standards among other providers and parents;
- Assist in efforts to expand professional development opportunities that improve the quality of experiences for children and families and that lead to relevant credentials and degrees for staff;
- Incorporate new data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate;
- Attend Early Childhood meetings, workshops and conferences at the regional, state and national level to stay informed about related efforts in other communities;
- Participate on Advisory Boards of Early Childhood teacher preparation programs at community colleges and universities.

Our in-kind support of these projects is an estimated \$45,000 over the four-year grant period. We look forward to working with you to improve the quality of care and education for our children.

Sincerely,



Eileen A. Ward
Director



October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

I write to confirm the commitment of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance to improving early childhood outcomes through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative.

The Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance (Alliance) is a statewide membership organization committed to improving developmental outcomes in the areas of learning, health, safety and economic security for children birth to age eight. More than 4,000 individuals support the Alliance across the state, and our member organizations employ over 3,000 Connecticut residents, providing care and education for nearly 25,000 children.

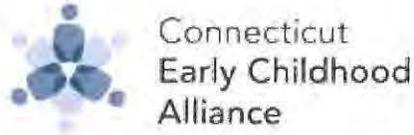
The Alliance has been integrally involved in the development and passage of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development.*" The Alliance is committed to assist with its ongoing implementation.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will take important steps to ensure that children, their families, their caregivers and educators, and the broader early learning community can more easily connect to the services and supports they need, including increasing state-level coordination of early childhood initiatives, developing a Quality Rating and Improvement System, creating a Birth-5 continuum of Early Learning Standards, increasing access to the Early Childhood Teacher Credential, and improving the Kindergarten Inventory assessment.

The Alliance has played a critical role in creating the foundation for these projects, and will actively participate in their successful implementation by:

- Supporting the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181;
- Providing a communication and feedback bridge between early care and education providers (including family care providers and kith and kin) and the State about new initiatives such as QRIS and Early Learning Standards;
- Promoting awareness of workforce training opportunities (e.g. the Early Childhood Teacher Credential program) among Alliance members;

Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance, 110 Bartholomew Avenue, Suite 4030, Hartford, CT 06106
 860.819.3647, www.earlychildhoodalliance.com



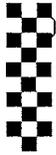
- Promoting the incorporation of new state data protocols among Alliance members as appropriate;
- Facilitating connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate;

These in-kind contributions will total an estimated \$19,280 over the four-year grant period. The Alliance's goal is that all Connecticut children will enter kindergarten healthy, eager to learn, and ready for school success. We are excited about the potential for Connecticut's RTT-ELC's initiative to improve outcomes for Connecticut's children.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Adair". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Maggie Adair
Executive Director



LITTLE SUPER STARS FAMILY DAYCARE
Where every child is a superstar!

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge funds

I am a family childcare provider writing to express my enthusiastic support Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development".

I started Little Super Stars Family Day Care in 2007, under the guidance of All Our Kin's Family Child Care Network. Today, Little Super Stars is fully accredited by the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), the national leader in family childcare accreditation organizations. As a mother of two deaf children and a Spanish speaker, it is important to me to offer services to high needs children, including children with special needs and English language learners. I also teach the children I care for American Sign Language.

I continue to be an active member in the Family Childcare Network, and am extremely interested in helping other family childcare providers and parents connect to supportive resources and information that will improve access to quality, family-centered childcare options across the state.

Family childcare providers have uniquely deep connections with the parents in our community. I am pleased that the RTT-ELC initiative will provide licensed and informal childcare providers capacity building and technical assistance tools to improve the quality of our care. I also support the expanded access to the Early Childhood Teacher Credential and other early childhood education RTT-ELC will provide. I will support the successful implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project by:

- Participating in the tiered QRIS system as a licensed early childhood education provider;
- Encouraging other family childcare providers to participate in the QRIS process (including kith and kin providers);
- Continue to participate in local networks like All Our Kin's Family Childcare Network to promote the understanding of Early Learning Standards among parents;
- Incorporate new data protocols as appropriate;

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will take important steps to connecting with and improving relationships with family childcare providers like me to improve support and resources for high needs children (e.g. English language learners, children with special needs). I look forward to working with you on this important project.

Sincerely,

Yanerys Aziz
Owner, Little Super Stars Family Daycare

43 Roosevelt Avenue West Haven Connecticut 06516 203-479-1868



RTT - ELC

Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation
Braulio Santiago
Executive Director of Education/HPD
2 Matt's Path
P.O. Box 3085
Mashantucket, CT 06338-3085

State of Connecticut

Tel 860 396 2245
Fax 860 396 2246

October 6, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge funds

The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Child Development Center is pleased to support Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development".

In 1989, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation recognized a growing need for comprehensive childcare for the community's children and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council approved the creation of the Child Development Center. In addition to teaching general development skills, the center teaches tribal children to know and respect their cultural history and the history of Native America. The center stresses the learning of traditional stories and crafts related to an ongoing sense of being young Mashantucket Pequots. Elders, parents, and students are often invited to give cultural classes.

The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation has 134 children between the ages of 0-5. Ninety-two attend the Child Development Center. In September, our Center became NAEYC accredited.

We are excited about this opportunity to reconnect with state efforts to develop and implement a strong, high quality spectrum of support for the early childhood community, and look forward to playing an active role in RTT-ELC implementation at the provider level.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will improve early childhood outcomes through the development of a comprehensive integrated early learning and development systems that includes a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), statewide Early Learning Standards, a well-trained workforce, and the creation of an integrated data system. We will participate in the successful implementation of these projects by:

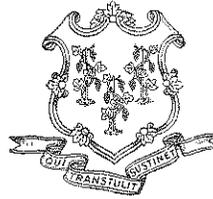
- Integrating RTT-ELC systems into existing education and literacy programs;
- Participating in the tiered QRIS system as a early childhood education provider;
- Encouraging other providers to participate in the QRIS process (including kith and kin providers);
- Promote the Early Learning Standards;
- Incorporate new data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate;
- Participate in committees, state meetings, etc.

The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Child Development Center in-kind support of these RTT-ECL projects is an estimated \$5000. over the four-year grant period. We are committed to providing the highest possible quality of care for our children, and look forward to working with you on this critical project.

Sincerely,



Braulio Santiago
Executive Director



State of Connecticut

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATE CAPITOL

HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

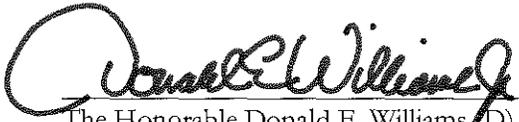
As the leadership of the Connecticut General Assembly, we are pleased to express our strong support for Connecticut's proposed Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application. If funded, this initiative will improve the quality of early learning and development and close the achievement gap for Connecticut children with high needs, such as children living in poverty, English language learners, and developmentally disabled children. We are unified in our strong support of the RTT-ELC's goals to increase quality and accountability for more efficient and comprehensive services for these children and their families. The proposed RTT-ELC project will achieve its ambitious goals by accelerating existing efforts to strengthen state systems and supporting communities to work collaboratively to better meet the needs of children and families through improved service coordination, integration of early care learning and development standards, and quality improvements.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC application builds on momentum that has been developing for several years towards the integration of a coordinated, comprehensive system of care for Connecticut's young children. Through our work in the Connecticut General Assembly, we have played a central role in creating this foundation of early learning and development. The Assembly's Education, Higher Education and Employment Advancement, Human Services, and Public Health Committees, as well as the Select Committee on Children and the Early Childhood Education Cabinet have further supported our efforts.

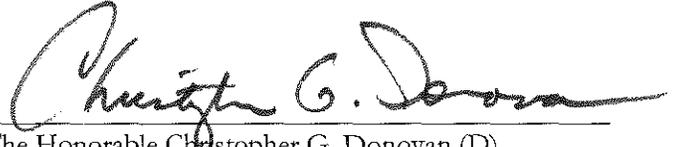
Most recently, the Connecticut General Assembly approved in July 2011 Public Act 11-181, *An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*, which mandates the continued development of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development through increased collaboration among relevant Connecticut state agencies. RTT-ELC projects will help increase inter-agency planning, delivering, and monitoring early childhood care and education programming and services. This approach will further the General Assembly's efforts to increase the efficiency of State Government while improving accountability and ultimately resulting in better outcomes for Connecticut's children and their families.

We are pleased and encouraged by the highly collaborative nature of the process used to develop Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application. The RTT-ELC Leadership Team and seven work groups include high-level representatives from each of the Participating State Agencies committed to supporting the successful implementation of this grant initiative (as evidenced by Memorandum of Understanding signed by each Participating State Agency). Over the past several months the work groups have also reached out to dozens of early care providers (including family care providers and kith and kin), higher education institutions, local and regional community leaders, private and philanthropic partners, and other leaders in the early care and education community to include their input in the application process. As a result, the proposed RTT-ELC activities build upon and align with the work already underway within and among state agencies to support young children and their families.

We, the undersigned leaders of the Connecticut General Assembly, fully endorse Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application and look forward to supporting its successful implementation.



The Honorable Donald E. Williams (D)
Connecticut State Senate – 29th District
President Pro Tempore



The Honorable Christopher G. Donovan (D)
Connecticut House of Representatives – 84th District
Speaker of the House



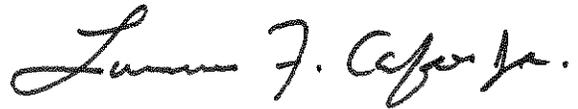
The Honorable Martin Looney (D)
Connecticut State Senate – 11th District
Senate Majority Leader



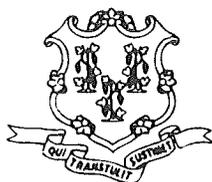
The Honorable Brendan Sharkey (D)
Connecticut House of Representatives – 88th District
House Majority Leader



The Honorable John McKinney (D)
Connecticut State Senate – 28th District
Senate Minority Leader



The Honorable Lawrence F. Cafero (R)
Connecticut House of Representatives – 142nd District
House Republican Leader



State of Connecticut

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
 LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BLDG.
 HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

October 12, 2011

Arne Duncan, Secretary
 U.S. Department of Education
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
 Washington, DC 20202

Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary
 U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services
 200 Independence Avenue, SW
 Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius,

As the Connecticut General Assembly's representatives on the Early Childhood Education Cabinet, we welcome the opportunity to express our support for Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application. If funded, the proposed initiative will enhance the work of the Cabinet, improve the quality of early learning and development statewide, and better prepare Connecticut's children for lifelong academic and employment success.

The Cabinet's ongoing efforts to improve the quality and services of early childhood care and education in Connecticut have laid the foundation for the RTT-ELC application. Our current standing committees—Data, Workforce, Early Learning Standards, and Family Supports—align with the goals of this important initiative.

The Early Childhood Education Cabinet is expanding its membership to welcome additional important RTT-ELC partners and will play an instrumental role in the successful implementation of RTT-ELC projects. The Cabinet will create three additional committees as well: a QRIS Task Force to advise the development of a statewide three-tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System for care providers; a Health Committee to oversee the expansion of health and mental health capacity among early care providers; and a State and Community Partnerships Committee to help integrate RTT-ELC priorities and systems into existing local and regional collaboratives.

We also support the Governor's creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education to facilitate inter-agency coordination and further the implementation of Public Act 11-181, *An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education and the Establishment of a Coordinated System of Early Care and Education and Child Development*. Connecticut's proposed initiative will strengthen and create systems critical to providing a comprehensive, high-quality network of early learning and development services for children and their families, as mandated by the Act.

We enthusiastically endorse Connecticut's RTT-ELC application and look forward to supporting its successful implementation. Thank you for your time and consideration of this crucial initiative.

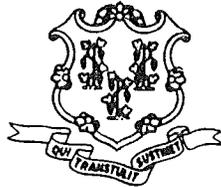
Sincerely,

Andrea L. Stillman (D)
 State Senator, 20th District
 Appendix 3 - Letters of Intent

Catherine F. Abercrombie (D)
 State Representative, 37th District

State of Connecticut

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



EDUCATION COMMITTEE
ROOM 3100
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591
(860) 240-0420

October 12, 2011

Arne Duncan, Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary
U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius,

We write to express the strong bipartisan support of the state General Assembly's Education Committee for Connecticut's proposed Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application. If funded, Connecticut's robust RTT-ELC proposal will achieve its ambitious goals by accelerating our current efforts to strengthen state systems and support communities to better meet the needs of young children and families.

Of the 210,000 children under the age of five in Connecticut, approximately 60,000 have high needs (e.g., low income, developmental delays, and language barriers). Despite current efforts, approximately one out of four children enters Kindergarten with skills, knowledge, and behaviors that are below expectations, which places them at a disadvantage in reaching their educational potential. The Education Committee is committed to improving early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative.

Through our work on the Education Committee, we have played a central role in building the foundation for early learning and development that RTT-ELC will enhance—including, most recently, the passage of Public Act No. 11-181, *An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education and the Establishment of a Coordinated System of Early Care and Education and Child Development*. The Act requires building a coordinated system that consolidates existing early childhood education and child care programs and services for children from birth to age eight into a coordinated system that strives to reduce the academic achievement gap; increase participation in early childhood education programs; increase parent engagement, family literacy, and parenting skills; increase oral language development and social competence; and decrease special education placements.

These elements in Public Act 11-181 serve as the bedrock for the RTT-ELC initiatives that enhance the best components of our existing state and local systems while building capacity, increasing coordination, and bridging gaps to more fully support young children and their families through high-quality initiatives. These proposals include Early Learning Standards across programs; a three-tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; dramatically enhanced, more granular Kindergarten Inventory assessments, and an early learning data system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System.

The Education Committee has greatly appreciated the highly collaborative nature of the planning process used to develop Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application. This process has included creation of a Leadership Team, seven work groups with high-level representatives from each of the Participating State Agencies, early care providers, health and mental health providers, higher education institutions, local and regional community leaders, private and philanthropic partners, and other leaders in the early care and education community.

It is for these reasons that we, as leaders of the General Assembly's Education Committee, fully endorse Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application and look forward to supporting its successful implementation. Thank you for your consideration of this crucial initiative.

Sincerely,



Andrea Stillman (D)
State Senator, 20th District
Co-Chair, Education

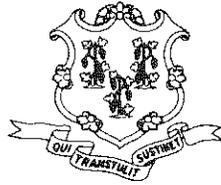


Andrew Fleischmann (D)
State Representative, 18th District
Co-Chair, Education



Toni Boucher (R)
State Senator, 26th District
Ranking Member, Education

State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 3000
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius,

The Connecticut General Assembly's Public Health Committee is pleased to support Connecticut's proposed Race to the Top -- Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application. If funded, this application will improve the quality of early learning and development, as well as physical and mental health outcomes for Connecticut's children.

The Committee has cognizance of all programs and matters relating to the Department of Public Health; the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and the Department of Developmental Services; the Office of Health Care Access; and all other matters relating to health. We are deeply committed to health and safety of Connecticut's children, and have been integrally involved in developing some of the key health and mental health systems and standards that Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will build upon and enhance.

We are pleased that the RTT-ELC will create a new Health Committee under the Early Childhood Education Cabinet to focus specifically on incorporating health and mental health standards into early care and education of Connecticut's children. Training and technical assistance to increase the capacity of local early care providers, families, and support service partners in child health and mental health standards will immediately improve outcomes for Connecticut's children, especially children exposed to significant stressors (e.g. poverty, food insecurity, domestic violence) that can threaten their development, and developmentally disabled children. RTT-ELC goals to promote healthy eating habits, nutrition, and expand physical activity will also make long-term impacts on child health and adult lifestyle choices.

Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application reflects the highly collaborative planning process the Leadership Team, seven work groups, and the early care community partners have undergone in the past several months. The proposed RTT-ELC project will achieve its ambitious goals by accelerating existing efforts to strengthen state systems and supporting communities to work collaboratively to better meet the needs of children and families through improved service coordination, integration of early care learning and development standards, and quality improvements.

We, the undersigned leaders of the Connecticut General Assembly's Public Health Committee, fully endorse Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application and look forward to supporting its successful implementation.



The Honorable Terry B. Gerratana (D)
Connecticut State Senate – 6th District
Public Health Committee Co-Chair



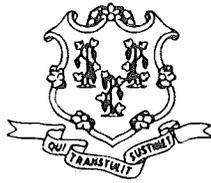
The Honorable Elizabeth B. Ritter (D)
Connecticut House of Representatives – 38^h
District
Public Health Committee Co-Chair



The Honorable Jason C. Welsh (R)
Connecticut State Senate – 31st District
Ranking Member, Public Health Committee



The Honorable Jason Perillo (R)
Connecticut House of Representatives – 113th
District
Ranking Member, Public Health Committee



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
 LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BLDG.
 HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan
 United States Department of Education
 400 Maryland Avenue, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20202

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
 United States Department of Health and Human Services
 200 Independence Avenue, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius,

The Connecticut General Assembly's Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee strongly supports Connecticut's proposed Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application. If funded, this application will improve the quality of early learning and development, better preparing Connecticut's children for lifelong academic and employment success.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC application accelerates momentum that has been building for several years towards the development of a coordinated, comprehensive system of care for Connecticut's young children. The Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee has contributed to the foundation of early learning and development that RTT-ELC will enhance.

We are pleased that the RTT-ELC projects include strengthening the quality and coordination of the early care and education workforce as a central tenant of improving statewide early care systems. By increasing coordination and cooperation of higher education institutions through the RTT-ELC initiative, our early childhood workforce will be well equipped to successfully address the needs of Connecticut's children and their families. We are also pleased to see resources devoted to a comprehensive data protocol to monitor progress in achieving RTT-ELC's ambitious goals and inform policy development and program planning. Through these initiatives, high-need children will be better connected to necessary support services.

This Committee has contributed to creating the systems that will allow Connecticut's higher education institutions to enhance the quality and coordination of their early childhood curricula as proposed in the RTT-ELC application. Below are a few examples:

- Public Act 04-212, *An Act Concerning Workforce Development*, which the Committee approved in 2004, created Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC), a statewide professional development, program improvement and registry system for early care educators in center-, group- and family-based settings. CCAC offers career counseling and training, advancement in career ladders to early care educators, and helps early care providers obtain accreditation for their programs. CCAC will play an integral role in advising RTT-ELC partners in the development of a comprehensive Workforce Knowledge and

Competency Framework, articulation agreements across 2- and 4-year colleges and universities, and increased implementation of the Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC) program.

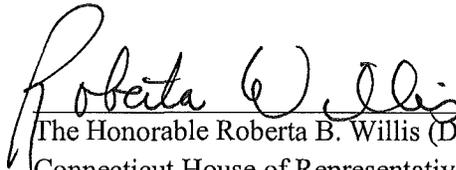
- In addition and most recently, the Connecticut General Assembly enacted Public Act 11-181, *An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education and the Establishment of a Coordinated System of Early Care and Education and Child Development*. This Act sets the framework on which Connecticut's RTT-ELC Plan was established – so as to ensure many more children enter Kindergarten ready to succeed. The Act requires building a coordinated system that consolidates existing early childhood education and child care programs and services for children from birth to age eight into a coordinated system that strives to: reduce the academic achievement gap; increase participation in early childhood education programs; increase parent engagement, family literacy, and parenting skills; increase oral language development and social competence; and decrease special education placements.
- Also, the Connecticut General Assembly recently enacted Public Act 11-54, *An Act Concerning Requirements for Early Childhood Educators*, which makes several changes to strengthen the required qualifications for early childhood educators.

Through the highly collaborative planning process used to develop Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application, we are confident that RTT-ELC activities will improve the quality and coordination of early care learning and development at the state, regional and local levels. As a result, Connecticut's children will be better supported in their developmental needs in their critical early years, positioning them to attain academic success and gainful employment as adults.

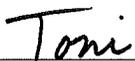
We, the undersigned leaders of the Connecticut General Assembly's Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, fully endorse Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application and look forward to supporting its successful implementation.



The Honorable Beth Bye (D)
Connecticut State Senate – 5th District
Co-Chair, Higher Education and Employment
Advancement Committee



The Honorable Roberta B. Willis (D)
Connecticut House of Representatives – 64th District
Co-Chair, Higher Education and Employment
Advancement Committee



The Honorable Antonietta Boucher (R)
Connecticut State Senate – 26th District
Ranking Member, Higher Education and
Employment Advancement Committee

State of Connecticut

Senator Anthony Musto
CO-CHAIR

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Representative Peter Tercyak
CO-CHAIR

Senator Eric D. Coleman, *Vice-Chair*
Senator Joe Markley, *Ranking Member*



Rep. Bruce Morris, *Vice-Chair*
Rep. Lile R. Gibbons, *Ranking Member*

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

October 14th 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius,

The Connecticut General Assembly's Human Services Committee strongly supports Connecticut's proposed Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application. If funded, this application will improve the quality of early learning and development, better preparing Connecticut's children for lifelong academic and employment success.

Of the 210,000 children ages 0 to 5 in Connecticut, some 60,000 have high needs (e.g. low income, developmental delays, and language barriers, etc.). Despite our current efforts, roughly one out of four children enters Kindergarten with skills, knowledge, and behaviors below expectations – placing them at a disadvantage to reach their educational potential. The Human Services Committee is committed to helping protect these children and ensure their needs are properly met.

The Committee has cognizance of all matters relating to the Department of Social Services and the Department of Children and Families, including institutions under their jurisdiction; the Office of Child Day Care; the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, among others. In this role, we have developed many of the policies and systems that will serve as the foundation of early childhood care and education that Connecticut's RTT-ELC application will advance.

