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**Illinois Early Learning Council Executive Committee Meeting**  
**June 27, 2022, 2:00 PM-4:00 PM**

**In Attendance:**

Chevell Bailey, Stephanie Bernoteit, Marcus Brown, Christi Chadwick, Dena Chapman, Shauna Ejeh, Phyllis Glink, Carisa Hurley, Jamilah R. Jor'dan, Stacey Leatherman, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Bela Mote, Bethany Patten, Curtis Peace, Martina Rocha, Mariana Souto-Manning, Bryan Stokes II, Dawn Thomas, Martin Torres, and Trish Rooney

**Excused:** Kirstin Chernawsky, Jason Helfer, Diana Rauner, and Joanna Su

**2:00 PM Welcome & Council Updates**

The Early Learning Council (ELC) Executive Committee Co-chair Phyllis Glink called the meeting to order at 2:02 PM. A request was made for those interested in making public comments to submit the request to Zach Allen, via the WebEx chat. Due to changes to the Open Meetings Act as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the meeting was recorded.

Co-chair, Martin Torres, welcomed the committee. Lauri Morrison-Frichtl read aloud the ELC racial equity definition and priorities.

Phyllis Glink asked for approval of the minutes from the May 9, 2022, ELC Executive Committee Meeting. Trish Rooney motioned, and Dawn Thomas seconded, the approval of the minutes. ELC Executive Committee members voted via the WebEx chat. The minutes were approved.

Phyllis Glink thanked members for providing feedback on alternate meeting times to make it easier for parents to participate. The two times receiving the most votes were 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm (25 votes) and 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm (22 votes). Going forward, meetings will alternate between these times. The November meeting date will also be changed to November 14, 2022, to avoid potential conflicts with the day before Election Day. The revised schedule will be distributed and posted on the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development's (GOECD) website.

Shauna Ejeh asked if the voting included a breakdown to ensure these times worked for parents. The Family Advisory Council was included in the survey, but it's unclear how parents voted because participation was anonymous. Martin Torres noted the co-chairs are committed to making times flexible to allow for participation. Participation will be monitored, and adjustments will be made if needed. Meetings are currently planned for two hours. The co-chairs reserve the option to extend the meeting time if necessary and will give members as much notice as possible.

Phyllis Glink thanked the ELC Executive Committee members for their feedback related to agency reporting. Members welcome written reports to save time for key strategic discussions. A template for written reports is in development and will become part of the process for future meetings.

For the next full ELC, there is a request for a presentation from the Erikson Institute and a scheduled presentation from Stephanie Bernoteit and Christi Chadwick on the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity. Phyllis Glink asked for suggestions for topics for future full ELC meetings. Topics suggested included mental health trauma, updates on the statewide enrollment campaign, the Birth to Five Illinois campaign, distribution of Strengthen and Grow Child Care funds, the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) 2.0, progress on early childhood components of the Black Caucus equity legislation, a discussion about applying for funds from the state's opioid lawsuit settlement to support early childhood education and care priorities, and reviewing health and early childhood data on developmental screening in support of universal screening and connection of children and families to needed supports they need.

Dr. Jamilah R. Jor'dan provided an update on the Family Advisory Committee Mentorship Program. There have been four to five members who have volunteered to be mentors. If others are interested, please let GOECD staff know. Dena Chapman will share profiles with Dr. Jor'dan. The goal will be to launch the program and provide an update by the next full ELC meeting.

## **2:15 PM DISCUSSION: ELC Bylaws Amendments**

Martin Torres reviewed the proposed bylaws amendments with a goal of building consensus. As the current bylaws require that proposed amendments be distributed 10 days before a meeting, no votes were taken. The amendments cover committee participation and representation, meeting cadence, flexibility regarding public comment, and the bylaws amendment process. Phyllis Glink reminded the committee that this is the first set of bylaws. As the committee works, it might find there are provisions that hinder work or that require more clarity. The bylaws include a process to make changes as needed. All bylaws amendment proposals will be discussed without identifying the member who submitted them to ensure open discussion.

Article V, Section 11 – Public Participation, Rules for Public Comment – The proposed amendment would provide clarity that at the discretion of the co-chairs, participants can secure more time for public comment than the allotted three minutes. The co-chairs are committed to staying beyond the allotted meeting time to ensure that all interested participants are able to comment publicly.

Article VII, Section 5 – Committee Participation - The first proposed amendment would allow a council member to designate a staff member to attend a committee meeting on their behalf, while maintaining fidelity of having only members vote. Feedback included allowing a board member to be a designated representative and setting a limit on the number of times a council member could send a designee. Martin Torres summarized the discussion that there was consensus to provide some flexibility, but that it should be limited in scope. Article VII, Section VII, which prohibited members from designating a representative, would be eliminated.

