

John C. Carney
Governor of Delaware
Carvel State Office Building
820 N. French Street
12th Floor
Wilmington, DE 19801

October 2019

Governor Carney:

Thank you for your continued investments in early learning, for meeting with our chair, Gary Stockbridge, on the topic of early learning governance—and for taking the first step to consolidate, by signing SB187 to bring the Office of Child Care Licensing into the Department of Education. We look forward to working with and hearing from your team as they implement this move and plan for next steps.

As you know, the Vision Coalition’s 10-year plan for education, *Student Success 2025*, calls for **greater consolidation and alignment in early learning governance**. Specifically, “an aligned state governance structure to enable unified and efficient decision making.” Delawareans still think that holds true today, as we heard via the public feedback the administration received during the PDG strategic planning process, led by the Office of Early Learning and Early Childhood Council.

- **Families often describe feeling discouraged, isolated, or lost** when dealing with early learning bureaucracy. They instead turn to family, friends, and neighbors for “formal care” for their children, in the absence of realistic support.
- **Professionals find the system difficult to navigate**, especially with political, regulatory, and administrative obstacles in place. Greater compensation and deeper training are glaring needs.

Last year, we suggested that local and national experts be engaged to develop a plan for consolidation. We appreciate your team’s efforts to bring in a national expert from the Council of Chief State School Officers to inform the efforts and to discuss the plans with the Early Childhood Council—and we encourage you to engage local stakeholders in an ongoing role.

We request that your team look comprehensively at the components of early childhood and assess what steps can be taken next. We urge you to:

1. Continue to utilize national experts and learn from other states
2. Engage stakeholders to gather input on a holistic solution
 - the best structure for all early childhood programming, services, and funding across state agencies – including which functions should be consolidated
 - the priorities after licensing; many stakeholders recommend Part C 0-3 and the federal child care grant (CCDF) be the next steps

3. Communicate your next steps and plans for FY21 publicly through the Early Childhood Council. Lay out a process and timeline for the steps beyond moving the Office of Child Care Licensing.
4. Keep the Vision Coalition Leadership Team informed of your progress. We look forward to hearing from you with your timing for taking steps #2-3 above.

Thank you for your support, and for keeping students at the center and as the priority. We look forward to hearing from you or your designated point person on the next steps and timeline on governance, and how we can be helpful collaborating with you as conveners, advocates, or advisors on any of these issues.

Sincerely,
The Vision Coalition Leadership Team

Gary Stockbridge, President, Delmarva Power; Chair
Tony Allen, Ph.D., Provost, Delaware State University
Jeffrey T. Benson, Jr., President, One Direction Insurance, Benson Development Group, LLC
Heath Chasanov, Superintendent, Woodbridge School District
Katrina Daniels, Principal, The Colwyck Center Early Education Program, Colonial School District
Ernest J. Dianastasis, CEO, The Precisionists, Inc.
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Dorrell Green, Superintendent, Red Clay Consolidated School District
Paul A. Herdman, President and CEO, Rodel
Logan Herring, Executive Director for the Kingswood Community Center Inc.
Mark Holodick, Superintendent, Brandywine School District
Stephanie Ingram, President, Delaware State Education Association
Leslie Newman, CEO, Children & Families First of Delaware
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Justina M. Sapna, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Delaware Technical Community College
Javier Torrijos, Chair, Delaware Hispanic Commission and Engineer, Delaware Department of Transportation
Margie López Waite, Head of School, Las Américas ASPIRA Academy

cc: Jon Sheehan, Office of the Governor
Mary Nash Wilson, Office of Management and Budget
Susan Bunting, Secretary of Education
Madeleine Bayard, Early Childhood Council