Both of the primary agencies (DSS and DCF) that relate to the efforts of our Committee will play central roles in the successful implementation of RTT-ELC projects. We are pleased that the RTT-ELC will increase inter-agency coordination at the state level through the creation of the Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development, and create clear Early Learning Standards and quality rating systems.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC proposal will achieve its ambitious goals by accelerating existing efforts to strengthen state systems and supporting communities to collaborate to better meet the needs of children and families through improved capacity building, service coordination, integration of early care learning and development standards, and quality improvements.

We, the undersigned leaders of the Connecticut General Assembly's Human Services Committee, fully endorse Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application and look forward to supporting its successful implementation.



The Honorable Anthony J. Musto (D)
Connecticut State Senate – 22nd District
Human Services Committee Co-Chair



The Honorable Peter A. Tercyak (D)
Connecticut House of Representatives – 26^h District
Human Services Committee Co-Chair

October 17, 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius,

As Senate Co-Chairman of the Connecticut General Assembly's Select Committee on Children, I strongly support Connecticut's proposed Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application to improve the quality of early learning and development systems and supports for Connecticut children and their families.

The Select Committee on Children is committed to improving the health and safety of Connecticut's children. I am pleased that Connecticut's RTT-ELC proposal will strengthen inter-agency cooperation and stronger data sharing protocols to help us better monitor how early care services are meeting the needs of Connecticut's children. The creation of a well integrated tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, enhanced health and mental health training for early care providers, and increased access to training and technical assistance for early care educators will all result in higher quality and more accessible early childhood care and education services for children and their families. These goals directly coincide with the interests of the Select Committee on Children.

The highly collaborative planning process for Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application has resulted in ambitious goals that will be achieved by accelerating existing efforts to strengthen state systems through improved service coordination, integration of early care learning and development standards, and quality improvements to better meet the needs of children and families.

I, the undersigned Senate Co-Chair of the Connecticut General Assembly's Select Committee on Children, fully endorse Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application and look forward to supporting its successful implementation.



The Honorable Terry B. Gerratana (D)
Connecticut State Senate – 6th District
Co-Chair, Select Committee on Children



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 STATE CAPITOL
 HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN W. THOMPSON
 THIRTEENTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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 TOLL FREE: 1-800-842-8267
 FAX: 660-240-0206
 E-MAIL: Jack.Thompson@cga.ct.gov

MEMBER
 APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
 HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
 SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

I write to strongly express my support for Connecticut's proposed Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application to improve the quality of early learning and development.

As a long-time member of the Select Committee on Children, Appropriations Committee, and Human Services Committees, I have a long history of leadership on children's issues, including the health care of children. For example, I played a central role in the development and implementation of the HUSKY insurance for low-income children and their families and the establishment of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council; I served as the first chair of the Select Committee on Children, and I chaired the task force that created what today is known as the Nurturing Families program (a provider of early intervention services to at-risk families to prevent child abuse and neglect).

I have received numerous awards for my work on behalf of children and families, and as a longtime advocate for children and families; I am pleased that Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will facilitate the connection of family caregivers, including licensed home day care and kith and kin providers, to a comprehensive system of early care and education. It will improve continuing education opportunities for early care caregivers and educators, and improve stronger data sharing protocols to help us improve educational outcomes. These projects will integrate our existing early learning and development infrastructure to improve our reach of the approximately 60,000 high needs children whose needs are not currently being met.

I also support the creation of the Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development to facilitate inter-agency coordination and further the implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education and the Establishment of a Coordinated System of Early Care and Education and Child Development," which mandates the creation of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development through increased collaboration among relevant Connecticut state agencies. Together, these efforts will create a strong continuum of birth-5 services, standards, and supports to promote healthy development and academic success.

I have dedicated my career to helping create systems that ensure every child has access to quality education, healthcare and social support services they need to thrive. I applaud Connecticut's RTT-ELC ambitious goals and I look forward to supporting its successful implementation.

Yours truly,

Representative Jack Thompson



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Connecticut State Board of Education to improve early childhood education and close the achievement gap in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative.

The State Board of Education is responsible for general supervision and control of the educational interests of the state, including preschool, elementary and secondary education, special education, vocational education and adult education. The State Board of Education's Five-year Comprehensive Plan for Education sets forth its priorities for Connecticut's students. A significant portion of the plan addresses the importance of high-quality early learning and the power that it holds in terms of allowing all children to fulfill their potential and in closing the achievement gaps. These priorities and the action steps designed to support them are articulated in two of the Board's three priorities: high-quality preschool education for all students and high academic achievement of all students in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

The RTT-ELC initiative aligns with the mission of the State Board of Education and the work of the State Department of Education. It exemplifies a coordinated and collaborative approach to addressing the needs of our youngest citizens, including their educational, social and health needs. The application supports our efforts to address the uneven preparation of young children and the resulting achievement gap. It also speaks to the need for a well-trained, highly qualified early childhood workforce and consistent standards across our state in public and private settings that care for and educate children.

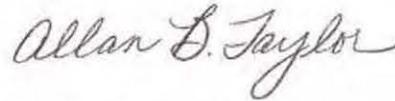
This application exemplifies the Board's priorities by focusing on children with high needs and promoting high-quality preschool education for all children. The Board commits to the following actions in support of the RTT-ELC initiative:

- provide guidance and leadership to the State Department of Education as it implements RTT-ELC in partnership with other state agencies and partners;
- integrate Board of Education activities and efforts with Connecticut's RTT-ELC plan to promote successful implementation;
- incorporate into its legislative and budget proposals language that supports the tenets of the application and serves to promote access to and participation in high-quality early childhood programs; and
- review data on a regular basis to inform the Board in setting policy around early learning, monitoring progress of initiatives and ensuring accountability.

-2-

The State Board of Education is proud to support Connecticut's application as a critical component of our collective responsibility and efforts to close the achievement gap.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allan B. Taylor".

Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson
Connecticut State Board of Education

G:Race to the Top – Letter of Support



Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

81 Wolcott Hill Road, Wethersfield, CT 06109-1242 - (860) 571-7446 - Fax (860) 571-7452 - Email admin@cabe.org

October 10, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) is pleased to endorse Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application, which will improve the quality of early learning and development and increase the academic achievement of children with high needs. The proposed RTT-ELC project will also accelerate implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

CABE serves local and regional boards of education in Connecticut and is dedicated to improving the quality of education throughout the state and the nation. CABE's membership includes nearly 150 school districts representing 90% of the state's public school population. CABE is a leading advocate for public education at the state capitol and in Washington, DC, and offers many types of support services to local boards of education including the Board Member Academy, a continuing education program for local board of education members.

CABE recognizes the connection between young children's early education experiences and their ultimate success in school. We applaud RTT-ELC's emphasis on supporting state efforts to increase high-need children enrolled in high-quality learning and development programs, and to increase coordination of early childhood services at the state, regional, and local levels. This is certain to increase the number of high-need children who arrive at kindergarten ready to learn, and will ultimately reduce Connecticut's educational achievement gap. CABE has long had a policy in support of early care and education.

CABE will assist the Governor's new Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development to implement the proposed RTT-ELC project by disseminating information through various means, which will include the CABE Journal, which goes to CABE member boards of education and superintendents of schools; speaking about these issues at various workshops; providing sample policies for boards of education to consider and adopt, support any efforts in the P-20 Council on early education, including strengthening public education's methods of ensuring smoother transitions between early education and k-12; and serving in other appropriate forums (I personally served on the Early Childhood Policy and Research Council and on the subcommittee working on ensuring quality in preschools).

CABE looks forward to working with you on this exciting and important initiative to improve the quality of education in Connecticut.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Rader
 Executive Director, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

David G. Title, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Phone (203) 255-8372
Fax (203) 255-8245

The Education Center

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Re: Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Fairfield Public Schools enthusiastically commits to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development."*

The Fairfield Public Schools is deeply concerned about improving the skills and knowledge of high needs children, including developmentally disabled children. Our community has been an integral part of the fabric of the state's early childhood systems, and I currently serve as the Chair of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet, whose infrastructure provides the foundation for RTT-ELC projects.

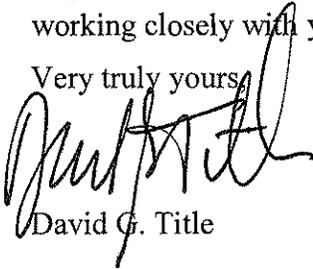
I am pleased that the Cabinet will play a central role in the implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative, especially in the development of a comprehensive statewide early childhood system that includes a tiered QRIS system, provides technical assistance to increase local capacity, develops and aligns statewide Early Learning Standards, strengthens connections to early elementary education, and improves data collection. Beyond my role in the Cabinet, I am committed to supporting the successful implementation of RTT-ELC projects through the Fairfield Public Schools by:

- Integrating RTT-ELC systems into district programs, including our literacy programs;
- Connecting early learning literacy programs (0-pre-K) and early elementary literacy programs (K-3) to ensure RTT-ELC impacts are sustained after age 5;
- Facilitating local collaborative efforts to integrate RTT-ELC systems of service delivery, parent engagement, and data sharing;
- Participating in the tiered QRIS system as an early childhood education provider;
- Encouraging maximum program and community participation in the QRIS process (including kith and kin providers) using existing quality improvement efforts already underway;
- Promoting understanding of the Early Learning Standards among providers and families;
- Assisting in the revision of the Kindergarten Inventory assessment tools as appropriate;

- Implementing the refined Kindergarten Inventory;
- Incorporating new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation; and
- Facilitating connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

These in-kind contributions total an estimated \$50,000 over the four-year grant period. Through RTT-ELC, we can support and better connect school-based activities to community and state wellness efforts in order to expand the impact on families and children. I look forward to working closely with you in this important effort.

Very truly yours,



David G. Title



P.O. Box 9310, Stamford, CT 06904

Offices at 888 Washington Blvd. Phone (203) 977-4105

www.stamfordpublicschools.org

Winifred Hamilton, Ph.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools

October 14, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Stamford Public Schools are excited to participate in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development"*.

The Stamford Public Schools serves approximately 66 children in our pre-k special education-like peer program. In addition, through a partnership with the Childcare Learning Centers, six Stamford Public Schools teachers work in the School Readiness Program. This program serves 544 children. Stamford is a Priority School District. We are a district "In Need of Improvement" Year 8. Minority students account for 62.2% of Stamford's enrollment, 50% of students are eligible for free/reduced priced meals. Stamford's students are 0.1% native American, 21.3% Black, 7.9% Asian, 32.9% Hispanic, and 37.8% white according to the 2010 Stamford Public School October counts.

Stamford has a demonstrated long standing commitment to ensuring that all four year olds have access to state funded preK programs. Our School Readiness Council works diligently to address the issues of school readiness and the needs of children and their families. Stamford's Early Childhood Blueprint outlines the Council's plan for improving the quality and accessibility of early childhood programs in our community. Yet more needs to be done to properly address the needs of low-income and other at-risk youth. For example, Stamford has the state's highest rate of uninsured children (9.9%), leaving them vulnerable to poor health outcomes, among others.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC will provide a comprehensive statewide early childhood system that includes a tiered QRIS system, provides technical assistance to increase local capacity, develops and aligns statewide Early Learning Standards, strengthens connections to early elementary education, and improves data collection to holistically address the needs of children. This system will result in better transitions into early elementary grades and comprehensive supports for local communities to better address the needs of vulnerable youth. In support of these RTT-ELC projects, the Stamford Public Schools will:

Re: CT's Application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Funds
Stamford Public Schools
October 14, 2011
Page 2 of 2

- Integrate RTT-ELC systems into district programs, including School Based Health Centers and literacy programs;
- Connect early learning literacy programs (0-pre-K) and early elementary literacy programs (K-3) to ensure RTT-ELC impacts are sustained after age 5;
- Coordinate the efforts of the Early Childhood Task Force to better integrate service delivery, parent engagement efforts, and data sharing;
- Participate in the tiered QRIS system as a early childhood education provider;
- Encourage maximum program and community participation in the QRIS process (including kith and kin providers) using existing quality improvement efforts underway through our School Readiness programs;
- Promote understanding of the Early Learning Standards;
- Assist in the revision of the Kindergarten Inventory assessment tools as appropriate;
- Implement the refined Kindergarten Inventory;
- Incorporate new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

The in-kind contribution from the Stamford Public Schools is roughly estimated to be 8 hours per month for four years.

The mission of the Stamford Public Schools is to prepare each and every student for higher education and success in the 21st century. RTT-ELC will help us achieve this through better integration of school-based, community and state wellness efforts. I look forward to working closely with all the partners in this important initiative.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Winifred Hamilton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Winifred Hamilton, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent

New Haven Public Schools

October 11, 2011



Reginald Mayo, Ph. D
Superintendent

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

I enthusiastically write to express the commitment of the New Haven Public Schools to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

With 9,150 children under the age of 5 in the city, early learning and development is a critical area of focus for the New Haven Public Schools. In 2007, Mayor John DeStefano and I convened a New Haven Early Childhood Task Force comprised of early childhood leaders, including members of our School Readiness Council, to create the New Haven Early Childhood Plan, which states "to achieve the results we want, we envision an integrated, comprehensive system that engages and supports families in their efforts to raise and teach their children."

We have taken some important steps forward to achieve this vision. For example, we significantly increased the number of children served in preschool programs (73% in 2009 up from 64% in 2004), and have devoted substantial resources to improving program facilities and quality. The Public Schools assumed responsibility for operation of the City's Infant-Toddler early care programs funded through the Connecticut Department of Social Services Child Development program and moved them into improved facilities.

Yet young children and their families in New Haven still face tremendous challenges: the child poverty rate rose significantly between 2009 and 2010, from 31.2% to 43.7%; the number of eligible children looking for quality infant, toddler and preschool program slots are unable to access them – due to both lack of supply and costs.



Dr. Tina Mannarino, Ph. D
Supervisor of Early
Childhood Education

Gateway Center
54 Meadow Street 5th floor
New Haven, CT 06519

Phone: (203) 946-5353
Fax: (203) 946-7401

I believe that RTT-ELC will help New Haven realize its vision by developing a comprehensive statewide early childhood system that includes a tiered QRIS system, provides technical assistance to increase local capacity, develops and aligns statewide Early Learning Standards, strengthens connections to early elementary education, and improves data collection. A State Department of Education Priority School District, the New Haven Public Schools fully support RTT-ELC projects in the following ways:

- Integrate RTT-ELC systems into district programs, including School Based Health Centers and literacy programs;
- Connect early learning programs (0-pre-K) and early elementary programs (K-3) to ensure RTT-ELC impacts are sustained after age 5;
- Coordinate the efforts of the Early Childhood Task Force to better integrate service delivery, parent engagement efforts, and data sharing;
- Participate in the tiered QRIS system as a early childhood education provider;
- Encourage maximum program and community participation in the QRIS process (including kith and kin providers) using existing quality improvement efforts underway through our School Readiness programs;
- Promote understanding of the Early Learning Standards;
- Share our gains in aligning our pre-k curriculum with the Common Core Standards;
- Assist in the revision of the Kindergarten Inventory assessment tools as appropriate;
- Implement the refined Kindergarten Inventory;
- Incorporate new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate; and
- Provide modeling and support to other collaboratives and extending our work to other towns in our region to meet identified needs.

These cash and in-kind contributions total an estimated \$85,000 over the four-year grant period.

Through RTT-ELC, we can support and better connect school-based activities to community and state wellness efforts in order to expand the impact on families and children. I look forward to working closely with all the partners in this important initiative.

Very truly yours,



Reginald R. Mayo, Ph.D.
Superintendent of New Haven Public Schools



Catholic Charities

Archdiocese of Hartford

State of Connecticut
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
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THE MOST REVEREND HENRY J. MANSELL, D.D.,

President

JOHN RUBÉN FLORES

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

LOIS M. NESCI

Chief Executive Officer

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

Catholic Charities enthusiastically supports Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development"*.

Catholic Charities is a nonprofit agency serving people of all faiths in Hartford, Litchfield, and New Haven Counties since 1920. We focus on children as our future, families as the backbone of our society, and the elderly as our link to our roots. Since 1991 we have been a leading provider of nationally accredited early childhood care and education services in the state, serve more than 300 children ages 3-5 annually in ten locations in Hartford, New Haven, Meriden and Waterbury.

Since 1996, we have been a School Readiness provider through the State Department of Education. Our model strongly encourages parent participation. We have also developed strong local partnerships in the communities we serve and collaborate with local schools to promote seamless transitions into kindergarten.

Catholic Charities early childhood staff are extremely well qualified and have extensive experience in early childhood and working with children with a variety of special needs, including speech and language delays, ADHD, autism, and special medication needs. We regularly serve high need children (e.g. low-income, children with special needs, English language learners), and their families with health and nutrition services, mental health consultations, educational and social activities, family involvement and support, early and family literacy programming, supportive housing services, and much more. Through our six Family Centers, we offer a culturally competent and comprehensive approach to the development and enhancement of the family, focusing on activities that reinforce parent-child bonding. The Family Centers also enable use to connect directly with family childcare providers.



Our goal is to promote the highest standards of excellence in early childcare education and strengthening the family through educational and support services. Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will help us realize this goal through the development of a comprehensive integrated early learning and development systems that includes a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), statewide Early Learning Standards, a well-trained workforce, and the creation of an integrated data system. We will participate in the successful implementation of these projects as follows:

- Integrate RTT-ELC systems into existing education and literacy programs;
- Participate in the tiered QRIS system as a early childhood education provider;
- Encourage maximum program and community participation in the QRIS process (including kith and kin providers) using existing quality improvement efforts underway through our School Readiness programs;
- Promote the Early Learning Standards and participation the QRIS system, including family care providers, kith and kin.
- Incorporate new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

Catholic Charities' commitment to RTT-ECL projects total an estimated \$58,000 per year or \$232,000 in-kind over the four-year grant period. We look forward to working with you on this critical project.

Sincerely,



Lois Nesci

Chief Executive Officer



October 7, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Women's League Child Development Center enthusiastically supports Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development"*.

Founded in 1917, the Women's League was formed with an approach to early childhood education that was well ahead of its time. Today we offer more than 250 Hartford area children with high quality care and educational services, including family engagement and health/nutritional support.

In 1991, we became the first inner city early childhood education program to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We continue to maintain our status as a role model in the field by fulfilling and surpassing the highest standards. As a selected Hartford School Readiness provider, Women's League is approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education and licensed by the Department of Public Health. Our center was chosen as a participant in the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Brighter Futures Initiative Child Care Enhancement Project. We actively participate on the Early Childhood Cabinet's Workforce Committee, and played an instrumental role in developing the Early Childhood Teaching Credential (ECTC) and associated competencies.

Many of the children we serve are at-risk, coming from low-income areas, are English language learners, and/or have special needs. Although our staff is exceptionally trained to care for these children, early care system improvements through Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will improve early childhood outcomes. We are pleased to see RTT-ELC incorporate the Cabinet's existing efforts in the development of a comprehensive integrated early learning and development systems that includes a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), statewide Early Learning Standards, a well-trained workforce, and the creation of an integrated data system. We will participate in the successful implementation of these projects by:

- Integrating RTT-ELC systems into existing education and literacy programs;
- Encouraging provider and community participation in the QRIS process using existing quality improvement efforts underway through our School Readiness programs;
- Participating in the tiered QRIS system as a early childhood education provider;
- Encouraging other providers to participate in the QRIS process (including kith and kin providers);
- Promoting the understanding of Early Learning Standards among parents;

Where all children love to learn and learn to love...while having fun.



Women's League
Child Development Center

- Continuing to participate on the Early Childhood Cabinet Workforce Committee to develop an integrated framework for early care educators;
- Incorporating new data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Facilitating connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate;
- Identifying ways to sustain the resulting gains

Our in-kind support of these projects is an estimated \$11,520 over the four-year grant period. We look forward to working with you to improve the quality of care for our youth.

Sincerely,

Iris Hope Rich

Iris Hope Rich
Executive Director

John R. Rathgeber
President and Chief Executive Officer

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Dannel P. Malloy
Governor
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge funds

Dear Governor Malloy:

I am writing to express the Connecticut Business Industry Association's (CBIA) strong support for Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*". CBIA firmly believes these efforts will better prepare Connecticut's children for the high wage, high skills jobs of tomorrow.

CBIA is the Connecticut's largest business trade association with about 10,000 members that represent every business sector and region within our state. CBIA believe that Connecticut's economic competitiveness is dependent on highly skilled workforce, one that can drive innovation and productivity gains. Graduating high school students who are ready for college or advanced technical education and closing the state's large achievement gap are priorities that we share with your administration. A coordinated system of quality early childhood care and education is critical to achieving these goals.

As you know, CBIA has been actively involved in both the policy debate on public education reform and in a number of district or school based initiatives. We have also been integrally involved in early childhood care and education planning through my service as the immediate past Chair of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet. During my tenure as Chair, we realigned the Cabinet's efforts and its Committees (Data, Workforce, Early Learning Standards, and Family Supports) to reflect your commitment to building a truly integrated system. These improvements laid the foundation for Connecticut's RTT-ELC application.