The second issue was related to recruitment of non-council members to participate on committees. Committees have always been open, and it is the expectation that non-council members will participate equally in committees. No approval process is needed for others to participate in the committees as general stakeholders. Two amendment proposals were presented. The first was to require the Governor's Office to actively recruit individuals to participate on the committees. The alternative proposal would make it the responsibility of all ELC members to recruit additional participants. Discussion included concerns about ensuring continued diversity on the committees. Carisa Hurley spoke in support of the ELC members actively recruiting as ELC members may know more people in the field. Dawn Thomas wanted to make sure to consider geographic diversity as well in recruitment activities.

Article VII, Section 3 – Frequency - The first amendment proposed that the full ELC meet three times per year and may hold additional meetings if needed.

Two proposals were presented to the Executive Committee. The first was to state that the Executive Committee will meet six times per year and the second proposal was to state that the Executive Committee may meet six times per year. Several members supported the second alternative stating the Executive Committee “may” meet. A suggestion was made to consider setting a floor to ensure a minimum number of meetings is held. Martin Torres said that he was not opposed to the floor, possibly at four meetings. Several members agreed with that suggestion.

Article X– Amendments - The final proposed amendment would reduce the number of days required to propose bylaws amendment to the Executive Committee for vote, from 10 to 5 days. The bylaws do not make a distinction between calendar and business days, so the timelines would be associated with calendar days. The shorter timeframe will accommodate internal review and administrative process.

Martin Torres thanked the Executive Committee members for their input and noted they will receive proposed bylaws changes 10 days before the next Executive Committee Meeting.

### **2:25 PM Agency Updates**

There were two agency updates. Kristin Rzekowski, Senior Policy Advisor, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), provided an update on COVID-19 vaccination for children under five. IDPH has been working with the Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (ICAAP) since late fall to enroll pediatricians and other health care providers in the state vaccine registry, which would allow them to order and receive COVID-19 vaccines. IDPH has created provider and parent materials, infographics, and frequently asked questions in English and Spanish that are available on the website and all social media channels. They have also been working with the Chicago Department of Public Health, the Department of Child and Family Services, and family physicians. IDPH is recommending that parents and caregivers contact the child's primary care provider for vaccinations. Local health departments, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and pharmacies are also providing child vaccinations, although pharmacies are not able to vaccinate children under age three. Helpful websites include Vaccines.gov, the American Academy of Pediatrics and IDPH. Bryan Stokes II asked if IDPH has lessons based on the relatively low COVID-19 vaccine uptake among school age children. IDPH has provided a grant to ICAAP to work with providers to hold regular webinars and podcasts, offering tips on how to talk to parents and integrate vaccine discussions as a routine part of visits.

Carisa Hurley, Director of Early Childhood, Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), provided an update. The state budget for fiscal year 2023 contains a significant boost for the Early Childhood Block Grant. It increases the allocation by 10 percent. After FY23 obligations are met, ISBE will work to provide additional support to districts and community-based organizations to support children served in the ECBG programs. This includes increasing the number of children served in all programs and providing more access for the families who need it. Additionally, we will address some of the recommendations we received from the field such as providing cost of living adjustments to community-based programs and increased supports for supplemental Doula services within home visiting programs. Additionally, we can now go back and fund some of the awardable FY21 RFP applicants that we were not able to fund in FY21. Those awards will be based on the FY21 RFP, which prioritizes applicants serving families who reside in areas of high need. ISBE will update this group with a more detailed briefing as soon as more information is available.

### **2:50 PM Committee Updates and Discussion**

The ELC co-chairs have spoken with the committee co-chairs. Identifying the work of each committee is ongoing. Most committees will hold first meetings in July, and these meetings will focus on establishing inclusive participatory cultures, discussing the committee charge and identifying priority areas of work. Phyllis Glink encouraged committee co-chairs and members to think about the issues originally outlined for each committee, issues raised in the full ELC and the Executive Committee, and those raised by committee members. Specific topics included English Language Learners, inclusion, children with disabilities, the Geographic Equity Adequacy Mapping (GEAM), and other recommendations from the Funding Commission. Consideration should include which committees should hold specific topics and how committees might work collaboratively or coordinate on topics of overlapping scope and interest. Several committee co-chairs raised questions on how to set priorities and how to balance recommendations suggested by agencies and those from committee members. Brief updates from the committee co-chairs were provided.

Integration and Alignment Committee - Shauna Ejuh and Bethany Patten provided an update. The first committee meeting will be held on July 21, 2022, from 1:30 – 3:30 pm. They are considering asking Afton Partners to present the GEAM. They anticipate resources to be a challenge. In response to a question about how to manage priorities with limited resources, Martin Torres said he expects they would have more than one priority at a time.

