



Washington State Department of Early Learning

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

Quarterly Meeting

March 9, 2009, 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE

DEL STAFF

Dr. Karen Tvedt, Interim Director

Dr. Amie Lapp Payne, Deputy Director

Sonali Patel, Senior Policy Advisor- Presenting

Lynne Shanafelt, Assistant Director, Parent Support & Programs Division- Presenting

Dr. Juliet Torres, Assistant Director, Partnerships & Collaboration Division- Presenting

Amy Blondin, Communications Manager- Presenting

Kelli Bohanon, Program Administrator, Head Start- DEL Staff to the Council

ELAC MEMBERS

Amber Havens - Educational Training Partners

Lorena Lowell, Child Care Center Director

Dr. Maxine Hayes - State Health Officer, Dept. of Health

Jada Rupley - Associate Superintendent

James Skucy - Executive Director, Benton Franklin Head Start

Nina Auerbach- Chief Executive Officer, Thrive by Five

Peter Berliner- PRI Makers Network Managing Director, Philanthropy Northwest

Leslie Goldstein- Executive Policy Advisor, Governor's Executive Policy Office

Paula Smith - Head of School, University Child Development School

Linda Sullivan-Dudzic - Director of Special Programs, Bremerton School District

Maria Vera- Parent

Charles Earl - Director, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges

ELAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Ann Daley - Executive Director, Higher Education Coordinating Board

Representative Roger Goodman - Washington State House of Representatives

Representative Larry Haler - Washington State House of Representatives

Senator Mike Hewitt - Washington State Senate

Robin Higa- Parent

Senator Claudia Kauffman - Washington State Senate

Dr. Ilene Schwartz, Children with Disabilities

Sue Winn- Family Child Care Provider

ELAC Quarterly Meeting Minutes - Draft

Marie Zackuse - Chairwoman, Tulalip Tribes of Washington

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

- DEL staff to report out on progress of subgroups established in October 2009 meeting
- Hear public comment
- Determine next steps

WELCOME, OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S INTENTIONS, AGENDA REVIEW

Co-Chair, Jada Rupley opened the meeting with an overview of meeting objectives. Kelli Bohanon oriented council members to the agenda.

INTRODUCTIONS

Members introduced themselves. Leslie Goldstein was welcomed as the new ELAC representative from the Governor's Office.

Interim Director Karen Tvedt gave opening remarks. She emphasized how pleased she is to be working with DEL staff and the larger early learning community. She spoke about the significance of recent improvements to the early learning infrastructure in Washington. She provided updates from DEL including:

- Her focus in the past month has been on building relationships both internally and externally, the need for department transparency in the current economic climate and legislative session.
- She commented on the severity of the current budget challenges and its impact not only on governments but also on families around the state. She commented that it is gratifying to see the recognition of early learning even in the current climate.
- She talked about activity at the state and federal level including:
 - Consideration in Congress last week about extending the continuing resolution under which the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) operates.
 - The Obama 2010 budget includes a proposal for additional funding for CCDF, additional funding for Head Start and Early Head Start, nurse home visits for first time moms and incentives and supports for comprehensive early learning services from birth to five. There is not yet a lot of detail available on any of this.
 - The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) was passed. The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) estimates that about 33 million dollars in additional CCDF funding will be coming to WA but nothing is definite until the Child Care Bureau's (CCB) spending plan is approved by OMB. In a conference call with CCDF lead agencies, the CCB said that the stimulus money will likely come to states as awards for which no application is necessary. State plans would have to be amended to reflect any state spending decisions which impact these plans. There is also some question of funds being available retroactively. These funds must be tracked and reported on separately from other CCDF funds and states must provide information about jobs created or retained. The funds will have to be obligated by September 30, 2010 and spent by September 30,

2011. Tribes will receive 2% of these funds. Funds will have to be used consistent with rules and laws governing CCDF. The CCB anticipates that the non-supplantation line will be state fiscal year 2008.

Dr. Maxine Hayes commented on the importance of integrating these resources into the overall plan with accountability for every dollar spent, otherwise funds are not likely to be rewarded again. Karen Tvedt agreed, mentioning that there will be a work session in the House tomorrow that will include discussion of how CCDF dollars are spent. Some of the rules incorporated into the CCDF guidelines include- subsidies for low income families, 5% administrative cost limit, 4% for quality. The CCDF stimulus dollars include funds specifically targeted on quality activities.

Karen Tvedt thanked the council for being so welcoming and spoke briefly about incoming Director Dr. Betty Hyde.

DEL REPORT OUT AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Publications- Presentation by Amy Blondin, Communications Manager. The DEL Licensed Child Care guide is new since the last ELAC meeting. DEL had received feedback from providers that it would be helpful to have some basic guidance about what they can expect from the department. DEL worked with providers and council members to develop the guide. It is intended to be a resource both for new providers and those considering becoming a licensed provider. DEL is currently working on its Annual Report and would like ELAC members to look it over and provide their feedback. For budgetary reasons, the report will be available on the website rather than printed.