CBIA is pleased to see that RTT-ELC will improve access and integration of early care educator workforce training and promote the expansion of the Early Childhood Teacher Credential. Inter-agency coordination through the Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development, along with the expansion of the Cabinet's membership and committees, including 1) a QRIS Task Force to advise the development of a three tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; 2) a Health Committee to oversee the expansion of health and mental health capacity among early care providers; 3) and a State and Local Partnerships Committee to help integrate RTT-ELC priorities and systems into existing regional and local collaborations, will result in higher quality, better coordinated care, especially for high needs children.

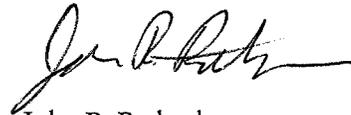
CBIA's education initiatives fully support the comprehensive and integrated approach defined in the RTT-ELC application, and we will contribute to the successful implementation of RTT-ELC's projects by:

- Supporting the creation of the Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development;
- Identifying and facilitating linkages to additional resources to expand high quality early learning and development programs;

- Facilitating practicum experiences required for the Early Childhood Teacher Credential as appropriate;
- Educating our members about the RTT-ELC initiative and its importance in developing a stronger workforce;
- Reaching out to the state's media and general public about the importance of these initiatives;
- Continuing our participation on the Cabinet and its Workforce Committee as appropriate;
- Facilitating links to private and philanthropic resources to promote long-term project success as appropriate;

We look forward to continuing our partnership with your administration to implement this important initiative.

Sincerely,



John R. Rathgeber



October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Connecticut Council for Education Reform (CCER) is pleased to support Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*". Together, these efforts will make significant strides in improving early childhood outcomes by accelerating the existing momentum to reform early care and education systems and supports.

Connecticut has the largest achievement gap in the nation between low-income and non low-income students. CCER is a statewide nonprofit organization that advocates for comprehensive reform efforts to close the achievement gap while raising academic outcomes for *all* students in Connecticut. We also work for the implementation of the recommendations of the CT Commission on Educational Achievement (one of which was to consolidate early childhood services). Over the next decade our two major goals are:

Goal 1: Connecticut will largely eliminate the achievement gap between low-income and non-low-income students on the 4th and 8th grade Connecticut Mastery Tests and on high school graduation rates.

Goal 2: Connecticut will have one of the smallest achievement gaps in the nation and will be amongst the highest-achieving states overall, ensuring all students have a world-class education.

As part of our mission, we support innovative initiatives to build momentum and capacity for education reform efforts. Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will help very young children and their families access the high quality supports, care and education necessary for a strong foundation for future academic success. We are especially pleased to see that RTT-ELC projects include 1) revising Connecticut's Early Learning Standards to create a B-5 continuum aligned with the Head Start Framework and Connecticut's K-3 standards; 2) efforts to refine the Connecticut's Kindergarten Inventory assessment tool to improve quality and include revised Early Learning

Standards; 3) development of a comprehensive data system that enhances inter-agency and provider data-sharing to better monitor progress on improving early learning outcomes; and 4) a conscious effort to link and sustain RTT-ELC projects to program efforts in Early Elementary Grades to sustain improved outcomes for high needs children in the long term.

These reforms, and the others captured in the RTT-ELC application, are essential steps to creating a supporting environment for children ages 0-5 to grow and be ready to achieve academic success. CCER will support the successful implementation of these projects by:

- Supporting the creation of the Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development to improve coordination of state agency programs and facilitate better inter-agency cooperation, including data sharing protocols;
- Serving as a resource for regional and local capacity building in implementing new standards and assessments as appropriate;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate;

We are excited to see this progress in our state's education system, and look forward to working with you to ensure long-term success on these critical projects.

Sincerely,



Shana Kennedy-Salchow
Interim Executive Director

Sheff Movement**Quality Integrated Education for All Children**

12 October 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education and the Establishment of a Coordinated System of Early Care and Education and Child Development"*.

As you know, my son Milo and I are the named plaintiff family in the landmark civil rights lawsuit (*Sheff vs. O'Neill*) concerning disparities in educational opportunity for all children. A critical part of that lawsuit was about government's response to the long-term effects on children living under the weight of poverty concentration and racial isolation.

My many years of activism include defending the rights of persons who live in public housing, those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, families marginalized by economic challenges, and advocating against the proliferation of waste facilities in Hartford. I have worked tirelessly to address the high incidence of asthma, lead poisoning, and obesity that adversely affects the quality of life for Hartford's children. In support of this growing family dynamic, I founded the City of Hartford Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program – an initiative that resulted in the construction of housing units to support these unique families.

I recently retired from public service on the Hartford City Council. Chief among my many accomplishments in this role was the creation of the citywide literary effort "Keep Them Reading" campaign.

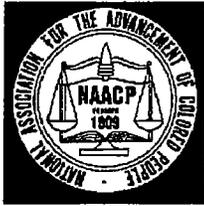
As a former licensed nurse and advocate for young children, I am pleased that the RTT-ELC initiative will focus on children not currently being supported by existing early care systems. It will integrate early learning educational standards and increase technical assistance and resources for formal and informal (kith and kin) family childcare providers. I also support expanding access to the Early Childhood Teacher Credential and to health/mental health standards, and the creation of the Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development to increase coordination among state agencies.

I have dedicated my life to championing the needs of at-risk youth, and applaud RTT-ELC's effort to improve support for them and their caregivers. I look forward to working with you on this important initiative, most especially with regard to initiatives that address early beginnings and open choice programs in our state.

Sincerely,


 Elizabeth Horton Sheff,
 Co-founder, Sheff Movement

Connecticut State Conference of NAACP Branches



October 13, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The mission of the NAACP is "to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality for all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination." A principal objective of the NAACP is "To ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all citizens." The NAACP National Education Program strives to ensure that all students have access to an equal and high-quality public education by eliminating education-related racial and ethnic disparities in our public schools.

National progress tests given to 4th and 8th graders in Connecticut, however, show that low-income students perform at dramatically lower levels than non-low-income students—sometimes up to three grade levels behind. In fact, 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results demonstrated that Connecticut has the largest academic achievement gap of any state. Our low-income students and students of color achieve at significantly lower levels than their wealthy and white peers, which hurts our children, our communities, and our state.

Because of this dire situation, the Connecticut State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) strongly supports Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) proposal, which will put more high-need children on a path to educational achievement and success in life. We have reviewed an overview of Connecticut's RTT-ELC application, and we are optimistic that its strategies will benefit Connecticut's high-need children, including many children of color.

The Connecticut NAACP intends to support the RTT-ELC project by:

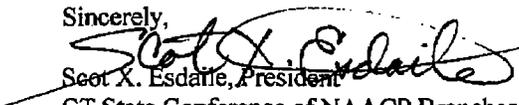
- Advocating for State policies that will build upon the reforms proposed as part of the RTT-ELC effort;
- Raising awareness of early learning opportunities among the parents of young children in Connecticut's communities of color; and
- Educating family-based and kith & kin care providers about opportunities to enhance the quality of the care they provide for young children through training and technical assistance.

Provide technical education awareness to parents and young children in Connecticut's communities of color.

Provide financial literacy to parents and young children in Connecticut's communities of color.

Connecticut's achievement gap does an injustice to our communities of color. The proposed Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge project will play an important role in shrinking the achievement gap by helping our youngest and most vulnerable children. The Connecticut NAACP fully endorses this application and eagerly awaits news of its success.

Sincerely,


Scot X. Esdaile, President
CT State Conference of NAACP Branches

2074 Park St, Hartford, CT 06106, Office: (860) 523-9962
Email: ctnaACP2@sbcglobal.net

STATE OF BLACK CT ALLIANCE

October 14, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The State of Black CT (SBCT) Alliance convenes a statewide network of stakeholders committed to creating a high quality of life for Connecticut's Black and vulnerable populations through fiscal and best practice accountability, education and advocacy. The SBCT Alliance provides intensive and interactive, hands-on technical assistance and training in parent engagement within diverse communities. Our core partners include the Education Equality Project, a leading civil rights movement to eliminate the racial and ethnic achievement gap in public education by working to create an effective school for every child.

Unfortunately, 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results demonstrated that Connecticut has the largest academic achievement gap of any state, as low-income and students of color perform at dramatically lower levels than their non-low-income and white peers.

As a direct result of the urgent need to close the achievement gap by putting more high-need children in high-quality early learning and development programs; the SBCT Alliance offers its support for the enclosed Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application.

The SBCT Alliance intends to support the RTT-ELC project by:

- Raising awareness of early learning opportunities among the parents of young children in Connecticut's communities of color and vulnerable populations;
- Providing training and technical assistance to family-based and kith & kin care providers regarding opportunities to improve the quality of the care they offer to young children.
- Providing parents and families with knowledge and supports regarding the importance of appropriate child and academic development which include the reshaping of home and community environments thus fostering the necessary social, emotional, physical and nurturing support that each child needs in order to prepare them for academic achievement and life success.

In closing, all citizens benefit by responsible investments, in an accountable, streamlined Pre K – 12 educational system, thus propelling Connecticut on a trajectory towards economic security.

Best Regards,

Gwendolyn Samuel, Founder
State of Black CT Alliance



The CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION for ADULT and CONTINUING EDUCATION

October 13, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education's (CAACE) support for Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development."*

CAACE members are committed to providing quality adult education services that are accessible to all Connecticut adults and lead to mastery of the essential proficiencies needed to function as productive citizens in work, family and community environments. Connecticut's adult education programs are governed by Connecticut General Statutes, which require local school districts to offer education programs in the areas of elementary and secondary school completion, English for adults with limited English proficiency, and preparation for United States citizenship.

Adult education programs can contribute to the success of the RTT-ELC initiative and the implementation of P.A. 11-181 in some of the following ways:

- Research has demonstrated that a mother's education level is one of the greatest predictors of children's school success. Adult education programs will contribute to children's health and success in school by educating their parents to: improve their literacy abilities and/or attain a high school diploma; be better prepared to enter employment or postsecondary education; and be better equipped to move out of poverty and provide a healthier and safer future for their children.
- Programs will promote the training, credentialing, and career opportunities in early education to adult education students.

- In order to increase access to high-quality early care programs, parents enrolled in family literacy projects will be advised about information available through the Quality Rating and Improvement System.

We fully support this effort and look forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Richard Tariff, President
Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing
Education

CAACE
P.O. Box 339, North Haven, CT 06473
Phone/fax 203-691-0516
caace@comcast.net
www.caace.org



reachoutandread.org

October 7, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

Connecticut Reach Out and Read eagerly supports the state's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative to improve early childhood outcomes for the state's high needs children.

Children who start out with reading difficulties are more likely to ultimately fail in school. Without intervention, they will grow into adults with low literacy skills and poor economic potential. Children living in poverty are especially at risk, since they hear as many as 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers before the age of 3, and 61% of them do not have children's books at home.

Reach Out and Read uses an evidence-based approach to combat these threats by partnering with pediatricians to give new books to children ages 6mo – 5 years and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud during their pediatric primary care exams. Through our presence in hospitals, clinics, and health centers, we reach those "at-risk", hard to reach children who do not have access to early education programs and therefore most need our services. The 47,248 Connecticut families served by Reach Out and Read read together more often, and their children enter kindergarten better prepared to succeed, with larger vocabularies, stronger language skills, and a six-month developmental edge over their peers. Last year, 44 pediatric healthcare providers distributed 57,818 books through our three-step model:

1. In the exam room, providers speak with parents about the importance of reading aloud to their young children every day, and offer age-appropriate tips and encouragement.
2. The child receives a new, culturally- and developmentally-appropriate book to take home and keep.
3. Parents incorporate the advice and encouragement they receive in pediatric visits and make reading aloud a daily, enjoyable experience between parent and child. Reach Out and Read families read up to 350 hours with our children prior to kindergarten.

This RTT-ELC initiative will improve educational outcomes for Connecticut's children through the development of a coordinated, statewide early learning and development system that includes comprehensive Early Learning Standards and data systems. Reach Out and Read will work diligently to ensure the successful implementation of these projects by:

- Providing support and integration into RTT-ELC capacity building efforts for literacy programs;
- Advise and assist in connecting early learning literacy programs (0-pre-k) and early elementary literacy programs (K-3) to ensure RTT-ELC impacts are sustained after age 5;
- Disseminate information to parents about Early Learning Standards and the QRIS system;
- Incorporate new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate;
- Enhancing the quality of current Connecticut Reach Out and Read Programs by providing 100% of the books needed to sustain each Program annually which, in turn, will enhance the outcomes for the children, better preparing them for kindergarten;
- Expanding our Programs in Connecticut to reach additional children living in poverty. According to Annie E. Casey's KID'S COUNT 2000 data, there are nearly 200,000 children in Connecticut living with income <200% FPL.

These cash and in-kind contributions total an estimated \$15,500 over the four-year grant period.



reachoutandread.org

Through RTT-ELC and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*", Connecticut children will better realize their full potential as healthy, productive citizens. We look forward to partnering with you to realize these outcomes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Garber".

Christine Garber
Reach Out and Read
Connecticut Program Director



October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of Child FIRST to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development"*.

Child FIRST (Child and Family Interagency Resource, Support, and Training) is an evidenced based early childhood intervention, embedded in a system of care, that works to decrease the incidence of serious emotional disturbance, developmental and learning problems, and abuse and neglect among the most vulnerable young children and families in Connecticut. It has been designated by HRSA and ACF as one of the nine national, "evidence-based home visiting models" of the federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. Extensive research has documented that the first three years of life are the time of the most rapid brain development, critically shaped by a child's environment. The greater the number of risks, the greater the incidence of significant learning disorders and serious emotional disturbance. **Our goal is to identify and address problems early among high risk young children (birth through age five), so as to maximize children's social-emotional health, language development and learning capacity so that they are ready for school.**

Child FIRST sites develop broad collaborations including local service providers, parents, and community stakeholders - both to identify children needing services and to connect Child FIRST families with community services. Child FIRST CT works closely with state providers who serve these children and their families, especially Department of Children and Families (DCF), Birth to Three early intervention system, home visitation programs for high risk families, and adult substance abuse and mental health providers. Our intensive home-based services include: comprehensive assessment of the strengths and needs of the child and family; development of a comprehensive, well integrated, family-driven plan; care coordination to access services; and intensive home-based and community mental health treatment. Parental involvement is fundamental to the Child FIRST model, and is included at every level.

Child FIRST is dedicated to reaching as many high needs children as possible with our intensive home-based services. The generous support of philanthropic, private and public funders allows us to provide these services at no cost to families. As a result we work with many families who are recent immigrants and without insurance. Our staff is multicultural and multilingual, reflective of each of the communities where Child FIRST works.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will better coordinate state and local early childhood systems and provide more complete supports for high needs children. We strongly support these goals, and commit to assisting in the successful implementation of RTT-ELC projects by:

- Supporting the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181;
- Providing Child FIRST services to high risk young children and their families and coordinating the delivery of those services with other partners involved with the implementation RTT-ELC;
- Providing technical assistance and capacity building tools to implement RTT-ELC systems at the regional and local level as appropriate;
- Promoting awareness of RTT-ELC resources and systems among the families we serve;
- Advising the improvement and coordination of training for early care and education providers in health and mental health standards (e.g. through participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet's new Health Committee as appropriate);
- Identifying effective investments to improve the early screening and mid-level assessment process;
- Incorporating new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation; and
- Facilitating connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

We estimate that these in-kind contributions total \$50,000 over the four-year grant period.

Child FIRST shares the Connecticut RTT-ELC's goals of identifying those children most likely to fail and providing comprehensive services that will promote their success and close the achievement gap. We look forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Darcy Lowell, M.D.
Executive Director, Child FIRST CT
Associate Clinical Professor
Pediatrics and Child Study Center
Yale University School of Medicine



Connecticut Association for Human Services
110 Bartholomew Avenue · Suite 4030
Hartford, Connecticut 06106
www.cahs.org

Luis Caban, President
James P. Horan, Executive Director
860.951.2212
860.951.6511 fax

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

RE: Connecticut’s application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

Dear Governor Malloy:

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Connecticut Association for Human Services to improve early childhood outcomes through participation in Connecticut’s Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *“An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development”*.

Founded in 1910, the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) promotes family economic security strategies that empower low-income working families to achieve financial independence. We are a key contributor to developing and improving the state’s early childhood care and education systems. For example:

- CAHS is the state’s premier convener of early childcare and education providers through our Provider’s Caucus, a forum for providers to develop a well-informed voice and become equipped to participate in early care and education policy dialogue.
- CAHS plays a leading role in the state’s early childhood data infrastructure, and serves as staff for the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT project in Connecticut, a public education campaign that provides reliable, comprehensive, timely data and analysis on how well Connecticut’s children are doing at the state and local levels.
- CAHS is a leading member of the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance and a partner in the “I Care About Kids and I Vote” campaign.
- CAHS administers the Early Care and Education listserv, disseminating essential early learning and development information to more than 800 caregivers, educators, parents, policy makers, and support services providers statewide.
- Sheryl Horowitz, CAHS’s Director of Community Research, is the Co-Chair of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet’s Data Systems Committee, helping to build the foundation for many proposed RTT-ELC projects.

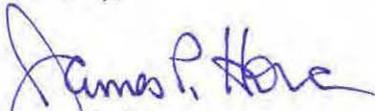
Connecticut’s RTT-ELC projects increase and enhance connections to local providers of early care and education services and supports. CAHS is committed to RTT-ELC’s success, and will support this effort in the following ways:

- Support the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181;
- Advocate for maximum participation in the Quality Rating and Information System (QRIS) among child care providers and educators (including family caregivers, kith and kin) as appropriate;

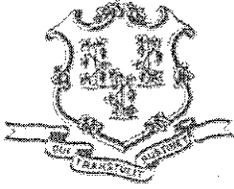
- Promote understanding of the Early Learning Standards among early care and education providers (including family care providers, kith and kin), parents, and local communities;
- Promote awareness of workforce training opportunities (e.g. the Early Childhood Teacher Credential program) among early care educators as appropriate;
- Advise and assist in the development of new data protocols to facilitate integration across systems and data sharing through continued leadership on the Cabinet's Data Systems Committee;
- Promote the incorporation of new state data protocols among early care and education providers as appropriate; and
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

Our in-kind contributions will total an estimated \$150,000 over the four-year grant period. The key to a strong society is the education and care of our children. We look forward to working with you to achieve these important outcomes.

Sincerely,



James P. Horan
Executive Director



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

October 6, 2011

Arne Duncan
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
Department of Education Building
400 Maryland Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Kathleen Sebelius
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the support of the Connecticut Nonprofit Liaison to Governor Dannel Malloy for Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) proposal. The proposed RTT-ELC project will increase the number of high-need young children enrolled in high-quality early learning and development programs, in large part by providing early education providers with the resources and technical assistance they need to better serve high-need children and their families.

The partnership of state agencies and private providers has always been, and continues to be, integral for the delivery of services to many of Connecticut's citizens who require assistance in their lives. In recognition of this important relationship, the Nonprofit Liaison to the Governor is appointed to interact and communicate directly with the nonprofit providers and to advise the Governor with regard to policy reforms and other measures that will benefit this partnership. The Nonprofit Liaison to the Governor coordinates efforts to implement these policy reforms.

As the Connecticut Nonprofit Liaison to Governor Dannel Malloy, I will support the successful implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project by working cooperatively with our nonprofit partner organizations that promote the healthy development of our young children and advising the Governor about opportunities for the State to assist these organizations through policy reforms and other measures.

I encourage the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health & Human services to strongly consider Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application. This application, if funded, will provide much-needed resources and support to the local and regional nonprofit organizations that work diligently to serve our young children and ultimately benefit our children and our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deb Heinrich".

Deb Heinrich
Connecticut Nonprofit Liaison to Governor Dannel Malloy

Phone: (860) 418-6500 Fax: (860) 418-6487
450 Capitol Avenue-MS# 55SEC Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1379

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October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

Middlesex United Way, Inc. is pleased to support Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative. As a leader in promoting vibrant, supportive communities, we look forward to being an active partner in this important effort to support better outcomes for young children.

Middlesex United Way recognizes the critical role early childhood development plays in a child's long-term academic, economic, and social success. Through our School Readiness initiative we have implemented and support 11 Early Childhood Councils (ECC) that serve all 15 towns in Middlesex County. Our ECC provide local and countywide networking opportunities for the early childhood community, and provides other supports designed to ensure that our children are socially and emotionally ready to enter kindergarten. Our ECC initiative provides workshops and technical assistance to caregivers and parents of preschoolers that focused on curriculum development, assessment, and other evidence-based strategies that ensure a quality preschool experience for our children. During the past year these services, which benefit all children involved in preschool programs throughout Middlesex County, were provided to 19,085 caregivers and parents.

We recently provided funding, volunteers and other supports for the installation of 9 Born Learning Trails throughout Middlesex County for our annual Day of Caring. Born Learning Trails are an early learning tool featuring a series of signs on posts with fun, physical activities for parents and caregivers to do with their children. They are installed in a public setting for everyone in the community to enjoy. We know that children are constantly learning, right from birth. Their early years are the foundation for growth and development, and what they learn during those years depends on the experiences they have each and every day. That is why the Born Learning Trails were perfect for Middlesex United Way's goal to increase children's readiness to learn by school entry. We are an active partner with the William C. Graustein Memorial Fund in the Discovery Community initiative. We also provide funding and/or other supports for local early childhood programs and initiatives such as the YMCA's Kids Korner Program (before and after-school), Opportunity Knocks, Even Start, Early Head Start and Middletown's School Readiness Council.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will help us achieve our goals of supporting our community, connecting families to the services they need, and preparing children for academic success. We are pleased that RTT-ELC will improve the coordination and quality of early childhood care and education

programs while focusing on the needs of high needs children. Our education initiatives fully support the comprehensive and integrated approach defined in the RTT-ELC application, and we will contribute to the successful implementation of RTT-ELC's projects by:

- Supporting the creation of the Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development;
- Serving as a resource to build capacity and integrate RTT-ELC systems (e.g. tiered QRIS, Early Learning Standards, improved Kindergarten Inventory) at the regional and local levels as appropriate;
- Connecting early learning literacy programs (0-pre-K) and early elementary literacy programs (K-3) to ensure RTT-ELC impacts are sustained after age 5;
- Identifying and facilitating linkages to additional resources to expand high quality early learning and development programs;
- Promoting understanding of the Early Learning Standards, especially among parents, kith and kin;
- Encouraging provider participation in the QRIS system (including family care programs and kith and kin);
- Facilitating links to private and philanthropic resources to promote long-term project success as appropriate.

