



**EARLY LEARNING ADVISORY COUNCIL (ELAC)
MEETING MINUTES**

January 30, 2008

Lacey Community Center

Overall Purpose:

The purpose of the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) is for representatives from the state's early learning stakeholder communities to provide input and recommendations to the Department of Early Learning (DEL) so that DEL's strategies and actions are well-informed and are broadly supported by parents, early care providers, health/safety experts and interested parties. The Governor holds final authority for policy decisions and her P-20 Council will be made aware of ELAC's input to DEL.

Today's Intentions:

- Progress Update from Director Bosworth: Learn about and discuss the "Nuts and Bolts" of the Department of Early Learning and our current work
- Learn about and discuss the Parent Needs Assessment
- Learn about, discuss and inform the Communications poll and DEL's external communications strategy
- Follow-up on the discussion - Exchange of Information
- Next Steps

In Attendance:

Director Jone Bosworth
Charlie Earl
Dr. Maxine Hayes
Lorena Lowell
Sue Winn

Ann Daley
Amber Havens
Robin Higa
Jim Skucy

Welcome, Overview, Agenda Review

Dr. Maxine Hayes and Lorena Lowell, co-chairs, welcomed all, reviewed the agenda for the day and the overall purpose of the Early Learning Advisory Council.

Introductions – Who is here?

Few members were in attendance because of the legislative session. Members in attendance introduced themselves.

Department of Early Learning – Status and Progress Report and Discussion

Director Bosworth welcomed all and talked about sharing the challenges of the Department. A handout and the presentation itself were made available to the Council and will be posted on the Early Learning Advisory Council page of the Department of Early Learning's Website <http://www.del.wa.gov/ELAC/ELAC.html>. Director Bosworth started off giving a very brief legislative update. The supplemental budget request includes improving child care safety, raising the degree of licensing decision, consistency, and establishing quality improvement teams for case reviews and

improved documentation. This includes 5 FTE's (two at state office and three out in the service areas) who will help DEL meet these goals. Federal audit requirements were discussed; meet the requirements of the federal Improper Payment act of 2003.

The bills introduced in the 60-day legislative session related to early learning were discussed:

HB 2597 – Kindergarten Readiness Assessment – requires DEL and OSPI to develop single kindergarten readiness assessment in collaboration with Thrive by Five

HB 3168 – Creation of Washington Head Start Program – study to align state-funded preschool with federal Head Start standards and expand to birth to 3 by 2010.

HB 2449 – Child Care Center Directors and Workers Collective Bargaining – includes professional development and training access to health care and other benefits; compensation and other supports.

Plus other legislation:

SB 6813 –Roving early learning intervention specialist in Pierce County to support child care providers and provide report to Legislature by August 1, 2009.

SB 6661 – Child Care Licensing Actions

SB 6444 - Children's Product Safety

Director Bosworth then shared with the council the major reports and studies per RCW 43.215.080 – Reports to the Governor and Legislature – two years after the implementation of the early learning program and every two years thereafter by July 1, the department shall submit to the governor and the Legislature a report measuring the effectiveness of its programs in improving early childhood education.

Also mentioned was the Joint Legislative Audit Review Committee's pre-audit of the Department, which is due July 2010 and a report to the legislature on the Quality Rating and Information System in December 2009.

Director Bosworth discussed the Statewide Early Learning System model. This is how we see the comprehensive statewide early learning system. Where do we see ourselves as ELAC members?

The Mission, Vision and Goals of the Department of Early Learning (DEL) were presented. Build Public Awareness and Will to Act is one of the Department's four goals. One of the greatest challenges and greatest opportunities in the Department has been communications. Other challenges include our website navigation and content getting a baseline of state-generated data to guide DEL in targeting resources and materials to communicate importance of early learning and DEL's mission. We have been able though to turn these challenges into opportunities: Redesign of our website; Parents needs and desires assessment and Public awareness poll and campaign. Council members can help by providing feedback on the ELAC Survey available to members; reviewing and giving feedback on the parent needs assessment information, and helping with DEL's public awareness campaign.

Parent Needs Assessment Discussion

Judy King (DEL staff) introduced the presentation. Shari Golan and the rest of her team from SRI International. Donna Spiker and Jill Sells were not able to attend due to inclement weather. Judy introduced Jane Reeseman and Kathleen Stafford from California whom also worked on the group. Handouts and presentation materials were provided and will be available at

<http://www.del.wa.gov/ELAC/ELAC.html>. Shari gave an update of where they are with this venture.

Purpose: To enable DEL to better understand parent and family priorities, issues, strengths and challenges; to identify ways that DEL can support families by providing information, skills and services they desire as they nurture and educate their young children; and to assist DEL in setting priorities and allocating future resources in ways most likely to support parents. Discussion of the underlying principles. There has been a tremendous amount of work already been done and able to use all the information provided. Discussed the methods; phone survey and focus groups.

Discussed survey topics, development and sample. Timeline for survey data collection (January 15-February 15, 2008); focus groups (March); preliminary findings: data set and tables (April 20) and Final report (June 15)

DEL Poll and Communication Strategies Discussion

Jean Craciun from the Craciun Research Group was introduced. They conducted the Washington Research Report and discussed their methodology – timeframe December 17, 2007 to January 3, 2008. When asked, in your opinion, when do you think a child begins learning? – 95% of those surveyed believe that children begin learning at birth or during the first year. Showed the important factors in Kindergarten Readiness. Graph of Community and Personal Responsibility – large majorities of people feel it is the community's responsibility to be more involved with children you know, to smile at and acknowledge a child, and for some members of the community to volunteer at school and libraries. Only slightly more than a quarter (29%) of the respondents reported any familiarity with the Department of Early Learning. According to the survey the importance rate of DEL Tasks – or all of the task performed by DEL are deemed “very important” by more than half of the registered voters in this sample. The most trusted source of parenting information is from one's own parents. Interesting cross tabs – about three-quarters of the people who have had experience with children birth to six believe learning begins at birth, while only about half of those who have had no such experience think so.

DEL's new agenda – “Kids Potential our Purpose” – What can you do for a child today?

Exchange of Information

Continuation of agenda item from last meeting. Maxine felt this was a very informative meeting. Stressed the needs assessment and looking at school readiness and how this relates. She encouraged DEL to be specific in what they need from the Council.

Sue Winn – Said it would be helpful if DEL included phone numbers of licensors and offices on our website. In addition, council members would benefit from DEL giving out consolidated information to ensure one, accurate message. She also felt this meeting was very informative. Sue also provided an update: In the Negotiated Rule Making workgroup they have completed the section on food.

Amber Havens – The Tribal Program is working together to put together a “Part 2” to the summit held last May. It will be a family child care and center based program and will include training at the conference. This is just in the planning stage. Amber thanked DEL for all the information provided at this meeting.

Lorena Lowell – Felt the Council was forming a good foundation. She expressed concern about (unregulated) half day child care programs and their regulations and would like to have the Council keep an eye on these programs.

Jim Skucy – Mentioned that the United Way in Benton/Franklin is very involved in programs making sure every child entering kindergarten is ready to learn.

Charlie Earl – SBTCC Legislative agenda being planned for 2009, Representative Kagi is working with this planning – to help with enrollment at 2 year colleges for early learning and child care.

Jone Bosworth – Thanked all for coming with all the inclement weather and with the legislature in session.

Future Meetings, Next Agenda Items, Next Steps

The next meeting will be held on April 23rd.

For all ELAC communications please send email to elac@del.wa.gov.