

Brooklyn, Canterbury, Killingly, Plainfield, Putnam, Sterling & Thompson

ARTICLE I - Name, Mission, & Purpose

The Name of the organization shall be the Northeast Early Childhood Council, henceforth referred to as the NECC, covering the towns of Brooklyn, Canterbury, Killingly, Plainfield, Putnam, Sterling and Thompson.

Our Mission is to promote effective regional programs and policies to address:

- Early care
- Education
- Social, emotional and physical health
- Family support and engagement

To ensure that all children birth through age 8 who reside in all the Towns participating in our Council are healthy, safe, and successful learners.

Our Purpose is to:

1. Collect data, identify issues, research best practices and take action to improve outcomes for Children, Birth through Age 8, and their Families with collaborative partners
2. Foster partnerships among the providers of services to children and families
3. Empower parents to be advocates and leaders in order to influence policies and services in the interest of all the Towns participating in our Council
4. Encourage active participation of the public in the work of advocacy at local, regional, and state levels for policies that promote positive early childhood outcomes
5. Support the development of highly qualified early care and education professionals.
6. Promote compliance with Section 10-16 O-R of the CT General Statute concerning School Readiness and Child Day Care and all subsequent amendments
7. Promote compliance with section 10-40 of the CT General Statutes, governing family resource centers

ARTICLE II - Membership

The number of representatives may vary based upon community size and structure. Every effort will be made to have equitable representation from each of the communities served by the NECC

- A. Types of Members
 - 1) NECC General Membership
 - 2) School Readiness Council Membership
 - 3) Leadership Team Membership
 - 4) Task Force Membership

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5) Workgroup Membership

1) NECC General Membership

Membership includes any parent, caregiver, agency, organization, business, school, or local government who have an interest in early childhood and wants to work together on the mission of the NECC.

To become a general member of the NECC, you must ask the staff of the NECC to add you to the email list serve. You can do that by completing the “Join the NECC” form found here:

<http://www.neccouncil.org/join-the-necc/>. If you no longer wish to be a member, alert a staff member in writing to remove you from the list.

2) School Readiness (SR) Council

a) Duties of SR Members:

- Promote the mission and purpose of the NECC
- Ensure compliance with the SR legislation
- Attend a minimum of 3 School Readiness Council meetings per year
- Serve as a representative for their community
- Participate in discussion and vote on recommendations as it relates to SR policy, procedures, Quality Enhancement and other grant funding
- There shall be membership appointed by the Leadership Team to serve on the School Readiness Council with a minimum of 25% parents.
- These members are identified in the School Readiness General Policies C-01 provided by the CT Office of Early Childhood.

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/GP_C-01_School-Readiness-Council-Membership-Responsibilities-and-Role-of-the-Liaison-final-2.6.22.pdf

b) Voting:

- All members of the SR Council will be voting members
- A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the School Readiness Council membership or one SR member from each of the NECC towns. A quorum must be established for a vote to take place
- Each Voting Member must be present to vote, and each member represents one vote

c) Selection Process:

- To become a SR voting member, you must be a resident of or work for an agency that serves the Town(s) in the SR Council
- When appointing school readiness council voting members, an effort will be made to choose members who represent each of the towns participating in our SR Council

- SR council will document efforts to ensure that the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic composition of the council reflects that of its town or region, as applicable
 - At least twenty-five percent of the membership of the school readiness council shall be parents or guardians of children eligible to attend a school readiness program. Such parents or guardians may, within available appropriations, be compensated for any time and travel related to council meetings, and any activities related to training, leadership and community engagement
 - SR Council meetings shall be held at times and locations that are convenient for the council members, including the parent and guardian members
 - SR Council members are required to attend a minimum of three meetings per year
 - SR Council meets a minimum of 5 times per year
 - SR Council Emergency meetings may be called as necessary by either the NECC Co-Chair or SR Co-Chair
- d) Inactive Member – if a SR Voting Member is absent for more than 3 consecutive meetings, the NECC Chair will contact the Member to inquire as to their intent to continue serving. If a member no longer wishes to serve as a Voting Member, written notice should be given to the NECC Chair. If no written notice or intent to remain a member is received within 30 days of initial contact by the NECC Co-Chair, the membership is automatically ended.
- e) Co-Chairs – The School Readiness Council shall have two Co-Chairs. As outlined in General Policy C-01. The members of the School Readiness Council shall elect the Co-chairs of the School Readiness Council.
- Length of Terms – SR Council Co-Chairs will serve a two-year term that may be renewed at the end of that term. Appointments are made at the end of each term and will rotate within all the towns participating in our SR Council. The incoming Co-Chairs will attend the last two Leadership meetings and the outgoing Co-Chairs will attend the first two Leadership Team meetings
- f) SR Council Conflict of Interest
- 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 SR Council
 - Program directors that receive School Readiness funds, School Readiness liaisons, or direct supervisors of liaisons may not be designees on behalf of the chief elected official or superintendent
 - When the chief elected official or superintendent and their designees attend SR Council meetings, the chief elected official and the superintendent vote, the designees do not vote. When designees represent the chief elected official or the superintendent, the designees vote on their behalf

