

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) Quarterly Meeting

March 14, 2011 . 9:00 to 12:00 . Lacey Community Center

M i n u t e s

ELAC MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

John Bancroft – Assistant Superintendent for Early Learning, Puget Sound ESD
Maxine Hayes, MD, MPH – State Health Officer, Department of Health
Dr. Bette Hyde – Director, Department of Early Learning
Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer – Project Manager, HSSCO, Department of Early Learning
Cynthia Juarez – Early Learning Directory, ESD 105
Lois Martin – Director, Community Day Center for Children, Inc
Todd Mc Nerney – Parent and Parent Advisory Group Member, Department of Early Learning
James Skucy – Executive Director, Benton Franklin Head Start
Paula Smith – Head of School, University Child Development School
Maria Vera – Parent and Early Learning Expert
Sue Winn – Family Child Care Provider

ELAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Nina Auerbach – Chief Executive Officer & President, Thrive by Five Washington
Don Bennett – Executive Director, Higher Education Coordinating Board
Susan Dreyfus – Secretary, Department of Social & Health Services
Charles Earl – Executive Director, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges
Leslie Goldstein – Executive Policy Advisor, Governor’s Executive Policy Office
Representative Roger Goodman – Washington State House of Representatives
Representative Larry Haler – Washington State House of Representatives
Senator Nick Harper – Washington State Senate
Susan Johnson – Director of Early Learning, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Senator Curtis King – Washington State Senate
Dr. Ilene Schwartz – Children with Disabilities
Marie Zackuse – Tulalip Tribes of Washington

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Co-chair Dr. Maxine Hayes welcomed all in attendance. ELAC members and public attendees introduced themselves. Co-chair Sue Winn mentioned that any changes to meeting minutes are due 1 week following their release.

DEL Director Bette Hyde welcomed everyone. She wanted to share with everyone the excitement surrounding Washington State and our Early Learning efforts. Bette also mentioned that DEL is in the process of reviewing the Early Learning Benchmarks. They are typically reviewed every 3 years. We would like the updates to include communities of color, better diversity represented, the plan encompassing prenatal to third grade, currently they stop at Kindergarten. The primary focus really needs to be on physical, social, and emotional health.

DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING UPDATES

Legislative/State Budget Updates

Amy Blondin, Government and Community Relations Manager at the Department of Early Learning, gave bill updates from the current legislative session and state budget updates.

- More than half way done with the 105 day Legislative Session
- Supplemental Budget:
 - Cuts to ECEAP administrative costs
 - Career and Wage Ladder suspended
 - Appropriation level increased
 - Good for SAC grant
 - Biennial budget: \$5 billion short fall & possible \$500 million more
- Department of Education Bill
 - US Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, will be conferencing in later today with the Governor to discuss education governance. Arne supports the DOE proposal, cradle to career.
 - Higher Education is no longer in the Department of Education bill
 - House of Representatives passed a version that is more of a study bill bringing everyone to the table to discuss this in further detail
- There has been a lot of talk regarding child care licensing
 - How to move licensing forward
 - Bill 1756 – Authorizing implementation of a non-expiring license for early learning providers
 - Bill 1903 – Portable background checks: background checks would be portable for 3 years amongst child care facilities
- WaKIDS – An OSPI request bill is moving forward. However, there is a null and void clause included; if there is no funding then it will not move forward
- A Bill in the Senate for our state to adopt core competencies did not pass. There is a possibility of attaching this onto another bill. It is important for us to develop standards in Early Learning.

State Advisory Council Grant Status

Kelli Bohanon, Assistant Director of Partnerships and Collaboration at the Department of Early Learning, provided a current status update on the State Advisory Council grant.

- Through the supplemental budget we now have spending authority to use the \$1.7 million grant over the next 2 ½ years. This will allow for the following to happen:
 - Further strengthen the role of this council
 - Build on the work that is already happening in our communities
 - Help with the revision of the benchmarks
 - Strengthen Pre-K through third efforts

Infant Toddler Regional Hubs

Kelli Bohanon also spoke about the work being done within the regional hubs.

- This work is primarily headed by Nancy Vernon and Thrive by Five Washington
- Infant toddler networks:
 - Early Learning Plan: evidence connected to one science message
 - Increase quality of services and supports for infants and toddlers
 - Build infrastructure in communities for supporting infant/toddlers
 - 10 communities across the state applied
 - Regions organized by 9 ESDs (split Puget Sound ESD into 2)
 - Initial work of communities was to conduct a Needs Assessment (needs of Infants and toddlers)
 - Submitted to DEL
 - Based on initial needs assessment, it was identified that a focus needed to be increasing the quality of care for infants and toddlers in child care settings; therefore, a next step will be to design locally-based interdisciplinary child care consultation models
 - Creating a capacity: putting focus on Infants and toddlers at regional networks
- It is intended that the regional networks will be a mechanism for continuing to build capacity for all early learning systems work in communities (creating community engagement, ownership and voice)

Home Visiting

Judy King, Parent and Caregiver Engagement Administrator at the Department of Early Learning presented on the home visiting structure in Washington.

