

**Illinois Early Learning Council  
Data, Research, and Evaluation Committee  
Friday, August 31<sup>st</sup>  
10:00 am – 12:00 pm  
Ounce of Prevention Fund  
33 W. Monroe, Suite 2400  
Chicago, IL 60603**

**Meeting Notes**

**Meeting Participants**

*In-Person:* Carie Bires, Jeanna Capito, Bernard Cesarone, Kim Collins, Serah Fatani, Jon Furr, Harriette Herrera, Dan Harris, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Susan Munro, Tony Raden, Elliot Regenstein, Christy Serrano, Nancy Shier, Bob Spatz, Teri Talan, Dawn Thomas

*Phone:* Michele Carmichael, Karen Carradine, Lilibeth Gumia, Theresa Hawley, TeeNeka Jones, Brenda Klosterman, Jonathan Nuttall (for Tom Spyrka), Ralph Shubert, Julie Speilberger, Michael Stelmach, Meldon Vogel, Joellyn Whitehead, Blake Whitson, Cindy Zumwalt

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Elliot Regenstein, co-chair of the DRE Committee, will be starting at the Ounce of Prevention Fund on September 10<sup>th</sup>.

**2. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from both 4/16 and 5/24 meetings were formally approved.

**3. Updates**

a. Unified Early Childhood Data System

Michael Stelmach, Project Manager for JSI, provided a brief review of the project accomplishments.

*Interview Process:* JSI started the project in June and immediately went into a stakeholder interview process. JSI engaged about 35 people from relevant government agencies for interviews in both Springfield and Chicago during the month of July. In August, three focus groups were held with members from advocacy, research, and community-based organizations to gather additional information about policy, research, and community-level data needs. All the sessions were recorded and transcribed in order to inform subsequent steps. JSI has proceeded by reviewing about 15 existing and planned early childhood data systems from across the state. JSI is currently in the process of completing this review and will be submitting the document to the Core Team on 9/4.

*State Review:* Another task for JSI during the month of August was to review similar data system initiatives from five other states. JSI will report their findings from this review and submit the document to the Core Team on 9/4.

*Feedback:*

Consider engaging others from advocacy or community-based organizations to specifically discuss Early Intervention services and related data needs.

- Government agency and other program-related people were interviewed in July to capture information on data/systems related to serving children with special needs.
- A list of recommended people will be shared with JSI and will also be contacted to share their perspective about these services and the potential data needs.

Question about when the reports will be distributed to DRE Committee.

- Once Core Team reviews these deliverables, their feedback will be incorporated and there will be a broader distribution of the documents, including the DRE Committee.
- Intention for work to be distributed to the Committee to inform potential policy recommendations or other decisions about the direction of work.

b. Planning for the Early Learning Challenge – Phase 2<sup>1</sup>

Although Illinois was not awarded 70 million dollars in phase 1, the state has the opportunity to take the application from this first phase and pare it down to a doable list of activities for the 35 million dollars. There has been draft guidance issued by the US Department of Education, but there are not final rules yet about what the money can be spent on and what priorities should be emphasized.

*Phase 2 Application:* The paring down process is currently being based on information from the draft guidance, but will be ultimately determined by the final requirements.

- Governance: There needs to be a similar governance structure to what was proposed in first phase. Guiding question - what does the structure need to be to make the grant successful? This structure includes decisions about staffing needs within the government agencies, support needed to develop consortia, etc.
- Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): States are also being required to follow through with QRIS activities that were previously proposed (but are allowed to scale back some).
- Other Projects: Beyond the governance and QRIS, the state is allowed to choose other activities that were included in the Phase 1 application and fund those. States have to choose at least two projects (not sections). There seems to be a good amount of flexibility for what can be chosen beyond the QRIS. Using critical questions to guide the selection of projects:
  - Is it a multi-system project or expenditure? The grant is about cross-system building and integration. One of the strategic priorities for the state was to deepen and strengthen the integration of our supports. Want to spend the funding on projects that are multi-system.

---

<sup>1</sup> This discussion was based on the best information available at the time. The final requirements for the grant were released on September 18, 2012 and can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html>.

- Is it critical for the achievement of the strategic priorities that were laid out for the state? (i.e. deepening and integration of supports, the most at-risk children are in programs, increasing the quality of programs from adequate to good and from good to great, etc.) Everything that is funded needs to support the advancement of those priorities.
- Is it a project that could be funded through existing public sources or through private philanthropy? Use this funding for projects we couldn't do otherwise.
- Is it a project that the state is confident will be implemented smoothly and on-time as the feds will be holding us accountable? To the extent that even minor changes might require the state to submit an amendment.

