

**ILLINOIS EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL**  
**February 13, 2007 - 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**  
**160 N. LaSalle, Bilandic Building, Room N-505, Chicago**

MEETING MINUTES

**Members Present:** Martha Arntson, Lori Baas, Barbara Bowman (for Arne Duncan), Mary Ellen Caron, Tim Carpenter (for Mark Donahue), Representative Elizabeth Coulson, George Davis, Martina Casey, Claudia Fabian, Jana Fleming (for Ellen Alberding), Phyllis Glink, Vicki Hadaway (for Ann Alvarez), Vinni Hall, Emily Harris (for Adele Simmons), Ava Harston, Kay Henderson, Terri Lawrence, Trinita Logue, Janet Maruna, Mark McHugh (for Richard Jones), Harriet Meyer, Janice Moenster, Cynthia Moreno (for Bryan Samuels), Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Sean Noble (for Jerry Stermer), Claudia Quigg, Elliot Regenstein, Vanessa Rich, Sarah Slaughter, Luz Maria Solis, Sheridan Turner, Jaci Vaughn (for Barry Maram), Judy Walker Kendrick, Maria Whelan, Katie Williams (for Joyce Thomas)

**Absent:** Guy Alongi, Gayla Boomer, Marilu Galan, Representative Deborah Graham, Senator Don Harmon, Grace Hou (for Carol Adams), James Kaplan, Maureen Marx, Samuel Meisels, Cordelia Meyer, Senator Carol Ronen, Ralph Schubert (for Carol Adams), Leo Smith, Eric Whitaker

➤ **Introductions and Plan for the Day, Adoption of Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Harriet Meyer. Harriet asked members to introduce themselves and reviewed the day's agenda. Harriet asked that the Council approve minutes from the previous meeting. Maria Whelan moved to adopt the September 18, 2006 Early Learning Council meeting minutes. Luz Maria Solis seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

➤ **Brief Updates**

**Public Awareness Committee recommendation**

Harriet Meyer introduced Jerry Stermer, co-chair of the Public Awareness Committee. Jerry acknowledged the generosity of Action for Children in funding a process with a graphic designer to create a logo for Preschool for All. That logo was unveiled at the Governor's Summit on Early Childhood in October. Jerry then presented the Public Awareness Committee's recommendation that the Early Learning Council issue a briefing paper, created by the Public Awareness Committee's Work Group on Capacity, to raise awareness of areas in the state where Preschool for All 3-5 program capacity to serve at-risk children is needed. Jerry encouraged the Early Learning Council to urge the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies to focus outreach and technical assistance efforts in those counties highlighted in the briefing paper that are in need of service expansion to meet the needs of eligible children in the region during the FY08 Preschool for All RFP process.

He also stated that in addition to the issue brief, the committee is collecting materials for a "tool kit" for capacity building efforts, which ISBE will review and assemble. Claudia Fabian commented that information on the need for cultural competence be added to the "Next Steps" section on page 6 of the document, and that providers of technical assistance should consider their own competence in delivering technical assistance to diverse groups. Claudia also reminded the group that, while the issue briefing paper is a good beginning, many children of undocumented parents will not be accounted for in the census data. Because of this, the need in some areas may be underrepresented. Elliot Regenstein stated that it is clear that the paper demonstrates where need exists, it does not rule out need in counties not included in the data.

Harriet stated that state demographic information is being updated for the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) and will help to inform county-level estimates as well as provide the opportunity for data analysis at smaller geographic levels. Elliot thanked the Public Awareness Committee and Emily Harris and the Work Group on Capacity for their work on the paper. Harriet asked for a vote to approve the issue paper. The paper was approved by unanimously by voice vote.

### **Collaboration between Preschool for All and Head Start programs**

Harriet Meyer mentioned that the minutes from the last Early Learning Council meeting reflected the need to convene a meeting of ELC Executive Committee members, Head Start representatives, and a few other key stakeholders to address how we might better coordinate Preschool for All and Head Start services. A meeting was held on January 10, 2007 to address issues in this area. Recommendations that resulted from the meeting included a pledge to re-double efforts to increase communication by including Head Start representatives on all Early Learning Council committees and to continue the dialogue about Head Start in the context of Preschool for All. This group may reconvene after the Governor's budget address and/or after the FY08 Preschool for All awards process has concluded. Meeting notes are available in participants' meeting packets.

### **Illinois State Board of Education and Chicago Public Schools Early Childhood Block Grant RFP plans (0-3 and 3-5)**

Harriet Meyer asked Kay Henderson (ISBE) and Barbara Bowman (CPS) to provide updates on plans for releasing the Early Childhood Block Grant Request for Proposal (RFP).

Kay Henderson stated that the Prevention Initiative (PI) RFP was posted to the ISBE website in January 2007. Two bidder's conferences were held the week of February 5, 2007, and over 300 attended the conferences. PI grant proposals are due at 4:00 pm on March 15, 2007. She added that the Birth to Three Training Institute network is providing assistance to programs that wish to apply to provide center-based services based on the Early Head Start Model. The Training Institute will also host forums on implementing a research-based model for home visiting programs. She stated that the Preschool for All RFP for programs for children aged 3 to 5 will be released in the coming week and will be due at the end of April or early May. Kay mentioned that she and Jan Maruna (INCCRRA) have collaborated to provide information in some of the geographic areas of higher need highlighted by the Public Awareness Committee's issue paper, and plan to convene additional meetings in these areas after the bidder's conferences. George Davis asked whether counties included on the list of those in need of services would receive extra consideration in the RFP scoring process. Kay replied that ISBE will look at need when the office reviews grant applications. Janice Moenster asked Kay for a report on the grants that ISBE made available to programs for social and emotional consultation. Kay reported that she received 24 applications for funds from preschool programs, and that the proposals were currently being reviewed.