*For more information on this presentation see the PowerPoint posted on the DEL website.

Federal Child Care and Development Fund plan (CCDF)

Lynne Shanafelt, Child Care Administrator for the Department of Early Learning spoke on the status of the Federal Child Care and Development Fund plan.

- This CCDF's plan:
 - Has a new look with more check boxes which allows the data to be rolled up Nationally and statewide
 - Will be electronically submitted
 - Has fewer sections
 - Is much more integrated
 - Is infused into the areas of Licensing
 - Is also much more focused on what state goals and objectives are and how to get there
- Emphasis on quality: Report due July 1, 2011
- Below are highlights of the time frame from now until its due date:
 - DEL staff is currently working on the first draft
 - The Steering committee, made up of 5 ELAC members; Jim Skucy, Sue Winn, Lois Martin, John Bancroft, and, alternate, Cynthia Juarez, will be reviewing the draft at their next meeting
 - Comments from there will go back to the DEL writers
 - A second look will be sometime in early April
 - The final plan is due to partners and the Office of Child Care by July 1st 2011.

Comments

Sue Winn asked if the Early Learning Plan would be used to make some decisions on this document. Absolutely! It is one of the 1st in the nation and it is a foundational piece in creating the CCDF plan. John Bancroft expressed concerned with the timeline. The next ELAC meeting is mid-June which doesn't leave much time to include all of ELAC as a whole before the due date. Lynne said that she would look into possibly having a webinar to incorporate ELAC in the review process.

ESIT Cost Study

Karen Walker, Program Administrator for the Early Support for Infant and Toddlers Program at the Department of Early Learning, spoke about the ESIT Cost Study.

*For more information on this presentation see the ESIT Study Overview handout posted on the DEL website.

Symposium Update "One Science Message" & Video

Bette Hyde and Kelli Bohanon presented on the "One Science Message."

*For more information on this presentation see the PowerPoint and video posted on the DEL website.

Comments

Maxine commented on how today's technology is now able to back up these theories. It is a profound juncture when we are able to finally take what we know and apply it to what we do! We really need to start investing more into the health of women especially in the child bearing years even if they are intending to become pregnant or not, it is an important investment which we are falling behind other countries in.

Legislative/State Budget Updates

Dr. Maxine Hayes, State Health Officer for the Department of Health spoke about the current updates for the Department of Health, Maternal Child Health related activities.

- With the 11-13 budget still undetermined these updates are only going to include the current supplemental budget
 - Total DOH reductions within Maternal Child Health related activities are \$1.2 million
- The following are early learning related reductions:
 - Oral Health
 - DOH provided \$690 thousand for oral health activities including sealants and referrals
 - Funding was eliminated through the adopted budget in 2011

Comments

Sue Winn asked if there are other places to go for money to support this program. Maxine pointed out that this all depends on the local jurisdictions and the geographic area. Some areas will be able to patch things together more easily, some will not.

- First Steps
 - Maternity support was reduced by 20% in FFY 11
 - Program was transferred to the Health Care Authority eliminating 5 full time employee positions in the process

- Additional cuts are expected
- Maxio Facial Clinics
 - Funding was not eliminated but it was reduced by \$55 thousand
- Neural Developmental Centers
 - Funding was reduced by 44% on January 1st

Comments

John Bancroft inquired about the waiting list for Working Connections Child Care (WCCC). Questions of concern include; is it possible to study how big the waitlist is? How long do families end up on the list? What happens to the families while they are on the waiting list? Do they have to quit their jobs? This basic statistical information would be helpful to have. Bette commented that DSHS would have that data. Lois Martin asked, what is the set limit? Bob Hamilton provided the answer with 35,200 families with a current budget of \$297 million. This waiting list currently has 1,000 families on it. Amy Blondin mentioned that this information is also on the DEL website. John Bancroft worries that families will end up feeling hopeless and stop adding their name to the waiting list, this is similar to what is seen with Head Start. Sue Winn asked if we have anything showing how this affects the entire state, areas hardest hit, etc. Bob did say that this information is currently not available but is being worked on at this time.

Early Learning Joint Resolution One-Year Action Plan Quarterly Progress Report

Bob Hamilton, Deputy Director for the Department of Early Learning provided the quarterly progress report for the Early Learning Joint Resolution One-Year Action plan.

*For more information on this presentation see the PowerPoint and video posted on the DEL website.

Comments

Sue Winn asked if there would be financial support for providers. Bob confirmed, absolutely! We have to create the solid program first.

ELP Parent Ambassador Proposal

Joel Ryan, Executive Director of the Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP.

*For more information on this presentation see the PowerPoint posted on the DEL website.