The estimated total value of our in-kind contributions in support of RTT-ELC is \$20,741.76 over the four-year grant period.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will improve the lives of Connecticut's high needs children and support the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*". Middlesex United Way is pleased to be an active partner in these efforts and look forward to helping you realize the vision of this application.

Sincerely,



Kevin J. Wilhelm
Executive Director



Fairfield County Community Foundation

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Juanita T. James

October 14, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

**RE: Connecticut's application for Race To The Top-Early Learning
Challenge Grant Funding**

Dear Governor Malloy:

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Fairfield County Community Foundation to improve early childhood outcomes through participation in Connecticut's Race To The Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181: *An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education and the Establishment of a Coordinated System of Early Care and Education and Child Development*.

The Fairfield County Community Foundation promotes philanthropy to build and sustain a vital and prosperous community where all have the opportunity to participate and thrive. As the region's center of philanthropy, we provide personalized philanthropic advisory services and financial stewardship to donors and partners; visionary leadership and strategic initiatives to address key regional issues; and grants, counsel, and leadership training to Fairfield County nonprofits.

The Community Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of early learning and development and closing the achievement gap for children with high needs. We are a committed member of the new Connecticut Early Childhood Funders Collaborative, a joint effort of 13 Connecticut funders to provide funding for the implementation of SB 1103 (which became effective July 1, 2011 as Public Act 11-181.) Further, the Community Foundation works closely with donor advised fundholders who are interested in high quality early childhood education and development as a strategy of addressing the achievement gap in our urban areas. Our past competitive funding has included support for early childhood workforce development/teacher professional development and program quality improvement, *and we remain committed to these focus areas.*

The Community Foundation will continue its support for early childhood and stands behind Connecticut's RTT-ELC application. In particular, we support the creation of an Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education which will create a central point of coordination, authority, and accountability in state government for all programs that touch the lives of young children and their

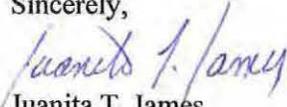


Confirmed in compliance
with national standards for
U.S. community foundations

families in Connecticut. We also applaud the development of a data collection system with benchmarks to track quality improvement. Finally, we approve of the application's support for local collaborative efforts designed to advance Connecticut's early childhood outcomes.

The Fairfield County Community Foundation fully endorses Connecticut's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge application and pledges to continue working alongside the many public and private sector partners that have contributed to the development of this application and will work together to insure its impact on Connecticut's young children and their families.

Sincerely,



Juanita T. James

President/CEO

Fairfield County Community Foundation

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

**Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top -
Early Learning Challenge Funds**

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving strongly supports Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds. This letter confirms the Foundation's ongoing commitment to improve early childhood outcomes through participation in RTT-ELC initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development."

The Hartford Foundation has been involved in early childhood system building for more than two decades. Our *Brighter Futures Initiative* is a 25-year, \$35 million commitment to improve the school readiness and early school success of Hartford's children age birth through eight years. This nationally recognized initiative targets four critical areas that parallel the goals of the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge: child care and early childhood education, family support and parent education, health care and sustaining early learning program effects in the early grades of school.

At its core, *Brighter Futures* focuses on bringing together community residents, providers, funders and the public sector to develop a system of early childhood support in Hartford and statewide. Toward that end, the Foundation is an active participant in the implementation of Public Act 11-181, and has met with your chief of staff and policy director. The Foundation has also worked with, and provided significant funding to, Connecticut Voices for Children to provide independent performance monitoring of the HUSKY Program as a means to ensure that children are receiving the health care to which they are entitled. Through this monitoring, Connecticut tracks enrollment trends and the health care that children and families receive, informing effective public policy and practice. In addition, the Foundation is also actively involved with the CT Commission on Children on aligning services for families and children on the state and local levels, including such projects as the prevention of childhood obesity and low birth weight babies, and promoting civic engagement.

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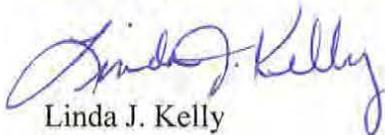
On the local level, the Foundation actively supported the creation of the Hartford Office for Young Children, the development of a blueprint for the provision of services to families and children, and now partners with the Hartford Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation to create in Hartford a vehicle for aligning diverse programs and services to provide a cohesive, coordinated and measurable system for young children and their families.

Working with the Early Childhood Funders' Collaborative, the Hartford Foundation has been an enthusiastic, committed participant in funding and planning for the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge application.

The Foundation's commitment to continuing this work is evidenced by our Board of Directors' vote to extend our *Brighter Futures Initiative* for an additional five years, and \$10 million dollars last November. In addition, our recently approved five-year strategic plan, *Accelerate Success*, builds on and expands the systems-changing work of *Brighter Futures*, integrating it even more fully into a holistic plan to help close the achievement gap and prepare residents for the workforce.

The Foundation's continued investments in young children will increase the impact of federal funds by supporting the priorities of Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge proposal. These include promoting collaboration across the public, private and philanthropic sectors to strengthen state systems, supporting local collaborative efforts to coordinate early childhood systems and services, expanding access to high-quality early learning programs, and measuring the impact of early learning efforts.

Sincerely,



Linda J. Kelly
President

WILLIAM CASPAR GRAUSTEIN
MEMORIAL FUND

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy,

I am pleased to support Connecticut's application for the Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge, and to confirm the continuing commitment of the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund to participate in both the Early Learning Challenge and in implementation of Public Act 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development."

As you know, since 2001 the Memorial Fund has been a catalyst behind the Discovery initiative, which aims to improve early school success for children from birth to age eight. Discovery's goal for 2010-2014 is that "Connecticut children of all races and from all income levels are ready for school by age five and successful learners by age nine." To that end, we have invested over \$28 million in grants and \$7 million in technical assistance to date, and anticipate an additional investment of \$10 million between now and December 2014. The total investment, over \$45 million, aligns directly with the priorities of Connecticut's proposed Early Learning Challenge project, particularly with the enhanced investment in local early childhood infrastructure.

Discovery chiefly supports local infrastructure, including data analysis and the costs of collaboration, in 52 Connecticut communities, where the vast majority of Connecticut's children in poverty reside. In partnership with the State Department of Education, the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, we encourage and support Discovery communities to develop comprehensive plans for children from birth to age eight. Seventeen communities now have such plans, and 21 more community plans are underway, all within a framework of results-based accountability (RBA). Thus, communities are assessing the condition of children based on data, determining key issues and challenges, and formulating strategies to address those issues. The partnership grants supporting these communities have been cited as a best practice by the National Governors' Association, and we were pleased to hear you call them out as "a partnership we are proud of" in your 2011 budget message. Discovery local grants come with a great deal of targeted technical assistance, in RBA, community planning and decision-making, facilitative leadership, and pre-k/kindergarten transition.

Another public/private partnership grant supports the Grade Level Reading Campaign in New Britain, the Connecticut city with the greatest early literacy problems. The Memorial Fund is working with the Casey Foundation, the State Department of Education and private partners to extend the pilot to other Discovery/School Readiness communities in need. For example, we are encouraging other communities to file letters of intent for the All-American City award. Simply filing will bring access to national technical assistance via the Casey Foundation.

A third public/private partnership supports parent leadership development through the State's Parent Trust Fund. Our offer to match State funds effectively tripled the scope of the Fund. Many trained parents are active on local early childhood councils, in statewide advocacy groups, on nonprofit boards and in other civic arenas related to early childhood and education.



The storyteller figure symbolizes the values of the Memorial Fund—educating, supporting and inspiring our children.

All three of these initiatives are overseen by Collaborative Management Teams (CMT's) with State Education representatives, other government officials, private funding partners and others. We have also been full partners in the "3 to 3" (age 3 to grade 3) initiative convened by senior management of the State Department of Education, bringing new knowledge, professional development and awareness to educators of the importance of aligning education and child development. Currently, we are also part of the Connecticut Data Collaborative, a public/private partnership dedicated to making public data more readily accessible. Through the Collaborative, a new Early Childhood Portal is available to all Discovery communities and the general public, making it easier to use data to assess the conditions affecting children, and to identify indicators and measures for accountability.

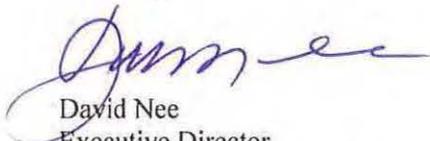
Discovery also supports policy research and advocacy at the state level. Advocacy organizations and communities contributed significantly to shaping Public Act 11-181. When this Act passed, working with the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy, the Memorial Fund helped draw together a funders collaboration that now exceeds a dozen members, dedicated to partnering with the State to make a system of early care a reality in the next 21 months.

Private philanthropy has also made a significant contribution to developing the Early Learning Challenge application. We remain committed to helping the State and communities deliver a coordinated system, building out and supporting the local systems infrastructure. As Federal funds come into play, we will adapt our investments to ensure that communities have the key capacities they need. At the State level, our Right From the Start Initiative, a growing network of more than 40 advocates, thinkers, providers and community representatives, will act as an external voice, a mirror and a critical friend, making sure that we all deliver on our common goal of seeing that Connecticut's children of all races and from all backgrounds get what they need to succeed in school.

Governor, with all of its economic challenges, this has been a remarkable year of hope and great promise for children in Connecticut. I believe we are better positioned than any other state in the union to make great strides for our neediest children. We have your commitment and leadership; a powerful mandate in Public Act 11-181; wise advocates who work cooperatively to shape creative public policy; some of the highest quality service delivery in the country; energized communities; and finally, a philanthropic sector working together more closely than ever before.

You know and we know, we are all going to do this. It would be wonderful to have the Federal government join us in this effort. The Memorial Fund is proud to join the State of Connecticut and many other partners in the Early Learning Challenge.

Sincerely,



David Nee
Executive Director
William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund

ACTION FOR BRIDGEPORT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INC.

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Charles B. Tisdale, *Executive Director*

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

I enthusiastically write to express the commitment of Action for Bridgeport Community Development to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

Established in 1964, Action for Bridgeport Community Development (ABCD) aims to work with people toward the eradication of the "paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation." ABCD presently serves over 35,000 individuals in the Greater Bridgeport area annually through our early childhood, energy, family support, youth, weatherization, and other support services. Our sole mandate is to assist the poor, and our efforts are directed towards promoting appropriate institutional change and enabling the poor to become self-sufficient.

As part of this mission, ABCD has been unwavering in our dedication to improve early childhood outcomes of our youngest residents. An estimated 25% of Bridgeport children under age 5 live in poverty. These children face enormous challenges and stressors in their early years that can significantly threaten their future academic, economic, and social success. In response, we have been working tirelessly to offer parents high-quality childcare options and build local capacity to strengthen our early learning and development community. Today, ABCD is Bridgeport's largest childcare provider, including Head start, Early Head start, State Department of Education funded and School Readiness programs.

In 2007, the ABCD became the provider of the Total Learning Initiative to provide an enhanced learning environment for high needs children. The Total Learning Initiative provides full day / full year programming in which children learn in a multi-sensory environment and are provided with comprehensive wraparound support services through the innovative Child FIRST program. Since inception, the Total Learning Initiative has served 4,222 children with tremendous success. A 2008-2009 evaluation of the program found that test scores of the 596 Kindergarteners and 375 first graders monitored went up significantly in pre- and post- program assessments. Results were especially impressive for English language learners, whose scores were 23% higher than the control group.

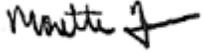
Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will help us continue to improve early childhood outcomes, especially for high needs children (e.g. low-income children, English language learners) through the development of a comprehensive statewide early childhood system that includes a tiered QRIS system, provides technical assistance to increase local capacity, develops and aligns statewide Early Learning Standards, strengthens connections to early elementary education, and improves data collection. ABCD will support RTT-ELC projects in the following ways:

- Integrate RTT-ELC systems into existing early learning programs, including literacy programs;
- Connect early learning literacy programs (0-pre-K) and early elementary literacy programs (K-3) to ensure RTT-ELC impacts are sustained after age 5;
- Facilitate local collaborative efforts to integrate RTT-ELC systems of service delivery, parent engagement, and data sharing;
- Participate in the tiered QRIS system as a early childhood education provider;
- Encourage maximum program and community participation in the QRIS process (including kith and kin providers);
- Promote understanding of the Early Learning Standards among providers, parents, and the local early learning community;

- Incorporate new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate; and
- Total Learning brings the availability of noted early Learning experts including Dr. Edward Ziegler of Yale University an important mentor and advisor.

These in-kind contributions total an estimated \$20,000 over the four-year grant period. Through RTT-ELC, we can support and better connect community and state wellness efforts in order to expand the impact on families and children. I look forward to working closely with all the partners in this important initiative.

Very truly yours,



Monette Ferguson
Director of Early Learning



October 6, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Connecticut Science Center to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative.

With 150 hands-on exhibits, a state-of-the-art 3D digital theater, four educational labs, plus daily programs and events, the Connecticut Science Center offers endless exploration for children and adults. The Science Center also offers exciting tools to help educators and parents bring science alive. Creating unforgettable experiences with science motivates students and visitors of all ages to enthusiastically embrace science at school, at home, and in their communities.

The Science Center is working closely with the Connecticut Department of Education and school districts across the state to support efforts to improve science instruction in Connecticut's schools by providing professional development training to teachers. Under the proposed RTT-ELC project, the Science Center will continue and expand this commitment to supporting improved instruction by supporting RTT-ELC efforts to develop and utilize statewide, high-quality early learning and development standards. Specifically, the Science Center will use its statewide reach to help promote early learning standards in science to families, early childhood education providers, and K-2 teachers.

The Science Center will also work to align its materials and displays with RTT-ELC priorities by showcasing the resource guides developed through the RTT-ELC project, connecting exhibits, including its *KidSpace Gallery* that is dedicated to young scientists, to new early learning standards, and providing professional development sessions to pre-K and kindergarten teachers to help them ensure that instruction aligns with the new standards.

We estimate the value of our in-kind contributions to the proposed RTT-ELC project at \$60,000 over the four-year grant period.

The Connecticut Science Center enthusiastically endorses Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application and looks forward to supporting its successful implementation!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Fleury", is written over a horizontal line.

Matt Fleury
President and CEO, the Connecticut Science Center

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

Imagine Nation Museum is pleased to support Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *“An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development”*.

As one of the state's premier children's museums, we serve more than 50,000 Connecticut children ages 2-10 and families annually from over 144 cities and towns across the state. The museum features over 20 interactive exhibits on three floors designed to spark children's learning through play and discovery. Each year more than 6,500 students, representing 375 schools and organizations participate in field trips and educational programming.

In addition to our field trip opportunities, the Museum conducts 10 different kinds of workshops designed to improve science, math, dexterity, problem solving, and analytical skills through interactive programs. We regularly provide services to the high needs children the RTT-ELC initiative targets through our Outreach Programs, where we bring the Museum directly to children in classroom and daycare settings. In partnership with early childcare providers, community-based nonprofits (e.g. the Boys & Girls Club, United Way), and local school districts, we have reached more than 400 children in our Outreach Programs.

We are an innovative leader in educational programming with a solid partnership with the State Department of Education. As the first Connecticut children's museum to incorporate state learning standards into our program curricula and exhibit designs, we are also a School Readiness Provider for the Bristol area, and have an early childhood program that serves 110 pre-school children (including at risk children) onsite. The Bristol School Readiness Council is a strong collaborative partner. Two years ago we collaborated on a “Kindergarten Here I Come Exhibit” that promotes school readiness. The exhibit provides a place for children to become familiar with early education. The Quality Enhancement funds that we receive each year support this exhibit and the educational programming.

The RTT-ELC initiative improves educational outcomes and quality of life for Connecticut's children through the development of a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for early childhood care and education providers that includes local level technical assistance, the adoption of comprehensive Early Learning Standards, and the creation of an integrated data system. To support the successful implementation these projects, we will:

- Participate in the tiered QRIS system as an early childhood education provider;



Imagine Nation Museum • One Pleasant Street • Bristol, CT 06010
Ph: (860) 314-1400 Fax: (860) 584-3608
www.imaginemuseum.org

State of Connecticut

- Identify additional resources to expand high quality early learning and development programs;
- Promote participation of other providers (including kith and kin providers) in the QRIS system;
- Incorporate new Early Learning Standards into our new exhibits as they are developed;
- Incorporate new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

The value of our in-kind contributions to this effort total an estimated \$8,352 over the four-year grant period. We look forward to helping you improve the well being of the state's children through the RTT-ELC initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doreen Stickney".

Doreen Stickney
Museum Director



October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of **Stepping Stones** Museum for Children to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative.

The mission of Stepping Stones is to broaden and enrich the educational opportunities for children ages ten and under and to enhance their understanding of the world. The museum seeks to create an environment that inspires lifelong learning and supports parents, caregivers and educators as facilitators of children's explorations. At Stepping Stones, play is serious business. We understand that children learn best by doing. All exhibits and programs are designed to promote active inquiry and investigation through three interacting elements: a) Play is the naturally interdisciplinary way that children explore, discover and develop; b) An interdisciplinary mix of arts, sciences, culture, and literacy offers experiences that overlap and interact, spanning multiple subjects and skills; and c) Interdisciplinary discovery tools help facilitate children's explorations and discoveries.

In response to widespread concern about children's health, Stepping Stones is leading a statewide children's health initiative. *Healthy Children, Healthy Communities*[®] is an innovative collaboration between health professionals, state agencies, schools, community organizations, business leaders and museum educators. We will leverage *Healthy Children, Healthy Communities* to help support RTT-ELC efforts to improve and coordinate efforts to train early childhood educators and program staff on health standards. The award-winning health-themed mini exhibits, *Healthyville*[®] and *Conservation Quest*[®] will tour year-round to schools across the state. Both mini exhibits bring portable, hands-on educational activities directly to students and teachers. *Conservation Quest* focuses on recycling, energy conservation and renewable energy, and *Healthyville* focuses on nutrition, fitness and hygiene.

In addition, Stepping Stones supports efforts to improve instruction in Connecticut's schools by providing professional development training to teachers, including preschool teachers. Under the proposed RTT-ELC project, Stepping Stones will expand this commitment by supporting RTT-ELC efforts to develop and utilize statewide, high-quality early learning and development standards. Specifically, Stepping Stones will promote early learning standards to families, early childhood education providers and preschool-grade 3 teachers. Partner organizations include Connecticut HOT schools, Yale University Fairfield County Association for the Education of Young Children, Norwalk Community College, Norwalk ACTS and Norwalk Early Childhood Council.

Stepping Stones will also work to align its exhibits and programs with RTT-ELC priorities by showcasing the resource guides developed through the RTT-ELC project and connecting our unique experiences to new early learning standards. Finally, we will assist in delivering outreach to kith and kin care providers, to offer learning opportunities for staff and young children and to help raise awareness of the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and early learning standards. Communication channels we can utilize include emails, fliers and the museum website.

We estimate the value of our in-kind contributions to the proposed RTT-ELC project at \$ 824,000 over the life of the federal grant.

Stepping Stones Museum for Children eagerly endorses Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application and looks forward to supporting its successful implementation!

Sincerely,



Rhonda Kiest
Executive Director

American Academy of Pediatrics

HEZEKIAH BEARDSLEY
CONNECTICUT CHAPTER

HEZEKIAH BEARDSLEY CONNECTICUT CHAPTER

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The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
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Hartford, Connecticut 06106

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Douglas Idelson, M.D.
New Haven, CT

Scott Schoem M.D.
Hartford, CT

Catherine Wiley, M.D.
Hartford, CT

Leonard I. Banco, M.D.
Hartford, CT

Elsa L. Stone, M.D.
North Haven, CT

Robert Zavoiski, M.D.
Hartford, CT

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS LOBBYIST

Judith A. Blei, J.D.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jillian G. Wood

October 12, 2011

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics enthusiastically supports Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*" to improve health and mental health services and supports for children and their families.

The Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (CT-AAP) is an organization of 1000 pediatricians committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental, and social health and wellbeing for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults in the state. Our members work tirelessly to bring the best and latest medical care to the children of the state, and to be the medical home for those children and their families.

We are an integral part of the fabric of child health and wellness in Connecticut, and have been an active resource, advocate, and leader in increasing the quality and access of health and mental healthcare for very young children. For example, we are currently:

- Working with Connecticut Council of Child and Adolescent Psychiatrists to increase access to mental health for all kids;
- Partnering with the state Department of Social Services to increase access to children's access to quality, affordable healthcare; and
- Have developed programs with the state Department of Public Health to increase child immunizations.

