

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

**Illinois Early Learning Council
Executive Committee Meeting
August 10, 2020 - 1:00 PM – 3:15 PM**

Join via [Webex](#)

Meeting Number/Access Code: 133 229 8768

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

In attendance:

Jennifer Alexander, Karen Berman, Shauna Ejeh, Dan Harris, Carisa Hurley, Gaylord Gieseke, Phyllis Glink, Cornelia Grumman, Jamilah R. Jordan, Kimberly Mann, Cristina Pacione-Zayas, Laura Phelan, Sylvia Puente, Jesse Ruiz, Linda Satterfield, Sara Slaughter, Teri Talan, Josie Yanguas

Minutes

1. Welcome & Introductions – Phyllis Glink & Jesse Ruiz (5 minutes)

Phyllis Glink welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that due to amendments that have been made to the Open Meetings Act as a result of the public health emergency, we will be recording today's meeting. Jesse Ruiz requested a motion to approve the minutes from the June 2020 Early Learning Council Executive Committee meeting. The minutes were approved as written. Phyllis briefly reviewed the next section of the agenda (the "Reopening Discussion") noting that time for questions and discussion has been included between presentations.

2. Reopening Discussion (50 minutes)

• Update – Jesse Ruiz & Theresa Hawley

Jesse Ruiz reminded everyone that Illinois is currently in Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan. The State was previously divided into four regions; now it has been divided into eleven, and there is guidance on how to sustain movement through the phases in the different regions. Jesse noted that several counties downstate have COVID-19 positivity rates that are of growing concern. Jesse briefly reviewed the *Restore Illinois Actions to Combat a Resurgence of COVID-19* and the *Restore Illinois Phase 4 All Sports Policy* documents that were included in the meeting materials. Jesse noted that there is a new mask mandate from the Governor. The emergency rules give more enforcement authority to fine businesses who are not in compliance. Schools can also be fined for not complying with the mask mandate.

Theresa Hawley reviewed the *Fall 2020 Learning Recommendations* issued by ISBE, noting that guidance is broken out by age range and includes recommendations for remote learning, face-to-face learning, and a hybrid of both. At this time, half of Illinois schools stated that they would be utilizing a hybrid model at the start of the fall, around one quarter said they plan to teach fully remote, and another quarter plan to meet fully in-person. Theresa mentioned that Early Intervention has also released guidance that was not included in the materials. All guidance is available on the GOECD website. Theresa

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.

noted that the \$10 million of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Funds (GEER) is devoted to early childhood. Funds through ISBE will target PFA, PI, and PFA-E programs in Disproportionally Impacted Areas (DIA) due to COVID-19. Additionally, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services have developed the Child Care Restoration Grant (CCRG) program for licensed child care. The CCRGs are being administered by the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (INCCRRA). Three thousand awards have been approved to date, and funds will be dispersed in a few weeks. Theresa gave thanks to all for creating and implementing this grant program.

- **Questions or Concerns** – Executive Committee Members

Issues elevated by Executive Committee members:

- What is being done to address the disproportionately high incidences of COVID-19 in Black and Latino communities?
 - o Is there compensation available for providers who must close due to a positive case?
 - o Is there support for substitutes?
 - o Is there support for the additional personal protective equipment (PPE)?
- Is there a policy in place to ensure Early Intervention (EI) providers have access to reimbursements for PPE or provisions for families who transition out of EI after a child's 3rd birthday?
 - o Is there coordination across the state to support families of 3-5 year-olds with an IEP?
- Do we have data on children or adults testing positive for COVID-19 in child care programs?

- **Priority Populations Discussion of Family Supports & Resources** – Carie Bires

Carie Bires (All Families Served Subcommittee co-chair) presented on the current needs of priority populations due to COVID-19 elevated from survey results and experiences shared during recent subcommittee meetings. The presentation included concerns and areas of need related to early care and education programs, examples of creative solutions, and recommended next steps. It was decided the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD) would connect with the All Families Served Subcommittee to support the development of the webinar series to elevate solutions and the addition of content to support priority populations on the GOECD website.