The state is not allowed to add new projects for phase 2. The only activities that can be funded are those that were included in the phase 1 application. Many of the descriptions of the activities in the first application were vague and open enough that there is room to get more specific and to move in a slightly new direction than what was intended last year.

*Next Steps:* Will be to begin thinking about potential projects (within the scope that was proposed in the last phase) that would advance the data work and if there are going to be related data needs for other projects we have to fund (i.e. TQRIS). There could be a compelling case for including data projects as it would be a multi-system expenditure, could potentially be completed in a multi-year period, and will have discrete outcomes. Jon Furr will be taking the lead on thinking about scaling back and find other resources for the data work. In phase 1, there were 10 data-related projects and a lot of discrete work in section E2. Eight of those projects were about system integration (i.e. how do we establish common data models and ids?). Jon will be going back and looking at the application to figure out (1) what is critical for what needs to be achieved, (2) what has happened since fall 2011, (3) where haven't we made progress, and (4) what can be supported by some of the other funding streams. There were two projects around usage of data (i.e. trying to integrate the referral and program information into the Early Intervention data system). There is a basic review that needs to happen soon which involves getting in touch with agency staff and looking at those projects to assess progress since the first application. This process will be informed by JSI's work and will benefit from their analysis. After the baseline information is gathered, a broader group will be engaged (including the DRE Committee) to assess and strategize in order to identify key priorities for this phase 2 application.

*Feedback:*

- Critical for data to be part of decision making and has to be understandable and usable to the field. To make a difference to the system the data has to be tangible for both practitioners and researchers.
- New initiative being proposed in the first application was the creation of a statewide early childhood research consortium. The consortium was to be involved in helping to shape a research agenda for the state and assist in analyzing all the new data to report it out in different ways. This is still being considered, but may not potentially happen through this grant.

- Realizing we are focused on integration of data at the state level, but should also be sensitive to data being useful on the local level. There has been some effort - Community Systems Work Group gave data points to help with community planning and capacity building. There was also a project in the last application, named the Community Systems Project, which looked at how to pull in the redesign process for the Early Intervention data system, Statewide Provider Database, and the Guiding People, Providers, and Parents through Systems (GP3S) data system. This one might have been more challenging than others due to such factors as the redesign of the Early Intervention data system being in flux at that time. It would be helpful for the DRE Committee to provide input regarding the concepts for projects and how they might be different based on where the systems currently are at this point.

c. Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Committee

The exercise has been primarily to identify six major indicators and then a set of secondary indicators that will be measuring system health, including early care and education, health, etc. Of the six major metrics some were comparatively simple, while others were complex. There have been deeper conversations with people outside of the Ad Hoc Committee to decide how best to approach the more complex indicators (i.e. health indicator). For the secondary indicators, there will be a little more flexibility. The committee was aiming for 18 to 20 secondary indicators, but there is some fluidity. The committee is currently going through a whittling down process with the goal of drafting a document describing the major and secondary indicators to share with stakeholders for their feedback. The Ad Hoc Committee is also responsible for creating a logic model that shows what is to be accomplished based on the decided upon metrics and how it relates to the work being done by the Early Learning Council.

d. P-20 Council – Data Governance

P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act lays out some requirements for data integration on a cross-system and cross-sector basis. One of the things the act calls for is a council for governance of this work. At a recent meeting, most of the discussion involved surfacing additional issues that needed to be worked out having to do with different approvals and security systems and issues about integrating the work of different committees around the state. There will be two people working on formulating membership for the steering group having to do with governance that will meet this fall. There was question about if there was going to be a need for a change in legislation and that has not been resolved.

#### **4. DRE Committee Work Plan**

a. Overlap Revisions

A few revisions have been made to the work plan based on the overlap identified in the other committee's work plans.

Short summary of revisions:

Objective 1 – Action Step 3

Objective 2 – Comment Section

Objective 3 – Comment Section

Objective 4 – Comment Section

All changes included were to ensure that the work of the other committees (that specifically relates to our work) is being reflected in the work plan.

b. Next Steps for Other Work Strands

The committee had come together and agreed upon the action steps in the work plan, but had not decided on how the items were to be executed. The purpose of this section of the meeting is to identify who is going to take the lead on some of the work.

