



Washington State Department of Early Learning

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

Quarterly Meeting

October 8, 2008, 9:00 - 4:00

M i n u t e s

IN ATTENDANCE

DEL STAFF

Amie Lapp Payne, Deputy Director - Presenting
Kate Verville, Chief Operating Officer
Sonali Patel, Senior Policy Advisor - Presenting
Lynne Shanafelt, Assistant Director, Parent Support & Programs Division - Presenting
Juliet Torres, Assistant Director, Partnerships & Collaboration Division - Presenting
Kelli Bohanon, Program Administrator, Head Start - New ELAC Staffer
Bambi Sotak, Parent Relations Specialist

ELAC MEMBERS

Robin Arnold-Williams - Secretary, Dept. of Social & Health Services
Jone Bosworth, JD - Director, Dept. of Early Learning
Lenda Crawford - Interim Chief Executive Officer, Thrive-by-Five (interim member)
Amber Havens - Educational Training Partners
Robin Higa - Parent
Lorena Lowell - Child Care Center Director
Dr. Ilene Schwartz - Children with Disabilities
Jada Rupley - Associate Superintendent
James Skucy - Executive Director, Benton Franklin Head Start
Paula Smith - Head of School, University Child Development School
Linda Sullivan-Dudzic - Director of Special Programs, Bremerton School District
Maria Vera - Parent
Sue Winn - Family Child Care Provider

ELAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Ann Daley - Executive Director, Higher Education Coordinating Board
Laurie Dolan - Director, Governor's Executive Policy Office
Charles Earl - Director, State Board for Community & Technical Colleges
Representative Roger Goodman - Washington State House of Representatives
Representative Larry Halder - Washington State House of Representatives
Dr. Maxine Hayes - State Health Officer, Dept. of Health
Senator Mike Hewitt - Washington State Senate
Senator Claudia Kauffman - Washington State Senate
Marie Zackuse - Chairwoman, Tulalip Tribes of Washington
Jill Sweet - Parent

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

- Identify current Council members, representatives, and co-chairs up for renewal and/or election
- Recap meeting protocols and values discussion
- Hold elections for co-chair(s)
- Review/approve dates and potential work plan for next year (Oct. 2008-Dec. 2009)
- Hear public comment
- Determine next steps

WELCOME, OVERVIEW OF DESIRED RESULTS & AGENDA, RE-CAP MEETING PROTOCOLS & VALUES

Co-Chair, Lorena Lowell opened the meeting with an overview of meeting objectives.

INTRODUCTIONS

Members introduced themselves.

INTRODUCE ELECTIONS, APPOINTMENTS, AND LEGISLATION

Sonali Patel, DEL Senior Policy Advisor, presented a copy of the Legislative Citations for the Early Learning Advisory Council (Handout 1) as well as a copy of the ELAC Members by Designation (Handout 2). She highlighted the language in both to help provide clarity for today's election of Chairs and upcoming term renewals.

Handout 1 - Legislative Citations for ELAC

Sonali provided a brief overview of the legislative citations:

The Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) was established during the 2007 Biennial Session to advise the Department of Early Learning on statewide early learning community needs and progress. The funding for ELAC is specified in the 2007 Legislative Budget notes at \$250,000 over the biennium. The council works in conjunction with the Department to develop a statewide early learning plan that crosses systems and sectors to promote alignment of private and public sector actions, objectives, and resources, and to ensure school readiness.

The council includes diverse, statewide representation from public, nonprofit, and for-profit entities. Its membership reflects regional, racial, and cultural diversity to adequately represent the needs of all children and families in the state.

Council members serve two-year terms. However, to stagger the terms of the council, the initial appointments for twelve of the members shall be for one year. Once the initial one-year to two-year terms expire, all subsequent terms shall be for two years, with the terms expiring on June 30th of the applicable year. The terms shall be staggered in such a way that, where possible, the terms of members representing a specific group do not expire simultaneously.

