

**Early Learning Council  
Executive Committee Special Session**

Friday, September 27

9am – 12:00pm

Bilandic Building, 160 N. LaSalle, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Room N-505

Dial-in: 888-494-4032 Access Code: 7198518485#

**Minutes**

**Participants:**

- **In person:** Janet M; Elliot R.; Teresa; Gaylord G.; Phyllis G.; Kathy; Nancy R.; Reyna Hernandez; Teri; Theresa Hawley; Dan H.; Karen Berman; Beth M.; Julie Smith; Sylvia Puentes; Harriet M.; Cindy Zummwalt; Diana R.; Maria W.; Vanessa R.; Gina R.; Sara S.  
- **Call-in:** Josie; Greg D.

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Co-chairs Julie Smith and Harriet Meyer welcomed participants to the meeting. Theresa Hawley gave a brief introduction of Facilitator and consultant Maggie McGlynn. Every participant, both in person and on the phone, introduced themselves and states what they thought was the greatest thing about the Early Learning Council and Early Learning in Illinois.

Maggie McGlynn offered an overview of what the meeting would be like and the materials they would be working with.

**Discussion of Council Vision for Systems-Level Integration**

At the beginning of the discussion, participants were given a framework model of leadership and broad theory of change for systems building for the ELC, and they were asked to provide feedback. Among the most common suggestions and concerns were:

- The establishment and clarification of a shared early learning vision is crucial; members of the Council should not assume that there is a shared vision. It is evolving and clarity of said vision is critical.
- There needs to be a broadening of stakeholders, which will support the sustainability of the ELC by developing new leadership.
- Accountability and alignment between early childhood and K-12 is critical.
- Scale and Policies and implementation are important to consider. Tackling certain issues in a organized matter (instead of all at once) will guarantee a higher rate of success in the process. Finally, participant and agreed that making sure recommendations are actually implemented is where the true impact of their work lies.

It was determined that there are two aspects the council needs to work on: Priorities relating to the work the council does, which is correlated to its actual capacity to do the work given current resources. Participants stressed the need to identify the outside drivers that impact the council's ability to act and the feasibility of its goals. The participants agreed that the ELC needs to learn how to work efficiently

under the new funding conditions and changing needs, look at the system and the resources and align them with the council's priorities.

When discussing these two points, participants discussed the definition of high-need kids. It was clarified that for reporting purposes, it consists of children under 200% of the federal level of poverty.

After their break, participants discussed their current strategic focus, RTT-ELC Schematic, and survey responses to identify how current activities logically link to systems-level thinking. Maggie introduced the RTT-ELC Scope of Work document. Karen Berman explained that the thinking behind creating this RTT-ELC document was to have it as a sub document of the broader vision of the council. One of the main points she made was that they, as the Executive Committee, needed to prioritize how RTT funds would be allocated. It's a framework document because there is data missing. It is intended to say where Illinois is, where the programs are and where does Illinois need to get to be able to bring children of high need quality programs. She stressed that, as a council, they need to maximize the resources they have from RTT.

## **II. Discussion of Council Structures and Best Practices**

Maggie McGlynn encouraged participants to consider their current "ELC golden opportunity" and a leadership frame for strategic, tactical and operational roles and responsibilities. Additionally, she went over survey responses with the group and affirmed and clarified with them ways that the Executive Committee can operate more optimally together and with its Committees and Subcommittees.

After their discussion, participants agree that they need to go into further discussions on: taking a 'ground-up' approach to set goals, figure out system strategies to achieve them and discuss the 'big-plot' theory. Additionally, out of the survey, the most common responses drew on the need to work on data integration and programs coordination, needing to align funding and regulations and quality improvement; discuss work-force issues and innovation zones.

## **III. Close Planning Discussions; Gratitude and Other Business**

After the discussion was over, Theresa Hawley presented the ELC Governance Document and said that the version given would be the one presented at the October 7<sup>th</sup> meeting for final revision and approval.

Participants agreed that they will need to continue with at least two more special sessions to continue working to define their goals and methodology as a leadership group.

Theresa Hawley and Julie Smith thanks everyone for their participation and Maggie McGlynn for facilitation the discussion.