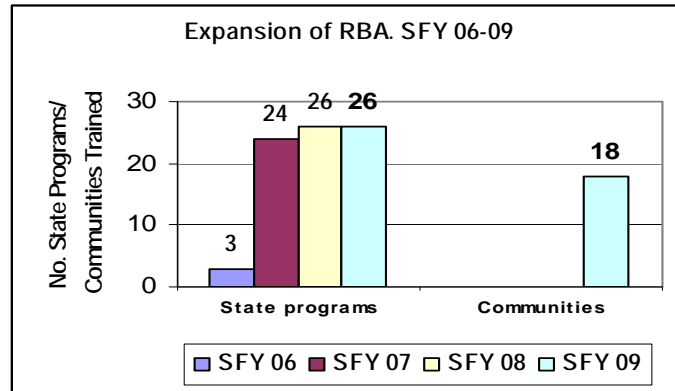


## System Report Card: Early Childhood Cabinet

**System Purpose:** Improve coordination within and across agencies serving children between the ages of birth to five, expand interagency access to essential information, and increase public accountability for existing expenditures and new investment.

**Contributes to Population Quality of Life Result:** All children healthy and ready for school success at entry to K

### Performance Measure 1: RBA Expansion

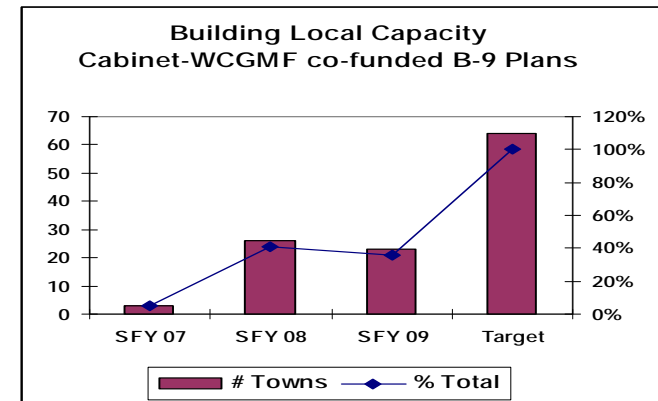


**Story Behind Measure 1:** Use of RBA was chosen as indicator because it reflects the Cabinet co-chairs' continued commitment to the expansion of a results-driven policy approach. In our 1<sup>st</sup> three years, we expanded RBA use 8-fold among Cabinet agencies. This year, our expansion took a different tact. As co-chair of the Cabinet, the SDE Commissioner has implemented RBA throughout the entire agency (increasing the "depth" of RBA penetration). With private funds from the Graustein Memorial Fund, 18 communities were trained intensively in RBA use for the preparation of their own B-9 community strategic plans. This increases the "breadth" of RBA penetration and supports both state-local data-based strategic planning and budgetary decision-making. In addition, we have presented on CT's RBA progress at a national early childhood state convening hosted by the National Governors Association

#### Proposed actions to turn the curve:

- Continuation of funding for the Cabinet's RBA TA is a lower-cost item (\$100,000). With restoration of these RBA funds or the identification of federal stimulus funds for this purpose, we will be able to continue state agency RBA technical assistance.
- Seek a continued partnership with the Graustein Memorial Fund to offer RBA training to the additional 36 communities in the Cabinet's B-9 at risk community cohort.

### Performance Measure 2: Investing and Supporting Local Capacity



**Story Behind Measure 2:** Acting alone, the state cannot "turn the curve" on young vulnerable children's age-appropriate health, development and learning. Sixty-four (64) CT towns have now been identified by SDE as experiencing lower levels of student achievement (19 Priority School Districts & 45 Competitive Municipalities). In a nationally recognized public-private partnership with the Graustein Memorial Fund and the CT Children's Fund, the Cabinet has co-invested state and foundation funds to support community development of B-9 strategic local plans. Selected by a competitive process but limited to the 64 towns identified above, 23 of the 26 communities who began the planning process in 2008 will publish a local B-9 plan by December of 2009. 18 of these communities received the RBA training noted in Measure #1.