Handout 2 - Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) Members by Designation

A correction was made to indicate that Paula Smith should be listed as the Washington Federation of Schools designee instead of Cheryl Cranston. *(Handout 2 has been updated for the ELAC website).*

Ms. Patel discussed the representative requirements of ELAC. She discussed that member's terms were intentionally staggered and that the co-chairs roles were specified to allow for one chair from a state agency and one chair as a non-governmental representative. Given the make-up of the Council, it was discussed that the language could be read to allow one chair to be from a governmental entity and one chair as a non-governmental representative.

Director Bosworth noted that all members have been re-appointed.

ELECTION OF CO-CHAIRS

Lorena Lowell began by stating that she would like to continue as Co-Chair but that Maxine Hayes, who was not present, had previously stated that she was not interested in a second term as Co-Chair

Jada Rupley conveyed her interest in the Co-Chair role noting the importance of the work.

MOTION: Dr. Ilene Schwartz motioned for Lorena Lowell and Jada Rupley to assume Co-Chair duties for the next term.

SECOND: James Skucy seconded.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously

YEAR IN REVIEW

Director Bosworth first thanked Representative Ruth Kagi who was in attendance.

She expressed her appreciation for the fantastic information sharing of the council but encouraged increased dialogue with members so they are able to be better ambassadors for DEL.

She provided an overview of DEL's four primary goals in the Strategic Plan:

- Building Public Awareness and Will to Act
- Build a Comprehensive Early Learning System
- Strengthen Dialogue with Parents and Caregivers
- Build Organizational Excellence

She is enthusiastic about the release of the Parent Needs and Preferences Assessment.

Brief overview of child care improvements including:

- Compliance agreements for all licenses care centers
- Quality Improvement Plan
- Initiated quarterly meetings with providers around the state to enhance communication and build relationships at the local level. Concerns expressed included regulations and unionization.

Sue Winn added that parents prefer to meet as a small group vs. a larger group.

Acknowledgements from Director Bosworth:

- Expressed her gratitude to the council members acknowledging them as advisors to the Department and ambassadors for DEL to the community.
- Recognized Amber Havens for the success of the historic Tribal summit.
- Appreciated Lorena Lowell and Sonali Patel for accompanying her to Washington DC for the National Conference where Washington State was highlighted as an example for quality early learning.
- Thanked Robin Higa for her great support to the Department.
- Thanked James Skucy for participating on the Washington State Head Start Proposal Steering Committee.
- Director Bosworth acknowledged Kate Verville's dedicated service as staff to the Council. She then introduced Kelli Bohanon, DEL's Head Start Collaboration Office Manager, as new staff to the Council.

Director Bosworth then introduced a three-part discussion to propose ways for DEL and ELAC to work together to fulfill statewide mandates to create a statewide Early Learning Plan and respective reports.

- Statewide Early Learning Plan - Presenter, Amie Lapp Payne
- Professional Development - Presenter, Juliet Torres
- Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) - Presenter, Lynne Shanafelt

Statewide Early Learning Plan - Amie Lapp Payne

Amie began with a recap of one of the statutory requirements of ELAC which is to work in conjunction with the Department to develop a statewide early learning plan that crosses systems and sectors to promote alignment of private and public sector actions, objectives, and resources, and to ensure school readiness. She added that one of DEL's four goals in the strategic plan is to Build a Comprehensive Early Learning System, however there is a need for a comprehensive plan in which we, as a state (across all systems and sectors) identify, define, and track progress against a set of agreed upon performance measures, or indicators for children and families, and for the systems that support them.

Amie also reported that she and Director Bosworth were participants on the Washington State team that attended the National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy at Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child. The "Harvard Team" also included representatives from the Governor's office, both political parties, the Senate (Kauffman, King), the House (Kagi, Haler), and the private sector (Watt, Graciela); and Valisa Smith, of the Gates Foundation participated in the Symposium as well.

