

**Illinois Early Learning Council**

**Executive Committee Meeting**

**August 12, 2015, 11am – 4pm**

Chicago: Conference Room N-502 (160 N. LaSalle St.)

Conference Link: 888-494-4032

Access Code: 6113045703

**Meeting Minutes**

Chicago: Karen Berman, Jeanna Capito, Gaylord Gieseke, Phyllis Glink, Dan Harris, Theresa Hawley, Reyna Hernandez, Jan Maruna, Christine Nicpon (for Sylvia Puente), Beth Purvis, Linda Saterfield, Sara Slaughter, Teri Talan, Kathy Villano, Maria Whelan, Josie Yanguas, and special guest consultants Elizabeth Cole and Karen Ponder

Phone: Sara Jimenez, Teresa Kelly, Anna Potere, Diana Rauner

**I. Welcome, Introductions, and Approval of Minutes**

Co-chair Phyllis Glink began the meeting with a welcome and started with the approval of July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes.

Co-chair Beth Purvis thanked Janet Maruna from INCCRRA who will be leaving the Executive Committee. Purvis then went on to congratulate Dan Harris who will become the executive director of INCRAA.

**II. Budget Update**

Co-chair Purvis shared that she does not have any news on the budget though she appreciates the work of the people in early childhood and DHS who have continued to come to work during this difficult time with the budget. She and other members of the committee encouraged everyone there to either contact her or their state legislator to communicate how frustrating things currently are. There have been a few surveys done by agencies on the committee that show that in times similar to this current budget crisis there are detrimental effects to the children, their families, and the early education workforce.

Committee member Reyna Hernandez shared with the committee information about the FY16 Early Childhood Block Grant Funds. Hernandez shared the way that allocation of the increased funding for FY16 has been made. For FY16, there will be a total of \$314 million in grants with 37% set aside for the Chicago Block grant. Funds for operations for ISBE for Early Childhood - including infrastructure contracts such as for monitoring, KIDS implementation, and training - have not yet been appropriated. ISBE used the additional grant resources to 1.) restore all continuing Prevention Initiative programs to FY12 levels; 2.) provide a 3% COLA for PI programs; and 3.) restore, to the extent possible with the funds, continuing PFA programs to FY12 levels. Most PFA programs will now be at approximately 97% of their FY12 levels. It is expected that most programs will use the increased funding more to restore quality features of their programs (e.g., transportation, professional development, curriculum materials, etc.) rather than to expand services.

III. **Gallery Walk**

Members of the Executive Committee then participated in a Gallery Walk led by special guest consultant Elizabeth Cole. They were asked to go around the room and look at various posters with diagrams and questions such as “What decisions are required to address changes at state and federal level?” in regards to early childhood and “Can we develop clear definition of children and family based on need to determine the type of resources they need and how can all these things work together to serve the family best?”. Committee members took time alone and/or in small groups to think about these and other questions during their lunch break for about 30 minutes.

IV. **Current Strategy**

Committee member Theresa Hawley provided a brief historical perspective on the Illinois early childhood system since the inception of Preschool for All. Theresa highlighted that the policy direction/path we have been on for the last few years is not actually the path that will help us reach the groups stated goals of reach the most vulnerable children with the highest quality of services. The current system is not functioning in line with the policy direction that the Council wants and that there needs to be some kind of assessment how programs and services need to be realigned to better accomplish the stated goals. The committee agreed that all members needed to be on the same page and be clear on what each member’s respective group and program is doing to better align with the stated goals of the Council.

V. **Future Strategy: Model Overview**

Special guest consultant Karen Ponder led the committee in an overview of the various models for early childhood governance that other states used. Model A, would give more policy and contracting authority to the Office of Early Childhood Development and those things done would have to align with that the OECD is doing.

Model B (loosely referred to as the Pennsylvania model) has the head of the OECD report directly to the Superintendent of ISBE, the Secretary of DHS, and possibly the Secretary of Education. The staff of the existing agencies would become a part of the OECD and report to the head of the OECD.

Model C, the Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maryland model, creates a department of child development within an already existing agency.

Model D, essentially the current model, is one in which coordination depends on other agencies willingness and desire to cooperate with the OECD.

Karen Ponder emphasized that each of these models is just a rough outline/model and can be modified as best fits the needs and desires of Illinois stakeholders.

Executive committee members then split up into two separate groups to discuss the barriers of their current model and areas that could grow to be winnable or successful. Please see the attachment for a summary of the small group discussions.

VI. **Recompetition of ECBG in FY17**

Committee member Reyna Hernandez went over the planned recompetition of the Early Childhood Block Grant for FY17. The ECBG has a 5 year cycle for full recompetition for funds. At this point, only minor modifications in the RFP could be contemplated due to the time required to develop the RFP and plan the competition. Currently, there is a process going on to figure out how to do competition for ECBG in electronic format with the target release date being some time in February/March. ISBE also considering what it would look like if there were new grantees.

Committee member Maria Whelan stated that a one year extension needed to happen and that to lock the current system in place with no time to reflect is a bad idea. Hernandez explained that if an extension was made, there would be a lot of people who would become upset since our Preschool Expansion federal grant commitment anticipates a \$50,000,000 increase in ECBG in FY17 and new applicants will want to be able to compete for those funds.

Co-chair Purvis said that Theresa Hawley, Stephanie Donovan (ISBE Chief Counsel), and Reyna Hernandez will sit down and come up with scenarios and that she and Co-chair Phyllis Glink are planning to go to meetings in September that will look more into this.

#### VII. **Wrap-up and Next Steps**

Co-chair Purvis thanked colleagues from DHS and ISBE for being honest with the information that they were bringing to the table today and also for those who shared their frustration with some of the things that were being discussed. Co-chair Glink explained the possibility for their being two September meetings that committee members could choose to participate to talk more about the model for Early Childhood in the state of Illinois.