Each year, we also host a Continuing Medical Education (CME) meeting for over 300 medical providers, advisors, and school nurses to explore critical issues in school health.

CT-AAP is extremely pleased to see that Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will provide more complete health and mental health supports for high needs children, especially during their most crucial stages of development. AAP is committed to actively participate in the successful implementation of RTT-ELC projects to create a coordinated, statewide early learning and development system that increases training for early childhood caregivers and educators

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top
Early Learning Challenge funds

Page 2

(especially family caregivers, kith and kin) in health and mental health standards, improves connections between high needs children and their families to local health resources, and integrates local, regional, and statewide systems. Specifically, we will:

- Support the creation of the Early Childhood Office as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181;
- Promote RTT-ELC initiatives among our membership and advocacy network;
- Advise the improvement and coordination of training for early care and education providers in health and mental health standards through participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet's new Health Committee;
- Identify effective investments to improve the early screening and mid-level assessment process;
- Continue to promote and coordinate health and mental health standards training for early childhood caregivers and educators; and
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

We estimate that these in-kind contributions total \$61,600 over the four-year grant period. Strong supports that foster healthy development in the youngest years of life are critical to a child's long-term health and wellness. Connecticut's RTT-ELC will help create these strong supports, and we look forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Jillian G. Wood
Executive Director



October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA) to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

Established in 1904, the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA) serves as an advocate to protect and advance the practice of nursing and the health of Connecticut residents. In this role, CNA has provided training for over 100 childcare health consultants over 5 years through existing partnerships with the Department of Public Health (DPH). These consultants deliver health and safety oversight to over 3,000 high needs children and their families in communities throughout the state. CNA will continue to work with DPH and other organizations to facilitate the creation of a dependable system of child care health consultation that will address the achievement gap and children's ability to learn. Health is not merely the absence of disease; it is the promotion of health through healthy environments, nutrition practices, physical activity, oral health, inclusion of children with special needs and more.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will provide more complete health and mental health supports for high needs children during their most crucial stages of development. CNA will actively participate in the successful implementation of RTT-ELC projects to create a coordinated, statewide early learning and development system that includes a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) system, comprehensive Early Learning Standards and data systems, and a well trained workforce. Specifically, we will:

- Support the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181;
- Advise the improvement and coordination of training for early care and education providers in health and mental health standards through participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet's new Health Committee;
- Identify effective investments to improve the early screening and mid-level assessment process;
- Continue to promote and coordinate health and mental health standards training for Early Childhood Health Consultants; and
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

We estimate that these in-kind contributions total \$40,000 over the four-year grant period. The healthy development of our youngest citizens is especially important in promoting and encouraging long-term wellness. CNA is excited to partner with you on Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative.

Sincerely,

Carole H Bergeron PhD, RN
Executive Director, Connecticut Nurses' Association

Board for State Academic Awards

Charter Oak State College
Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium

October 05, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the strong ongoing commitment of Charter Oak State College to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

Charter Oak State College was established in 1973 by state legislation to help adult learners achieve their educational and career goals through time-flexible and economical credential and degree completion programs. The College has been a long-time supporter of early education programs and quality initiatives that improve outcomes for children ages 0 to 5.

Over the past eleven years the College has collaborated with the Connecticut State Departments of Social Services, Education and Higher Education as well as with CT Charters-A-Course, other institutions of higher education, local providers and foundations to administer statewide certificates, credentials, degree programs and an Alternate Route to Early Childhood Teacher Certification (0 to 5 yrs). Programs developed in collaboration with statewide partners include:

- In 2001, development of ECE Pathways Exams to improve outcomes for young children. We currently have four exams, 3 credits each.
- In 2003, creation of the CT Director's Credential (CDC). The CDC is administered by Charter Oak State College and is designed for early childhood program administrators.
- In 2008, ECERS-R Project (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale - Revised). The CT Early Childhood Cabinet provided two years of grant funding to Charter Oak to administer this statewide quality improvement initiative.
- In 2008, Charter Oak collaborated with seven colleges and universities to apply to the State Department of Higher Education to create an Alternate Route to Certification for Early Childhood (ARC). This program will continue as a special education cross-endorsement for certified teachers.
- In 2009, a Certificate in Infant-Toddler Care was created to encourage providers in early head start centers, family day care and other center-based programs who care for infants and toddlers to gain the specialized knowledge they need to ensure positive outcomes for infants and toddlers.
- In 2011, Charter Oak State College participated with the credential design team led by the CT Parenting Education Network (CT-PEN) to create a CT Parenting Educator Credential based on a National Framework of competencies and a code of ethics for parenting educators. Charter Oak State College administers this credential.

Charter Oak State College is an integral part of the fabric of the state's early childhood systems and fully supports the work, ideals and goals of the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant, particularly in the following areas:

- Charter Oak State College continues to participate on the Early Childhood Higher Education Collaborative (ECHEC), and has since its inception.
- The leadership of the College and staff participate on the Early Childhood Cabinet Early Learning Standards and Workforce Committees and on the RTT-ELC workgroups in preparation for the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant.
- Charter Oak State College is among the four four-year institutions participating in the pilot Connecticut Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC) Application project. We intend to build and improve upon our Early Childhood Studies and Child Studies concentrations to enable students to earn the ECTC.

Charter Oak State College's commitment to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut is evident in the collaborations we have championed and the priority we have placed on staff time and effort devoted to these programs and initiatives that benefit young children and ultimately quality of life. Charter Oak State College, through in-kind support at an estimate of \$13,824, will provide staff to attend consortium meetings, participate on committees, and assist with program planning.

Sincerely,
Shirley M. Adams
Shirley M. Adams, Ph.D.
Provost

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October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Connecticut's application for Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds

Dear Governor Malloy:

The Connecticut Community College System (CCCS) enthusiastically supports Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development."*

The Board of Trustees, as the governing authority that establishes and oversees the policies that guide the State's 12 Community Colleges, encourages a strong role for the Colleges in helping prepare the early educator workforce in Connecticut. By providing access to the education and practicum experiences early childhood educators need, CCCS is supporting the growth and development of children ages 0 to 5.

Connecticut's 12 Community Colleges have actively partnered with the Connecticut State Departments of Social Services, Education and Higher Education as well as with CT Charts-A-Course, other institutions of higher education, local providers and foundations to administer statewide certificates, credentials, degree programs and an Alternate Route to Early Childhood Teacher Certification (0 to 5 yrs). The Colleges are now using philanthropic funds to work toward National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation of their Associate's Degree programs in Early Childhood, and are pleased to see that RTT-ELC project's goals align with these efforts. CT Charts-A-Course (CCAC), which is housed within the CCSC, is the State's professional development and program improvement system and also operates the Early Childhood Registry that captures demographics and qualifications on the workforce.

The Connecticut Community Colleges will work diligently with other RTT-ELC partners to prepare Connecticut workers to advance along educational and career pathways in early care and education and provide high quality care for our youth. CCCS is pleased to support the following activities, each of which advances RTT-ELC goals:

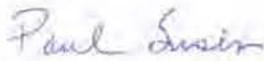
- Participate on the Early Childhood Cabinet Early Learning Standards Committees, Workforce Committees and other RTT-ELC workgroups to assist in the development of a progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the statewide workforce knowledge and competency framework;

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- Continue to participate on the Early Childhood Higher Education Collaborative to analyze and expand our existing articulation agreements with other institutions of higher education, and to recognize in-service experience toward ECE credentialing and degree awards;
- Continue to build the capacity of our colleges to offer quality early childhood education programs that meet the NAEYC Associate Degree Accreditation;
- Continue and expand use of the Early Childhood Teacher Credential (currently 4 Colleges are in the ECTC pilot program, and the remaining 8 have each expressed interest in bringing the program to their campuses);
- Participate as a resource for collaborative to build capacity as they integrate RTT-ELC systems locally; and,
- Continue to house and support the efforts and implementation of CT Charts-Course components in collaboration with other State agencies, and to collect current workforce data across all sectors (0-5) in order to report on of the qualifications of workforce as part of a QRIS and other public reporting systems.

Our combined in-kind support for these projects totals an estimated \$271,857 (10 percent of Full-time CCAC time plus 8 hours per month per college for Early Childhood Education Faculty) during the four-year grant period. The twelve (12) community colleges that comprise our statewide system are eager to partner with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Paul Susen, Ph.D.
Chief Academic and Student Affairs Officer
Connecticut Community Colleges



EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

83 WINDHAM STREET • WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT 06226 • 860-465-5222

Office of the President

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds

Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU) enthusiastically supports Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education and the Establishment of a Coordinated System of Early Care and Education and Child Development*" to improve the quality of early childhood care and education for children ages 0-5.

ECSU has been a central part of the workforce development initiatives aimed at improving training, practicum experiences, and continuing education opportunities for Connecticut's early childhood education workforce. We conduct this work primarily through our Center for Early Childhood Education, a multidisciplinary research and training institute. Created in 2007, the Center brings together researchers, educators, trainers, students, practitioners, and policymakers from a variety of disciplines to share ideas, resources, research findings, and techniques for working with young children and their families. Housed in a high-tech facility connected to a model early care and education program, the Center enhances the quality of early care and education by:

- Conducting research and disseminating research findings in a variety of research projects related to young children (e.g. social development, motor development, use of technology, and teachers' interactions with children).
- Providing a variety of research-based professional development opportunities to in-service and pre-service teachers, including conferences, workshops and seminars, interactive training CDs, in-classroom coaching, on-line courses, and for-credit courses.
- Offering consultation, technical assistance, and evaluation services to schools, early care and education centers, and state and local agencies.
- Maintaining a growing library of early childhood video clips for observation, research, and use in adult education and professional development. We draw from the video archive to produce periodic podcasts that early childhood professionals can download and view at any time (e-clips).
- Supporting teacher educators in preparing future early childhood teachers.
- Using our unique co-location with a fully functioning, high-quality childcare program, faculty work closely with teachers to design curriculum, conduct research, and test new ideas in early childhood education.
- Administered Project Navigate, a transportable digital portfolio assessment system to monitor and share children's developmental progress with U.S. Navy parents (including deployed parents) through video clips and digital photos. in partnership with the U.S. Navy.
- Implementing Community Partners for Early Literacy (CPEL) project in partnership with U.S. Department of Education to improve early literacy through intensive professional development and in-classroom coaching to teachers and paraprofessionals in preschool classrooms, as well as supporting parents to improve the home literacy environment.



Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative aligns well with our efforts to improve the quality of both early childhood education programs and the development of a high-quality early childhood educator workforce. We will work diligently with other RTT-ELC partners to achieve these goals. Specifically, ECSU will assist in the successful implementation of RTT-ELC's projects in the following ways:

- Participate on the Early Childhood Cabinet Early Learning Standards Committees, Workforce Committees and other RTT-ELC workgroups as appropriate to assist in the development of a progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the statewide workforce knowledge and competency framework.
- Integrate RTT-ELC systems into existing education and literacy programs.
- Participate in the tiered QRIS as an early childhood education provider.
- Stay active on the Early Childhood Higher Education Collaborative to analyze and expand existing articulation agreements with other higher education institutions, recognizing in-service experience toward ECE credentialing and degree awards.
- Preparing all undergraduate early childhood students through the Early Childhood Teaching Credential competencies under the ECTC expansion.
- Continuing to provide research expertise to study best practices in early childhood care and education.
- Promote the understanding of Early Learning Standards among other providers and parents.
- Incorporate new data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation.
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

ECSU is excited about this opportunity to further improve the quality of early learning and development, and the quality of the early childhood education workforce in Connecticut. We look forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Elsa M. Nunez
President



University of Connecticut
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Office of the Dean

October 6, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds

The University of Connecticut (UConn) is pleased to support Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

UConn is committed to improving the quality of training of Connecticut's early childhood workforce, broadly defined, and has been a long standing partner of local providers, state foundations (like CT Charts-A-Course), and a variety of state agencies (e.g., the State Departments of Children and Families, Social Services, Public Health, Education, and Higher Education) to achieve this goal.

As the State Dept of Higher Education (SDHE) sought solutions to developing the early childhood workforce in 2005, faculty in our Department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS), led by Professor JoAnn Robinson, provided leadership and support to SDHE's efforts. This group proposed the need for an Early Childhood Teacher Credential and drafted the competencies that were refined and elaborated by the Early Childhood Higher Education Collaborative. As a result of this collaboration, the undergraduate teacher training program at UConn has undergone profound changes that correspond with the State's development of the ECTC, instilling increasing levels of professionalism and intentionality in the student's training. The faculty within HDFS has also provided research expertise to SDHE by studying and pilot testing approaches to observing classroom quality.

Faculty in the HDFS Department also promote the workforce development of early childhood professionals who aspire to careers in early intervention for children with disabilities, parent education, and infant mental health. Serving the neediest families through the training of graduate students in Prevention and Early Intervention as well as Marriage and Family Therapy is also a priority of this department. Faculty in HDFS and

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Psychology serve on the Board for the Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health and provide training statewide through the State Education Resource Center.

Another UCONN resource to the state is the Center for Applied Research in Human Development that has provided continuous quality improvement program evaluations to early childhood professional development initiatives of EASTCONN, the northeastern regional educational service center. Their program evaluation and technical assistance efforts are also noteworthy in the areas of positive behavior intervention and support, teen pregnancy prevention, and parent education.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences proudly provides substantial financial support to the HDFS Child Development Laboratories, the site of the oldest undergraduate early childhood teacher training programs in Connecticut.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative aligns well with our efforts, and we will work diligently with other RTT-ELC partners to prepare the State's early care and education workforce to provide the highest quality care for children ages 0-5. Specifically, UCONN will assist in the successful implementation of RTT-ELC's projects by:

- Participating on the Early Childhood Cabinet Early Learning Standards Committees, Workforce Committees and other RTT-ELC workgroups to assist in the development of a progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the statewide workforce knowledge and competency framework.
- Staying active on the Early Childhood Higher Education Collaborative to analyze and expand existing articulation agreements with other higher education institutions, recognizing in-service experience toward ECE credentialing and degree awards.
- Preparing all undergraduate early childhood students through the Early Childhood Teacher Credential competencies as indicated by their participation in the ECTC Pilot Program.
- Continuing to provide research expertise to study the development of assessment tools such as the Oral Competencies of teachers.
- Utilizing our regional campuses and distance learning opportunities to prepare students around the state on the ECTC.

UCONN is excited about this opportunity to further improve the quality of the early childhood education workforce in Connecticut.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Teitelbaum
Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences



University of Connecticut
Neag School of Education

Office of the Dean

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

The Department of Educational Psychology houses 6 nationally ranked graduate programs. Faculty and staff within the Department of Educational Psychology have extensive experience coordinating large grants and centers, and as such, departmental facilities are set up to promote efficient management of research projects. In addition, the Neag School has a longstanding research partnership with Professional Development Schools, which are diverse public school systems located in the area that serve as top-quality practicum and internship sites for education students and as conduits for collaborative research with Neag faculty. The Neag School of Education maintains a website at www.education.uconn.edu.

One of the programs within the Department of Educational Psychology is the Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment Program. In 2003, the Connecticut State Department of Education/UConn Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment Partnership was formed to provide additional technical resources to the CSDE student assessment office to develop, administer, and report results from statewide measures of student achievement. Support services are provided for the main assessment program, which includes the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, as well as for smaller scale assessment initiatives such as the CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist, the modified assessment program, the kindergarten inventories, and formative assessment programs. Examples of services provided under this partnership include independent analysis of testing data to confirm analyses performed by the CSDE and/or its contractors to ensure data accuracy and program quality, as well as to resolve technical issues. UConn faculty facilitated item review and test form review workshops for developing instrumentation. UConn faculty also designed and initiated research programs to monitor the effectiveness of the student assessment programs. UConn faculty also provided research on current

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assessment issues such as national academic content standards, growth modeling, factors associated with closing the achievement gap, the use of technology to enhance student learning, and understanding the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement.

The Department of Educational Psychology has supported the development of Connecticut's RTT-ELC application through active participation in the RTT-ELC work group responsible for developing a High-Quality Plan to understand the status of children at kindergarten entry. This builds on our involvement in testing the validity, reliability and appropriateness of Connecticut's existing Kindergarten Inventory Assessment through multiple validity studies to examine teacher administration of the Inventory and the psychometric properties of the Inventory data.

If RTT-ELC funding is granted and the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut is selected following an RFP process, we will support Connecticut's RTT-ELC project by playing a central role in the development of the revised Kindergarten Inventory – resulting in the new Kindergarten Early Learning and Development Inventory. If selected to assist with this project, the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut will create a research team to develop the revised Kindergarten Inventory. The research team will include faculty from the Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment Program as well as a Project Coordinator and one full-time graduate research assistant.

The Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Connecticut fully endorses the proposed Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge project, and looks forward to assisting with its successful implementation.

Best Regards,



Thomas C. DeFranco
Dean, Neag School of Education
Professor of Mathematics Education, Neag School
Professor of Mathematics, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Co-director, Center for Research in Mathematics Education



University of Connecticut
A.J. Pappanikou Center for Developmental Disabilities

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter expresses the commitment of the University of Connecticut Health Center's A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service to supporting the implementation of Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) project, which will improve the developmental, functional and early outcomes of all young children in Connecticut.

The A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence is a university center administered in the School of Medicine, and affiliated with all schools and campuses of the University of Connecticut. It is a community based center that works with state and local partners to meet its mission. The Center is one of 69 centers in a network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service (UCEDD) authorized by the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act and funded through the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. The Center's work, as a university-based center on disability, ensures that individuals with disabilities and those at risk for disability, representing all racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, are fully included and valued in society. The mission of the Center is to work collaboratively to promote advocacy, capacity building and systems change to improve the quality of life for a person with a disability across the life span and their family.

The A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities is prepared to support the successful implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project by:

- Assisting in the provision of training and technical assistance to support the continued development of an early childhood workforce in Connecticut;
- Assisting in the development, implementation and evaluation of a knowledge and competency framework that addresses the needs of children with disabilities, special health care needs and behavioral and mental health needs;

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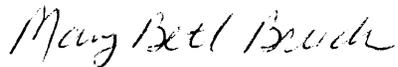
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The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
Page 2
October 11, 2011

- Supporting the State's Early Childhood Cabinet, including the Early Childhood Standards Committee in ensuring that the State's standards reflect high quality and the inclusion of children with high needs, including children with disabilities; and
- Assisting in the development, implementation and evaluation of a tiered quality rating system that includes all children, including children with disabilities.

At this time we cannot estimate the value of our in-kind contributions in the form of services to the RTT-ELC project over the four-year grant, but await invitations to serve the project in whatever capacity we can.

Sincerely,



Mary Beth Bruder, Ph.D.
Professor of Pediatrics and Educational Psychology
Director, University of Connecticut A.J. Pappanikou
Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
Education, Research, and Service

Editor, *Infants & Young Children*
An Interdisciplinary Journal of Early Childhood Intervention
<http://journals.lww.com/iycjournal>



Educating, Engaging, and Mobilizing Parents
to Act on Children's Issues

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

Connecticut Parent Power enthusiastically supports Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development"*.

Connecticut Parent Power is a statewide parent action network that engages and mobilizes parents on behalf of Connecticut's children. Our mission is to educate, engage and mobilize parents to act on children's issues. To do this, we bring timely, clear, and accurate information to Connecticut parents and deliver meaningful opportunities for parents to take action on children's issues. Our advocacy priorities include ensuring **every** child has access to:

- Quality, affordable and available early care;
- Quality, affordable health care; and
- A quality education.

As part of our efforts, a parent represents Connecticut Parent Power on the Early Childhood Education Cabinet's Family Involvement and Home Visitation Committee, which has helped lay the foundation for many of the projects RTT-ELC will advance, including increased connections with family-based providers, kith and kin.

Quality early learning opportunities benefit us all. Communities can prosper when children enjoy reliable health care, quality early learning programs, strong schools, and creative out-of-school opportunities. We are pleased that RTT-ELC projects will increase collaboration among state agencies in their delivery of early care and education services and supports, enhance connections among and between state, regional and local early childhood stakeholders, including parents, to improve access to these services and supports, and improved training on health and mental health standards for early care providers.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative is an essential step to realizing our priorities for children ages 0-5. Connecticut Parent Power will support the successful implementation of these projects by:

- Supporting the creation of the Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development to improve coordination of state agency programs and facilitate better inter-agency cooperation, including data sharing protocols;
- Continuing parent participation on the Cabinet's Family Involvement and Home Visitation Committee;
- Promoting understanding of the Early Learning Standards among parents;
- Facilitating connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate;
- Educating parents throughout the state on the progress of these projects, gathering feedback and feeding that feedback back to the relevant entities.

We are excited to see this progress to make Connecticut's early care and education opportunities more easily accessible and parent friendly. We look forward to working with you on these critical goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Wessel', written over a circular stamp or seal.

Paul Wessel
Director

CHEFACONNECTICUT HEALTH AND EDUCATIONAL
FACILITIES AUTHORITY

October 14, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the commitment of the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) to support the success of Connecticut's young children through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

CHEFA is a quasi-public authority created to help Connecticut-based non-profit organizations raise the funds needed to meet their goals of improving the health and education of the State's citizens through low-cost financing in the public municipal markets. Formed in 1965, CHEFA currently has in excess of \$7.6 billion in bonds outstanding. Childcare providers (along with hospitals, institutions of higher education, independent schools, cultural institutions, and human service providers) have benefited from this financing to expand their physical plant and equipment and increase services to the children and families they serve.