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Quality and Workforce Committee - Christi Chadwick provided an update. The first committee meeting is scheduled for July 19, 1:30 – 3:00 pm. In addition to discussing priorities, they plan to discuss how the committee might engage with other workforce tables and how to align, connect or prevent duplication.

Community Equity and Access Committee - Trish Rooney and Carisa Hurley provided an update. The meeting dates are July 13, 2022, and August 10, 2022, at 10:00 – 11:30 am, and they plan to expand to the second Wednesday of the month, bimonthly. They are also planning to focus two meetings a year on coordinating with families, possibly October and April, and hope to team with the Family Advisory Committee.

Research, Evaluation and Data Committee - Dawn Thomas and Mariana Souto-Manning provided an update. The meeting dates are August 24, 2:30 – 4:00pm, which will focus on the *Too Young to Test Act P.A. 102-0875*, and October 19, 5:00 – 6:30pm, which will focus on the ILDS 2.0. They plan to vary meeting times and assess participation. They plan to assess current data, focus on building data capacity, discuss important data issues and offer data support to the other ELC committees.

Health and Home Visiting Committee – Phyllis Glink provided an update. A co-chair planning meeting is scheduled for July 11, 2022, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm. The agenda includes reviewing the draft charge, determining activities to propose to the committee members, discussing strategies to reengage members of the prior Home Visiting Task Force and Health Subcommittees, and setting the date and time for the initial committee meeting.

Family Advisory Committee (FAC) - Dena Chapman provided an update. The FAC revised their charge and priorities and narrowed the scope of goal #2. The revised charge is “That the FAC ensure that parents, families, and children’s needs and wants for early education and care are continuously sought, understood and included. Family voices are at the center of the feedback, policy analysis and recommendations.” The three priorities are: identify barriers that families experience in accessing resources, acknowledge the successful resources that families use, and promote authentic and equitable family engagement practices in all policy conversations including the committees of the ELC. The revised goal is to “Identify and illustrate barriers and solutions through family stories or inclusion related to disabilities, racial disabilities, economic disparities, and culturally responsive practices, in early intervention, and within early childhood education and care settings.” At its most recent meeting, the FAC began to share personal experiences and identify some of those barriers.

The topic of inclusion and which committee it belongs to was raised. The draft charge of Health and Home Visiting addresses inclusion but does not specifically reference Early Intervention. The FAC specifically includes children with disabilities and Early Intervention in its priorities. It was suggested that all committees should consider equity and inclusion. This can lead to inadequate attention and lack of people with expertise in any given discussion. It was noted there are state agencies addressing aspects of inclusion and that the ELC could connect more strongly with the Illinois Interagency Council on Early Intervention.

Members expressed the goal of making sure the work of ELC committees is integrated and aligned with those of agencies to avoid duplicating efforts and to ensure that recommendations are relevant and helpful. Suggestions to address this were to focus on communication, to bring priorities to the Executive Committee to discuss with agency partners and possibly facilitate smaller group meetings between agency staff and co-chairs.

Phyllis Glink summarized the discussion stating that committees are interested in going deeper on issues raised by Afton Partners, but also discussing how to identify priorities that the committees should focus on such as how to balance priorities from agencies, the field, and the funding commission; as well as how to avoid duplication. The committee co-chairs have discretion to decide how to balance the work. It was suggested that a group chat of all the committee co-chairs be formed to facilitate communication and coordination across committees. Planning for future ELC Executive committee meetings will include time for strategic discussion.

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Action – staff will pull together an email list of committee co-chairs and staff for communication.

The presentation of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) was postponed.

### 3:50 PM Public Comments & Announcements

Dr. Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro, Director of Education Policy and Research, Latino Policy Forum, was recognized for public comments. She thanked the ELC for its partnership to promote equity for English Language Learners within efforts to re-design Illinois' systems and identified three areas for comment:

- Requesting the ELC to form a time-limited Ad Hoc group focused on English Language Learners to inform state planning in early childhood with English Language Learners' best practices and to embed recommendations in the Funding Commission.
- Offering input into the organizational structure of the ELC and committee charges.
- Providing feedback and input on the GEAM and how it will be used to make governance decisions.

The full statement was distributed to ELC Executive Committee members in advance of the meeting.

### 4:00 PM: Closing Comments and Adjourn

The co-chairs thanked everyone for their participation, especially Christi Chadwick and Stephanie Bernoteit for being flexible in rescheduling the ECACE presentation. They also thanked all of the committees and co-chairs on working with GOECD staff counterparts in moving forward with priorities.

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for August 8, 2022. The next full ELC meeting is scheduled for September 26, 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:03 PM.

**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;