**Early Learning Council Draft Meeting Minutes**

**February 27,2023**

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 AM.

ELC Co-chairs Phyllis Glink, Executive Director, Irving B. Harris Foundation and Martin Torres, Deputy Governor for Education provided the welcome and a recap of the ELC Committee meetings held to date. In addition, a brief update was provided regarding Smart Start Illinois and the PDG B5 grant.

**Updates on committees**

1. **Dawn Thomas--Research, Evaluation and Data (RED)**

Focus on State Data Initiatives going on, presentation at last committee meeting on 2/23/23 by Carole Robertson Center for Learning (Ashley Nazarka and Sonja Knight).

Phyllis Glink asked about the committee’s work ahead, ultimate goals and objectives for data initiatives? Dawn responded, how we can present and share and use the data and make it accessible and user friendly data all around, through mechanisms like ILDS 2.0 and other work going on for accessible public portals. Data sources need to consider race, ethnicity, and be reliable and valid. The former Data, Research, and Evaluation (DRE) committee worked on a set of research questions. The new committee hopes to contribute to the research questions and research agenda.

1. **Bela Mote-- Quality and Workforce**

The committee identified three areas of work: Compensation policy; workforce recruitment and development; and program quality standards, supports, and funding. Work on compensation policy began by reviewing initiatives already underway. The committee reviewed the CELFE salary scale for cost modeling, the ExceleRate Child Care Center Pilot’s “foundational contracts” to support salaries and quality improvement, and the IDHS thinking about Smart Start Workforce Contracts, Smart Start Quality Contracts, and future layered funding contracts. Tentative “guiding principles” to be discussed at the March meeting include:

* 1. A systemic mechanism to fund compensation not dependent on special funding
  2. Move to base compensation, not just salary supplements
  3. Include benefits, not just wages
  4. No positions pay less than living wage

1. **Shauna Ejeh and Bethany Patten-- Integration and Alignment**

The committee’s biggest priority is regional community infrastructure. Now contracting with ISBE for a consultant (through PDG B-5 funding) to help with coordination of community equity and access work. The committee wants to meet with RED around GEAM (Geographic Equity and Access Map) now known as FEM (Funding Equity Map). What does this mean for the IRC committee so that they can align data?

ISBE fiscal and legal teams are looking at the proposed scope of work, scheduling a meeting for Thursday, March 2, 2023.

IRC is working with GOECD to consider intersectional work between committees and set up joint committee chair meetings.

1. **Joanna Su-- Health and Home Visiting**

Committee priorities include recruitment & retention of workforce, equity data enhancement, and improved access to healthcare services and system linkages. Next meeting will also discuss the proposed expansion of home visiting and expansion of Early Intervention. Committee will also be looking at Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative Transformation report.

1. **Dena Chapman and Stacee Leatherman-- Family Advisory Committee**

Last meeting the committee hosted a guest speaker, Ann Kremer from Early CHOICES, on inclusion of children with disabilities and developmental delays, including goals and identified barriers. Excellent meeting, learned a lot, help guide work related to inclusion goal. Members also participated in PDG B-5 evaluation focus groups with the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

1. **Trish Rooney and Carisa Hurley-- Community Equity and Access Committee**

The committee charge was approved. The committee will focus on: Increasing access to prenatal to school age services; identifying programs and policy to ensure equity and access in high quality programs; and measuring equity; and creating opportunities for parents to inform strategies and know what is going on. Next meeting scheduled for March 15, 2023 to align objectives with the Governor’s budget proposal. Meeting times vary from day times and evening times.

**Presentation: Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (I/ECMHC)** -La’Tasha Lee (GOECD, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Manager and Wendy McCullough (Consultant) presentation: Snapshot Systems Guide to accessing I/ECMHC services for children under 6, strengths and barriers.

Questions and discussion:

Who are the professionals who are doing the identification of children who are at risk or potentially have disabilities/mental health needs? Answer: Parents/Guardians/ Pediatricians/ Home Visitors/ Child Care providers

Rep Lilly- [We need greater] Awareness of I/ECMH [by] all adults that work with young children. Where will it show up in the budget? Are we looking across the state budget items? Answer: State agencies are working to coordinate, and more work on looking across systems will take place.

***Group Discussion following Break-Out Group Reports***

Advocates requested information on where ISBE expansion funding from recent years has gone. Legislators have been asking how it was used.

Discussion of the need for resources to support infant toddler services. ISBE stated that 25% of new Early Childhood Block Grant funding (ISBE) must go to infant toddler services. Also, IDHS is considering this question for its workforce contracts. We can think more about family child care as a provider of Prevention Initiative (0-3) services. ISBE is able to fund family child care providers.

Representative Lilly highlighted the need for more public communication on Smart Start and early learning opportunities is needed. Finally, the group discussed the need for a central source or information for the field on what questions being considered by the State and who is working on them.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:55 PM