One of the goals the team worked on was what the "next steps" would look like after the symposium in terms of the scientifically-based actions needed to move closer to meeting the primary goal for children: *that all children are healthy and ready for success in school and in life.*

Based upon the presentations at the symposium and during the group discussions in Boston and follow-up discussions in Seattle and Olympia, the group recognized that a multi-disciplinary approach looking at not only early learning but also health, child welfare, child safety and economic security was crucial. This mirrors the national model of an early learning system that Director Bosworth presented to ELAC in January of this year, and by identifying specific indicators associated with each of these four categories (Early Care and Education; Parent Information and Support ; Health, Mental Health, and Nutrition, and Special Needs and Intervention) we can join the ranks of nearly every state in the nation and what they have done to make progress in early learning (including Minnesota; Boston, MA; MI).

Amie pointed out that there are a number of excellent indicators already available, but they are not collected in one easily accessible location nor are they specific to the birth-to-five population. She asked the council to make a decision about whether to support what the team and others have agreed to.

What was proposed is two-fold:

- (1) Early Learning Plan Committee, for which we have a Council Representative, in addition to representatives from stakeholder groups.
- (2) To move forward; make measurable, planned progress on the development of a statewide early learning plan in conjunction with DEL and with stakeholders we, as a first step, host an "Indicators Forum" to include:
 - Establish indicators platform for statewide plan
 - Define indicators
 - Link to existing strategic plans (and logical models, etc) in communities throughout the state
 - Map out how suggested strategies roll up in the four model areas in the statewide ELP
 - Include analysis of current plans
 - Roll up all into single, cohesive plan; get ELAC and public feedback, buy in
 - Approve, submit to legislature

Director Bosworth opened a discussion for the proposed Early Learning Plan Committee and the Indicators Forum:

- Ilene expressed her excitement for how far things have come but cautioned that things will become stalled if they try to make selections based on perfection.
- Linda looks forward to seeking specific outcomes adding that people will respond better to measureable outcomes and a common language.
- Maria Vera said they need to deliver the message to local communities and asked how members can support that effort.
- Robin Arnold-Williams said some measurements get measured in other venues such as the Governor's GMAP and it's not just ELAC's responsibility.
- Sue Winn said we need better information sharing.
- Lorena noted a disconnect with children in populations not currently in the system.

Director Bosworth requested establishment of a group of volunteers from ELAC for 1 to 2 meetings 2 hours each between now and the December 30, ELAC meeting to include other stakeholders as well. The work plan will be presented at the next ELAC meeting.

Lorena Lowell and Jada Rupley volunteered for the Statewide Early Learning Workgroup. Maria Vera offered to participate by phone.

MOTION: Lorena Lowell motioned to create the Statewide Early Learning Group and nominated Lorena Lowell and Jada Rupley as ELAC liaisons.

SECOND: Director Jone Bosworth seconded.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Professional Development - Juliet Torres
Handout 3 - Early Learning Partnership Resolution

Juliet began with the April signing of the Joint Early Learning Partnership Resolution between DEL, TB5, and OSPI.

“Commit to jointly support the development of high quality, aligned early care and education programs that respect and reflect the rich diversity of children and families throughout our state”

5 priority areas were identified and lead agencies were designated:

- Early Learning and Developmental Benchmarks (DEL)
- *Early Learning Professional Development System (DEL)*
- Information Technology System, Data and Resource Mapping (DEL)
- Kindergarten Readiness and Transition Process (Implementation - OSPI)
- Early Literacy Development (TB5)

She also reminded the council that the Legislative Report is due on June 30, 2009, to the governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature that relate to professional development activities involving the State Training and Registry System and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network - specifically:

- Administration of the state training and registry system, including annual expenditures, participants and average hours of training provided per participant
- An evaluation of the child care resource and referral network in providing information to parents and training and technical assistance to child care providers

As part of the Resolution, DEL is taking the lead on the Early Learning Professional Development System. The new group met on September 29. At the first meeting, DEL discussed this role and the desire to partner with agencies and state organizations that have been working on professional development across the state, including, but not limited to: the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, WAEPECP - WA Association for Educators of Personnel in Early Childhood Programs (WAEYC), Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and the Washington Association for the Education of Young Children. On the call, three organizations provided a brief introduction to some of the work they have been doing on professional development. This work provided context for the various projects that are going on at both a state and local level.

