

**Transition Advisory Committee
Meeting 6
May 21, 2024, 5:30-7:00pm CT
Public attendee link:**

https://aftonpartners.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_REyUOw7OQgGVqg8PRqb3-Q

In attendance:

Transition Advisory Committee (TAC) members:

Makisha Binns (Kiddos Care), Katie Cobb (Peoria Public Schools), Johnna Darragh-Ernst (Heartland Community College), Shontae Fennoy (East St. Louis School District 89), Rochelle Golliday (Cuddle Care, Inc), Keshia Harris (Parent, We, the Village Coalition), LaKeesha James-Smith (Parent, Family Advisory Council), Marcy Mendenhall (SAL Family and Community Services), Bela Moté – Chair (Carole Robertson Center), Dara Munson (Family Focus), Mariana Osoria (Chicago of Chicago), Angel Powell-Muldrow (Early Childhood Center Principal), Edgar Ramirez (Chicago Commons), Robin Steans (Advance Illinois), Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro (Latino Policy Forum)

State Agency Members and Consultants:

Megan Bock (Afton Partners), Aressa Coley (Afton Partners), Kristen Garcia (Afton Partners), Liz Garza (Afton Partners), Katie Reed (Afton Partners), Siri Smillie (Afton Partners), Ann Whalen (Early Childhood Transition Director)

Kendall Miller-Roberts (ChiByDesign), Chris Rudd (ChiByDesign), Tommie Collins (ChiByDesign), Justin Walker (ChiByDesign)

Members of the public: 57

Minutes

1. Welcome, Introductions, Listening Session Update – Bela Moté (13 minutes)

Bela Moté began the meeting by welcoming TAC members and public participants, outlining virtual meeting protocols, and reminding everyone that meeting minutes and materials are available on the new [Transition website](#) in English and Spanish. Feedback was encouraged through the feedback form.

The meeting goals and agenda included:

- Department of Early Childhood Legislation updates
- Transition Ad Hoc Workgroup updates
- TAC Equity Framework update
- ChiByDesign Co-Design Workshop 1 update
- Small Group Discussions
- Quarterly Pulse Check Survey results
- Next steps and closing

Bela celebrated the passing of Senate Bill 1 and invited TAC members to share their reactions using emojis in the chat. Robin Steans (TAC member) commented on the historic nature of the event,

acknowledging the beginning of more work and congratulating Bela and Ann for their efforts in championing the bill.

Bela reviewed the TAC's charge to synthesize and make meaning of stakeholder input and highlighted that all the efforts and meaning making will lead to a report due in December 2025.

Bela recapped the previous Friday's listening session, noting that 178 stakeholders participated. Key insights included the critical role of data in decision-making, the need for equitable and comprehensive data, the importance of workforce trend data, and the necessity for inclusive engagement and transparent communication to prepare for the upcoming changes to the ECE landscape. Bela encouraged members to promote future listening sessions for broader representation.

Marcy Mendenhall (TAC member) offered support to other TAC members needing help advertising the listening session to their networks. Ann emphasized the goal of gathering diverse feedback and mentioned the open feedback form. She also confirmed the scheduling of listening sessions for the year.

2. Department of Early Childhood Legislation & Workgroup Updates –Ann Whalen (4 minutes)

Bela turned it over to Ann to give Department of Early Childhood Legislation and Workgroup updates. Ann shared that Senate Bill 1 passed out of the Illinois General Assembly, thanks to years of advocacy. She clarified that the clerk has up to 30 days to send the bill to the governor, who then has 60 days to sign it. Updates will follow as more details become available.

Ann shared that the Transition is entering Phase 2, focusing on building the capacity of the new agency and initiating crucial conversations. The TAC is guiding this process, centering on the voices of parents and providers. Ann shared that there will be multiple touchpoints and feedback loops, involving advisory groups such as the Early Learning Council and Early Intervention Interagency Council. Additionally, Ann shared that three co-design workshops have been launched by the ChiByDesign team, and additional workgroups will begin this summer based on feedback heard from the co-design workshops. Recommendations from these workgroups will lead to further legislation in Spring 2025-2026 for program integration and realignment.

3. Transition Ad Hoc Workgroup Updates – Ann Whalen and Aressa Coley (5 minutes)

TAC workgroup members provided updates on the status of their workgroups.

Data, Analytics & Insights

Marcy Mendenhall and Robin Steans shared that their workgroup aims to build strategic foundations for the data and learning functions in the new agency. Over 65% of members represent providers, parents, or members of the workforce. They emphasized integrating diverse voices across all committees and ensuring these voices are reflected in data analytics and insights. Robin emphasized the importance of using foundational data to support progress. Monthly meetings and a survey to develop guiding principles among the workgroup are planned.

Supporting Multilingual Learners

Rebecca Vanderlack-Navarro (TAC member) and Edgar Ramirez (TAC member) shared that the SML workgroup's focus is on multilingual learners. Goals include developing a common identification method across programs, providing cultural linguistic supports, and creating seamless transitions from early

childhood to K-12. Three parents and three educators have been invited to participate. They aim to meet their goals by December 2024. Rebecca expressed excitement about setting national priorities for multilingual learners, and Edgar emphasized the importance of centering parent and teacher voices in this iterative process.

Supporting Children with Special Needs

Johnna Darragh-Ernst (TAC member) shared that the SCSN workgroup is focused on supporting children with special needs by promoting inclusion, improving social-emotional skills, and creating seamless transitions. Invitations have been extended to providers, parents, state representatives, and advocates. She shared that the process is iterative, focused on the voices of children with special needs and their caregivers. Collaboration with ChiByDesign workshops will inform future work.

