

**BY LAWS**  
**COLCHESTER SCHOOL READINESS COUNCIL**

Adopted 5/15/2014

Revised 10/27/2016

Revised 1/17/2020

**Name of Organization**

The name of the organization shall be the Colchester School Readiness Council.

**Declaration of Purpose**

- 1) The Council shall make recommendations to the chief elected official and superintendent of schools on issues relating to School Readiness, including any applications for grants pursuant to sections 10-16p, 1016u, 17b-749 and 17b-749c of the C.G.S.;
- 2) The Council may advocate for public policy at local, state and national levels;
- 3) The Council shall foster partnerships among the providers of services to young children and families including School Readiness programs;
- 4) The Council shall cooperate with the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood in any program evaluation use measures developed pursuant to section 10-16s of the C.G.S. for purposes of evaluating the effectiveness of School Readiness programs;
- 5) The Council shall identify existing and prospective resources for services available to young children and families;
- 6) The Council shall facilitate the coordination of the delivery of services to children and families including (A) referral procedures, and (B) before-and-after school child care for children attending kindergarten programs;
- 7) The Council shall exchange information with other SR Councils and community organizations serving children and families;
- 8) The Council shall make recommendations to school officials, providers, and families concerning transition from early care and education, including School Readiness programs, to kindergarten; and
- 9) The Council shall actively encourage the participation of the public in the work of the Council.

**Membership**

The chief elected official convenes the SRC and leads in collaboration with the superintendent.

- 1) The members shall be jointly appointed by the First Selectman and the Superintendent of Schools at

least annually through a letter submitted to the Council with member names listed. Members can be appointed at any time by the Superintendent of Schools and First Selectman.

- 2) The following must be represented on the School Readiness Council:
  - the First Selectman or his/her designee;
  - the Superintendent of Schools or a management level staff person as the Superintendent's designee;
  - parent(s);
  - a representative from a health care provider in the community;
  - representatives from local programs such as Head Start, family resource centers, nonprofit or for-profit child day care centers; group day care homes, prekindergarten and nursery schools, and family day care home providers;
  - the local homeless education liaison designated by the local or regional board of education for the school district, pursuant to Subtitle B of Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 USC 11431 et seq., as amended from time to time;
  - other representatives from the community who provide services to children.
- 3) The Colchester School Readiness Council also desires representation from the following:
  - an administrator of Colchester Elementary School;
  - Director of Pupil Services;
  - the town or children's librarian from Cragin or designee;
  - one representative from the Board of Education;
  - one community member at large;
  - one representative or their designee from each participating provider site;
  - a person knowledgeable in birth-to-three services.
- 4) Membership is not limited to the above lists.
- 5) Program Directors that receive School Readiness funds, School Readiness Liaisons, or direct supervisors of Liaisons may not be designees on behalf of the First Selectman or Superintendent.
- 6) The term of membership shall be for two years and shall allow for optional reappointment with approval of the First Selectman and Superintendent of schools. Terms shall be from July 1 through June 30.
- 7) When the First Selectman or Superintendent and their designees all attend Council meetings, the First Selectman and the Superintendent vote with the Council, the designees do not have a vote. When designees represent the First Selectman or the Superintendent, the designees vote on their behalf.
- 8) Attendance at all meetings is expected. The Council chair or co-chairs shall review attendance and shall be empowered to remove Council members who have had less than 90% attendance at scheduled Council meetings.
- 9) Council members may periodically bring guests to the Council meetings with advanced notice to the School Readiness Liaison. These individuals' participation must be recognized by Council chair or co-chair, however, the Council is solely responsible for the final decisions in any manner which requires a decision to be made.

10) Resignation of any Council member shall be in writing to the chairperson or co-chairpersons of the Council. If no effective date is stated, the resignation shall be effective upon receipt.

### **Responsibilities of the Council**

Within the stated purposes of the Colchester School Readiness Council, the members of the Council shall:

- 1) Perform the work of the Council and make recommendations to the town, Board of Education, appropriate State of Connecticut departments and the legislature regarding early care and education.
- 2) Monitor and evaluate school readiness grant funded programs performance in accordance with state and NAEYC accreditation requirements and standards.
- 3) Recommend changes in and advocate for new town, state and federal policies and programs that are necessary for the development of a coordinated early care and education system that provides equal access to quality care, education and support services for all children from birth through age eight in Colchester.
- 4) Expand community engagement by conducting activities designed to bring the voices of all community members to planning and policy making for young children.
- 5) The Council and the Liaison shall share information with their sub-grantees and ensure that each program is in compliance with the policies in order for sub-grantees to receive funding as a School Readiness program.

