

Illinois Early Learning Council
Executive Committee Special Meeting

July 6th, 2015

11:00am – 2:00pm

Chicago: JRTC, 14th Floor (100 W. Randolph)

Springfield: ISBE V-Tel Rooms (100 N. 1st Street)

Conference Link: 888-494-4032

Access Code: 6113045703

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Participants

In-Person: Jeanna Capito, George Davis, Gaylord Gieseke, Phyllis Glink, Dan Harris, Theresa Hawley, Reyna Hernandez, Teresa Kelly, Jan Maruna, Sylvia Puente, Beth Purvis, Diana Rauner, Elliot Regenstein, Sara Slaughter, Kathy Villano, Maria Whelan, Karen Yarbrough with special guest Trey Childress and special guest consultants Elizabeth Cole and Karen Ponder

In Springfield: Linda Saterfield and Cindy Zumwalt

Phone: Vanessa Rich, Teri Talan, Josie Yanguas

I. Welcome and Introduction

Co-chair Phyllis Glink began the meeting. She explained that one of their special guest, Trey Childress, the Deputy Governor, was to be joining them once he got out of an earlier meeting. Childress would give a big picture of his plans to work across state government and how early learning would play a part in that. Glink thanked McCormick for providing lunch.

II. Statewide Planning and Process & Context

Before the guest speakers began, the council briefly went over some goals that they wanted to reach at this meeting as well as the direction they wanted to hopefully pursue in regards to governance structure. It is the hope of the council to connect with others and situate the council's work and make connections with other outside groups in a meaningful way. Theresa Hawley reviewed the timeline, also provided as a handout, for the planning process we are undertaking. The timeline includes ambitious goals for the next few meetings so the group must focus and stay on task.

Co-chair Beth Purvis and Deputy Governor Trey Childress soon arrived. Purvis apologized for being late before introducing and thanking Trey.

Deputy Governor Trey Childress introduced himself to the council as well as his plans to work on issues of structure and organization within the state of Illinois. Childress will be looking at the state from three points of views: organization alignment (getting rid of redundancies and streamlining organization),

cultural value (“what is our value and are we focusing on the customer as an individual instead of pockets of inconsistency”) and operational competency (what would make the most sense and seem more efficient to the customer). Childress then opened up the floor for questions where some asked him how he planned to fit early childhood education into his plan though at this point he is not sure but wants to focus on building bridges with partners and agencies that can be sustainable. Childress stated that it was important to accommodate the diversity of the customer base as well as know who the customer is. After Childress finished speaking, the council then broke for lunch.

Returning from lunch, co-Chair Beth Purvis gave a brief update on the budget saying that there was not much of an update and that a lot of work was being done within the agencies to keep services moving.

Karen Ponder, one of the special consultants, began talking about the paper produced by the BUILD initiative entitled “A Framework for Choosing a State-Level Early Childhood Governance System”, recognizing Elliot Regenstein as one of the authors of the work. She gave a brief overview of the paper before focusing on three general models for effective structures: coordination, consolidation, and creation. She went through the pros and cons of each model, giving examples of other states’ success with each. The Coordination model allows multiple agencies to work together towards a shared vision or goal and is the least disruptive of the three models. However, the Coordination model lacks a formal authority that has control over all policies and budgets in the system. The Consolidation model allows authority and accountability to be placed in one executive level agency without the cost of a new agency and unifies vision, policy, regulation, and data systems. Issues with the Consolidation method include the difficulty of transitions and the possibility that early childhood would not be the central vision. The final model, Creation, creates a new department or high level office with authority over early childhood that creates accountability, unified and consistent rules, regulations, and services for agencies and families, and ability to reexamine all aspects of programs and make needed changes. The Creation model is unfortunately the hardest of the three models to accomplish due to the need for a strong leadership, political clout, transition time, implementation costs, and difficulty in getting the Governor on board.

For each model, Ponder emphasized the need to examine an individual state’s context and current reality and choosing which model would work best for the current structure since what works in one state does not always work in another state. She also stated that timing was important and that for a new effort, an effective leadership is also crucial. Consultant Karen Yarbrough then turned the conversation to the current decision making process. Currently there is no real clear decision making process across agencies though it is not because there is not a desire for it but because individuals have to balance their agency with what they know about the whole system. Substantial budget decisions usually do not reside with the program experts within the agencies but take place within GOMB.

III. Discussion

Co-chair Phyllis Glink then introduced Elizabeth Cole to help the council reflect on the current process. Due to lack of time, the small group discussions were skipped. Cole pointed back to the BUILD paper, highlighting the importance of understanding the context in which one is working. She asked the council if everyone believed that the current structures of early childhood programming the state needed change. Everyone agreed for the need for change but many were unsure of what that change should look like. Cole then had the group create a pros and cons list of the current structure. For the pros, the general idea was that the current structure allowed for more funding/budget opportunities and for greater participation. The cons brought up included a lack of accountability and commitment to a centralized goal as well as lack of consistent definitions of regional geography.

IV. **Next Steps & Closing**

Co-chair Phyllis Glink ended the meeting saying that a survey would be sent before the next meeting to get more opinions on the current structure with the possibility of also setting up some sort of webinar content to help facilitate small group discussions as well.

V. **Adjourn**