*Objective 1:*

Work has been moving forward with the support of JSI.

*Objective 2:*

FOR ACTION STEP 1- Inventorying which members have joined other ELC committees and who might be willing to serve as a “liaison”, if needed. It would be helpful if DRE Committee members could share with Nicole (DRE Committee staffer) the other committee meetings they attend. Nicole could also work with other committee staffers to identify common members.

FOR ACTION STEP 2 – A sort of asset mapping – there is a need to our identify assets that DRE Committee members have that other committees might want to draw on. Next steps might be for members to (1) identify (of their own assets) what they are willing to share with other committees on an as needed basis and (2) share what national resources are they are tracking that would be helpful for the committee to collect in a centralized place on behalf of the council. Possibly have a section on the Governor’s website for a folder system organized based on the committee structure where members could post an article or research report that may be useful for each of the committee’s work. As a result, committee members would have access to a warehouse of relevant research that would have been vetted as a published document. It would be helpful additionally for members to write a short summary or synopsis of the document when posting. Concern was shared about placing documents in the correct category – if members are not confident on the category, they could also send to Nicole or other staffers to post. Also need to capture existing listservs or websites about funding, grants, etc. to centralize the information for interested ELC members. Create list of member assets to send to other committees. Possibly come up with a process for other committees to identify top priorities or data needs and submit to the DRE Committee. Maybe use committee “liaisons” to collect information/needs and bring them back to the committee. Adding language under Action Step 2(a) – “identifying important research for follow up action by the Executive Committee of the Early Learning Council”.

*Objective 3:*

FOR ACTION STEP 1-3

Seems to depend more on DRE Committee members to identify through their work current research and evaluation projects. A next step may be to initially survey members about what ongoing

research and evaluation projects they are aware of and send the responses to Nicole. The survey would provide information for a moment in time, but an ad hoc or other substructure of the committee might offer a way to maintain the information. Connect with different institutions though other collaboratives or councils (i.e. ICEPR) to help identify new projects. IECAM might be able to host the database that would come out of this effort. Along with collecting this information, the committee should also be thinking about convening researchers in a meaningful way and setting new research agendas. Helpful if the committee put some thought into criteria, definitions, and taxonomy to really define what is relevant. Early Learning Council has an agenda and will guide what research is relevant. Possibly ask other ELC committee's to add an agenda item once at a meeting (but not every meeting) to identify their research needs. There are currently rich pools of data that aren't being accessed yet in a way that could move us forward. The point of Action Step 3 is to identify what research is potentially needed and then this list could be evaluated to see if it is an actual gap or if the data is there and just needs to be analyzed. Executive Committee of the Early Learning Council is where research findings and recommendations should be followed up on, but the DRE Committee could assist by notifying the Executive Committee when needed. Action Steps 4 and 5 will be informed by the information (i.e. identified gaps) collected in Steps 1 through 3.

*Objective 4:*

FOR ACTION STEP 1 -

Add the Illinois Higher Education Consortium and Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) to the list. Importance of Action Step 1 is to identify those bodies and then make sure the committee has some connection to them. There are representatives from the committee that attend meetings for ICEPR and P-20 Council. Need to be knowledgeable about who at this table is also at the other tables, which may need to happen through a survey.

FOR ACTION STEP 2 -

Add to the list: Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) and the data collection effort outlined by new legislation for DCFS Child Care Licensing. Next step may be to figure out who are the best contacts for these data systems and try to use those connections to do a short summary of current progress. JSI has begun a list and the committee can continue to build off of that list. Could also utilize websites and meeting minutes from groups for updates, such as for PDAC.

FOR ACTION STEP 3 -

More of an action item. All of the agencies referred to in the Action Step are represented on the committee. These are issues that the committee should discuss or conversations that need to be had as agenda items in upcoming meetings.

FOR ACTION STEP 4 -

This touches on issues raised about how agencies are reporting out data. Two separate parts: 1) what data are agencies currently reporting that could potentially be shared in a more user friendly manner? and 2) as new data comes online how can we ensure it is reported in a user friendly manner? For the first, there seems to be a need for an inventory of data that is already being

reported and how can that be shared in ways that are more user friendly. The second is an issue of taking a look at ongoing projects and making sure it's a value in each of the project. Next steps may be to identify what data agencies are currently reporting and finding some volunteers to put some thought into how it could be reported better. The best conversation may be with the agencies and their stakeholders with facilitation by a member of the DRE Committee. It could be the whole group, but doesn't have to be.