### **Early Learning Illinois Advocacy Agenda**

Harriet Meyer asked Maria Whelan to discuss the Early Learning Illinois Advocacy Agenda for 2007. Maria summarized the advocacy agenda:

- Increased funding for Preschool for All/Early Childhood Block Grant
- Rates increases for providers in the Child Care Assistance Program to ensure parity for center-based providers
- Implementation of at Quality Rating/Tiered Reimbursement System
- Funding for an early childhood capital initiative
- Access to health insurance for all families in Illinois

### **Developing recommendations for an Early Childhood Capital Initiative**

Elliot Regenstein reported that the Governor's Office has asked the Early Learning Council to develop recommendations by the end of the week on key components of an early childhood capital initiative. He stated that, while the Council has been asked for recommendations, there is no guarantee that a capital initiative for early childhood will be proposed this session. He stated that because of the quick response required, a few conference calls were scheduled late last week to narrow down priorities for the initiative. The feedback from those calls is reflected in the issue brief on this topic that was included in member meeting folders. Elliot asked Early Learning Council members to review the recommendation and email comments by close of business tomorrow (February 14, 2007) to Margie Wallen at [mwallen@ounceofprevention.org](mailto:mwallen@ounceofprevention.org). After receiving members' input, the Executive Committee of the Council will then meet to finalize recommendations that will be shared with the Governor's Office. Elliot assured Council members that they will receive a copy of the final recommendation. Elliot encouraged any members interested in participating in the meeting with the Executive Committee to contact him.

### **Setting Council priorities, structure, and next steps**

Elliot Regenstein stated that the Executive Committee of the Council met a few weeks ago to revisit the Council's scope of work, and within the context of Preschool for All and the changing landscape of early childhood services, to propose priorities to guide the work of the Council over the next two years. He reported that Executive Committee members decided on a broad scope for the Council's work to move forward on systemic issues within the state. However, the Executive Committee agreed that the Council should continue its focus on Preschool for All funding and program implementation issues. He stated that the Executive Committee reviewed recommendations that resulted from the Summit's issue area work groups, outstanding work plan items from current Council committees, and individual summit survey responses as they considered priority areas for the Council. The Executive Committee suggested creating a structure of five committees and two "cross-committees." Cross-committees would represent the issues of concern to their groups on the other five committees to ensure that the special concerns of their target populations are integrated into all of the committees of the Early Learning Council. The new committee structure proposed by the Executive Committee is:

- o Five committees: Space Capacity, Workforce Development, Public Awareness, Infants and Toddlers, Oversight and Coordination
- o 2 cross-committees: Linguistic and Cultural Diversity, Special Populations (including but not limited to homeless children and families, children in the child welfare system, children with special needs)

Elliot stated that co-chairs from the committees would make up the Executive Committee of the Council, along with at-large members, as in the past. Elliot stated that each committee co-chair will be responsible for deciding how that committee will approach the work, but that committees will begin developing work plans based on outstanding work from former committees as well as the recommendations from the Governor's Summit. He mentioned that ad-hoc work groups of any committees may be formed to deal with specific work of the committees. He stated that the Executive Committee will reach out to representatives from broader education organizations that have not been active in past Council work, such as superintendents, regional superintendents, principals, higher education institution administrators, and others. Finally, he reported that the Executive Committee felt strongly that special attention should be paid to reaching out to younger people for leadership on the committees and work groups.

It was suggested by Executive Committee members that experienced Council/Committee members mentor a younger professional in order to develop leadership. Elliot thanked the current committee co-chairs for their leadership over the past few years, and asked that the Council discuss the proposed committee structure. Elliot also mentioned that agencies interested in staffing committees should contact him for more information on expectations for that role.

Judy Walker Kendrick asked if there is a limit to the size of the committees, and whether only members of the Council are eligible to participate. Elliot replied that there is no set committee size, and that stakeholders from both within and outside the Council can be members of the committees. Maricela Garcia asked for more information about the “cross-committee” structure. Mary Ellen Caron reminded Council members that the cross committees will overlap the other five, in that members of the cross-committee will also participate in each of the other committees. Representative Beth Coulson asked whether the Infant Toddler Committee should be considered a cross committee. Phyllis Glink commented that the Linkage and Integration Committee is no longer included in the new structure, and Elliot remarked that much of the work that that committee has undertaken will be put into the Oversight and Coordination Committee. George Davis suggested that the Executive Committee remain open to revising the structure, if needed, after it has been implemented for six months. Sara Slaughter suggested that the Council has benefited from having one agency staff all of the work of the committees. Sara thanked the Ounce for fulfilling that role in the past, and stated that it will be important to create a plan for coordination among staffers from various agencies. Judy Walker Kendrick asked if funding is available for agencies staffing Early Learning Council committees. Maria Whelan agreed that the staff work should be supported. George Davis suggested that the Executive Committee look into possible funding for ELC committee staffing. Representative Beth Coulson moved that the Council adopt the committee structure and charges proposed by the Executive Committee. Sara Slaughter seconded, and the motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

➤ **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.