Through the State's landmark School Readiness Legislation (Public Act 97-259), CHEFA collaborated with the Department of Social Services and State Department of Education to develop three loan programs to finance quality spaces for early education. One of these, the Tax-Exempt Loan Program, has become the principal engine generating early care facilities for low-income children in Connecticut. \$76 million has been invested to provide over 5,100 spaces through this program. Each of the facilities is required to demonstrate its commitment to quality by being accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Recognizing the importance of systems planning in early education, the Authority has consistently supported State efforts with funding and technical support. In 2006, CHEFA provided a \$200,000 grant to support the work of the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council; in 2007, CHEFA developed a statewide facility plan for early education pursuant to Special Session Public Act 07-03; in 2008, the Early Education Cost Estimate web-based tool was launched; and in 2010 CHEFA approved financial support of \$985,000 for the Connecticut Data Collaborative project.

CHEFA has reviewed a summary document describing Connecticut's RTT-ELC application, and firmly supports the priorities of the proposed project. CHEFA will support RTT-ELC efforts by continuing to support childcare center facility improvement and expansion. Specifically, CHEFA commits to:

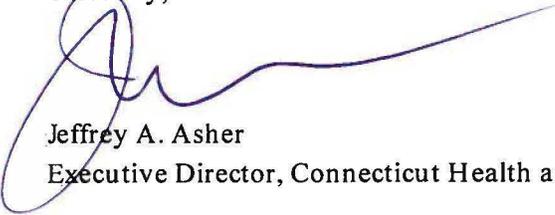
- continue our funding of interest rate subsidies for existing child care providers in the Guaranteed Loan Program, estimated to be \$190,000 per year. The financial support enables programs serving lower-income families the ability to afford quality facilities;

- expand its Guaranteed Loan Program up to an additional \$3MM in loans, utilizing \$1 million of CHEFA funded loan guarantees and up to \$100,000 of additional interest rate subsidies, while requiring that new borrowers engage the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
- continue its grant support with \$492,500 for the Connecticut Data Collaborative, which is prepared (if selected) to provide de-identified, community-level data across all early childhood domains to RTT-ELC participating state agencies while a federated data system is developed for long-term use.

We estimate the value of our cash and in-kind contributions to the RTT-ELC project at \$2,250,000 over the four-year grant period.

CHEFA reiterates its support for Connecticut's RTT-ELC application and looks forward to hearing of its award and working towards its success.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Asher

Executive Director, Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority

New Connecticut Foundation, Inc.

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860-571-7136 ♦ 860-571-7150- Fax
EIN 45-2841472

October 17, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the New Connecticut Foundation to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

The New Connecticut Foundation oversees the CT Data Collaborative, an open affiliation of individuals and organizations from the public and private sectors whose interest is to identify ways in which elected officials, policy makers, state agencies, advocates, and communities can gain access to and utilize rich and increasingly accurate and powerful data and information sources, especially with respect to high-need children. The Collaborative has developed an Early Childhood Portal with support from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and CHEFA to (a) provide access to a wide range of early childhood indicators, and eventually performance measures, along with powerful data visualization tools to analyze and present them and (b) engage State agencies and other generators of useful data in a process to improve dramatically the availability and quality of data produced by Connecticut's early childhood service system. The Connecticut Data Collaborative is a member of the Open Indicators Consortium, a national group of advocates for community level indicators that is working with the University of Massachusetts at Lowell on powerful visualization software that will be used to display the early childhood data available through the Consortium. This software (called WEAVE) will allow data analysis on multiple measures across communities – providing program managers and policy makers with information necessary to ensure that limited resources are used as effectively as possible.

The CT Data Collaborate currently supports system change efforts at the state level through its partnership with the Early Childhood Cabinet Data Committee, with which it has held discussions regarding the dissemination of early childhood knowledge and data through the Early Childhood Portal. While coordination at the state level contributes to improved local collaboration, the CT Data Collaborative also contributes directly to the regional and local early childhood system. Through support from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund the Collaborative has engaged early childhood practitioners in the development of the Early Childhood Portal. Users have helped choose the critical data points that need to be included and assisted the software developers to ensure needed functionality. An advisory group of local practioners will continue to work with the development team to provide needed guidance on updating the Portal. The Collaborative will also be engaging regional collaborative community data efforts in Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport regions to increase use of and contribution to the Early Childhood Portal.

The CT Data Collaborative has supported the development of Connecticut's RTT-ELC application through its dialogue with the Early Childhood Cabinet Data Committee regarding the dissemination of key early childhood data to local planning collaboratives and key stakeholders, and is pleased that the application focuses on our organization's priorities including the dissemination of quality and actionable data to key stakeholders in a centralized, and user-friendly manner..

The CT Data Collaborative will support the successful implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project in the following ways:

- Providing easy access to the extensive community-level data from all participating agencies in a common format with full documentation and powerful analytical tools
- Engaging the generators of the data and the users of the data in an ongoing dialogue to develop the most useful content and format of data
- Providing agencies and users with expert and peer support in accessing and using the data through provision of online guides, in-person and webinar-based training, and access to a help desk to answer user-specific questions

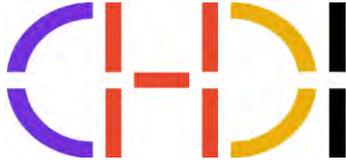
Additionally, we estimate the value of our cash and in-kind contributions to the RTT-ELC project at \$125,000 over the four-year grant period.

The New Connecticut Foundation enthusiastically endorses Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application and looks forward to supporting its successful implementation!

Sincerely,



Robert W. Santy
Chairman
New Connecticut Foundation



Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut, Inc.

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI) to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

CHDI's ultimate goal is to ensure that all children in Connecticut have access to and benefit from a comprehensive, effective, community-based health and mental health care system. To achieve this vision, we focus our efforts on long-term systemic change by identifying and evaluating effective practices, and then building the capacity to implement them statewide.

CHDI is an independent, non-profit subsidiary of the Children's Fund of Connecticut, a public charitable foundation. Working in partnership with state and regional agencies, hospitals, universities, and other organizations, we combine direct funding with research, policy analysis, advocacy, and technical assistance. CHDI's mission is to improve the quality of care for all children, emphasizing family-centered, comprehensive care that encompasses both physical and behavioral health. Collaborating with the Connecticut Children's Medical Center, the University of Connecticut, and Yale University, we strive to advance sustainable improvements in primary and preventive health and mental health care practices and policy for all the state's children, with a particular focus on disadvantaged or underserved children and families.

CHDI recognizes that the care and education of very young children (birth – 5) has lifelong consequences. Approximately one out of four Connecticut children enter kindergarten without the sufficient skills, knowledge, and behaviors necessary for academic success.

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Physical and mental health-related issues, alone or in combination, account for all but 6% of these children. In recognition of the role that health services play in ensuring school readiness, CHDI works tirelessly to improving access, integration, and impact of early childhood systems at the local, regional, state, and national levels. Examples of this important work include:

- In 2009, CHDI facilitated a statewide, collaborative process that produced, “A Framework for Child Health Services”. The Framework provides a basis for action through identifying a full continuum of child health services and the necessity of linking health to other child serving systems, including early care and education and family support, in order to ensure optimal healthy child development and school readiness.
- CHDI published a “Tool Kit for Integrating Child Health Services into Community Early Childhood Initiatives“ (A Framework Tool Kit” (2011)). The tool kit provides a guide for implementing the major recommendations outlined in the Framework. We have conducted TA workshops for communities on the use of the tools and will continue to do so over the next year.
- CHDI, in partnership with the CT Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CT Chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians, launched Educating Practices in the Community (EPIC), a training initiative to inform pediatricians and their staff about critical children’s health issues - right in the comfort of their own offices. This model of "academic detailing," brings together 11 training topics under one training umbrella.
- CHDI is actively involved in supporting the development of the person-centered medical home model of pediatric care that includes developmental screening, mid-level assessment, care coordination, and family-centered care through our training initiatives (e.g. EPIC), and our role as a convener and facilitator of policy and systems reform.
- The Connecticut Center for Effective Practice (CCEP), a division of CHDI, focuses on improving mental health care for children across Connecticut. CCEP collaborates with state agencies and academic institutions to improve the effectiveness of treatment provided to all children with serious and complex emotional, behavioral, and addictive disorders. Through CCEP, we are assisting with the replication of Child FIRST, an evidence-based early childhood home visiting intervention that works to decrease the incidence of serious emotional disturbance, developmental and learning problems, and abuse and neglect among the most vulnerable children and families.
- CHDI participates in local early childhood community collaborative groups, including as an active partner in the Graustein Memorial Fund’s Discovery Initiative, providing technical assistance and capacity building assistance to Discovery’s 53 early childhood collaboratives across the state related specifically to the integration of child health into local birth to 8 plans.
- CHDI has supported the development of a system of workforce competencies in infant/toddler mental health in partnership with the CT Association for Infant Mental Health.
- CHDI facilitates and/or participates in numerous other partnerships including but not limited to: the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Committee, Children’s Behavioral Health Advisory Council, SDE School Health and Wellness Advisory Committee, Help Me Grow National Dissemination Technical Advisory Team, Medicaid Managed Care Council, and numerous groups involved in transformative work that lead to improved health outcomes for children.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC application accelerates and unites existing momentum from the Cabinet, Discovery communities, the State's commitment to expanding preschool and kindergarten access, the Early Childhood Teacher Credential Pilot Program, and other initiatives to provide more complete supports for high needs children during their most crucial stages of development. CHDI is deeply committed to helping achieve RTT-ELC's ambitious goals to better serve high needs children and prepare them for school and lifelong wellness.

CHDI has been an active participant in the RTT-ELC planning process, and we will actively participate in the successful implementation of RTT-ELC projects to create a coordinated, statewide early learning and development system that includes a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) system, comprehensive Early Learning Standards and data systems, and a well trained workforce. Specifically, we intend to:

- Support the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181;
- Continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building tools for local communities through the regional hub system created under RTT-ELC as appropriate;
- Support the development of a comprehensive tiered QRIS system that addresses child health and development issues through participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet's new QRIS Task Force as appropriate, and encourage maximum participation the QRIS system among local and regional child care providers and educators;
- Advise the improvement and coordination of training for early care and education providers in health and mental health standards through participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet's new Health Committee;
- Identify effective investments to improve the early screening and mid-level assessment process;
- Advise the development of new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation; and facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

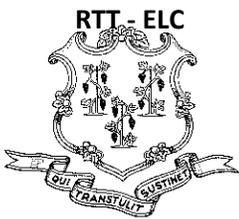
We estimate that these cash and in-kind contributions total \$2 million (funds from the Children's Fund of CT, CHDI's parent organization) over the four-year grant period.

CHDI plays an integral role in developing and improving the state's early childhood system. We fully support the work, ideals and goals of Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge initiative.

Very truly yours,



Judith C. Meyers, PhD
President and CEO



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

On behalf of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council, this letter confirms the Council's commitment to support Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education and the Establishment of a Coordinated System of Early Care and Education and Child Development"*.

The Child Poverty and Prevention Council has a statutory mandate to develop and promote the implementation of a ten-year plan to reduce the number of children living in poverty in the state by fifty percent and to establish prevention goals and recommendations and measure prevention service outcomes in order to promote the health and well-being of children and families. Our goal is to better coordinate existing and future prevention expenditures across state agencies and increase fiscal accountability.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC application tries to reach low-income children by increasing supports for family childcare providers (including kith and kin), increasing training for early childhood educators on health and mental health standards (including home visitation providers), and using data sharing protocols across state agencies to better monitor long-term success. The Council is committed to partnering with you to strengthen the linkages between early childhood education and poverty prevention, and will support the successful implementation of RTT-ELC by supporting the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181.

The highly collaborative planning process for Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application has resulted in ambitious goals that will improve the lives of low-income children and their families. We fully support this effort and look forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Anne Foley

Under Secretary

Chair, Child Poverty and Prevention Council



October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Children's Fund
 of Connecticut, Inc.

270 Farmington Avenue
 Suite 367
 Farmington, CT 06032

Dear Governor Malloy,

On behalf of the Children's Fund of Connecticut, I am pleased to support Connecticut's application for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC), and confirm the Fund's commitment to improving early childhood outcomes for disadvantaged children. The Fund stands ready to participate in both RTT-ELC and implementation of Public Act 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development."

The Children's Fund of Connecticut is a public charitable foundation dedicated to ensuring that children in Connecticut who are disadvantaged have access to and make use of a comprehensive, effective, community-based health and mental health care system. To carry out this mission, the Children's Fund champions sustainable improvements in primary and preventive care practices through innovative grant making. Our primary vehicle is our Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) which works in partnership with state and regional agencies, hospitals, universities, and other organizations, combining direct funding with research, policy analysis, advocacy, and technical assistance. Through our Connecticut Center for Effective Practice we seek to improve the effectiveness of treatment provided to all children with serious and complex emotional, behavioral, and addictive disorders.

We focus intensively on early childhood to support the integration of health and mental health care into settings where young children are served. Key initiatives include:

- Developing a statewide system of consultation to early care and education settings so that the health and mental health needs of children in child care settings will be identified and properly addressed by qualified consultants. CHDI played a key role in developing, supporting and evaluating Connecticut's **Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP)**, which provides mental health consultation to early care and education settings.
- Improving the health and safety of early care and education settings by supporting research that documents program noncompliance with state licensing standards, and facilitating and supporting the implementation of recommendations for systems and program improvements.
- Promoting the **integration of child health** as part of the state's efforts to improve children's readiness for kindergarten and performance in the early elementary grades, through research, grant making and technical assistance.
- In partnership with the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund and the State Department of Education, we have awarded grants to 15 communities over the past three years to bring health and health care providers into their broader school readiness **planning** efforts, which are funded through a public/private partnership. CHDI participates in the ECE Collaborative Management Team overseeing the broader effort.

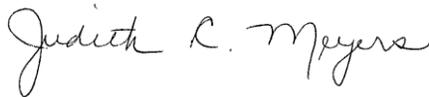
The Fund has played an active role in developing the RTT-ELC application as a member of the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative, providing support to the grant preparation and participating in planning meetings and reviewing and commenting on documents. This fits perfectly with our mission of integrating health and mental health into early childhood settings and promoting healthy child development. The Fund will support successful implementation of RTT-ELC in the following ways:

- We will continue to contribute funding to the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative throughout the planning and implementation of Public Law 11-181.
- We will continue to provide grants to communities to implement their comprehensive early childhood plans through the public/private partnership that includes the State Department of Education and the Memorial Fund along with the Children's Fund.
- We will continue to support the implementation of a system of health consultation to early care and education settings including centers and family child care homes.
- We will continue our active participation in convenings, forums, and committees where the work outlined in CT's RTT-ELC proposal will be carried out.

We estimate the value of our cash and in-kind contributions to the RTT-ELC project at \$2 million over the four-year grant period.

We are excited about the opportunity to work with you on this important initiative. Connecticut's strong track record of promoting a holistic approach to early childhood, at the community, regional and state levels, ensures that RTT will improve the lives of our most disadvantaged children and families.

Sincerely,



Judith C. Meyers, PhD
President and CEO
Children's Fund of Connecticut



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Commission on Children



October 6, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge funds

The Connecticut Commission on Children enthusiastically supports Connecticut's Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development"*.

Created with bipartisan support in 1985, the Connecticut Commission on Children (Commission) promotes public policies in the best interest of children. To that end, the Commission develops landmark policies for children, leads in media for children and youth, performs key research on children's needs, and connects families and government systems and policies. The Commission follows a preventive approach, which strengthens the capability of families and communities in all their diversity to provide for children's needs.

The Commission is actively involved in initiatives that promote and develop high quality education for Connecticut children, increase parent engagement, and promote health & safety. Several of our efforts focus on the early care and education of very young children. For example, the Commission partners with the Department of Public Health and others to improve the quality and access of infant and maternal home visitation programs. The Commission has been a key member of the Connecticut Early Childhood Cabinet for the past several years. The Commission staffs the Speaker of the House's Task Force on Children in the Recession, formed in June 2009 to find ways to help families deal with the impact of the recession. The Commission is a catalytic member of the State Child Poverty Prevention Council, established to develop and promote the implementation of a ten-year plan to reduce the number of children living in poverty in the state by fifty percent.

The Commission partners with numerous organizations at the regional and local levels for good child and family outcomes, including (1) partnerships in 24 towns and cities to implement the parent leadership training institute, a nationally recognized program that

gives parents the knowledge, confidence, and tools to actively participate in civic life; (2) a decades-long partnership with the CT Conference of Municipalities, working with mayors and first selectpersons across the state on issues from school readiness to policy considerations for homeless families to early care and education; (3) current work on low birth weight and childhood obesity reduction with agencies and coalitions from Stamford to Hartford; and (4) legislative updates with child care providers to detail opportunities and regulations in recent legislation impacting their work.

The Commission fully supports the ambitious goals of the proposed RTT-ELC project to create a more coordinated, comprehensive system of early learning and development in Connecticut. I have been directly involved in the development of this application in my role as Co-Chair of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet's Family Involvement and Home Visitation Committee. The Commission will support the RTT-ELC efforts as follows:

- Support the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181;
- Bring national best practices, gleaned from the Commission's numerous connections at the national level, to bear in Connecticut as appropriate;
- Promote understanding of Early Learning Standards among early care and education providers (incl. family care providers, kith and kin), parents, and local communities;
- Provide expertise and informational resources in the development of a three tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) through participation in the Cabinet's new QRIS Task Force as appropriate;
- Advocate for maximum participation the QRIS among child care providers and educators (including family caregivers, kith and kin) as appropriate;
- Promote awareness of workforce training opportunities (e.g. the Early Childhood Teacher Credential program) among early care educators as appropriate;
- Advise in the development of new data protocols to facilitate integration across systems and data sharing through continued leadership on the Cabinet;
- Promote the incorporation of new state data protocols among early care and education providers as appropriate; and
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.

The Commission is committed to working with CT's RTT-ELC partners to develop and enhance systems and supports to encourage the best possible outcomes for all CT children.

Sincerely,



Elaine Zimmerman
Executive Director

CONNECTICUT
Workforce
Development Council

560 Ella T. Grasso Boulevard
New Haven, Connecticut 06519
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Capital Workforce Partners
One Union Place
Hartford, CT 06103

Eastern CT Workforce
Investment Board
108 New Park Avenue
Franklin, CT 06254

The Northwest
Regional Workforce
Investment Board, Inc.
249 Thomaston Avenue
Waterbury, CT 06702

Workforce Alliance
560 Ella T. Grasso Blvd.
New Haven, CT 06519

The Workplace, Inc.
350 Fairfield Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Connecticut Workforce Development Council strongly supports Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*" to position more of Connecticut's young children to achieve academic, employment, and economic success.

The Connecticut Workforce Development Council (CWDC) strives to develop a competitive workforce to meet the current and future needs of the state's employers by creating opportunities through education, training and job readiness. The Boards of Directors of all five regional Workforce Investment Boards are led by business executives and include education and community leaders to assure that workforce investment policy is directed toward the real jobs in the state economy. The leadership and participation of a broad spectrum of businesses helps ensure our services and programs are relevant to our customers, today and in the future.

CWDC enthusiastically supports Connecticut's RTT-ELC proposals to improve the quality of early learning to close the achievement gap for children with high needs. We understand that healthy and prepared young children become successful students, and eventually become productive workers and citizens. We are also pleased to see expanded access to and integration of early care educator workforce training and the Early Childhood Teacher Credential, especially among family and informal childcare providers. In support of these initiatives, CWDC will:

- Support the creation of the Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development to improve coordination of state agency programs and facilitate better inter-agency cooperation, including data sharing protocols;
- Promote access to high-quality early care programs among WIB clients (including educating students about information available through the Quality Rating and Improvement System);
- Make our training facilities available for professional development trainings, subject to availability, particularly for family caregivers, kith and kin;
- Promote training, credentialing (e.g., Child Development Associate), and careers in early education;
- Inform our business and community partners about the RTT-ELC initiative and its important role in developing a stronger workforce;

As the statewide association of Workforce Investment Boards, the CWDC is uniquely positioned help shape Connecticut's economic future. Connecticut's RTT-ELC application will make important strides forward to ensure our early care and education workforce provides the high quality care our children need to place them on the path of academic and economic success. We look forward to working with you to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

William P. Villano
Executive Director, Workforce Alliance
Chair, Connecticut Workforce Development Council





Connecticut Association for Infant Mental Health, Inc.
 Concerned with the Healthy Social Emotional Development
 of Infants and Young Children

October 13, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Connecticut Association of Infant Mental Health, Inc. (CT-AIMH) strongly supports the state's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development"* to improve physical, social, and mental health outcomes for the state's high needs children.

Infant Mental Health concerns the relationships that infants and young children have with their caregivers, usually their parents. Infant mental health also refers to the capacity to regulate emotions and to explore one's environment. Promoting these relationships in a culturally sensitive context is the work of professionals from many disciplines including health, human services and education. When these earliest relationships are positive, responsive and predictable, the stage is set for successful learning in later development.

CT-AIMH offers professional development opportunities to those working with infants and young children and their families, assisting them to 1) support and enhance responsive relationships, to promote culturally sensitive practice, and 2) reflect on their work with families and their young children. CT-AIMH's 180 members include professionals at all levels and caregivers (e.g. early care educators, therapists, clinicians, home visitors, social workers, nurses, psychologists, physicians) and families.