3) Leadership Team (LT)

- a) Governing Body – The NECC shall have a governing body named the Leadership Team.
- b) Composition – The Leadership Team may be comprised of:
- Co-Chairs of the School Readiness Council
 - NECC Staff*
 - Fiduciary Agent*
 - Parent Representative(s)
 - One representative from each community’s FRC or School Readiness Program
 - SR Liaison
 - One representative from each Task Force
 - Local Elected Officials
 - One representative from the Regional Educational Service Center
 - One representative from Head Start
 - Other community agencies

*The NECC Staff & Fiduciary Agent membership will be contingent upon funding

When appointing the Leadership Team, an effort will be made to choose members who represent all the Towns participating in our Council.

- c) Vacancies – In the event of a vacancy in one of the Leadership Team positions, it shall be filled by another person who meets the criteria of the above composition
- d) Duties of the Leadership Team

As active champions of the NECC mission and purpose, the Leadership Team shall:

- 1) Leadership Co- Chair(s)
 - Preside over NECC/School Readiness Council meetings
 - Approve the NECC/School Readiness Council meeting agendas prepared in collaboration with the School Readiness Liaisons & Leadership Team
 - Provide guidance, supervision, and performance evaluation of the work of the NECC Regional Director based upon recommendations from the Leadership Team
 - Set the annual calendar of NECC/School Readiness Council meetings
- 2) Leadership Team
 - Provide oversight of the progress made in achieving the mission and purpose of the NECC

- Collect & analyze data to identify areas of focus to improve outcomes for children birth through age 8 and their families
- Seek the input from the NECC & School Readiness Council Membership on the annual areas of focus & policy platform
- Develop Memorandums of Understanding with partners
- Prepare agenda items for NECC meetings
- Provide input on the job performance for the NECC staff annually
- Respond to issues identified within the NECC, School Readiness Council, Task Force and/or Workgroup
- Maintain & ensure communications to/from Membership and Stakeholders
- Identify & recruit members for the NECC, School Readiness Council, Task Force and/or Workgroup
- Provide leadership development opportunities for NECC members
- Identify & leverage direct financial and in-kind resources to support the NECC
- Endorse funding proposals and grant applications that will support the strategies and/or infrastructure of the NECC
- Approve annual budgets and quarterly financial statements
- Appoint the Task Force Chair(s)
- Set an annual calendar of meetings for the Leadership Team

Every effort will be made for Leadership Team decisions to be made by consensus.

Decisions shall be made by a majority vote of members present.

3) Fiduciary Agents

- Receive and manage grant resources on behalf of the NECC
- Provide quarterly reports to Leadership Team
- Provide the NECC with the staffing and other support services as outlined in Memoranda of Agreements
- Attend Leadership Team and NECC meetings

4) Task Force

a) NECC Task Force priorities may consist of:

1. Health (Mental & Physical)
2. Safety
3. Early Care and Education
4. Training & Education (Staff & Parent)
5. Ad hoc workgroups

- will be added as indicated by the work of the NECC

b) Core Composition

Task Force may be comprised of:

- Chair(s)
- Members representative of the area(s) of focus, e.g. health, safety, education
- Interested community members
- Parents

Chair(s) will be appointed by the Leadership Team from recommendations by the Task Force

c) Duties of the Task Force:

- Submit recommendations for Chair(s) to the Leadership Team for appointment
- Attend Task Force meetings
- Research best practices; develop strategies, actions & performance measures on areas of focus
- Implement strategies through educating, informing, and mobilizing the community to take action
- Track performance measures
- Advocate for the laws, policies & funding that will support our mission
- Identify new issues and providing Leadership Team with recommendations
- Provide Leadership Team with updates on strategies, difference made, resource alignment & recommendations
- Periodically bring resource people to the meetings
- Identify other potential Task Force members

5) School Readiness Program Workgroup

a) Core Composition

Workgroup shall be comprised of:

- Representatives from programs who receive School Readiness Grant Funding
- SR Liaisons

b) Duties of the Workgroup

- Collaborate to maximize resources by sharing best practices and regionalize where appropriate
- Bring program, resource & funding recommendations to the School Readiness Council