#### Proposed actions to turn the curve:

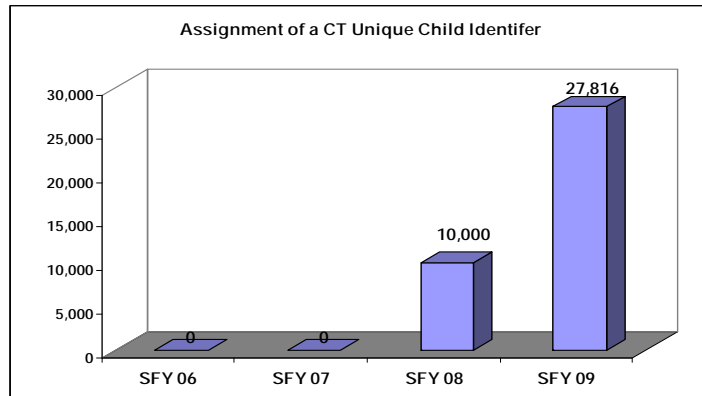
- Of the 15 communities on the SDE Needs Improvement List (Ansonia, Bridgeport, Danbury, East Hartford, Hartford, Meriden, Middletown, New Britain, New Haven, New London, Norwich, Stamford, Waterbury and Windham) **all but two** (Ansonia, and New London) have B-9 strategic plans in development. If SDE funding and/or federal education stimulus funds become available for these towns, it should be possible to build school improvement strategies off these emerging B-9 plans.

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### Performance Measure 3: Data Development



**Story Behind Measure 3:** We chose this measure because it is impossible to make sound public policy without a base of systematic, valid and reliable data. Our 2008 RBA presentation documented systemic but remediable challenges in CT's early childhood data development, interoperability and reporting capability. Over the past 18 months, we have moved forward to build an Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) that crosses state agencies and that can provide desperately needed local data by town. One of the three core components in the ECIS is the assignment of unique child identifiers as early as possible in the lives of young children. In 2008, SDE began to assign its randomly generated unique student id process (SASIDs) to young children enrolled in state-supported preschool programs. In SFY 08, 10,000 SASIDs were assigned to three- and four-year olds. In SFY 09, the total number of preschoolers with unique IDs in SDE databases totaled just over 27,800 (33% of all preschool-aged children in CT). Note: SDE also assigns SASIDs for infants and toddlers enrolled in the Department of Developmental Services B-3 Program. These data are not reported here.

#### Proposed actions to turn the curve:

- Work with the Department of Children and Families to have SASIDs assigned to all young children receiving services provided or funded by DCF. No cost
- Work with the Department of Public Health to develop a MOU with SDE to generate the SASID for all births in Connecticut, beginning on or before January 2, 2010. No or low cost to SDE

