

## Early Learning Council Executive Committee Meeting

October 1, 2012

1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Chicago – Illinois State Board of Education

JRTC – 100 W. Randolph, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor Video Conference Room

Springfield – Illinois State Board of Education

Alzina Building – 100 N. First Street – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Video Conference Room

### Minutes

#### Participants

**Chicago** – Karen Berman, Jeanna Capito, Gaylord Gieseke, Phyllis Glink, Dan Harris, Theresa Hawley, Teresa Kelly, Beth Mascitti-Miller, Harriet Meyer, Sylvia Puente, Diana Rauner, Elliot Regenstein, Vanessa Rich, Linda Saterfield, Julie Smith, Sara Slaughter, Teri Talan, Josie Yanguas, Maria Whelan

**Springfield** – Gina Ruther and Cindy Zumwalt

**No Present** – George Davis, Daniel Fitzgerald, Reyna Hernandez, Kay Willmoth

#### I. Welcome and Announcements

Harriet Meyer welcomed the Executive Committee and announced that the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC 2) application is due on October 26<sup>th</sup>. She also announced that she will be creating a small ad-hoc group to focus on communications that she will lead. This group will also take over the responsibilities of the Public Awareness Subcommittee. Last she said that the co-chairs have received good feedback on the governance document and will provide that for further input prior to the next meeting..

Julie Smith welcomed Theresa Hawley to her new role as the Senior Advisory to the Governor's Office and thanked her for her work so far on the RTT-ELC 2 application.

##### a. Minutes

The minutes were approved unanimously with no edits.

#### II. Updates

##### a. SAC Grant

Kim Collins gave an update on the SAC grant. John Snow Inc. JSI, reporting that they had completed interviews and turned in their first report for the design of the Unified Early Childhood Data System. Community Systems Development project, which Illinois Action for Children is leading, got over 34 applications to receive technical assistance. The scope of the Home Visiting Coach Project was been restructured and is moving forward. Hard-to-reach pilot projects are all being fully implemented – Elgin is doing particularly well. The Capital Development Board has requested information from top tier candidates for facilities funds and has notified all other applicants that they will not be funded.

- Phyllis Glink – How are we on spending?
  - Kim Collins– Spending has increased a lot, and is now including those that bill on a quarterly cycle. We're going to get dollars out to communities quickly. We're back on track.
- Harriet Meyer: How are we connecting to the Chapin Hall child grant?
  - Theresa Hawley: I believe they're in data collection.

- Kim Collins: Their reports have been shared with the Data Research and Evaluation committee.
- Harriet Meyer: We should get a presentation from Bob on it.

**b. MIECHV**

Gaylord Gieseke explained that there will be two new subcommittees of the task force. Glendine Sisk from DHS and Claudia Quigg from the Baby Talk will be leading Health Connections Subcommittee, working on advancing connections between home visiting and health elements. This work is important because this will inform decisions statewide. The next meeting of the Task Force is being rescheduled because of conflict.

- Teresa Kelly: Collaboration building with other projects such as IL Action for Children SAC project. MIECHV has almost 600 active cases. Researchers are gathering baseline data for the FY10 final report, which is due soon. They're also working with the authors of data collection tools, which is going to be built into database statewide. The Ounce of Prevention is partnering on a number of issues. We continue to work on statewide infrastructure. All communities implementing coordinated intake, starting to hear some very positive comments. Going to collaborate with Latino Policy Forum and hired a Community Collaborations Staff person- Joanna Su. Competitive grant research projects are progressing well. Englewood, Grand crossing, Elgin, Cicero, Rockford, Macon county and Vermillion county are targeted communities.

**c. Chicago: Ready to Learn!**

Beth Mascitti-Miller gave an update, mentioning that they've had several bidders conferences, and that their first round of applications for community organizations for Head Start are due today. She cited a beneficial yet difficult recalibration process, during which over 110 CBOs had submitted letters of intent. They're committed to the RFP website with 24 hour turnaround on questions. For school applications, they waited until November so now the focus is shifting to them, with teacher and principal outreach. Also want to reach out to parents and other stakeholders (aldermen, network chiefs). They are continuing to look for reviewers – and have over 380 schools currently so the volume will ramp up. Also working on building common language. In response to a question, Beth stated that they currently contract with about 160 CBOs.