CT-AIMH provides our members continuing education and professional development trainings; informational resources about programs for young children and other issues affecting the quality of life for young children and their families (including an online newsletter); advocacy on behalf of infants, toddlers and their families locally and statewide; and opportunities to influence the infant mental health network and to work towards the optimal development of infants and young

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www.ct-amih.org

children and their families. Many of our Board members have been members of the Early Childhood Education Cabinet and/or its existing Committees, playing active roles in the development of both existing foundation of infant mental health network and the development of the RTT-ELC application.

We also promote competency in the infant/toddler/family workforce by offering an Endorsement in Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health®. The Competencies are aimed at four levels of professional development: infant/family associate, infant/family specialist, infant mental health specialist, and infant mental health mentor. Connecticut is one of 14 states to offer this endorsement that was initiated by the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health and in 2006 received the Annapolis Coalition for the Behavioral Health Workforce award for innovation in workforce development.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will enhance supports for young children in infancy and toddlerhood, a time when young brains are critically sensitive to development. CT-AIMH is deeply committed to this goal, and will continue to play an active role in RTT-ELC project development and implementation.

In addition to supporting the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, CT-AIMH will 1) Advocate for maximum participation in the QRIS system among local and regional child care providers, families and educators, including our membership; 2) Advise the improvement and coordination of training for early care and education providers in health and mental health standards through participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet's new Health Committee as appropriate; 3) Identify effective investments to improve the early screening and mid-level assessment process; 4) Continue to provide professional development training on infant / toddler health and mental health competencies 5) Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate; and 6) share resources as appropriate from other state and international infant mental health associations.

Infants and young children and their caregivers deserve support and services that encourage nurturing relationships if we truly want to impact future learning. CT-AIMH looks forward to partnering with you on RTT-ELC initiatives to strengthen and develop these critical supports and services. As part of this partnership, we estimate our in-kind contributions from the above activities will total an estimated \$13,000 over the four-year grant period.

Yours truly,

Margaret C. Holmberg

Margaret C. Holmberg, Ph.D. IMH-E®(IV)
President, CT Association for Infant Mental Health

230 S. Frontage Road, New Haven, CT 06520
www.ct-amih.org



*Connecticut Association of
Public School Superintendents*

26 Caya Avenue
West Hartford, Connecticut 06110

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter expresses the commitment of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through support of Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and participation in the implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

The mission of CAPSS is to lead the continuous improvement of public education for all students by advocating public policy for children, and by developing and supporting executive school leaders. CAPSS is a statewide nonprofit educational administration organization whose membership includes Connecticut public school superintendents, assistant superintendents, central office administrative personnel, state department of education officials, and college and university professors. It provides educational and administrative leadership on a state and national level; it researches, gathers, and disseminates data and information necessary for the management and operation of effective school systems; it monitors state and federal legislative activity and strives to influence positive laws and regulations affecting the education of Connecticut's public school students; it provides personal support services for its members; it holds statewide conferences of interest to the educational community; and it is a strong voice and staunch advocate of quality public school education.

CAPSS currently supports system change efforts at the State level through participation in the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC), the P-20 Council, the Early Childhood Council, the High School Graduation Requirements Review Task Force, the Legislature's Task Force on Student Achievement, the CT Council for Public Education and the CAPSS Educational Transformation Project.

CAPSS leadership has reviewed a summary of the Connecticut RTT-ELC proposal, and we endorse its goals and priorities. CAPSS specifically intends to support the success of the RTT-ELC project by: Providing guidance to RTT-ELC efforts to created statewide early learning standards to promote alignment of early learning and K-3 standards;

- Ensuring that early childhood program efforts are sustained in the early elementary grades by strengthening connections between early education and K-12 systems;
- Providing guidance to RTT-ELC efforts to created statewide early learning standards to promote alignment of early learning and K-3 standards;
- Advocating for statewide program and staff standards for privately provided early childhood programs.
- Advocating for publicly provided programs for every child for whom a privately provided high quality early childhood program is not available.
- Advocating for a systemic change that would begin formal schooling at age three instead of at age five.

Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge program will increase access to high-quality early learning and development programs for children 0-5, setting the stage for the success of Connecticut's K-12 students. CAPPs enthusiastically supports your application and eagerly awaits news of its success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph J. Cirsuolo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Joseph J. Cirsuolo, Ed.D.

Executive Director

Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the commitment of the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, *"An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development"*.

CAS is an educational organization affiliated with the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAESP), the National Middle School Association (NMSA), and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). CAS's mission is to improve and expand educational opportunities for Connecticut's students while striving to strengthen the professional skills and talents of the school leaders of Connecticut. Through leadership, administrative, and professional development services, CAS works to serve the collective interests and needs of Connecticut educators, to enhance the professional growth and competency of school personnel at all levels, and to recruit and retain qualified school leaders. CAS now provides services to Connecticut's K-12 schools in areas ranging from academics to athletics, and represents more than 1,100 Connecticut public and parochial schools.

CAS currently supports system change efforts at the State level through participation in writing the Race to the Top Grant, the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council, the High School Graduation Issues Task Force, the Expanded Learning Opportunities State Leadership Team, and the School Governance Councils Advisory Board. CAS also implements the Executive Coach program for administrators in struggling schools, provides CALI training, represents Connecticut on the New England Secondary Schools Consortium, and provides extensive professional development for principals in many areas of educational progress and reform.

CAS has reviewed an overview of Connecticut's RTT-ELC application, and enthusiastically supports the priorities of the proposed project. In particular, CAS is prepared to support and facilitate where appropriate proposed RTT-ELC efforts to:

- Sustain early childhood program efforts in the early elementary grades;
- Revise statewide early learning standards to align with Connecticut's K-3 standards; and
- Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework to strengthen the early childhood educator workforce.

CAS understands that high-quality early childhood programs (as well as comprehensive supports for young children, their families, and their educators) lay the foundation for success in school. We therefore endorse Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge proposal enthusiastically.

Best Regards,

□



Dr. Karissa L. Niehoff
 Executive Director, Connecticut Association of Schools



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Executive Director and CEO: James J. Finley, Jr.

October 7, 2011

The Honorable Dannel P. Malloy
Governor of Connecticut
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

Dear Governor Malloy:

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is pleased to express its support for improving early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An Act Concerning Early Childhood Education And The Establishment Of A Coordinated System Of Early Care And Education And Child Development*".

As you are aware, CCM is Connecticut's only statewide association of towns and cities representing municipalities before the General Assembly, the state executive branch and regulatory agencies, and in the courts. CCM provides towns and cities with a wide array of other services, including management assistance, individualized inquiry service, assistance in municipal labor relations, technical assistance and training, policy development, research and analysis, publications, and information programs, among other services.

CCM has reviewed an overview of Connecticut's RTT-ELC application, and enthusiastically supports the priorities of the proposed project, particularly its emphasis on providing technical assistance, capacity-building support, and increased resources to local communities to expand and better coordinate their efforts to support young children and their families. CCM will support the success of the RTT-ELC project by:

- 2 -

- Advancing public policies that strengthen state systems and support local communities to serve young children and their families;
- Encouraging business and philanthropic support for local efforts to advance early childhood goals; and,
- Disseminating information to communities across the state about opportunities for local early childhood collaboratives to expand their impact through participation in RTT-ELC technical assistance and capacity-building activities.

We look forward to the approval of Connecticut's application and to the success of this important project for young children, their families and towns and cities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James J. Finley, Jr." followed by a decorative flourish.

James J. Finley, Jr.
Executive Director and CEO



CT Division of Early Childhood

October 7, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge funds

The Connecticut Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Early Childhood is pleased to support Connecticut's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*".

The Council for Exceptional Children is a premier education organization, internationally renowned for its expertise and leadership, working collaboratively with strategic partners to ensure that children and youth with exceptionalities are valued and full participating members of society. In Connecticut CEC is a trusted voice in shaping education practice and policy. Our Division of Early Childhood is the key organization in CT that best represents and supports the advancement of early childhood education for children with high needs. CT DEC provides professional development on best practices for children who have challenging behaviors and specific physical needs, as well as professional development for teachers.

We currently support system change efforts at the State level through participation in the Early Childhood Education Cabinet's Workforce Committee and state level early childhood conferences. While coordination at the state level contributes to improved local collaboration, the Council also contributes directly to the regional and local early childhood system via advocating for appropriate programming and supports for children of high needs as well as for the appropriate preparation of early childhood educators who work with children of high need.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative aligns well with our efforts to improve the professional standards of early childhood educator training and increase access to accredited, quality workforce development programs. We will work diligently with other RTT-ELC partners to achieve RTT-ELC project goals in the following ways:

- Support the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education;
- Continue to participate in the Early Childhood Cabinet's Workforce Committee as appropriate to advise the development of the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework for early care educators and caregivers;
- Identify additional private and philanthropic resources to help promote sustainability;
- Provide training in support of the application goals, if selected through an appropriate bidding process.

Our in-kind contribution in support of RTT-ELC projects will total an estimated \$10,000 during the four year grant period. We appreciate this opportunity to further the quality of Connecticut's early childhood systems and wish you success in this effort.

Sincerely,
Regina Miller
Regina Miller
President



Patricia Baker
Chair
Connecticut Health Foundation

Kim A. Healey
Vice Chair
NewAlliance Foundation

Barbara Fernandez
Secretary
Connecticut Department of
Economic and Community
Development

Dean Andrews
Treasurer
Bank of America

Lucy Ball
Lone Pine Foundation

Andrew Boone
The Netter Foundation

Penny Canny
Community Foundation for Greater
New Haven

Glenn A. Cassis
African-American Affairs
Commission

Thomas Fiorentino
Community Representative

Robert Haggett
Newman's Own Foundation

Debra Hertz
William H. Pitt Foundation

Jack Horak
Reid & Riege

Emily Tow Jackson
The Tow Foundation

Linda J. Kelly
Hartford Foundation
for Public Giving

Lori Lindfors
Citizens Bank

Frederick Mayer
MFUND, Inc.

Patricia McGowan
Kostin, Ruffless, & Co.

Yvette Melendez
Hartford Hospital

Judith Meyers
Children's Fund of Connecticut

Sue Murphy
Liberty Bank Foundation

Holly Nuechterlein
Louis Calder Foundation

Nancy Roberts
President
Connecticut Council
for Philanthropy

Guy Rovezzi
Community Foundation
of Northwest Connecticut

Shelly Saczynski
United Illuminating Company

Anita Ford Saunders
Anita Ford Saunders
Communication

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Connecticut Council for Philanthropy is a statewide association of grantmakers and the hub of philanthropy in Connecticut. As a nonprofit organization, the Council is dedicated to providing its members with the highest quality programs, resources and services, networking opportunities, and insight and news about grantmaking and philanthropy. The Council supports three networks of funders concerned with improving early childhood outcomes --the Early Childhood Affinity Group, the Connecticut Network of Community Foundations and the Connecticut Early Childhood Funders Collaborative, a joint effort of 14 Connecticut funders to provide funding for the implementation of SB 1103 (which became effective July 1, 2011 as Public Act 11-181).

Connecticut grantmakers have been meeting to share their concerns and knowledge on early education and child development programs since 1994. A recent survey found that, over the past five years, 38 Council for Philanthropy member organizations have provided more than \$72 million in support of public and private efforts that have benefited children from birth through third grade and their families in Connecticut.

In February 2011, the Early Childhood Funders Affinity Group (the precursor to the Funders Collaborative) sent you a letter stating that grantmakers that believed in the importance of early care and education would continue investing in early childhood, but the letter challenged the State to improve the quality of early education programs, meet the full developmental needs of children, and support parent involvement and leadership more effectively by increasing collaboration across state agencies and strengthening partnerships across sector lines.

As I write to you today on behalf of the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy, I am pleased that the process of developing Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant application has been a truly collaborative process that has involved every state agency that touches young children, that you have welcomed input from the philanthropic community by including me as a representative of the philanthropic sector on your RTT-ELC Leadership Team and that you held a special planning meeting with philanthropic and private-sector representatives.

More important, I am pleased that many of the key components of Connecticut's RTT-ELC proposal reflect the suggestions made in our February 2011 letter to you on behalf of the Early Childhood Affinity Group. We suggested the following approaches to enhance early care and education policies and programs and help facilitate a more

vibrant interaction with the philanthropic sector:

- We recommended creating a central point of coordination, authority and accountability in state government for all programs that touch the lives of young children and their families. Your RTT-ELC application includes creation of an Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education to create a culture of change and to integrate the transformative RTT-ELC projects into the existing transformative efforts outlined in Public Act No 11-181. We understand that you intend to establish this Office via Executive Order regardless of the receipt of RTT-ELC funds.
- We recommended developing a data collection system with benchmarks to track quality improvement. Your RTT-ELC proposal includes developing a data-sharing protocol across state agencies, adjusting existing state agency databases to better coordinate efforts among state agencies to serve young children and their families, and developing reporting parameters that inform policy development and program planning.
- We recommended expanding local and regional capacity to oversee development and implementation of early childhood plans that include blending of funds, technical assistance, professional development, quality enhancements and accountability for results. Your RTT-ELC application includes significant support for local collaborative efforts designed to advance Connecticut's early childhood outcomes with particular emphasis on service coordination, service co-location, service integration, family engagement, and data sharing, among others.

In short, the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy strongly supports the proposed Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application and, in partnership with our member funders, expresses our continued commitment to working at the state, regional, and local levels to build stronger early learning and development systems.

Sincerely,



Nancy Roberts
President, Connecticut Council for Philanthropy
Host of:
Early Childhood Affinity Group
Early Childhood Funders Collaborative
Connecticut Network of Community Foundations

Connecticut Family Resource



October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
 State Capitol
 210 Capitol Avenue
 Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Connecticut Family Resource Center Alliance enthusiastically supports the state's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*" to improve academic, physical, social, and mental health outcomes for the state's high needs children.

Family Resource Center (FRC) promotes comprehensive, integrated, community-based systems of family support and child development services located in 62 public school buildings. This model is based on the "Schools of the 21st Century" concept developed by Dr. Edward Zigler of Yale University. We provide access, within a community, to a broad continuum of early childhood and family support services that foster the optimal development of children and families. It is vitally important to note that FRCs provide direct services as well.

Our 62 school-based Centers collaborate with the many resources in their communities, including child-care providers, School Readiness Councils, local United Ways and service providers of the State Departments of Social Services and Children and Families. Statewide, our Centers serve approximately 15,000 children annually, many of whom are low-income, English language learners, developmentally and/or physically disabled, or have other high needs.

A key feature of FRCs is our customization of services following needs assessment of each community. We provide direct services as well as referrals for families and children and effectively respond to changes within our schools and communities over the years. We have kept pace with demographic changes and employ linguistically and culturally diverse staff, thereby enhancing our ability to work with immigrant families and assist school staff with translation and understanding how cultural variations influence school-family relations. Seventy-seven percent of the FRCs have bilingual staff and, as a group, staff members are fluent in 15 languages, with two-thirds of them fluent in Spanish.

Healthy development and good education begin with access to quality childcare and support services from birth. In response, FRC is committed to providing high-quality services in collaboration with local partners:

- **Quality Full-Day Child Care and School Readiness Programs:** These services are offered year-round for children ages 3-5 on a sliding fee scale. Centers must be licensed by the Connecticut Department of Public Health and have NAEYC or equivalent accreditation. Our model offers preschool programs with operating hours that are consistent with parents' schedules, and family support and child-care services can be administered by the school or by community-based agencies on behalf of the school. These innovations help ensure that parents can access services when they need them.
- **Adult Education:** This component offers a range of adult education opportunities, including parent training and adult education, support and educational services to parents with children who are participants of the child-care services of the program. Parents and their preschool-age children may attend classes together in parenting and child-rearing skills so as to promote the mutual pursuit of education while enhancing parent-child interaction.

- **School-Age Child Care** This component is offered for children enrolled in school up to the age of 12 for before and after regular school hours and on a full-day basis during school holidays and school vacation. Over 500 statewide businesses rely on the FRC childcare program to support their employees.
- **Resource and Referral Services:** Centers serve as a primary resource and referral service for issues concerning the well being of families. Collaboration with local and state agencies provides families with the supports they need, when they need them.
- **Families in Training:** We provide community support services to expectant parents and parents of children under the age of 3 (e.g. information and advice to parents on their child's language, cognitive, social and motor development, home visitation, gathering new parents together, and providing referrals to parents who need special assistance or services. A nationally approved, evidence-based home visitation program is the foundation of family support in the FRCs. Early intervention child development screening tools are used to identify and refer children with developmental or social/emotional needs.
- **Support and Training for Family Day-Care Providers:** We offer training and technical assistance and other support to family providers in the community, serve as an information and referral system for other childcare needs, and/or coordinate existing systems in the community.
- **Positive Youth Development:** This component provides programs to adolescents emphasizing responsible decision-making and communication skills. Aimed at children in Grades 4 through 6, it offers a range of opportunities that help prevent an array of childhood and adolescent problems.

Our goal is to work towards a minimum of one FRC per school district targeting high needs families and children. In addition to our strong partnerships with local and state agencies, FRCs leverage private and community-based funding streams, and use an extensive volunteer corps, who provide approximately 2,800 hours of service per month statewide.

The FRC Alliance is excited that Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will strengthen and improve supports for high needs children during their most crucial stages of development. The coordination of state level efforts through the new Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development, development of a three-tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System for providers (that includes technical assistance resources), improvement of Early Learning and Health Standards, increased access to early care education career ladders, refinement of the Kindergarten Inventory assessment, and development of an integrated data collection and monitoring system combine to create an impressive infrastructure of system supports for children, their families, their caregivers and educators, and the broader early learning community.

The examples of our services above demonstrate our commitment to these ambitious goals. We have played a critical role in designing many of the supports that serve as the foundation that RTT-ELC projects will build on (e.g. connecting with and supporting family care providers, kith and kin). FRC will actively participate in the successful implementation of these critical RTT-ELC projects in the following ways:

- Support the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181;
- Continue to serve as a resource for local capacity building through the regional hub system created under RTT-ELC as appropriate;
- Participate in the development of a comprehensive tiered QRIS (including possible participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet's new QRIS Task Force as appropriate);
- Advocate for maximum participation the QRIS among local and regional child care providers and educators, including family caregivers, kith and kin;
- Participate in the QRIS as a provider of childcare services;
- Integrate RTT-ELC systems into district programs, including School Based Health Centers and literacy programs;

- Connect early learning literacy programs (0-pre-K) and early elementary literacy programs (K-3) to ensure RTT-ELC impacts are sustained after age 5;
- Promote understanding of the Early Learning Standards among fellow providers (including family care providers, kith and kin), parents, and the communities in which we operate;
- Promote awareness of workforce training opportunities (e.g. the Early Childhood Teacher Credential program) among FRC staff, other providers, and family caregivers;
- Incorporate new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Continue to provide a support network that is essential in preventing mental health problems and enhancing families' abilities to cope with stressful situations;
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate; and
- Undertake a cost-effective approach to the provision of services by identifying service gaps, provide missing services and also by contributing to the effectiveness of other local and state efforts.

We estimate that our in-kind contributions will total approximately \$595,200 over the four-year grant period. FRC is excited to be an active partner in the development and implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project and the potential this initiative has to improve the network of supports for high needs children, their families, and the early learning community.

Sincerely,



Catherine R. Battista
President, CT Family Resource Center Alliance



October 12, 2011

Rina Bakalar
Executive Director
(860) 263-6523

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) is pleased to support Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development".

As the state's principal workforce development policy agency, the OWC:

- Facilitates and convenes various federal, state and local entities involved in workforce development issues;
- Provides staff support to the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC - a public/private partnership that oversees the development of statewide workforce development policy) and the Governor's JOBS Cabinet (which guides the implementation of integrated, multi-agency training programs and services);
- Oversees implementation of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

The OWC is dedicated to implementing A Talent-Based Strategy that will keep Connecticut competitive regionally, nationally and globally in the 21st century and beyond. Improving early childhood learning and development outcomes will help ensure that youth are better equipped to find high-wage, high-skill jobs in the future.

We are regularly involved in a variety of broad-based youth initiatives by providing: 1) staff support at the policy level for the Youth Committee of the CETC; 2) leadership, staff support, and funding support of the state's Youth Vision Team and the Youth Futures Committee, focusing on bringing at-risk and vulnerable youth into the workforce; and 3) facilitating (with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services) an exciting "big-picture" effort to address data-sharing across the agencies, starting with but not limited to vulnerable youth.

These efforts directly support the comprehensive and integrated approach defined in the RTT-ELC application. We are committed to assisting in the successful implementation of these projects. Specifically, OWC will:

- Participate in the development of a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework for early childhood care and education providers through participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet Workforce Committee as appropriate;
- Advise on the development of integrated data protocols as it relates to existing OWC efforts through participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet Data Committee as appropriate;
- Facilitate links to private and philanthropic resources to promote long-term project success as appropriate;

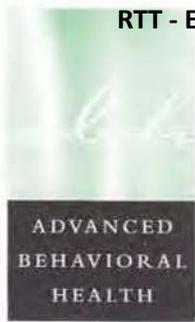
We estimate the value of these contributions to the RTT-ELC project at \$25,000 over the four-year grant period. We look forward to working with all the RTT-ELC partners on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Rina Bakalar
Executive Director

200 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield, CT 06109 | Ph: 860.263.6523 | Fx: 860.263.6529 | www.ct.gov/dol

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Improving the Quality of Life for Those Served

October 10, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Re: Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

Dear Governor Malloy:

The Early Childhood Consultation Partnership® (ECCP) enthusiastically supports the state's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*", to improve physical, social and mental health outcomes for the state's high needs children.

