



QUESTIONS FOR COMMISSIONER OF EARLY CHILDHOOD NOMINEE

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COMMISSIONER OF EARLY CHILDHOOD (CGS §§ 10-500; 4-5 TO 4-8)

The early childhood commissioner heads the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and oversees the state's system of early care and education for young children. The commissioner supervises the office, which administers the following programs:

1. school readiness, which funds accredited educational programs for three-to-five-year-olds;
2. Smart Start, a competitive grant program for boards of education to establish or expand preschool programs;
3. Children's Trust Fund, which supports child abuse and prevention and family resource programs;
4. Connecticut Charts-a-Course, a statewide training and professional development system for child day care and early childhood education staff;
5. Care 4 Kids, a child care subsidy program funded by the state and federal government;
6. child day care services management, evaluation, and professional development;
7. child day care facilities licensing and inspection; and
8. youth camp oversight.

OEC is the successor agency to the social services, public health, and education departments for these programs.

QUESTIONS

1. Since its creation by executive order in 2013, OEC has assumed responsibility for early childhood programs previously under three separate agencies. How has the office managed this transition while continuing to operate these programs?
2. Do you foresee OEC assuming responsibility in the future for additional early childhood programs currently operated by other agencies, such as the Department of Developmental Services' Birth to Three program for infants and toddlers with developmental delays?
3. Many programs that benefit preschool-aged children depend on federal grants. What steps has OEC taken to ensure that these programs continue to receive federal funding now that they are administered by OEC?
4. [Public Act \(PA\) 14-39](#), which establishes OEC in statute, requires the office to develop an early childhood information system for sharing data among early childhood service providers. Has the information system been implemented? Have boards of education, school readiness programs, and child care centers begun entering data into the system?
5. Prior to OEC's creation, the Early Childhood Cabinet was tasked with coordinating early childhood services among various state agencies. Now that OEC is functional, what is its relationship with the cabinet?
6. [PA 14-39](#) requires OEC to create a plan for raising the kindergarten entrance age and creating additional school readiness and preschool spaces for children who will no longer be eligible for kindergarten after this change. Do you feel confident that the state can meet the needs of these ineligible children?
7. In addition to assuming responsibility for child care center licensing and inspection, OEC must now inspect child care centers annually instead of biennially. Does OEC need to hire additional inspectors to meet this requirement? Does OEC's budget provide enough funds to hire the number of inspectors needed?
8. Under [PA 14-39](#), OEC must create a preschool experience survey for parents preparing to enroll their children in kindergarten. Will this survey be ready for students enrolling in fall 2015? How does OEC plan to use the data collected by this survey?

9. Beginning in July, state law requires school readiness staff to hold a bachelor's degree. Do you believe personnel may leave the profession for better paying positions once they earn their degree? What can the state do to retain more highly qualified staff in school readiness programs?
10. OEC may enter into memoranda of agreement with, and accept donations from, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. Has the office established relationships with any such organizations? How do you anticipate these relationships will benefit the young children of our state?

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