

# Illinois Early Learning Council Meeting

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**June 24, 2013**

11:00 am- 2:00 pm

Erikson Institute

Polk Bros. Lecture Hall

451 North LaSalle St.

Chicago, IL 60654

Conference Line: 888-494-4032

Access Code: 7198518485

## Meeting Minutes

Members Participating: Lori Baas, Karen Berman, Barbara Bowman, Jeanna Capito, George Davis, Andrea Densham, Daniel Fitzgerald, Jana Fleming, Gaylord Gieseke, Phyllis Glink, Vinni Hall, Daniel Harris, Ava Harston, Reyna Hernandez, Harriette Herrera, Teresa Kelly, Janet Maruna, Beth Mascitti-Miller, Mark McHugh, Debbie Meisner-Bertauski, Harriet Meyer, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Carolyn Newberry-Schwartz, Beatrice Nichols, Donna Nylander, Andrea Palmer, Claudia Quigg, Barbara Quinn, Diana Rauner, Elliot Regenstein, Pam Reising Rechner, Vanessa Rich, Linda Saterfield, Byrnn Seibert, Sara Slaughter, Julie Smith, Luz Maria Solis, Teri Talan, Kathleen Villano, Joan Vitale, Judith Walker-Kendrick, Maria Whelan, Cass Wolfe, Josie Yanguas, Cindy Zumwalt, Gloria Harris.

### **I. Pre-Meeting Introductions**

### **II. Welcome and Announcements**

#### **a. Introductions**

Julie Smith welcomed participants and thanked the Erikson Institute for hosting the meeting.

#### **b. Minutes**

Minutes for the February 25, 2013 Early Learning Council meeting were approved.

#### **c. Announcements**

Julie Smith made the following announcements:

- Illinois will be eligible for an additional \$17 million in Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge funds
- Arne Duncan was in Chicago recently for a NGA conference and was very clear that early childhood education is the department's top priority
- Funding was not cut to early childhood programs by the General Assembly
- Governor Quinn is continuing to look for additional revenue for early childhood
- MIECHV continues to move forward and is being successfully implemented around the state
- Gail Nelson has been hired as the new QRIS Director for the OECD
- Julie Ewart informed members that, as part of the Department of Education's support of President Obama's early childhood initiatives, feedback sessions will

be conducted throughout Illinois. They will focus on implementation. The Department is interested in working with the ELC and its individual member organizations in this effort.

**III. Committee Recommendations**

- a. Family and Community Engagement Recommendations:  
Hard to Reach Recommendations were approved by the Council.
- b. Systems Integration and Alignment Recommendation:  
System Integration and Alignment Committee’s recommendation for changes to Rule 407 and its procedures related to Oral Health for consideration by DCFS were approved by the Council.

**IV. Committee Reports**

- a. Community Systems Development Subcommittee  
The Community profiles and resource toolkit will be finalized in early July and posted to the Early Learning Council webpage.

**V. Hard to Reach Pilot Evaluation Overview**

Dawn Thomas and Susan Fowler presented the findings of a pilot study on innovative ways to engage families that are hard to reach and enroll those children in high quality early childhood programs. The study was administered by the University of Champaign-Urbana and tracked six organizations across the state that received SAC grant funding for the work.

Findings included the need to: change mindset, provide interim services, create collaborations and continue outreach efforts beyond the funding period.

Recommendations included: creating incentives for programs to find and serve hard to reach families, addressing family needs holistically, addressing transportation barriers, using parent volunteers who know the community, having staff become part of the community and focusing on sustainable collaborations that are mutually beneficial.

Members questioned the capacity of continued efforts without funding and noted that Head Start programs should already be operating under these recommendations. Members also noted the lack of collaboration between top 0-3 and 3-5 programs, the fact that this study may fail to address the truly ‘hard to reach’ families and the disincentive programs have to recruit when they are already full.

***Break for Lunch***

**VI. Quality Rating and Improvement System Marketing Preview**

Rebecca Livengood showed members the new ExceleRate Illinois promotional video as well as the ExceleRate Illinois website that will serve as the hub for the new QRIS.

**VII. Chicago Coordinated Technical Assistance Overview and Discussion**

Julie Smith reminded members that coordinating early childhood training and technical assistance is a difficult task. She noted that with the support of the McCormick Foundation great strides in moving forward a coordinated TA system have taken place in Chicago.

April Janney gave an overview of the plan that Illinois Action for Children, DFSS, and CPS have for TA in the city. She stressed the need for collaboration over competition and assured members that the sustainability and comprehensive nature of the plan are at the forefront of their thinking.

**VIII. Definition of Poverty**

Larry Joseph from Voices for Illinois Children gave a presentation on the definition of poverty. He focused on three categories: census measures, program eligibility and state counts. He noted that one shouldn't expect a match between census counts and program enrollment because they measure different things.

He suggested using 2-3 year averages rather than single year estimates to get a more accurate picture. He also noted that there is higher poverty among children 0-5, in part because of child care costs.

**IX. Federal Preschool For All Proposal**

Elliot Regenstein provided an update on the status of the president's early childhood proposal. He noted that a coordinated campaign is underway in DC to build support for the initiative and that outreach in the states to build enthusiasm and put pressure on the system will be key. The administration has spent significant political capital on this issue and now needs the early childhood community to match that with enthusiasm and outreach. Julie Smith added that the Governor's office in DC is working to keep the Illinois Congressional delegation informed. The Early Learning Council and the greater Illinois early childhood community will work to develop consolidated recommendations.

**X. Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Additional Funding**

Theresa Hawley provided a brief overview of our thinking on the additional \$17 million in Early Learning Challenge funding, noting that the Executive Committee will discuss allocation in depth at their next meeting. She stressed that the funds have to be tied to the QRIS.

The funding projects can be thought of in three categories:

1. Small pieces that were overlooked in phase 2
  - Translating some of the trainings into Spanish
  - Additional communications support
2. Bigger projects that must be addressed
3. Other key areas to consider for significant investment

- The IAT has reviewed the comparison between Phase 1 and Phase 2 to build the following buckets.
  - Infrastructure
    - a. QRIS Director
    - b. QRIS & Licensing Integration Director
    - c. Funds to support the Workforce and Data
    - d. Communications Consultation
  - Public Awareness
    - a. Additional support for public outreach on the QRIS
  - Workforce Development
    - a. Reviewing the credentials
      - i. Family child care
      - ii. Family specialist
      - iii. TA Provider/Coach
    - b. Work with IBHE to push for credentials
  - Data
    - a. Further support the unified data system role out
    - b. Tablets for DCFS DCLRS to be able to process licensing information on site- allow greater integration between licensing and QRIS
    - c. Additional support for the integration of Head Start data with the state data systems
  - Quality Improvement
    - a. Support for the roll out of the Early Learning Standards and Guidelines and the training for both
    - b. Increasing the allocation for Quality Specialists that have higher qualifications- improve the workforce
    - c. Small incentives/quality grants for QRIS participants
    - d. Coaching and support for PFA and Head Start programs
    - e. Support for Family Child Care Homes through additional QRS specialists focused on home providers
    - f. Additional support for community level systems building.
  - The Leadership Team and IAT will submit the proposed budget to the Department of Education and HHS by July 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - We will then have until Labor Day to scope of work for the additional funding

#### **XI. Closing and Adjournments**

Julie Smith thanked members for their participation and announced that the next meeting will be on Monday, October 21.

The meeting was adjourned.