ARTICLE III – Meetings

- 1) NECC / School Readiness Council meetings will be held a minimum of five times per year.
 - The regular Council meeting schedule will be set annually
 - Special meetings will be called by the NECC / School Readiness Council Co-Chair, as deemed necessary
 - Shall be facilitated by the Co-Chair
- 2) Leadership Team shall meet a minimum of ten times annually.
- 3) Task Force shall meet a minimum of five times annually.
 - Shall be facilitated by the Task Force Chair(s)
- 4) School Readiness Program Workgroup shall meet a minimum of five a year
- 5) Meeting Notice may go out no later than one week prior to scheduled meetings. In the event of a special meeting, every effort will be made to provide 24-hour notice.
- 6) Minutes of all NECC/School Readiness Council meetings shall be kept. These minutes may be provided to members at least five days prior to the next scheduled meeting. The SR Council meeting dates, times, agendas and minutes shall be posted publicly on the NECC website

ARTICLE IV - Request for Town Membership on the Regional Council

In the event a Town wants to join the NECC, written request from the Town's CEO and the Superintendent of schools must be made to the Chair of the Council. The requesting Town will attend a Leadership Team meeting to discuss benefits and commitments associated with joining. The requesting town shall become a member of the NECC or SR Council by a majority vote of the Leadership Team. When a Town becomes a member, they agree to commit financial support and resources to the Council.

ARTICLE V- Conflict of Interest Statement

Whenever a Leadership Team or School Readiness Council voting member has a financial interest in any matter coming before the Council, the affected person shall a) fully disclose the nature of the interest and b) withdraw from discussion, lobbying, and voting on the matter.

ARTICLE VI- Amendment of Bylaws

- Bylaws may be amended at any time
- All amendments to the by-laws must be submitted to the Leadership Team and School Readiness Council members in writing atleast two weeks prior to a scheduled meeting at which a discussion and potential vote will be held
- Any amendment to the by-laws requires a simple majority of the members present to pass
- At a minimum, bylaws will be reviewed annually by the Leadership Team

ARTICLE VII– School Readiness (SR) Program Termination and Default

If the SR Program defaults or otherwise fails to comply with any of the conditions or provisions of any School Readiness Grant in whole or in part for cause, which shall include failure for any reason of the SR Program to fulfill in a timely and proper manner its obligations under the grant, the Town or Board of Education may: withhold payments; temporarily or permanently discontinue services; require that unexpended funds be returned; terminate this contract or take such other actions of any nature whatsoever as may be deemed appropriate for the best interests of the Town, SR Council or the SR program provided under this contract or both.

Prior to invoking any of the remedies for default herein specified, except when the SR Council deems the health or welfare of service recipients is endangered as hereinafter specified, the SR Council shall notify the NECC Leadership Team in writing of the specific facts and circumstances constituting the SR program's default or failure to comply with the conditions of this contract and proposed remedies. The Leadership Team Co-Chairs will notify the SR program of those specific facts and circumstances constituting default or failure to comply with the conditions of this contract and proposed remedies. Within five (5) business days of receipt of this notice, the SR Program shall correct any contractual defaults specified in the notice and submit written documentation of correction to the NECC Leadership Team Co-Chairs to the satisfaction of the SR Council or request in writing a meeting with the Leadership Team.

Any such meeting shall be held within ten (10) business days of the written request. At the meeting, the SR Program shall be given an opportunity to respond to the LT's notice of default and to present a plan of correction with applicable time frames. Within ten (10) business days of such meeting, the Leadership Team shall notify the SR Program in writing of their response to the information provided, including acceptance of the plan of correction. If the Leadership Team finds continued contractual default for which a satisfactory plan of corrective action has not been presented, the specific remedy for default the Town or Board of Education intends to invoke. This action of the Town or Board of Education shall be considered final.

If at any step in this process the SR Program fails to comply with the procedure and, as applicable, the agreed upon plan of correction, the Town or Board of Education may proceed with default remedies.

In the event the health or welfare of the service recipients is endangered, we would follow the SR Complaint/Incident Reporting procedure policy for reporting and contact the appropriate agencies to ensure student safety and wellbeing. The Leadership Team shall notify the SR Program of the specific reasons for taking such action in writing. Within five (5) business days of receipt of the written notice, the SR Program may request in writing a meeting with the Leadership Team.

Any such meeting shall be held within ten (10) business days of the written request. At the meeting, the SR Program shall be given an opportunity to present information why the Town or Board of Education's actions should be reversed or modified. Within ten (10) business days of such meeting, the Leadership Team shall notify the SR Program in writing of any incidents and resolutions.