



Washington State Department of
Early Learning

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

October 22, 2007

Saint Martin's University
Spangler Hall Meeting Room

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:

- Understand the purpose of the ELAC, and how it is different from the past Early Learning Council;
- Get acquainted with Council members;
- Discuss and identify values that will guide our work;
- Elect co-chairs;
- Discuss and develop guidelines for how the Council will operate;
- Clarify the roles of co-chairs, Council members, DEL staff and the public; and
- Determine future meeting dates and next steps.

In Attendance:

Secretary Robin Arnold-Williams
Cheryl Cranston
Amber Havens
Robin Higa
Lorena Lowell
Jill Sweet
Sue Winn

Director Jone Bosworth
Representative Larry Haler
Dr. Maxine Hayes
Senator Claudia Kauffman
Jim Skucy
Bob Watt

Welcome, Overview, Agenda Review

Presented by Debbie Rough-Mack. Less than full attendance recognized.

Background of ELAC

Presented by Dr. Amie Lapp Payne, Deputy Director of DEL (information in tab 3 and 4, in provided binder). Dr. Payne provided an overview of the Early Learning Advisory Council established during legislation in 2007. The ELAC has a unique purpose and is not an extension of the Early Learning Council, which sunset on June 30, 2007.

Introductions – Who is Here?

Council members were paired off, asked to interview each other, and then introduce their partners to the rest of the group. As part of that exercise, Council members shared what they hope for from the Council's work. Here's what they said:

Amber Havens – to move well-thought-out systems across the state.

Bob Watt – wants ELAC to win a Nobel Peace Prize; to change the way we think about learning and life for families.

Robin Higa – to establish ground-up and top-down consensus so parents know how to help children thrive – give parents and children voice.

Rep. Haler – everyone who has a child is aware of the critical nature of birth to 5.

Cheryl Cranston – make good things happen – look through the eyes of children.

Sue Winn – raise quality for children; honest support for providers; keep DEL's momentum.

Jone Bosworth – system-driven by parent voice.

Sen. Kauffman – make sure parents have choices; plan that includes parents.

Jim Skucy – support for families (first 5 years, especially).

Lorena Lowell – voice for diverse perspectives.

Maxine Hayes – policy development input; give a “leg up” to DEL.

Robin Arnold-Williams – inclusion of kids with special needs.

Jill Sweet – resources/funding & public support and knowledge about early learning.

Values /Beliefs that Guide our Work

Through a forced choice exercise, members were asked to identify their top values, and share a story illustrating how they recognized their top value from life.

The Council noted how often integrity (and similar values) came up. They described some behaviors which they thought embodied integrity and would guide the Council's work, namely:

- Recognize that all Council members are doing their best from a place of love; leave judgment out.
- Acknowledge differences, and be honest and sincere in challenging each other.
- Speak your mind.
- Be direct with each other; believe you are safe to be honest.

Legislative Overview

Presented by Sonali Patel, Senior Policy Advisor for DEL (tabs 4, 5, and 6 in the provided binder).

DEL is the combination of programs/divisions from Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED), Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

The whole country is looking to Washington State as the first state to have early learning on the Governor's Executive Cabinet.

DEL works in partnership with DSHS.

We need to take a strategic and thoughtful approach to early learning when moving forward, which is why the ELAC was created.

Election of Co-Chairs

The statute indicates that one Co-Chair should represent the public sector community, and the other should represent the private sector community. Bob Watt was nominated and declined, due to numerous other commitments. After considerable discussion, Lorena Lowell and Dr. Maxine Hayes graciously agreed to accept the Co-Chair positions.

Expectations for Conduct at Meetings

The Council discussed their desired meeting protocols and came up with the following agreements:

1. How will we balance “air time”?

Co-Chairs will manage time. (Council members will self-censor too.)

2. How will we set an agenda/stick to an agenda/manage time well?

Director Jone Bothworth, Dr. Maxine Hayes and Lorena Lowell will set a draft agenda and accept additional input. Director Bosworth will share information from DEL (as a regular agenda item) to ELAC and vice versa. Dr. Amie Lapp Payne will be the communications point of contact for DEL as it relates to ELAC business.

3. What will we do when distracting side conversations occur?

Co-Chairs will manage this.