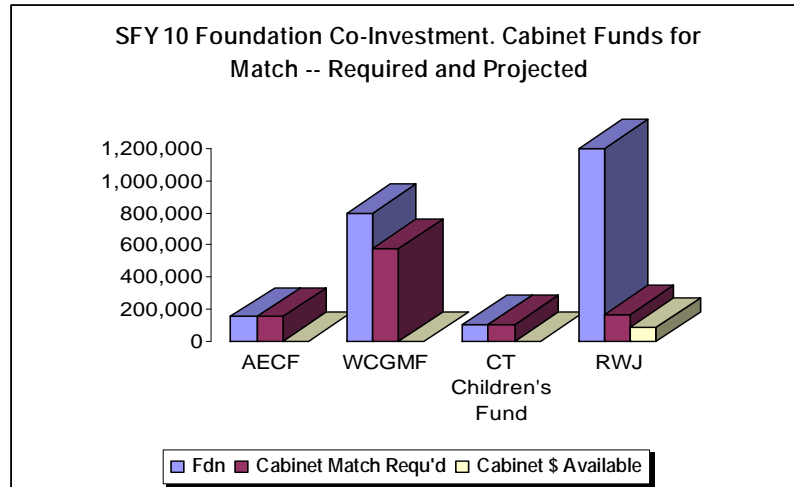
- Modify current Cabinet agency data forms to carry the SASID number for children receiving state funded services (DSS, DPH, DDS, DCF and SDE), once it is determined that these B-5 data are not covered by FERPA regulations. Low cost.
- Secure federal funding to continue development of the ECIS through money from the education and information technology categories of the federal stimulus bill. In addition to child id expansion, continue to support the ECE Workforce Data Registry and finish development of unique program identifiers.
- Secure TA the national Data Quality Campaign as one of several states that incorporate B-5 data as part of evolving (and mandated) state K-12 and K-20 longitudinal education data systems
- Secure state, federal or philanthropic support (\$100,000 per year) for CT's continued participation in the University of Massachusetts' data reporting software project. This project has 7 national partners and one state partner, Connecticut. Web-enabled, open software data reporting tools will begin to be available to Connecticut's Early Childhood Investment Initiative in the spring of 2009.
- Based on the Cabinet's 1<sup>st</sup> born cohort study, continue to track the health, development and learning of Cabinet's first target birth cohort, children born in 2006 who will enter K in 2011 and 4<sup>th</sup> grade in 2015.

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### Performance Measure 4: Foundation Co-Investment with the Cabinet

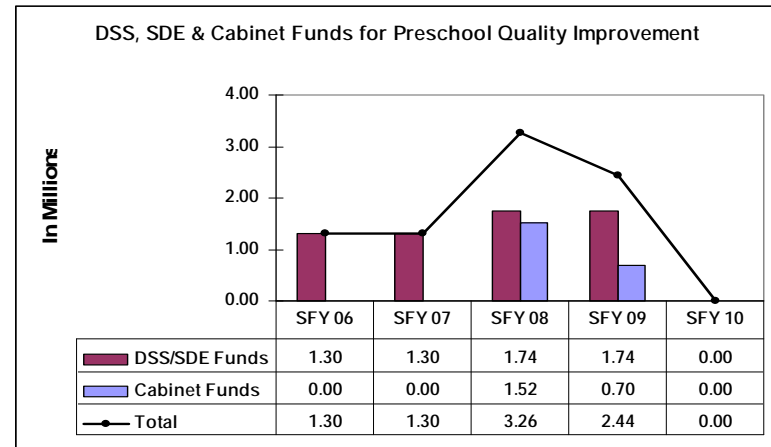


**Story Behind Measure 6:** This measure is important because it reflects our commitment to public-private partnership in children's development and outcomes, through supports to families, communities and the service system. Two national and two CT Foundations seek to partner with the Cabinet for co-investment in the coming biennium: (a) the Parent Trust Fund; (b) Community B-9 plan implementation; (c) Early literacy; (d) Replication of Child FIRST. For SFY 10, \$2.2 million in foundation funds are available. This requires Cabinet matching funds of \$990,000; however, just \$85,000 in SFY 10 cabinet funds will be available (and this is from SFY 09 funds that will roll forward).

**Proposed actions to turn the curve:**

- The Early Childhood Cabinet should identify any funds likely to be unused in SFY 09 and propose legislative authorization to roll them forward into SFY 10.
- Cabinet funding for SFY 10 and 11 should be restored by the amount necessary to secure this private foundation funding. NOTE: This would not require new funds, only that SFY 09 funds be continued.
- A review of federal stimulus funds should be conducted to determine whether dollars could be allocated as state match to these various foundation offers.

### Performance Measure 4: Preschool Quality Improvements



**Story Behind Measure 4:** All of the national research tells us that poor quality preschool programs do not advance early development among vulnerable young children and may even impede or harm that development. The Harvard Center on the Developing Child goes further, advising that we stop funding poor quality programs.

