

QUALITY & WORKFORCE COMMITTEE, ELC MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 2ND, 2024: 1:00PM-2:30PM-VIRTUAL

Committee Charge: Address the urgent need to develop, recruit and retain a qualified, diverse workforce representative of the communities served. Identify steps to mitigate the systemic workforce problems without compromising high standards, including accessible pathways and equitable compensation to stabilize the workforce and enhance the public's perception of early educators. Identify and support efforts to improve program quality using a racial equity lens.

Present:

CO-CHAIRS: Bela Motè and Christi Chadwick

ISBE Staffer: Mary Kestel

MEMBERS: Brynn Seibert, Cathy Mannen, Cerathel Burgess-Burnett, Courtney Hatcher, Dan Harris, Shauna Ejeh, Josie Yanguas, Sarah Slaughter, Sergio Hernandez, Bryan Stokes, Carisa Hurley Davis, Denise Monnier, Rochelle Golliday, Ruth Kimble, Sergio Hernandez.

OTHERS PRESENT: Ann Erickson, Aubry Stapleton, Beata Skorusa, Veronica Cortez, Debrah Clark, Angela Farwig, Gabriela Manzanara Jule, Lori Harrison, Hollie Hoole, Jill Andrews, Kathleen Wildman, Lynn Burgett, Marie Masterson, Maya Portillo, Ms. Monique, Shannon Ellison, Taylor Seal, Wendy Connell, Michelle Wood.

Welcome and Introductions

Christi Chadwick and Bela Moté welcomed attendees. Committee members and other participants put their names and affiliations in the Chat.

Minutes of July 2023 meeting:

Christi asked for any corrections or discussion of the July meeting minutes. There were no corrections, and the minutes were approved.

Recap of Committee Work to Date and Last Meeting:

Bela opened by mentioning that it has been a long time since the committee met. There is a lot to recap such as talk about advances in the state and talk about the single unified ECE agency.

Highlights of Previous Work

- Compensation and how it is tied to benefits.
- Presentation about benefits.
- Moved forward the ExceleRate Framework that was recommended

We may need to consider movement towards the workforce now.

Questions and Discussions

Bela opened the conversation up for members to ask questions and discuss movement forward. Jill Andrews wondered if SEIU have been brought into discussions yet. Brynn from SEIU mentioned members are ratifying the current agreement and will share information once everything passes and they are excited to include Family Childcare. Josie mentioned looking into teacher shortage and how to make

connections. Sara S. Wondered if there will be a specific committee or this committee will be used with the Unified ECE agency. Bela was not sure about that. This will be clarified more as the movement continues as support is created for the unified agency. They will target the frontline workforce and parent input. Bela asked if the committee needed to revisit what the focus is for the committee such as, what other information is needed for benefits, or for the workforce be about. A question from Beata, is there a grant to support abroad teachers? Josie stated ISBE does have a visiting international program. Cathy M. School districts are supporting visiting teachers differently. Some Districts are working with third party companies for teachers.

Noted in Comments: Include information on the EC Bills currently being considered that will change the workforce, IAFC's bill that would raise the CCAP eligibility to 300% FPL for the teaching staff.

Brian mentioned the question, what do we know about the state of the workforce to make recommendations? Such as, here is what is happening in CCAP centers, CBOs and what they are doing. Bela mentioned that the next step may be to see when the next workforce updates through INCCRRA and what they are working on. Others stated IDHS and DCFS may collect this information as well. Christi mentioned it is difficult to get the PEL numbers due to ISBE not tracking.

Noted in comments: Carisa H., INCCRRA tracks in the Gateways Registry ECE professionals with the PEL with early Childhood Endorsement and are currently teaching in a 0-3 and/or 3-5 early childhood program funded by ISBE.

Noted in Comments: Debrah C. We want well-educated teachers, but experience is just as important. How do we ensure we are not pushing out our seasoned Educators who may not have the credits, who are older and may not wish to return to school and still pay them a wage that will keep them in the field?

Bela, thinking about the new agency, what are the recommendations? What does it look like?

RECOMMENDATIONS BROUGHT FORWARD

- A Technology line to collect more data to pull all respective agencies to get all pieces needed throughout the state and workforce
- Bring the birth to 5 team in and get the region and local level of the ECE workforce.
- Supports with Data and Technology for movements forward
- Include more frontline workers and parents

IDENTIFIED TOPICS AND DISCUSSION FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

Christi asked the committee about their thoughts and ideas for future ideas.

1. Bethany Patten (IDHS) Guest speaker: Smart Start Contract Development at IDHS
2. Invite an expert on benefits packages for center-based programs. (Suggestion being sent to Christi)
3. Parents as mentors look at it as a pipeline of paraprofessionals who then would become educators.
4. Explore options to have an umbrella policy for CBOs to share the cost of health insurance and benefits.
5. Marketplace Speaker

6. Illinois Department of Insurance speaker to talk about the next steps with the new Health Benefits Exchange Law.
7. Think about pipeline to get 2,4,6-year institutions getting people in our field.
8. Look into how many teachers who used the Gateways ECE Credential level 5 working in ECE program until they obtain a PEL with ECE endorsement do so, and how long does it take? (Suggestion came from comments.)

UPDATES:

ECACE update: Christi C. Gave a presentation on the ECACE Consortium and scholarship initiative and how it supports the ECE workforce. Workforce, Mentors, Financial Relief updates and how it is supporting Smart Start goals. Reported the success of the scholarship meeting the capacity for awards that can be disbursed.

Public Comment: There were no public comments.

NEXT STEPS & MEETING:

Bela and Christi will review comments/recommendations/ suggestions to set up topics of discussion for the next meeting. Next meeting will be June 4th, 1:00pm

We envision Illinois as a place where every young child – regardless of race, ethnicity, income, language, geography, ability, immigration status, or other circumstance – receives the strongest possible start to life so that they grow up safe, healthy, happy, ready to succeed, and eager to learn.

Racial Equity Definition: A racially equitable society values and embraces all racial/ethnic identities. In such a society, one's racial/ethnic identity (particularly Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Asian) is not a factor in an individual's ability to prosper.

An early learning system that is racially equitable is driven by data and ensures that:

- Every young child and family regardless of race, ethnicity, and social circumstance has everything s/he/they need to develop optimally.
- Resources, opportunities, rewards, and burdens are fairly distributed across groups and communities so that those with the greatest challenges are adequately supported and not further disadvantaged; and
- Systems and policies are designed, reframed, or eliminated to promote greater justice for children and families.

Racial Equity Priorities:

- 1) Align and standardize race/ethnicity data collection and reporting.
- 2) Evaluate and identify whether processes for distributing resources exacerbate racial disparities, including agency contracting.
- 3) Address race/ethnicity disparities in terms of workforce compensation and advancement.
- 4) Eliminate racial/ethnic disparities for children participating in all programs that contribute to school readiness and life success by addressing racial disparities in enrollment in preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds and in prenatal to age 3 services.