- **Early Learning Council Research Agenda: COVID-19 Questions** – Elliot Regenstein

Elliot Regenstein (Data, Research, and Evaluation (DRE) Subcommittee chair) explained that the DRE developed COVID-19-specific questions on which the DRE would like the Executive Committee's input. Phyllis Glink asked Executive Committee member to review the questions and send Elliot any thoughts or changes following today's meeting.

3. **Role of the ELC in Racial Equity Accountability for Illinois** (50 minutes)

- **Next Steps for the ELC Executive Committee & the Full ELC** – (Illinois BUILD State team)

Cristina Pacione-Zayas, Kimberly Mann & Jamilah R. Jor'dan

Cristina Pacione-Zayas reviewed the history of the Early Learning Council's racial equity work to date. Next steps and proposed actions include: member engagement in a professional learning series, including racial healing circles and strategies to meaningfully include beneficiary voice; disciplined use of the race/ethnicity equity one-pager; buildout of a racial equity webpage on the GOECD website; and

aligning and advancing the racial equity work in the Statewide Strategic Plan. Jamilah R. Jor'dan presented the strategic focus areas in the Statewide Strategic Plan, as well as the racial equity metrics that were identified for the Illinois Early Childhood Dashboard. Kimberly Mann presented on importance of beneficiary voice and what to consider when engaging in listening sessions with families.

- **Funding Commission Recommendations – Phyllis Glink**

Phyllis Glink briefly discussed how the Funding Commission is one important vehicle to build racial equity within our early childhood systems. The Commission adopted the ELC's racial equity definition and is working to ensure their final recommendations meet the needs of families. Phyllis noted the ELC will play a role in the implementation of the Commission's recommendations. Whether the work is divided between existing committees or a new ELC committee is established to guide the work is yet to be determined.

- **Governance Structure – Phyllis Glink**

Phyllis Glink noted the importance of creating an ELC structure that advances our racial equity goals and objectives. The Membership/Governance Workgroup is meeting again to finalize the Governing Principles and re-evaluate membership to make sure the ELC has the diverse representation it needs to move our work forward.

- **Access Committee Representation**

Phyllis Glink noted that we have two co-chair vacancies on the Access Committee; the committee needs leadership. We seek race/ethnic and geographic diversity in the co-chair representation. Phyllis reviewed the desired competencies, qualifications, and requirements of the Access Committee co-chairs, and reviewed the charge of the Access Committee and its two subcommittees. Phyllis requested that any recommendations for new Access co-chairs are sent to her and Jesse Ruiz for consideration. There was an additional request to revisit the cost to staff the committees and subcommittees of the Council.

4. **Family Advisory Committee – Jamilah R. Jor'dan & Maggie Koller (15 minutes)**

Jamilah R. Jor'dan presented on the origin of the Family Advisory Committee (FAC), a soon-to-be added ELC committee that will more intentionally bring family voice to the work of the Council. The original proposal was approved by the ELC with a caveat that the work that requires funding would be put on hold until a funding source could be identified. PDG B-5 funding is now supporting this work. Maggie Koller reviewed where we are now with the formation of the FAC; GOECD's Family Engagement Manager is working with Illinois Action for Children, and member recruitment for the FAC is underway. Next steps are to select and train FAC members and to provide training to ELC members so all are informed and prepared to support family voice within the new structure. Conversations are still needed to address sustainability of the FAC after PDG B-5 funding ceases.

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5. **Q&A & Public Comments** (10 minutes)

Phyllis Glink noted that the ELC Annual Report has been completed, sent to the Governor, and Members of the General Assembly, and is hosted on the GOECD website.

6. **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting:

Monday, October 5, 2020

1:00-4:00pm