In SFY 08 and 09, the Cabinet invested a total of \$2.2 million in preschool quality improvement. Cabinet funds were utilized to (a) develop ECE workforce and QRIS (quality) plans, (b) conduct ECERS assessments of preschool classrooms receiving new state slots; (c) award quality improvement or enhancements grants directly to local programs; and (d) secure expert assistance in analyzing results. Across all classrooms rated through the SFY 08 and SFY 09 ECERS process, just over 50% were rated as below "good" on the ECERS (5.0 on a scale of 7.0) but many of these were between 4.0 and 4.9. Classrooms were eligible to receive grants of up to \$5,000 based on their ECERS score. Post-award ratings are being conducted now; resulting data is analyzed by Dr. Walter Gilliam, Yale University. Initial results based on as yet small group of classrooms do show a statistically significant increase in ratings (0.7 points).

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**Proposed actions to turn the curve:**

- Secure continued quality improvement through (a) education, CCDBG or Head start federal stimulus funds and/or (b) a reallocation by DSS and SDE of existing slot funds to increase funds for quality improvement
- As required by statute, a Quality Rating & Improvement Systems proposal was developed. Some work to further develop this proposal may be possible by existing agency staff and provider volunteers.

**Performance Measure 6: Results Accountability & Knowledge Development Cabinet Funds Uses and Results**

This final measure attempts to summarize an admittedly complex set of legislative results-accountability mandates and the Cabinet's investments, accomplishments and continued challenges in meeting them. PA 07-03 added a specific set of planning and investment responsibilities to the original legislation establishing the Cabinet in 2005. It also increased funding for the Cabinet from \$400,000 in SFY 05 and 06 to \$4 million in SFY 08 and \$3.55 in SFY 09.

	RBA & Mandated Plans Done	Data Development & Systems	Research & Evaluation	Strategic Communications
SFY 07	50,000	0	0	0
SFY 08	132,000	250,000	-580,000	110,000
SFY 09	150,000	250,000	-430,000	100,000
SFY 08 & 09 Biennial Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RBA</li> <li>• Acct Report</li> <li>• Workforce</li> <li>• Plan</li> <li>• Facility Plan</li> <li>• QRIS Plan</li> <li>• Preschool Reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth cohort study</li> <li>• ECE workforce registry</li> <li>• Data-flow studies</li> <li>• MicoViz UMASS project</li> <li>• MOA analyses</li> <li>• Project LAUNCH MOA</li> </ul>	Funding cut each year  Studies not done: PreK-K outcomes; Short term ROI; ECE industry study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Plan</li> <li>• New Website</li> <li>• Parent Initiative</li> </ul>
SFY 10	Funding eliminated	Funding eliminated	Funding eliminated	Funding eliminated

- **Story Behind Measure 6** The lion's share of Cabinet funds in each year was allocated to (a) community and family co-investment, reported earlier; (b) preschool expansion and quality improvement (reported earlier); and (c) the four core components of a results-based accountability and knowledge system: RBA, data development, research and strategic communication. Specific use of funds for results purposes is shown above. The short story behind this measure is that the Cabinet has completed virtually all of its required plans, initiated significant data systems development, and is implementing a strategic communications framework. The major mandate **not** accomplished was a PreK-K outcomes study, due to repeated cuts in SFY 09 funding. For SFY 10 and 11, the Cabinet's total funding is proposed to be reduced from \$3.55 million to \$210,000 (a 95% reduction). Few if any of these functions can continue without resources.

**Proposed actions to turn the curve:**

- In June 2008, state agencies on the Cabinet adopted a MOU defining actions to support development of a comprehensive B-8 child development system. As a collaborative working body, the Cabinet could move forward to implement this MOU within existing resources.
- Federal stimulus funds from (a) education, (b) Head Start and Early Head Start, (c) CCDBG and (d) Information Technology development coming to CT must be examined for allocation to support these vital accountability functions if state funds are not restored.