Around the Table Comments on Proposal

Sue Winn commented on what a great idea this proposal is. Smart to start out with only 10-15 fellows in order to keep it manageable. Members should be able to feel like this really works and is a quality program. Too little members and lack of guidance could quickly burn people out. Maxine mentioned that this is exactly why this advisory committee is here. It is important that we give people opportunity to answer some of these important questions. Who would be a fellow? This definitely needs to be open to inclusion and have a full range of diversity for different perspectives. Todd McNerney stated that this seems to parallel with other parent ambassador programs. What would we do after the first year to utilize the outgoing members? There should be long term work whether it involves working with other fellows or having some sort of mentor program. Sue suggested the possibility of committing for a year and then building capacity. Maxine likes the aspect of separating out the work. Jennifer Jennings-Shaffer shared that she was encouraged to see an opportunity to grow early learning leaders in Washington that could help to fill the gap left by the loss of the Collaborative Leadership Institute. Joel

pointed out that the parent ambassador program isn't just about advocacy it has also become about personal growth. This is a very similar opportunity that needs to be supported to make it happen. If the state budget looks up then we might have a real opportunity to support this, and this "pilot" will provide a basis for expanding on this program. Sue asked if we could possibly use the hubs to help foster the start of this fellows program. Joel thought that would be a terrific idea. Jim Skucy showed enthusiasm with the timing of this proposal. It gives us a chance to make progress even in a scarce resource time. Paula Smith also agreed that this would be an excellent way for people to move forward and thought the close link with ELAC would be the perfect beginning for this.

Public Comments on Proposal

Jill commented that there are people out there who want to help. As long as there is some recognition provided to the participants. It is critical to show that we can make progress in these areas. Joel stated that fellows can actually serve two purposes by teaching and engaging other volunteers and developing a grass roots structure. Bea suggested at looking into United Ways of Washington for volunteers. Maxine agreed that this could really be a terrific opportunity to bridge multiple generations. The Rotary in Seattle is the largest in the world and they are often looking for projects. I think we should put Rotaries on the table. It is important to look beyond organizations of like interest. Sue asked Joel how he sees this idea moving forward. What has to happen next? Joel informed everyone that this would really need to move fast in order for the important details not to be forgotten. He would suggest a sit down with Bob and Bette to help coordinate and launch the program, but he doesn't see a problem with this starting by the fall even if there are fewer fellows in the first launch year just to get it up and running. Bob commented that Bette fully supports this idea. This could be put into the HUBS immediately and there shouldn't be any resistance to that. He confirmed that there will be a plan for operation brought up at the next meeting.

Public Comment

Pat Dickason from the League of Women Voters of Washington asked how the policies for WCCC are being developed to establish the waitlist, who is doing the work, and when with the policies be available. She also stated that there is a much greater need for families at lower income levels and asked how these are prioritized. There is much concern with the first come, first serve notion. Lynne explained how hard of a decision this process has been for DEL and other government agencies. In this tough economic time the TANF caseload has skyrocketed. WCCC had a lot of TANF money put into it originally. Now there are more limited funds for WCCC. In order to balance a connection between WCCC and TANF there has to be a compromise. This means there will be a limited number of entries into the program for an unknown amount of time. The only things we are able to report at this time are how many are on the waiting list, about 1,000, and the expenditures from last year were \$311 million and now are currently \$297 million. There are 300 new participants each day entered into the subsidy system.

Joel Ryan wanted to know what is being done to improve the child care system call center in Washington. Also, what is being done to make changes as part of the federal plan? Lynne informed him that work has just started on the plan but it is open for discussion. As far as the call system goes, there is a high rate of inaccuracy but in their defense they are working with lacking technology. There has also been a tremendous amount of change that they have had to deal with which in turn backs up the system with the overwhelming amount of callers asking about these changes. Joel mentioned that he was asked to try calling in as a parent to test the system and he was dropped twice. He then asked some providers to call and do the same thing, they were also dropped when playing the role as parent.

Lynne again reiterated how lacking the technology is that the call center is working with and added that they are currently experiencing a case load of 37,000 as of last Friday. Jackie Haight mentioned that she is also experiencing the same problem as Joel. She asked if there is any tracking system in place regarding the people who are dropping off. There is also much concern regarding the co-pays rapidly increasing. A parent brought her letters that she had received into her and they followed her co-pay starting at \$15 per month then jumping up to more than \$200 within just a few months. Jackie suggested possibly starting a blog for these families in order for us to hear input. She really fears that people are going to drop off the program completely. Lynne explained the new Tier system for co-pays. Tier 1 has not yet changed but Tier 2 ranges from \$50-65 and Tier 3 is a sliding scale system which can really leap depending on the circumstance. Bob showed much concern with the system and will try to look into some kind of solution. He stated that these problems represent mathematics not our current environment.

June Agenda Items

- All departments budget updates
- ELP Parent Ambassador Proposal update

CLOSING REMARKS

Maxine thanked everyone for all of their input. This is an important discussion on WCCC especially while trying to solve problems with changes to State government budgets.