4. TAC Equity Framework Update – Lakeesha James-Smith (20 minutes)

Lakeesha James-Smith (TAC member) provided an update on the development of the TAC Equity Workgroup's development of an equity framework. She shared that the workgroup met twice since the last TAC meeting in April to discuss the feedback received, incorporate changes to the framework, and consider additional aspects for its future use. The feedback received was categorized into four major themes:

1. **Framework Changes:** Addressing specific edits and tweaks needed.
2. **Supplemental Materials:** Providing additional resources to support understanding of the framework, including a glossary for key terms.
3. **Implementation Ideas:** Shaping ways to integrate the framework into our processes.
4. **Out-of-Scope Comments:** Feedback that falls outside the TAC's current focus.

The equity workgroup decided to make the following changes to the framework after receiving the TAC's feedback:

- Added "unhoused, immigration status, or any other protected class or circumstance" to the framework's opening sentence and the "Systems Outcomes" section for inclusivity beyond SES.
- Included "and the intersections between and amongst them" in the second paragraph to address intersectionality, with the term defined in the glossary.
- Updated the first bullet under "mindset shift" to emphasize the system's impact on adults significant in children's lives, such as caregivers, parents, and teachers.

Next steps for the equity workgroup include conducting a crosswalk of the TAC's racial equity definition to align the framework accordingly, create a simplified visual of the framework for broader understanding, and develop a glossary for racial equity-related terms and other concepts in the framework that require clarification. One of the areas of focus of the TAC meeting in June will be to discuss the framework's application in stakeholder engagement.

5. Reflection & Feedback on the Draft Framework – Aressa Coley (3 minutes)

TAC members were instructed to take 3 minutes to reflect on the changes made to the framework and decide if they were comfortable moving forward with the latest draft. All TAC members agreed to move forward with current state of the framework.

6. **ChiByDesign Update & Small Group Discussion**—ChiByDesign (40 minutes)

Ann gave a shoutout and appreciation to TAC members for workshop referrals. She shared that the first co-design workshop had an amazing group and introduced ChiByDesign project lead, Tommie Collins, to debrief what was heard.

Tommie shared that the first workshop's goal was to identify the connections between family and provider stories, systems, and policies. Key learnings included:

- **Ecosystem Navigation and Service Accessibility:** Parents are uncertain about navigating the ecosystem and resources.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** Parents lack appropriate knowledge to make informed decisions about their children's education and development.
- **Provider Learning:** Providers face a workforce shortage.

Key challenges heard included:

- Need for cross-system collaboration
- Lengthy enrollment processes
- Quality assurance
- Mental health supports
- Parent-provider dynamics
- Resource distribution
- Learning and development for diverse learners
- Sustainability

Key opportunities included:

- Better interstate collaboration between state and local providers
- Fostering trust and relationships between educators and parents
- Simplifying and streamlining providers' funding sources
- Enabling parents/children to utilize available supports and services

A post-workshop survey showed that 92% of co-designers felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and felt that the workshop was a good use of their time. The next steps involve planning and delivering a 2.5

hour workshop for 17 co-designers to imagine how the new agency will serve providers, parents, and children.

Tommie invited TAC members to ask questions, and Marcy Mendenhall inquired about parent compensation (they received stipends) and how to center equity more meaningfully as a TAC moving forward. Feedback heard during the workshop included focusing on the experiences of immigrant families, developmentally disabled families, and the intersections of various identities. One workshop participant noted racism as a problem, emphasizing the need for tailored activities to explore such issues. Some surprising insights included the relationship between ECE and employment: Parents and providers discussed challenges around sustainability, running a center, and keeping a child in ECE, all linked to employment. This emerged as an area for further exploration. Additionally, Journey mapping activity revealed parents' concerns about providers and pointed to systemic issues.

TAC members were split into two groups to reflect on the following questions:

- What should the new agency prioritize to ensure the needs of all parents, children, and providers are addressed?
- What new experiences, programming, etc., should exist w./in the new agency?
- What should safety, well-being, transparency, etc., look like in ECE?

7. Quarterly Pulse Check Survey Results – Bela Mote (3 minutes)

Bela concluded the meeting by sharing results from the Pulse Check survey that was sent to the TAC to gather feedback for meeting preferences. The results showed that a majority of TAC members are content with the consistency in frequency and length of meetings. 78% of members indicate interest in an in-person TAC meeting. 69% of members believe the TAC is living up to community agreements. General areas for improvement include:

- Utilize TAC members to gather input in communities with limited tech access.
- Inform local school districts and community leaders about ongoing work.
- Provide more updates during meetings; Reduce reporting and prioritize engagement among members and with the consulting team.
- Ensure members are informed about meeting dates and opportunities for stakeholder input.

8. Looking ahead: summer regional engagement – Ann Whalen (3 minutes)

Ann previewed the summer regional engagements. These are proposed regional listening sessions that will be conducted throughout the summer and previewed the anticipated launch of additional workgroups. Ann previewed a partnership with the TAC to cohost the listening sessions, which will be discussed in more detail during June's TAC meeting. Ann shared that they are in the process of putting together a toolkit/protocols of how to collect information and feedback.

She also shared that the ChiByDesign workshops and TAC listening sessions will inform the priorities for these regional listening sessions and future workgroups.

Next Meeting Details:

Date: Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Time: 5:30 - 7 pm