



February 18, 2021

**Stamford Cradle to Career Executive Team**

**Bob Arnold – Chair**

CEO  
Family Centers

**Nadene McKenzie Reid – Vice Chair**

Parent./ NatWest Markets

**Isabel Almeida**

President  
United Way of Western Connecticut

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Executive Director  
Building One Community

**Barbara Carr**

Director, Women's and Children's Service Line  
Stamford Health

**Olympia Della Flora**

Assistant Superintendent  
Stamford Public Schools

**Mike Duggan**

Executive Director  
Domus Kids

**Jackie Heftman**

Member  
Stamford Board of Education

**Marc Jaffe**

CEO  
Children's Learning Centers of Fairfield County

**Kim Kispert**

Vice President, Retired  
IBM Corp

**Alice Knapp**

President  
The Ferguson Library

**Joseph Montalbano**

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HLW International LLP

**Michael Pollard**

Chief of Staff  
City of Stamford – Mayor's Office

**Matt Quinones**

CEO  
Stamford Public Education Foundation

**Vin Tufo**

CEO  
Charter Oak Communities

**Rowena Track**

CEO  
Boys and Girls Club

**Dudley Williams**

President & CEO  
Mill River Park Collaborative

**Candy Yeager**

Board Member  
United Way of Western Connecticut

Dear Hon. Chair Sen. Hartley and Chair Rep. Gibson, and Committee Members:

As Chair of Stamford Cradle to Career's Executive Team, I applaud the Governor for restoring \$100,000 to the Department of Labor budget in support of Connecticut's four 'cradle-to-career' initiatives.

This funding allows teams of community and resident leaders in Stamford, Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Norwalk to advance strategies that support student and family success and economic mobility, with a focus on racial equity. State resources in the past have helped leverage additional public and private investment in our communities which has been critical in creating systems change in Stamford that streamlines services and resources for families and increases access to opportunities.

Highlights of our work include:

**Early Childhood:** Coordinate the implementation of the Sparkler App, a developmental assessment tool for parents and caregivers. Sparkler made possible through a grant from OEC.

**Early Grade Reading:** Coordinate Stamford Summer Literacy Initiative that embeds certified literacy teachers into community summer camp programs with the goal of reducing summer literacy slide for children K-4.

**Transition to Post-Secondary:** In partnership with Stamford Public Schools and non-profit community partners, run the Bridge to College program which provides supports over the summer to first generation high school graduates to ensure they attend college in the fall.

**Community Racial Justice Series:** In partnership with Stamford Stands Against Racism, Stamford Cradle to Career launched a series of trainings on racial justice for faith-based and non-profits created to help organizations actively work to become anti-racist. Hundreds of community members join these monthly sessions.

We're thankful to have legislators who understand the importance of the funding, especially as we rebuild for a COVID recovery that works for all of our students and families. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Bob Arnold

Chair, Stamford Cradle to Career's Executive Team

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