

Welcome to the Quarterly Convening & Policy Breakfast!

December 13, 2022

Agenda

Breakfast & Networking (8:30-9:00)

Welcome, Introductions, and Celebrations (9:00 - 9:30)

Norwalk ACTS Initiative Presentations/Panel Response (9:30-10:10)

- Social-Emotional Health Initiative
- Early Childhood Initiative

Membership Comments, Questions, and Responses (10:10-10:50)

Closing & Wrap Up (10:50-11)

Policy & Advocacy Cornerstone

Community must be empowered and equipped to advocate for equitable policies and practices

- Develop multilingual tools, resources, and trainings for members of the community to educate and empower them to engage the city, state, and federal policymakers and advocate for equitable policy change.
- Convene and support community members and leadership throughout the city to take collective action on policies and practices that are critical to the success of each Initiative and work collaboratively with CT C2C Coalition to develop and advocate for equitable policies that are driven, and co-created, by community voice.

Celebrating Policy Wins

- ▶ Margaret Watt, Director of Prevention, Positive Directions, The Center for Prevention & Counseling
- ▶ Ken Waller, CEO, Norwalk Community Health Center



We are excited to welcome the following Common Council and State Legislature members!



State Senator
Bob Duff



State Representative Elect
Kadeem Roberts



State Representative Elect
Dominique Johnson



State Representative Elect
Tracy Marra



Council President
Gregg Burnett



Council Member
Barbara Smyth

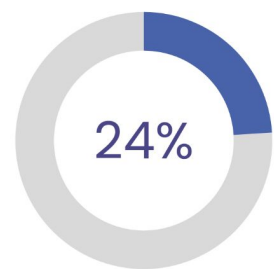


Council Member
Tom Livingston

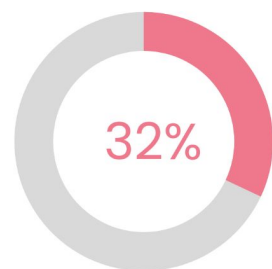
Social Emotional Health

**Gail Melanson, PhD, Executive Director,
Mid-Fairfield Community Cares Center**

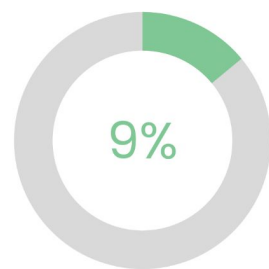
FY23 Budget: \$6.1 million



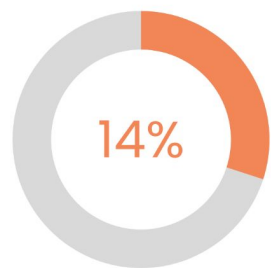
CT DCF



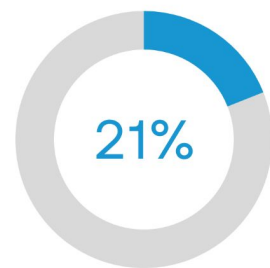
Patient Fees



State/Federal



City / BOE



**Funding Gap

Challenges

- Growing children's mental health crisis / increase in acuity
- Community demand far exceeds clinical capacity
- Shortage of mental health care workers
- Closing funding gap through private donations is getting harder due to current economic climate
- Closing funding gap only lets us operate at current capacity
- Patient fees / state funding does not adequately support operations
- Competing salaries / benefits from state / for-profit sector

Opportunities

- Increase reimbursement rates / state contracts
- Extend grace periods for clinicians to receive licensure
- Freeze testing requirements that discriminate against clinicians of color, ensuring people entering the clinical workforce can do so seamlessly after graduation
- Student loan debt relief for individuals working in nonprofits

Early Childhood

Mary Oster, Early Childhood Coordinator, City of Norwalk

Did you know?

- 90% of Brain Development takes place from birth to age 3—it's brain science!
- Early Care and Education workers are the “workforce behind the workforce”—if they don't work than no one can work. And yet, they are one of the lowest paid professions (*making about half the salary of a similarly educated public school peer*).
- The “system” is a patchwork of center-based and family childcare programs with a variety of funding streams including parents who cannot afford to pay the true cost of care.

Where we are now...

- Funding approved last legislative session helped to stabilize in the short-term but the need continues.
- State Funded programs (School Readiness and Child Day Care Contract) make up about 10% of the ECE industry.
- Statewide these programs are short 250+ educators leaving about 2,300 children unserved by a program.
- In Norwalk funded programs (including Head Start) are serving approximately 112 fewer children due to staff shortages which are causing under enrolled programs and closed classrooms.

It's All About Staffing...Staffing...Staffing

- State funded programs haven't had an increase in per child reimbursement since 2015.
- In comparison, Connecticut's minimum wage was \$9.15/hour in 2015, it will increase to \$15/hour in 2023, an increase of 61%.
- The average early educator salary is about \$16/hour (often with no benefits, full day/full year) which is about half that of a public school teacher with a comparable education level (school year with benefits).

What can we do?