4. What expectations do we have about our interactions with each other?

- Respectful listening.
- Decisions discussed in the room and made in the room.
- Co-Chairs (and Council) make sure space is made for all to be heard.
- Co-Chairs “check in” with all Council members.
- Cell phones off.
- See Council’s integrity behaviors:
 - Recognize that all Council members are doing their best from a place of love; leave judgment out.
 - Acknowledge differences, and be honest and sincere in challenging each other.
 - Speak your mind.
 - Be direct with each other; believe you are safe to be honest.

5. When will we meet? Times?

Quarterly, and as decided. It was decided that Dr. Amie Lapp Payne and Co-Chairs would try to have the next meeting scheduled to occur within the next 30 days, contingent upon availability. Additional dates will be proposed by Co-Chairs for 2008.

6. How firm are we regarding beginning and ending times?

Firm.

7. What about attendance at meetings?

The expectation is that you will attend! Do your best to make it a priority; if you cannot actively participate, relinquish your position. A quorum for the ELAC is defined as one more than half.

8. Will we allow others to join the meeting discussion (e.g. Subject matters experts? Members of the public?)

Allow public comment time on the agenda, as well as invite specific subject matter experts as relevant to the agenda topics.

9. Will we allow members to send representatives in their absence?

No, but opinions may be shared by email to a contact person (for now, Dr. Amie Lapp Payne). Those *present* at meetings will be responsible for making decisions. *(See note bueno on page 5.)

10. What expectations do we have about preparation for meetings?

The agenda and related materials should be sent out one week ahead. The agenda will also be available on the DEL web site. Revisions to previous meeting minutes should be addressed prior to the next meeting (as much as possible). Read agenda and materials ahead of time!

11. What should happen when we have to miss a meeting?

Notify Dr. Amie Lapp Payne and Co-Chairs. Dr. Payne will track attendees. It will be the responsibility of Council members – if they can't attend a meeting and wish to have their viewpoint shared – to write a statement expressing their opinion and send it to Dr. Payne prior to the meeting so that it can be included as part of the meeting materials. *(See note bueno on page 5.)

12. What shall we do when any of these things become a problem for us?

Make it an agenda item and revisit it, with Co-Chairs facilitating discussion.

13. How should conflict among council members be handled?

With respectful and courteous communication. Refer to values (integrity).

14. How will information from these meetings be shared with other interested parties?

Through the DEL web site. It is also the responsibility of Council members to share ELAC info with their communities and solicit input. TVW may be an option at future meetings.

15. Will we allow participation by phone?

Yes. Contact Dr. Payne if you need to conference-in to a Council meeting. *(See note bueno on page 5.)

Guidelines for Making Recommendations

1. How shall we discuss and consider alternative viewpoints?

Different viewpoints will be heard, solicited, and respected.

2. How shall we make decisions (i.e. represent our recommendations to DEL)?

Seek consensus first, confirmation by vote. Anyone can make a motion for a vote. Examine opportunities for creativity (e.g. individual time/ reflection – before engaging in conversation).

3. Who gets a “voice?”

The Council will hear from all. Votes will be limited to Council members.

4. What do we want to do about other interested parties who are not present but may have an opinion?

Interested parties are responsible for contacting Council members so that their voices can be heard through ELAC channels.

5. What if you disagree with a decision the council has made? Do we want to have any guidelines about how we talk about the decisions or discussions of this group outside of the meetings?

The expectation is that individual Council members will support the group’s collective opinion.

Roles

See the above guidelines for conduct for specifics.

Future Meetings, Next Steps

Council members and interested parties can expect that: 1) They will be contacted and the next ELAC meeting will be scheduled, as soon as Co-Chair schedules permit, with an attempt made to schedule within the next 30 days; 2) Additional information will be posted on the web site.

Please note that the Governor holds final authority for policy decisions and her P-20 Council will be made aware of ELAC’s input to DEL.

Thanks to all Council members for fully engaging in thoughtful discussion.

***Note bueno:** Since the first ELAC meeting, an email address has been established for ELAC communication. (This was sent out to ELAC members on October 23, 2007.)

For all ELAC communications, please send email to Dr. Payne at elac@del.wa.gov.