### **Role of the Council Liaison**

- 1) The Liaison is responsible for the coordination, program evaluation and administration of the School Readiness Grant and serves as liaison between the local or regional School Readiness Council and the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood as per School Readiness General Policy C-01 Appendix.
- 2) One of the primary responsibilities is to recruit eligible programs for potential funding.
- 3) To ensure bias-free implementation of the grant, it is necessary that the Liaison remain impartial. Therefore the Liaison:
  - may be a contracted position with an independent consultant or an educational organization. The Liaison may be employed by the Municipality, Regional Education Service Center (RESC), Local Education Agency, Community Action Program, etc.
  - must be supervised by an individual who is not directly overseeing programs that receive School Readiness funds:
    - Example: Liaisons can be supervised by non-program administrators such as an Assistant Superintendent, Mayor or administrative staff not directly overseeing funded programs. Program administrators receiving School Readiness funds may not supervise Liaisons.
  - Liaisons are specifically charged with the administration, coordination, and evaluation of the School

Readiness grant in collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood. Program directors and/or staff who work in programs that receive School Readiness funds may not act as the Liaison, however, exceptions may be granted. The School Readiness Council should seek assistance from their Office of Early Childhood program manager if an exception is being considered.

### **Chairperson/Co-Chairperson**

- 1) The Office of Early Childhood recommends having co-chairs for the Council. The chief elected official designates the chair or co-chairs. The First Selectman shall appoint a Council chairperson or co-chairperson(s) for a one year term and shall allow for optional reappointment.
- 2) The chairperson or co-chairpersons will:
  - a. Preside over all meetings of the School Readiness Council;
  - b. Ensure that all policies of the Council are fully implemented;
  - c. Appoint members of the Council to committees.
- 3) Program Directors that receive School Readiness funds, School Readiness Liaisons, or direct supervisors of Liaisons are not eligible to be Chairs or Co-chairs of the Council.

### **Meetings**

- 1) The Council shall have a minimum of 6 regular meetings on a schedule determined by the Council.
- 2) Special meetings of the Council may be called by Chairperson(s).
- 3) A simple majority of the required members of the School Readiness Council shall constitute a quorum, including at least the chair or one co-chair or their designee.
- 4) Each meeting may include an audience of citizens, allowing the public to address the Council at the beginning of the meeting.

### **Committees**

Committees shall be created by the Council and appointed by the chairperson or co-chairpersons to handle a broad range of topics relating to early care and education and to handle the work of the Council. Committee membership may include non-council members. The committees may include the following

- 1) Needs assessment.
- 2) Policies and Procedures for Programs Receiving Grant Funds.
- 3) Transition to Kindergarten.
- 4) Council By-Laws.

Ad hoc committees may be added or removed at the discretion of the Council. The actions of the committees

are in the form of recommendations to the Council for further consideration and final action by the general council.

### **Decision-making Policies**

- 1) The Council shall make decisions through a shared process that is informed by the cross-sector membership of the Council;
- 2) Since the involvement of the chief elected official and superintendent offices as required, all matters and decisions are discussed openly at meetings; if consensus cannot be reached by the group, a vote shall occur.
- 3) Recommendations for funding and all School Readiness Council work shall not be overruled by the First Selectman or Superintendent or any other governing body at the local level. The Council is a collaborative network charged with planning to serve all 3- and 4-year old children in high quality programs.
- 4) Decisions of the Council shall be made in the presence of a quorum (5 of the following) with voting representation from 7 sectors as follows: First Selectman (or designee), Superintendent (or designee from Colchester Public Schools), Health Sector Representative, Parent Member, a C3 staff person, a CASTLE Preschool Director (or designee), and the Librarian from Cragin Memorial Library.
- 5) School Readiness Liaison does not vote on Council matters;
- 6) Early Childhood Programs do not vote on distribution of funds, i.e. Colchester Public Schools and CASTLE;
- 7) The fiduciary assists the Council with fiscal responsibilities associated with the administration of the grant. The fiduciary's governing body does not hold decision-making authority regarding the administration, coordination, or evaluation of the School Readiness grant, inclusive of funding decisions.
- 8) Council members and committee members must disclose to the School Readiness Council any and all conflicts of interest that arise. Council members and committee members shall not utilize their decision making rights on policies or applications in which they have expressed a conflict of interest. In the event that a Council member questions whether a conflict exists, the issue shall be decided by consensus of the Council.
- 9) The by-laws and policies should not favor one sector (example: public school, community provider, etc).

### **Amendments**

The by-laws may be amended at any regularly scheduled Council meeting by consensus of the members if a quorum is present, provided that the proposed change has been read at the previous regularly scheduled meeting and circulated with a call for the meeting.