Legislative Session- Presentation by Sonali Patel, Senior Policy Advisor. She explained the “This Week in Olympia” (TWIO) section of the DEL website: updates are posted by the close of business on Fridays and provide a brief factual update of the week’s legislative activity which relates to the work of the department.

Jada Rupley commented that the acronym TWIO (This Week in Olympia) also has been in use for many years by the Washington State Association of School Administrators for legislative updates.

Sonali Patel provided and explained a handout titled “Tracking of Key Bills”. The handout provided a brief description, sponsor date, originating committee and status for each of the bills mentioned. Bills include: 1329 and 5572- Center Collective Bargaining, 2261 and 6048- Basic Education Definition, 1943- Professional Development, 5617- ELAC, 5620- QRIS, 5865-ECEAP/HS study by JLARC, 2107- Home Visiting, 2087, 5995,2151 and 5994- Elim Boards & Commissions.

In response to concerns raised by Dr. Maxine Hayes about the future of ELAC, Leslie Goldstein (ELAC member, Governor’s Office) indicated that the Governor’s intention is not to eliminate ELAC and discussions in that regard are occurring with the legislature.

Professional Development Consortium (PDC)- Presentation (power point) by Dr. Juliet Torres- Morrison, Assistant Director, Systems, Partnerships & Collaboration. Professional Development Consortium Overview- Overall purposes identified for current PD development system: mapping, identify gaps, develop recommendations, develop strategies. House Bill 1943 was discussed as a current piece of legislation connected to the work of the Professional Development Consortium. The group last met on February 13th. At this meeting, they reviewed the professional development visual- Juliet walked

through the document and emphasized that this is a working document. The group also discussed mapping criteria- they referred back to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) blueprint and are still in the process of developing the criteria. The group also reviewed five (5) other states' core competencies- worked in small groups to look at the content and structure of the documents as well as how well they align with other state documents. Next steps for the Consortium are to compile workgroup feedback, review existing state documents and continue to define mapping criteria (hoping to work with Dr. Bobbie Weber at Oregon State University).

Juliet Torres also provided a brief legislative update in relation to the subgroups- the Child Care Resource and Referral (R & R) report is due to the legislature on June 30. This report will be an evaluation of the R & R network- information for parents and providers, overview of R & R system and highlights of current activities. DEL and R & R have been working together on a report outline and they will meet further and develop timelines. The STARS report is also due June 30. This report will be an evaluation of STARS, expenditures and average hours of training. DEL has been working with WAEYC to compile data and get ready to write the report which is Phase 1 of a two phase approach. Phase 2 will be to look at making updates to the registry to improve the integrity of data and make the system more user- friendly. Juliet acknowledged and thanked Amber Havens and Sue Winn who are council liaisons.

Comments/Questions

In response to a question from Jada Rupley, Juliet Torres explained that they have been working to develop a uniform evaluation for all STARS classes. WAEYC will compile the data and do a random sample. They also will be using stakeholder data from 2005.

Jada Rupley and Lorena Lowell both raised concerns about the screening of STARS trainers. Maria Vera commented that as a STARS trainer, one must reapply each year, and this could be a good opportunity to look into trainer qualifications/background checks. Karen Tvedt responded that the issue seems to be a need to look at the criteria for approving STARS trainers. Amber Havens commented that there is a need for an evaluative process within the state system to facilitate alignment with higher education institutions. Lorena Lowell commented that the online STARS trainings are very helpful for those in rural locations.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Workgroup- Presentation (power point) by Lynne Shanafelt, Assistant Director, Parent Support and Programs. CCDF goals are to: improve access to child care, improve quality, support parent options, provide subsidies for work, training or school. The current plan is for October 2007 through September 2009. The next two year plan is due July 1, 2009. The subgroup goals are to develop a timeline, determine how to use current data/figure out what data is needed and to determine a method for sharing information with stakeholders. A survey will be released next month which will address areas where more information was needed (birth to three, how to support working families, inclusive child care, etc.). The plan is a broad brush across early learning, not an articulation of every activity. It will talk broadly about what to accomplish and align with DEL strategic plan. The first draft is due this week. Comments from the survey will be considered throughout the development of the plan. The plan can be amended as needed.

