

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 they grow up safe, healthy, happy, ready to succeed, and eager to learn.

## Illinois Early Learning Council

November 15, 2021, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Join via [Webex](#) | Meeting Number: 177 978 6449 | Meeting Password: pEKbDSPJ845

If joining by phone, dial: 1-312-535-8110

### Minutes

#### **In attendance:**

Chevelle Bailey, Cindy Bardeleben, Elissa Bassler, Karen Berman, Stephanie Bernoteit, John Borrero, Barbara Bowman, Marcus Brown, Cerathel Burgess-Burnett, Jose Cerda III, Christi Chadwick, Dena Chapman, Kristy Doan, Carl Eggleston, Shauna Ejeh, Kim Engelman, Loretta Espeut, Ann Freiburg, Gaylord Gieseke, Phyllis Glink, Rochelle Golliday, Rey Gonzalez, Cornelia Grumman, Dan Harris, Courtney Hatcher, Sergio Hernandez, Gene Howell, Carisa Hurley, April Janney, Jamilah R. Jor'dan, Ruth Kimble, Dan Kotowski, Stacey Leatherman, Mitch Lifson, Camille Lilly, Cathy Mannen, Tameeka McFarlane, Kenya McRae, Marcy Mendenhall, Denise Monnier, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Bela Mote, Sean Noble, Cristina Pacione-Zayas, Bethany Patten, Laura Phelan, Sylvia Puente, Diana Rauner, Martina Rocha, Trish Rooney, Brynn Seibert, Ushma Shah, Sara Slaughter, Bryan Stokes, Joanna Su, Dawn Thomas, Martin Torres, Edie Washington-Gurley, Yolanda Williams, Josie Yanguas.

**Absent:** Elliot Regenstein, Tonya Frehner, Vicki Hodges, Kimberly Mann, Curtis Peace, Steve Reick, Teri Talan, Jil Tracy.

#### **11:00** Welcome & Introductions (10 min)

Phyllis Glink called the meeting to order. She announced that Governor Pritzker named Martin V. Torres as Deputy Governor for Education and appointed him as Co-chair of the Early Learning Council (ELC). Martin Torres briefly addressed the Council, noting it is an honor and privilege to serve as ELC Co-chair and to support the Governor in making Illinois the best state in the nation to raise young children. Phyllis Glink reviewed several housekeeping items and turned it over to Dr. Jamilah R. Jor'dan who made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 2021 ELC meeting. The minutes were approved as written. Carisa Hurley was invited to read aloud the ELC Racial Equity Definition and Priorities.

#### **11:10** Opening Remarks & Shared Values (15 min)

- Martin Torres, ELC Co-chair & Deputy Governor for Education, Office of the Governor
- Phyllis Glink, ELC Co-chair & Executive Director, Irving B. Harris Foundation

Martin Torres made opening remarks focused on the need for Illinois to begin planning so “we can hit the ground running” when Congress acts on the Build Back Better Plan. He highlighted the work in early childhood the Administration has led thus far, including the investments made via the Child Care Restoration Grants, Workforce Bonuses, and the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity. Martin Torres then clarified that although the ELC is

**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.

undergoing transition, the Council will have the opportunity to advise the State in how to build the best early childhood system for Illinois. He asked for patience as we work through this process more quickly than anticipated.

Phyllis Glink’s opening remarks focused on the values/principles that will guide the Council’s continued meaningful engagement between the public and private sectors in the service of advancing an equitable, high-quality, comprehensive early childhood system that meets the needs of Illinois’ youngest children and their families, including: a commitment to racial equity; including parent and provider voice in decision-making; remaining nimble and flexible; reporting and communicating regularly to ensure transparency; leveraging the work being done at other tables to ensure we advance towards a common goal for the field; identifying the most important needs of the administration and setting up a structure that allows the ELC to inform and support the work; and supporting the work adequately with staffing and other financial supports, as needed.

### **11:25 Transformation Planning for Federal Legislation: Build Back Better (65 min)**

Phyllis Glink introduced Dr. Theresa Hawley, Director of the Illinois Early Childhood Transformation Team, who gave a short presentation on the Transformation Planning for the Federal Legislation. Dr. Hawley explained the plan for the “I like, I wish, I wonder” small group discussions, during which meeting attendees will be invited to share points of excitement, hopes, implications, and questions about the Build Back Better Plan. Dr. Jamilah R. Jor’dan thanked Dr. Hawley for her presentation, additionally noting that attendees will be invited to select their desired breakout group (Child Care, Universal Pre-K, Funding, and Workforce), each which would be supported by members of the GOECD Team.

Attendees met with their selected breakout groups for 25 minutes. When all attendees returned to the main room, Martin Torres and Phyllis Glink invited a spokesperson from each group to share the top three wants, wishes, and wonders that were elevated in each of the breakout sessions. The Workforce group wondered how to: provide scholarships with potential new funding, fully engage Institutions of Higher Education, reward prior experience and not just education pathways, increase compensation, and provide benefits beyond salary. The Funding group identified three priority needs: English Language Learners, adequately leveraging new and existing funding streams to reimagine what the system will look like, and the prioritization of compensation/aligning salaries across funding streams. The Universal Pre-K group wished there was more planning time to ensure parent voice and the prioritization of funding for priority populations and wondered what agency would be chosen to distribute the funds. The Child Care group “likes” included the opportunity for parent choice, cost caps for parents, and increased compensation for the workforce; “wishes” included clarification for where income falls within state medians and ensuring Montessori and Waldorf programs become available to any parent; and “wonders” included how the Build Back Better Plan will impact the expectations of ELC members. Phyllis Glink opened it up for reflections. Comments included: a request for increased ELC meeting cadence to get the work done, ensuring family and community engagement as well as the engagement of legislators, connecting with K-12 and higher education, determining priorities knowing there will not be enough funding to do everything our system needs, per the Early Childhood Funding Commission recommendations.

**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.

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 they grow up safe, healthy, happy, ready to succeed, and eager to learn.

## **12:30 Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (25 min)**

Dr. Jamilah R. Jor'dan introduced Dr. Brian Durham, Executive Director of the Illinois Community College Board, and Ginger Ostro, Executive Director of Illinois Board of Higher Education, who gave a presentation on the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity, which was established as part of P.A. 102-0174. Dr. Jor'dan acknowledged the Honorable Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas and the Illinois General Assembly for their support of the early childhood incumbent workforce.

Dr. Brian Durham and Ginger Ostro presented on the vision for the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity, as well as its membership, structure and function, goals, and eligibility criteria for the scholarship. Dr. Jor'dan thanked Ginger Ostro and Dr. Durham for their presentation, noting that the ELC would remain informed as this nation-leading work moves forward.

## **12:55 Public Comments & Announcements**

Martin Torres transitioned to Public Comments and Announcements. Teresa Herbert and Deborah Batie, two child care teachers with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), who both elevated compensation issues for the early childhood workforce. Deborah Batie additionally requested teachers with a Bachelor's degree who move between classrooms be considered for the Workforce Bonus. There were no additional announcements.

## **1:00 Closing Comments and Adjourn**

Martin Torres thanked everyone for their time and participation. He then noted that given the work ahead, another full Early Learning Council meeting will be held in three weeks on Monday, December 6, 2021, from 1-3pm. The meeting was adjourned.

**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.