9/24 Promise Program Task Force Notes

I. **OPEN DISCUSSION- MEMBERS EXPERIENCE AND PERSPECTIEVES ON PROIMSE PROGRAMS AND POSSIBILITIES**

The discussion underscored broad agreement that Promise Programs are delivering strong outcomes for students—degrees earned, reduced debt, and expanded opportunity—even under significant resource constraints. Participants highlighted that the success of these programs rests on a combination of wraparound supports, consistent student engagement, and financial assistance that addresses both direct and indirect costs of higher education.

Looking ahead, the group emphasized the need for a coordinated statewide network that builds on existing local programs while engaging key stakeholders—state agencies, higher education institutions, community foundations, employers, and K–12 educators. Critical enablers include intentional funding strategies, robust data systems to track outcomes and workforce impact, and sustained collaboration across public and private partners.

The emerging consensus is clear: Promise Programs work, but scaling them requires greater coordination, additional funding, and a deliberate strategy for statewide expansion that maintains the personal connections and supports that drive student success.

High level themes were:

- A need for concerted integrated effort across different departments in the state and funding streams - clear leadership, collaboration and cooperation

- Providing wrap around services that students need to be successful as well as financial support

- Potentially develop a network of existing promise programs, in partnership with the state and institutions of higher education

- Collaboration - duplicate programs that are doing well through partnership

- Programs overlap - wealth of knowledge readily available. Collaborate but not redundant so that the programs work on their own

- Programs receive significant outcomes with few funds

- Indirect costs for students should be considered for student's financial needs

- It is important for promise programs to meet/interact with students to keep in touch

- Collaborate with data systems in the state to make a case for promise programs

- Public school educator partnerships

- Public/private partnerships

II. WORK GROUPS

a. Support on existing programs and a plan to implement new programs: Richard Sugarman (Lead), Sivan Hines, Ayana Encarnacion, Jeff Barry, Nathan Fuerst

b. Statewide CT Promise Program: Kelvin Roldán (Lead), Patricia Melton, Kelonda Maull, Mona Lucas, Dan Giungi

III. MEETING SCHEDULE – All meetings will be held at 12:00 PM

- October 8 – In-person
- October 22 – In-person
- November 5 – Virtual
- November 19 – Virtual
- December 3 – In-person, to review and approve a draft report
- December 10 – Optional meeting if needed (format TBD)

Attendees included:

Kelvin Roldan, Richard Sugarman, Derek Slap, Megan Villanova, Nathan Fuerst, Mona Lucas, Jeff Barry, Dan Giungi, Sivan Hines, Patricia Melton, Kelonda Maull, Ayana Encarnacion