Comments/Questions

Nina Auerbach commented that she was glad to hear that the plan can be amended as it needs to align with the work of the Early Learning Plan. Lorena asked about how the funds work in relation to child care for foster children. Lynne Shanafelt explained that CCDF funds can be used to support foster families; this is handled by Children's Administration of the Department of Social and Health Services

(DSHS) and is separate from Working Connections Child Care. Lorena Lowell commented that it would be helpful for providers to have some sort of visual, which breaks out who pays for which kids to simplify billing. Dr. Amie Lapp Payne responded with the comment that Larry Horne and Lynne Shanafelt have been working with DSHS and Children's Administration to develop service level agreements and to figure out the best way to share information. Karen Tvedt mentioned that these issues have also come up in the legislature; a work group is being convened to facilitate coordination and alignment across departments and divisions.

Early Learning Plan (ELP)- Presentation (power point) by Karen Tvedt and Nina Auerbach. Background: planning process set in motion last fall. Began pulling together statewide needs assessments and plans, there was discussion about convening a large stakeholder group. The need for additional discussion and planning was identified. Nina Auerbach explained that the subgroup met more than four times between October and December; there was a feeling that the group needed to back up a bit to address the broader questions. Thrive by Five and DEL along with original partners in systems development in WA have begun talking about this. WA is a BUILD state funded by the Gates Foundation, Thrive by Five, DEL and Foundation for Early Learning. BUILD is a national initiative created in 2002 by the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative. They help states with systems building work and helped in the development of the Kids Matter framework. Made contact with BUILD in January about the Early Learning Plan development.

Karen Tvedt discussed the February meeting that BUILD helped facilitate. The group came to consensus about specific recommendations to ELAC: focus on the whole child, build on existing work and frameworks, develop comprehensive plan that connects local and statewide work, clear simple language, and broad representation on planning group (local and statewide, public and private, involve parents). The ELP group reported seeing ELAC as the approving/coordinating entity for the planning process. There was discussion of the need for work groups on specific components; mental health, social/emotional development, etc. There was acknowledgement that this can't be done "for free"; staff support will be necessary. Several people from the February meeting agreed to look into this. The group is looking at resources in the current agreement with BUILD, from Thrive by Five and possibly from the Head Start State Collaboration Office within DEL. The group also discussed the need for good communication mechanisms between other subgroups. Recommend finishing the plan by December of 2009. Power point slide showed proposed Early Learning Plan timeline.

Comments/Questions

Charles Earl commented that it appears ELAC's role is to advise rather than approve; need to identify where authority resides. Resulting council discussion concluded that ELAC has two distinct roles in statute: advising DEL and working to develop the Early Learning Plan.

Jim Skucy expressed a concern that the cumulative knowledge of this group is not being used effectively; members have been recipients of information rather than giving information. He would like to see work group products brought to the council for review, input and consensus building. In addition to information brought to ELAC meetings, he would like draft items sent to ELAC members and commented on the need to give input before things are too far down the line (choice points).

Dr. Maxine Hayes emphasized the need to use existing models (Kids Matter) while putting together the Early Learning Plan, don't reinvent the wheel. Nina Auerbach agreed but pointed out that it is a framework, not a plan, so there is still work to do. Dr. Hayes asked for clarification about BUILD- do we have to pay them? Nina Auerbach explained that a state does have to pay to be a BUILD state, but the

funding has already been committed by a variety of partners. The committee is working on a budget for administrative expenses associated with this planning process, as well as how to allocate staff.

The council agreed by consensus to support the committee moving forward with the Early Learning Plan planning process with the understanding that ELAC will be involved at each major step along the way.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Heather, Washington State Association of Head Start and Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (WSA) Parent Ambassador- Advocated for a switch from semi-annual to annual renewal for child care subsidies; would provide better continuity for parents, children and providers. Need to provide more opportunities for children to get into daycare. R & R is extremely helpful in assisting providers to become licensed and provide quality care. We need to provide every child with quality early learning opportunities, including those who cannot afford structured care.

Jill Sells, Docs for Tots- Thanked DEL, Thrive by Five and ELAC for their work today. Pediatricians see the issues of discontinuity of systems- engaging in this process is critical. Resources are available at the national level. Commented that Kids Matter is not perfect but it's a great framework to start with; need to think big picture.

Joel Ryan, WSA- At the national level they're looking at developing birth to five challenge grants; we may want to link to national efforts. He would be interested in participating in a group working on these issues. He advocated changing family qualification reauthorization (for subsidies) from semi-annual to annual. They have received feedback that many families are having to reauthorize more frequently than every six months. The current subsidy system is not providing continuity of care. Proposed HB 1754 legislation did not make it, but he and others will try to find money in budget process to get something started. He recommends that CCDF survey address continuity and co-pays. He also recommends involving parents in the Early Learning Plan process. He also commented on the possibility of ELAC receiving federal funding (\$500,000 over three years) contingent upon meeting representation requirements included in the Head Start Reauthorization Act. He feels that the council would not have to become Head Start-centric should they accept the funding.

The next quarterly meeting will be June 8, 2009 at the Tye Conference Center

ADJOURNED- Lorena Lowell adjourned the meeting at 12 p.m.