The Early Childhood Consultation Partnership® (ECCP) program is an innovative and nationally recognized evidenced-based program which provides statewide early childhood mental health consultation services to early care and education providers and families of children ages birth to five. Managed by Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc. (ABH®), ECCP's 20 master's-level Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants partner with local non-profit behavioral health care agencies to serve more than 3,000 children ages 0-5 across the state each year.

With a demonstrated success rate of 98%, ECCP is notably one of the first statewide, results oriented, data driven Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation programs in the country. The program has clearly articulated outcomes relating to professional development, service delivery of at risk children and their caregivers, and state and local community networking. ECCP serves as a national model and has influenced policy makers around the social emotional needs of young children, as well as the need to build the capacity of early care and education providers and families through consultation, technical assistance and workforce development activities. This year we were profiled as a promising program in the National Center for Children in Poverty's, "*Building Comprehensive Supports for Early Childhood Mental Health: A Planning Tool for States.*"

ECCP works in partnerships at state, local and individual family levels in order to meet the social, emotional and behavioral needs of typically underserved high-risk children (e.g. foster children, children with special needs, etc.). We also emphasize the importance of maintaining a workforce that is fully versed in the fields of Early Childhood Mental Health and Early Childhood Education. This is done through ongoing trainings and collaborations with other early childhood partners. ECCP has incorporated fundamentals such as, CT Early Learning Guidelines, Preschool Benchmarks and Head Start Guidelines into the service delivery model, contributing to a seamless support system.

We are an active partner at both the state and local levels working to improve early childhood delivery systems and outcomes. For example, ECCP:

- Has provided services for the Early Childhood Behavioral Consultation (ECBC) pilot project co-funded by the Department of Children and Families and the State Department of Education. The ECBC program intensively serves large urban centers focusing on children with special needs.
- Serves as the early childhood mental health experts and provides consultation and services to caregivers of children involved in DCF, Head Start and other early childhood community partners for the DCF Head Start Statewide Collaborative.
- Provides trainings to the DCF Training Academy and for local early care and education providers. Training Topics include social and emotional development, and target the 0-5 population and their caregivers.
- Participates in local early childhood community collaborative groups (e.g. Head Start Boards, School Readiness Councils, Discovery Initiatives, Directors Forums, Help Me Grow Meetings, etc.).
- ECCP is a member of the Steering Committee for the National Zero to Three Project: New Haven's Court Team for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers. This team seeks to improve outcomes for Infants and Toddlers in New Haven area foster care.

Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will provide more complete supports for high needs children during their most crucial stages of development. The few examples above demonstrate our commitment to this goal. Through these partnerships, we have played a critical role in designing many of the supports that serve as the foundation that RTT-ELC projects will build on (e.g. our workforce development trainings for early care providers and our provision of technical assistance to early care and education settings, as well as our capacity to design centralized data management systems that guide program fidelity and imbedding a practice approach of Results Based Accountability).

ECCP will actively participate in the successful implementation of RTT-ELC projects to create a coordinated, statewide early learning and development system that includes a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) system, comprehensive Early Learning Standards and data systems, and a well trained workforce. Specifically, ECCP will:

- Support the creation of the Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education as part of the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181.
- Provide technical assistance and capacity building tools (e.g. "Tips for Tots" Strategy Resources for families and providers, Action Plans, etc.) for local providers and families through the regional hub system created under RTT-ELC.

- Participate in the development of a comprehensive tiered QRIS system, that includes a social and emotional focus, through participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet's new QRIS Task Force, as appropriate.
- Advocate for maximum participation the QRIS system among local and regional child care providers and educators.
- Advise on the improvement and coordination of training for early care and education providers in health and mental health standards through participation on the Early Childhood Cabinet's new Health Committee.
- Identify effective investments to improve the early screening and mid-level assessment process.
- Provide workforce development training to early educators using RTT-ELC frameworks (ECCP Consultants are all certified TAB trainers through CT Charts A Course program).
- Incorporate new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation; Offer the expertise of Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc. (ABH®) through ECCP, in the area of data management systems and fidelity review, to inform or participate in the development of the statewide integrated data management system.
- Facilitate connections to private and philanthropic resources as appropriate.
- Consider ECCP program expansion to serve children, families and educators through Kindergarten in order to better align Infant Toddler Guidelines, Early Care and Education Benchmarks and Kindergarten requirements with a seamless system of social emotional and behavioral supports from Early Care and Education Centers to Grammar school.

We estimate that these cash and in-kind contributions total \$59,600 over the four-year grant period.

ECCP is excited to be an active partner in the development and implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project. We see the potential this initiative has in creating a strong network that supports positive outcomes for high needs children, their families and service providers.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Bicio, LCSW
Program Manager
Early Childhood Consultation Partnership®
Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc.
ebicio@abhct.com



Samuel Moy, Ph.D.
President and CEO
Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc.
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**Hartford Area
Child Care Collaborative**

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative strongly supports Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative. As a network of more than 300 early care and education organizations and individuals, the Collaborative is committed to promoting and supporting high-quality child care, and we look forward to being an active partner in this effort to improve early childhood outcomes.

High-quality early childhood experiences promote successful development and help children to seek out and open the doors of discovery - to become successful in school and successful in life. The Collaborative provides expertise and support for programs to influence community support for quality childcare. We increase access to high quality childcare programs by offering providers technical assistance; training; leadership building; cooperative planning; advocacy; and an information resource library.

For the past 23 years as an initiative of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, we have been active in developing and implementing much of the existing early learning and development infrastructure that RTT-ELC projects to advance and improve. Examples of our commitment to improving the quality of childcare include:

- Being one of the creators of the CT Accreditation Facilitation Project to assist child care centers in becoming NAEYC accredited.
- Partnering with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Brighter Futures Initiative to coordinate regional implementation of the Child Care Enhancement Project;
- Collaborating with Charter Oak State College, CT Charts-A-Course, and the Department of Social Services to develop the Connecticut's Director's Credential for childcare center directors;
- Membership in the Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance and Connecticut Provider Caucus to advocate for improved early learning public policy;
- The Project Director of the Connecticut Early Childhood Education Cabinet attends our Steering Committee meetings, creating a symbiotic relationship between state, regional, and local efforts.

We are pleased that Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative will improve continuity and quality across early childhood care and education programs. As the examples above demonstrate, our efforts fully support the comprehensive and integrated approach RTT-ELC proposes. The Collaborative will contribute to the successful implementation of the following RTT-ELC projects: 1) the development and implementation of a tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS); 2) the development and use of Early Learning and Development Standards; 3) improved access to early childhood educator training and credentialing programs; and 4) development of an integrated data collection systems. Specifically, the Collaborative will:

- Assist in the development of a tiered QRIS system (including possible participation on new Early Childhood Cabinet QRIS Task Force Committees) as appropriate;

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An initiative of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

Working together to ensure quality child care

- Identify and facilitate linkages to additional resources to expand high quality early learning and development programs;
- Promote broad participation in the QRIS among providers (including family programs, kith and kin);
- Be willing to provide training in support of RTT-ELC capacity building and training efforts, including health and mental health standards training, early learning standards training, and the Early Childhood Teacher Credential program;
- Increase awareness of RTT-ELC resources to support high-need children among providers, especially licensed family caregivers, kith and kin.
- Educate Collaborative members of the importance of incorporating new state data protocols for integrated data collection and evaluation;
- Serve as a convener of groups, a professional development training resource, and a regional resource to move the work of the RTT-ELC initiative forward.

Our in-kind contributions to the RTT-ELC project totals an estimated \$28,000 over the four-year grant period. The Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative is committed to turning ideas and solutions into actions, getting results, and moving forward to ensure that every child has access to high-quality early childhood programs. Connecticut's RTT-ELC initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*" align with our goals and we look forward to working with you to achieve them.

Sincerely,



Elena Trueworthy
Director

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Funds

On behalf of Connecticut's State Education Resource Center (SERC), it is my pleasure to express support for, and commitment to, Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*". These statewide, collaborative efforts will increase high-quality educational opportunities for Connecticut's young children and their families, especially those with educational and developmental risk factors.

SERC is a nonprofit agency primarily funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). SERC provides professional development and information dissemination in the latest research and best practices to educators, early childhood and other service providers, families, and community members throughout the state, as well as job-embedded technical assistance and training within schools, programs, and districts.

SERC, formerly known as the Special Education Resource Center, became the State Education Resource Center in 2005 according to a change in state statutes. State statute Sec. 10-4q. "*State Education Resource Center to promote equity and excellence*" requires that:

The State Board of Education shall establish a State Education Resource Center to assist the board in the provision of programs and activities that will promote educational equity and excellence. Such activities, to be provided by the State Education Resource Center..., may include training and continuing education seminars, publication of technical materials, research and evaluation, and other related activities. The center may support programs and activities concerning early childhood education, the federal No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, and closing the academic achievement gap between socio-economic subgroups, and other related programs.

SERC is known for providing high-quality, research-based professional learning opportunities as part of its mission to improve the achievement of Connecticut's children and youth. SERC provides these opportunities through both statewide programming and, increasingly, through on-site, job-embedded professional learning in Connecticut public schools and early childhood programs.

SERC maximizes the impact of community, state, and federal resources by collaborating with partners including CSDE, CT's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), Connecticut Parent Information and Resource Center (CT PIRC), Connecticut's Birth to Three Program, Head Start, the CT Commission on Children, Even Start, the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), the Family Resource Center Alliance, local school districts, and school readiness programs, among others.

SERC hosts a variety of annual conferences and professional learning opportunities covering a wide range of topics of interest to Connecticut's educators, early childhood providers, and the children and families they serve. SERC's 2011-2012 professional development catalogues, one specifically targeted to early childhood education and care, include entire sections devoted to "Early Childhood Education Professional Development Opportunities," which feature more than 50 training sessions on a wide range of topics. The catalogue specifically targeting early childhood education and care also features a multiplicity of information on resources for those working and caring for young children, Birth to Nine.

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RTT-ELC Letter of Intent
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Under the proposed Race to the Top – Early Learning challenge project, SERC will build upon its current services and leverage its statewide partnerships to serve as a mechanism to promote statewide and regional coordination of services. SERC represents a logical statewide coordination mechanism because of our mission as established by the Connecticut State Board of Education and the CSDE. Our vision, nimbleness, reach across all districts, and ability to connect RTT-ELC efforts to elementary school and beyond will also facilitate this coordinative role. SERC will assist qualified contractors and/or regional intermediaries such as the six Connecticut Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) to serve as regional coordinating hubs to support the delivery or training and technical assistance to local early childhood collaborative, individual early care programs, and families. By providing statewide coordination, SERC will enhance the reach of its services while building the capacity of regional and local service delivery systems.

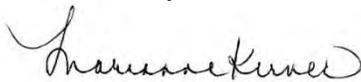
SERC is specifically prepared to assist the RTT-ELC project by:

- Participating in interagency discussions about high-quality professional learning and related topics convened by the Governor's new Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education.
- Providing professional development training directly to early childhood educators and training regional intermediaries to deliver training. SERC will adjust professional development curriculum, as needed, to target the learning needs of family-based and kith and kin providers, and will coordinate efforts to engage more of these providers in professional development activities.
- Disseminating information about opportunities associated with the planned Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to our network of early childhood educators, including family-based and kith and kin educators.
- Disseminating information about new early learning and development standards to early childhood educators, parents, and families.
- Participating in planning and policy discussions regarding the implementation of the RTT-ELC State Plan and Public Act No. 11-181, as appropriate.
- Expanding the Early Childhood Resource Center established at SERC, including the development and management of a dedicated website and early childhood collection in the SERC Library.

We conservatively estimate the value of SERC's in-kind contributions to the RTT-ELC project at \$250,000 over the life of the grant.

The Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant represents a valuable and timely opportunity for Connecticut to improve the quality of early learning and development and to close the achievement gap for children with high needs. The Connecticut State Education Resource Center is prepared to support this important effort in any way possible.

Sincerely,



Marianne Kirner, Ph.D.
Executive Director

CT State Advisory Council on Special Education

CT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION • BOX 2219 • HARTFORD, CT 06145



October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

It is with great pleasure that the Connecticut State Advisory Council on Special Education (SAC) provides a letter of support for the implementation of Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) project. Through this innovative and much needed endeavor we look to your leadership to on improving the developmental, functional and early outcomes of all young children in Connecticut.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) includes in its regulations, the authorization for "state advisory panels" (34 CFR § 300.169). The SAC is Connecticut's "state advisory panel" under IDEA and is also authorized under Chapter 164 Section 10-76i of the Connecticut General Statutes with the express purpose to "advise the General Assembly, State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education" on special education matters. The SAC addresses all five goals of the Comprehensive Plan of the State Board of Education and is specifically mandated under IDEA and Connecticut state statutes to accomplish the following actions:

- To advise the State Department of Education of unmet needs in educating children with disabilities;
- To review periodically the laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines pertaining to special education and recommend to the General Assembly and the State Board of Education any changes which it finds necessary;
- To comment of any new or revised regulations, standards and guidelines proposed for issuance;
- To participate with the State Board of Education in the development of any state plan for the provision of special education;
- To comment publicly on any procedures necessary for distributing federal funds received pursuant to IDEA;
- To assist the State Department of Education in developing and reporting such data and evaluations as may be conducted pursuant to the provisions of IDEA;
- To report annually to the General Assembly concerning recommendations for effecting changes in the special education laws;
- To advise the State Department of Education in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of IDEA;

- To advise the State Department of Education in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; and
- To perform any other activity that is required by IDEA.

The SAC is prepared to support the successful implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project by:

- assisting State leaders to improve and coordinate training for early childhood educators and program staff on health and mental health standards for young children with disabilities; and
- supporting the Early Childhood Cabinet Standards Committee to develop statewide, high-quality early learning and development standards and helping to ensure that the standards align with Connecticut's K-3 standards, including standards for children with disabilities and developmental delays.

While Connecticut has a long history of assisting young children by implementing exemplary programs all across the state, there are children with high needs whom will greatly benefit by this endeavor. Through our efforts as the SAC, we are in communication with other organizations and constituency groups who have provided us with information on current challenges seen in helping children with high needs. Clearly, the proposed statewide program will truly have an important impact.

Sincerely,



John C. Burke, Ph.D., BCBA-D
Chair, Connecticut State Advisory Council on Special Education

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Funds

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Connecticut Parent Information and Resource Center (CT PIRC), to express support for, and commitment to, Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development*". These efforts will increase high-quality educational opportunities for Connecticut's young children and their families, including those with high needs.

CT PIRC's goal is to improve parents' access to information and resources regarding their children's education. CT PIRC works to establish a statewide system for the implementation of successful and effective family engagement and involvement policies, programs, and activities. CT PIRC is coordinated by the Connecticut State Education Resource Center (SERC), a nonprofit agency, in part through a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education, and resources through the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). CT PIRC builds on a history of well-documented success, evidenced by national recognition from the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) as a Partnership State Award winner in 2000 and 2005, and on the statewide leadership and infrastructure in school-family-community partnerships.

CT PIRC maximizes the impact of community, state, and federal resources by collaborating with partners including the CSDE, the Capitol Region Conference of Churches, CT's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), Head Start, the CT Commission on Children, Even Start, the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), and the Family Resource Center Alliance, among others.

CT PIRC's work aligns with the priorities of the proposed RTT-ELC project in a variety of ways. CT PIRC's Parents as Teachers (ConnPAT) early childhood program is a research-based, prevention model for parent education and support. CT PIRC also offers a variety of statewide options to get information to families through schools, community providers, libraries, faith leaders, and faith-based organizations. CT PIRC focuses in particular on serving high-need black and Hispanic families with the goal of providing targeted assistance to communities where there are significant achievement gaps along racial lines.

CT PIRC is prepared to partner for the successful implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC in any way that may be helpful. In particular, CT PIRC will assist the project by:

- Participating in interagency discussions about family engagement and involvement and related topics convened by the Governor's new Office of Early Childhood Development, Early Care and Education.

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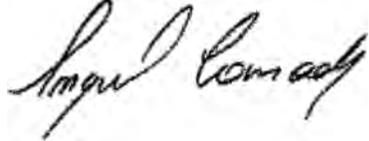
RTT-ELC Letter of Intent

October 12, 2011

- Disseminating information about opportunities associated with the planned Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) to family-based child care providers, and informing and educating families about the availability and importance of QRIS information.
- Disseminating information about new early learning and development standards to parents and families.
- Assisting high-need families with access to information and resources through alternate strategies, such as public television, radio, and other media, and providing Spanish translation of these resources as appropriate.
- Serving as a catalyst to convening all the agencies and organizations in Connecticut with primary responsibility for enhancing family engagement and parent education in order to facilitate collaboration, coherence, and effective allocation of resources.

We conservatively estimate CT PIRC's in-kind contributions to the RTT-ELC project at \$100,000 over the life of the grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ingrid M. Canady". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ingrid M. Canady

Assistant Director for Program Development



Connecticut's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Council

Council Chairperson
David Scata
East Haddam Public Schools

Part C CSPD Coordinator
Deb Resnick
CT Birth to Three System

Part B CSPD Co-Coordinators
Marianne Kimer, Ph.D.
Kim Mearman
State Education Resource Center

October 12, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

This letter confirms the ongoing commitment of Connecticut's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Council to improve early childhood outcomes in Connecticut through participation in Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiative and the ongoing implementation of Public Act No. 11-181, "*An act concerning early childhood education and the establishment of a coordinated system of early care and education and child development.*"

The mission of the CSPD Council is to be involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of Connecticut's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. The Council ensures the development of knowledge, attitude, and skills needed by early intervention/education professionals, allied health professionals, families, community representatives, and other professionals so they may provide the best possible programs and services for all of Connecticut's infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families.

The CSPD Council currently supports system change efforts at the state level by advising the Bureau of Special Education and the Birth to Three System at the Department of Developmental Services on personnel issues regarding children with disabilities. In addition, the CSPD Council provides stakeholder input on the design of personnel development such as certification requirements and professional development for pre-service and in-service educators. The Council also provides resources for educators and families of children with disabilities such as the Early Intervention video and training package.

The Council supported the development of Connecticut's RTT-ELC application through continued collaboration with the Connecticut State Department of Education and Department of Developmental Services' Birth to Three System. This application aligns well with key CSPD priorities regarding the prevention and early intervention of disabilities in children and the recruitment and retention of personnel who work with children with disabilities.

To ensure successful implementation of Connecticut's RTT-ELC project, CSPD will contribute the following:

- **Priority for Early Childhood Education.** Support the state's workforce development efforts, specifically as they relate to IDEA Part A and Part C, drawing on expertise in these areas. The Council will elevate early childhood education to a top organizational priority over the next four years.
- **Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.** Designate one of our members with expertise in early childhood teacher preparation (e.g., higher education) to join the workgroup of key stakeholders that will develop a common statewide workforce framework (Section D1).

We estimate the value of our in-kind contributions to the RTT-ELC project at \$6000 over the four-year grant period.

We look forward to working with you on this exciting endeavor to ensure that all of Connecticut's children – particularly those with disabilities – are prepared to succeed when they enter kindergarten.

Sincerely,

David Scata
Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Council Chairperson

C/O SERC
25 Industrial Park Road Middletown, CT 06457-1516
(860) 632-1485 www.ctserc.org/cspd



330 Main Street – Third Floor - Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: 860.548.1747 Fax: 860.541.6484 www.conncase.org

October 17, 2011

The Honorable Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Malloy:

Regarding Connecticut's application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds

The Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education (ConnCASE) strongly supports Connecticut's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application. If funded, the proposed RTT-ELC project will improve the developmental, functional and early outcomes of all students in Connecticut.

ConnCASE is a local division of the National CASE organization that supports and champions the needs of children with disabilities, particularly those receiving special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, Section 611 and 619. ConnCASE accomplishes their mission by promoting appropriate educational programs and services for all children; encouraging and strengthening communication between special education, pupil services and general education; developing and promoting standards of professional competence for special education and pupil services personnel, and promoting and strengthening relationships between special education, pupil services and related community services, among others.

ConnCASE also encourages the development of policies and procedures that will promote desirable special education and pupil services practices at the state and local levels. In this role, ConnCASE works to ensure that all students, ages 3 through 21, with disabilities and their families have access to the high-quality services that promote positive developmental outcomes including closing the achievement gap at kindergarten entry.

ConnCASE will support the efforts of Connecticut's RTT-ELC to meet the needs of all young children, particularly those with disabilities and the needs of their parents by:

- Supporting the efforts of the Early Childhood Cabinet's Standards Committee to develop statewide, high-quality early learning and development standards – particularly as they relate to children with disabilities – and helping to ensure that the standards align with Connecticut's K-3 standards.
- Providing guidance to the new State Office of Early Care and Education and Child Development in their efforts to improve and coordinate training for early childhood educators and program staff on health and mental health standards for young children with disabilities.

We are committed to providing in-kind contributions and technical assistance to the RTT – ELC Project over the four year grant period.

ConnCASE reiterates its support for Connecticut's RTT-ELC application and looks forward to supporting its successful implementation to benefit all children ages 0-5, including those receiving early intervention and specialized instruction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jeff Forman".

Jeff Forman
President, ConnCASE