FOR ACTION STEP 5 -

After the committee gets a better understanding of current initiatives and selects point people to become engaged in the process, there will be efforts to offer input and support the Early Learning Council's agenda.

*This information has been organized into a "Next Steps" document (below) to highlight the action items discussed during the meeting...*

**DATA, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE  
WORK PLAN NEXT STEPS**

WORK PLAN	ACTION ITEMS FROM 8/31 MEETING	DRIVER (WITH DRE COMMITTEE SUPPORT)
<b>UNIFIED EARLY CHILDHOOD DATA SYSTEM</b>		
OBJECTIVE 1 (Action Step 2)	Continue Core Team meetings with JSI and offer feedback or assistance when needed	Co-Chairs, Government Liaison, and Staffer
<b>SURVEY</b> <i>Develop a survey to identify...</i>		
OBJECTIVE 2 (Action Step 1)	DRE Committee members who have joined other ELC committees	Staffer
	Members who would be willing to serve as a “liaison” on other ELC committees	
OBJECTIVE 2 (Action Step 2)	Resources that members are tracking that would be helpful to collect in a centralized place on behalf of the Council	
	Assets that DRE Committee members have that other committees might want to draw on	
	Existing listservs or websites about funding, grants, etc. to centralize the information for interested ELC members	
OBJECTIVE 3 (Action Step 1-3)	Current/ongoing research and evaluation projects that members are aware of	
OBJECTIVE 4 (Action Step 1)	Outside data, research, and evaluation related bodies that members are also associated with	
OBJECTIVE 4 (Action Step 2)	Best contacts for the listed data systems	
<b>FOLDER SYSTEM</b> <i>Create a folder system organized based on the ELC committee structure in order to...</i>		
OBJECTIVE 2 (Action Step 2)	Allow members to post an article or research report that may be useful for each of the committee’s work.	Staffer and OECD
OBJECTIVE 2 (Action Step 2)	Allow members to share existing listservs or websites about funding, grants, etc. to centralize the information for interested ELC members	
<b>OTHER EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL SUPPORTS</b>		
OBJECTIVE 2 (Action Step 2)	Create list of member assets to send to other committees	Staffer
	Develop a process for other committees to identify top priorities or data needs and submit to the DRE Committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use committee “liaisons” to collect information/needs and bring them back to the committee</li> <li>- Ask other ELC committees to add an agenda item at least once at a meeting (not every meeting) to identify their data, research, evaluation needs</li> </ul>	Co-Chairs, Government Liaison, and Staffer

WORK PLAN	ACTION ITEMS FROM 8/31 MEETING	DRIVER (WITH DRE COMMITTEE SUPPORT)
<b>AD HOC COMMITTEE OR SUBCOMMITTEE</b>		
<i>Create an Ad Hoc Committee or other substructure of the DRE Committee to maintain the information about current research and evaluation projects. The Subcommittee would...</i>		
OBJECTIVE 3 (Action Step 1-3)	Initially survey members about what ongoing research and evaluation projects they are aware of (Item captured above)	Staffer
	Connect with different institutions though other collaboratives or councils (i.e. ICEPR) to help identify new projects	Co-Chairs, Government Liaison, and Staffer * Current Volunteers: Theresa Hawley, Brenda Klosterman, Bernard Cesarone, and Dawn Thomas
	Develop criteria, definitions, and taxonomy to really define what is relevant	
	Identify what research is potentially needed and then evaluate this list to see if it is an actual gap or if the data is there and just needs to be analyzed	
	IECAM might be able to host the database that would come out of this effort (Follow-up needed)	IECAM
<b>DATA SYSTEM PROGRESS AND REPORTING</b>		
OBJECTIVE 4 (Action Step 2)	Utilize member connections to data systems (captured in survey) to create short summary of current progress	Co-Chairs, Government Liaison and Staffer
	Collaborate with JSI to continue building off their list	
	Use websites and meeting minutes from groups for updates	
OBJECTIVE 4 (Action Step 4)	Identify what data agencies are currently reporting and ways in which it could be shared in a more user friendly way	
	Members to help facilitate conversations between agencies and their stakeholders about data reporting	
<b>INPUT TO STATE AGENCIES</b>		
OBJECTIVE 4 (Action Step 3)	Add agenda items in upcoming meetings to begin discussing listed issues	Co-Chairs, Government Liaison and Staffer