- Vanessa Rich: The three bidders conferences went very well. We haven't received pushback – people are happy with the information that's been out there and with how well it was explained (especially compared to NYC). Feeling confident that people are on board. Applications received today will be sent to evaluators tomorrow. Scores will be return to us on 11/16, at which point we will conduct an internal review, then sit down with CPS and decide together.
  - Anticipate that maybe 10% of applicants have never submitted anything before. We didn't want people showing up who couldn't really do it, and I think people thought twice before applying.
- Maria Whelan: Can an agency submit the same subgrantee model again?
  - Vanessa Rich: Yes.
  - Beth Mascitti-Miller: The mayor has really opened up with Ready to Learn!
- Beth Mascitti-Miller: We've talked about the fact that there could be scenarios where a really high need community doesn't have a program in their community that doesn't meet the high level of the new standards and we have to support them in a different way. We know that we're going to have high need and sometimes less than we're looking for in terms of standards in an application.

- Vanessa: We want to make sure that the city is covered and will be using the Chapin Hall maps to make sure that it is. We'll be looking to see if other agencies can step in and provide similar services in some cases.
- Beth Mascitti-Miller: If the quality has potential, that's where using some judgment and common sense will be necessary. We haven't determined if there will be a minimum score.
- Vanessa Rich: There will be inter-reader reliability and using the federal model.
- Harriet Meyer (and others): A presentation on the heat maps would be great

### III. **Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge**

Julie Smith gave a general overview, reminding that IL is no longer in competition with other states, but rather in a negotiation with the Department of Education. The experience ISBE has had with RTT3 districts indicates that we're in for a lot of questions. We know that the biggest challenge is how to bring down the application costs to \$35 million over 4 years.

- Theresa Hawley: Gave an overview of RTT-ELC Phase 2 application, including requirements, work done since phase 1 application submission, overview of TQRIS growth, next steps before 10/26 and budget thoughts.
  - For each element, for each quality level, the QRIS will include:
    - Standard: description of what is required at that level
    - Evidence: description of what type of evidence is required to demonstrate standard has been met
  - Levels will have consistent approach to evidence required (with all levels requiring any staff qualifications requirements to be verified by Gateways Registry):
    - First level is licensing criteria
    - Second level—requires evidence of Registry-approved training on all elements
    - Third level – requires rigorous self-assessment in all areas; random sample of programs receive validation visit by state-hired contractor. This will require the state to build upon current systems of approving qualified assessors that can do the ERS and/or CLASS for programs.
      - Programs will do the self-assessment on all classrooms (could be done as one-third of classrooms each year, so that all are done at least once every three years)
    - Fourth quality level—the “good quality early childhood care and education” level—requires on-site validation of high quality
      - Accreditation and/or compliance with Head Start and/or PFA regulations may serve as sufficient evidence of meeting specific criteria (e.g., use of curriculum or administrative practices) if those criteria are monitored as part of the accreditation/regulations
      - All programs must submit evidence of on-site validation of classroom quality (for HS programs, state will accept evidence by qualified assessors as long as they don't work directly for the program; for PFA and child care programs, this will be done by state-hired contractor; accredited programs can submit evidence from their accreditation validation)
    - Fifth quality level has multiple components that recognize excellence in a variety of areas. Programs can be recognized for one or multiple areas. A comprehensive “Governor's Award for Excellence” type of status will recognize programs that achieve excellence in all areas.