- Increase reimbursements to state funded programs to reflect the true cost of quality care.
- Expand the Care4Kids program to allow more families to qualify for help with tuition.
- Work with the Child Care for Connecticut's Future coalition on a 5-year plan to make childcare affordable to all families and for early care and education educators to reach parity with their comparably educated public school peers.
- Continue to build on work done locally and at the state level on workforce development.

➤ **How can cities and states work together on this issue?**

➤ **How can the early childhood community help state and local officials address these critical issues?**

Member Questions & Panel Response

- Please limit your comments and/or questions to no more than 2 minutes
- Please keep questions and comments related to our strategic plan - All Norwalk children and youth thriving academically, physically, and socially-emotionally from cradle to career
- Write questions on index cards provided or raise your hand to ask the question yourself

Information & Action Alerts

- Find your legislator and sign up for their newsletters - <https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp>
- Early Childhood
 - Childcare for Connecticut's Future (<https://www.childcareforct.org/>)
- Social-Emotional Health
 - NAMI CT (<https://namict.org/>)
 - CT Nonprofit Alliance (<https://ctnonprofitalliance.org/>)
 - Health Equity Solutions (<https://www.hesct.org/sign/>)

Closing

Sign up on our website for our newsletter!

September news & updates

September 9th, 2021

Upcoming Events

See what's happening this month.

News You Can Use

[The Hour: Census Data: Norwalk Has the 7th Highest Population Increase in CT](#)

[CT Post: "In Their Own Words," Dalio Education Funds Storytelling Platform for CT Teachers](#)

[Chalk Talks: For Norwalk Schools, Resolving Equity Gaps Starts with a Mindset Shift](#)





Member Spotlight

ALL OUR KIN

All Our Kin is a nationally recognized nonprofit organization that trains, supports, and sustains family child care educators—transforming opportunities by ensuring that children and families have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life.

[Become a Norwalk ACTS member today!](#)

FOLLOW US FOR OUR LATEST NEWS



DON'T MISS OUT!

Norwalk ACTS

Over the past week, social media feeds were filled with faces of children and teachers returning to school. Given the uncertainty of the past eighteen months, it feels comforting to have a routine. However, now more than ever, we need to continue to come together as a community to support one another, exercise patience and understanding, and give ourselves and others grace.

We send our very best wishes to all students, teachers, staff, and families as together we continue to learn to navigate this new reality. Getting back into a routine is also an opportunity to recommit to our own self-care plans so that we are in a position to serve to the best of our abilities.

We look forward to welcoming you to the first convening of the new school year on [September 14th](#). We will be unveiling our new vision and mission statements and updating members on the plans for the coming year. In addition, we will receive an update from our race equity core team and hear from the Norwalk Public Schools about the strategic operating plan for the district.

Are you a member?
Please sign our digital
Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

Norwalk ACTS

Norwalk ACTS
MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

The **mission** of Norwalk ACTS is to enrich and improve the lives and futures of all of Norwalk's children and youth, from cradle to career. In doing so, it is our **vision** that Norwalk will be the healthiest city in America for a child to grow up in - academically, socially/emotionally, and physically. Social justice and racial equity are core values of Norwalk ACTS. We are committed to continuing to disaggregate data to report on racial and economic disparities so that together we can deploy tools and resources to support adoption of equitable practices. This includes evaluating our internal operations and systems and building our own capacity to make measurable progress towards being a truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. The Norwalk ACTS Membership, having adopted the principles of **Collective Impact** and the **StriveTogether Theory of Action** for building cradle to career civic infrastructure, is helping our community build an integrated system to address the academic, social emotional, and health/wellness needs of Norwalk's children.

Principles of Collective Impact

- Common Agenda
- Shared Measurement
- Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- Continuous Communication
- Backbone Support

StriveTogether Pillars

- Shared Community Vision
- Evidence Based Decision Making
- Collaborative Action
- Investment and Sustainability

Additionally, we incorporate these additional **eight practices** of Collective Impact:

1. Design and implement Initiatives with a priority placed on equity
2. Include community members in the collaborative
3. Recruit and co-create with cross-sector partners
4. Use data to continuously learn, adapt, and improve
5. Cultivate leaders with unique system leadership skills
6. Focus on program and system strategies
7. Build a culture that fosters relationships, trust, and respect across participants
8. Customize for local context

Our Collective Impact process, strategies, and Initiatives are aimed at the achievement or increase in the %s of the following community level outcomes:

- Norwalk children enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- Norwalk students meet the goal level in 3rd grade reading.
- Norwalk students have the necessary skills to successfully transition from 5th to 6th grade.
- Norwalk students have the necessary skills to successfully transition from 8th to 9th grade.
- Norwalk students graduate from high school in 4 years ready for college, post-secondary training, or full-time employment.
- Norwalk graduates are career-ready with a college degree or professional certificate.

New Monthly
Workforce
Development
Newsletter!

Norwalk ACTS

Upcoming Events & Save the Dates!

All links will be shared in follow up email



Out of School Time Data Lunch & Learn



December 20 - 11:30-12:30 pm

ZOOM Link in Follow up Email

Joint Meeting- Out of School Time/ Social Emotional Health Initiative



January 25 -12:00 pm

Norwalk Public Library- Community Room

How did we do?

Please give us feedback on our Convening