- Teri Talan: ECERS is coming out in a whole new version.
  - Theresa Hawley: As things change, we're going to have to have some flexibility. NC and DE are working to create an entirely new instrument that we're considering chipping in on, but that won't be useful for 3-4 years. We have made a change to add recognition for certain types of progress made at level 4. Level 2 is the only level that a center can't stay at for a prolonged period of time.
- Diana Rauner: Isn't the city making its own web portal? Why the duplicative effort?
  - Maria Whelan: Because the city's system is city-specific and we're developing a statewide system. The conversation on moving licensing from DCFS has not stopped. There's a long bill that was signed but we have heard absolutely nothing from DCFS.
- Cindy Zumwalt: The KIDS contract is for 5 years, at \$1.5 million per year.
- Teri Talan: I worry that we don't have a system that identifies what it is that a program needs to move to the next level (like PA or NC has).
  - Theresa Hawley: We do spend a lot of money on quality enhancement. If what we learn is that we need to do TA in a different way, then we'll go from there.
  - Harriet Meyer: I think the fact that we're looking at a few things (rather than many) is elegant and a good thing.
  - Maria Whelan: We don't have a recipe here – if we get some good learnings, at the end of the day we have to be really smart and strategic about the way.
- Gaylord Gieseke: It's easy to get diverted into trying to solve problems and see that as a measure of progress but it may not move the needle that's most important for this: increasing the number of high need kids in high quality programs. One suggestion is to sit down with some of the key implementers for home visiting grant to discuss lessons learned.
- Jon Furr gave an overview of the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE), noting that it is supported by a \$12 million state investment and a \$100 million philanthropic investment. It's a cloud system for k-12 districts that allows teachers to have all their data on all their students in one location on a common dashboard, can search right away on various metrics and track progress for each student. They are looking to extend that environment to early learning programs with RTT-ELC 2 funds. Maybe focus on programs in those 35 RTT3 districts since their systems will be advanced through the ISLE.
- Maria Whelan: Raised concern over lessened attention paid towards actually doing something to grab/entice/get high risk kids into good programs.
  - Theresa Hawley: We have considered that community collaborations are organic, and so handcuffing ourselves to a federal grant in a fixed timetable may not be the best idea. But we do think it absolutely has to be done. We're going to need that flexibility and local buy-in for this.
  - Maria Whelan: We need to start figuring out some of these issues around getting the highest need kids into programs. And in places like North Lawndale, even when kids are enrolled, programs are reporting that they can't keep the kids in the program for any significant period of time.
  - Diana Rauner: Perhaps we should focus on quality elements because we know we can get outcomes from that and we can't use this grant to solve all of our problems.

- Theresa Hawley: We need to focus on both elements because that's what the federal government outlined for the purposes of this grant.
- Vanessa Rich: I don't get what the big plus for the early learning community in the Illinois Shared Learning Environment is, especially compared to the other options to fund that we have on this list.
- Maria Whelan: We just walked away from access! We're basically writing off the poorest most at-risk kids in the favor of making a very nice system for rich parents to use for their kids.
  - Theresa Hawley: I wouldn't have taken this job if I didn't think I was going to be working towards moving the highest need kids into good programs. I propose that we create a small, focused group (perhaps the data committee) that will delve deeper into the value and costs of this.
  - Linda Saterfield: Let's not forget that not everything we do lives and dies with this grant.
- Should KIDS still be a top priority?
  - Diana Rauner: It's not about individual program accountability – it's the critical measure: are our kids ready for kindergarten upon entry?
- Sylvia Puente: Raised serious concern about dropping the funding of ESL teacher scholarships from the grant application.
  - Cindy Zumwalt: Putting more money to scholarships hasn't been shown to be a strong need.
  - Sylvia Puente: I think there's a widespread misunderstanding of the deeper structural problem.
- Teri Talan: There's a need for us to have a credential around competencies for system building.
  - Theresa Hawley: We're committed to having all these credentials over time
- When would the committees served be determined?
  - Theresa Hawley: Before the ELC meeting 10/22.

#### IV. PDAC Recommendations

Julie Smith suggested that recommendations be reviewed at the Exec. level, referred to handouts. A presentation was given by Joni Scritchlow.

- Cindy Zumwalt: How does state-funded preschool fit in to this?
  - Joni Scritchlow: Head start and PFA have aligned their teacher standards well. This recommendation comes from the Professional development advisory committee, when you look at it, we want an integrated system across sectors: what is the vision we want when looking at center-based childcare. This is talking very specifically to a *vision* and is not yet tied to a timeline.
- Teri Talan: The Idea was to recognize that when we're creating a new system of child expectations regardless of the settings they're in, the vast majority of kids are in childcare settings, not Head Start or PFA. This is addressing the qualifications. Again, it's a vision, one that we spend two years crafting.
- Cindy Zumwalt and Elliot Regenstein expressed concerns about the ambiguity of the language.
- Maria Whelan: We need a lot more information on this. The rising prices that will result from requiring better educated teachers will drive a lot of low income into underground childcare.

- Harriet Meyer: Let's move this conversation to the Program Standards and Quality Committee.

**V. Committee Updates**

a. Family and Community Engagement

i. Action Items

1. The Space Capacity subcommittee was renamed the Capital/Infrastructure subcommittee and its scope was expanded to address transportation barriers.
2. The Family and Community Engagement committee was authorized to establish a subcommittee on Parent Engagement.
3. A letter from Julie Smith and Harriet Meyer was authorized to be sent to the city regarding the Early Childhood Construction Grants.

**VI. Approve ELC Agenda**

- a. The 10/22 ELC agenda was approved by consensus.