In June 2008, a team from Washington attended a National Conference on building professional development systems. One result of the conference was a draft document produced by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). On the call, two members of the state group that attended the conference: Executive Director of WAEYC, Agda Burchard, and DEL HSSCO, Kelli Bohanon led a discussion on using the NAEYC Blueprint as a resource and framework for the consortium’s work. The Blueprint highlighted six policy areas to focus work when building an integrated system. The Consortium discussed and agreed that we must take current stock of professional development work and resources across the state to get a clearer picture of Washington’s needs within every policy area. So the first work item will be to create a current professional development map of work occurring across the state.

There was a lot of rich discussion and recognition of the fragmentation across the state despite good work that is taking place. Sue Winn is a member of the consortium, and the group discussed the role of the Early Learning Advisory Committee in helping to move this work forward. This will be a group that meets every six weeks with the first item completed; the professional development map by end of June 2009.

The next step is an in-person meeting on October 22, at the WAEYC Conference where we will clearly identify some foundational definitions, set a timeframe and focus for the group and commit to the first priority item.

Juliet invited council members to attend these meetings.

The Overall Goal for both the report due to the Legislature and the Professional Development Consortium mapping project will support the creation of an integrated professional development system in manageable, concrete steps.

To move the professional development work forward, Juliet requested a liaison from ELAC responsible for participating and bringing information back to the council. Juliet also requested a liaison for the Legislative Report and the Professional Development Consortium.

Sue Winn and Amber Havens both volunteered.

MOTION: James Skucy motioned to allow Sue Winn and Amber Haven to participate as professional development consortium liaisons.

SECOND: Maria Vera seconded.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Director Bosworth said results are needed after each meeting.

Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) - Lynne Shanafelt

Lynne requested the Council to establish a Child Care Development Fund Steering Committee. The purpose of the steering committee will be to serve in an advisory capacity to guide the process development for the upcoming two-year CCDF agency plan. The steering committee serves as conduit to DEL and the Early Learning Advisory Council throughout planning process.

The steering committee will review summary documents to include:

- Agency Mission and Vision Statement
- Current Plan
- CCDF requirements and timelines
- Agency strategic plan (other performance documents)
- Data collection from PNA and MRS
- Successes
- Gaps

The steering committee will determine planning recommendations for:

- Timeline for draft plan to be completed by November 30, 2008
- Who will provide data for plan
- How will we gather data for plan

Membership:

- Small group which includes an ELAC chair, state child care administrator, a parent, staff support, and two additional members
- Six members total
- One parent

Meetings:

- October conference call
- November, in Olympia or agreed upon location
- December, conference call
- February, conference call
- April review of early draft

Lynne provided information about the CCDF grant:

- Administered by the Administration for Children and Families provides five billion dollars in federal funds nationwide to improve accessibility and quality of child care.
- Provides child care subsidies to low-income parents to help pay for child care while they are working. Each state has a designated lead agency to manage the grant.
- DEL is the lead agency for the Child Care Development Fund.
- DEL uses CCDF dollars to improve accessibility, affordability and quality of child care DEL submitted their first plan that covers CCDF activities from October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2009.
- Next two-year plan is due for submission on July 1, 2009.

DEL is responsible to:

Submit a two year plan describing:

- Budget and Program Administration
- Coordinated Community and State Partnership Plan
- Child Care Services Offered and Eligibility Requirements
- Parental Rights and Responsibilities
- Services to Improve Quality and Availability of Child Care
- Provider Health and Safety Requirements

Other requirements include:

- No more than 5% spent on agency administration
- At least 4% spent to improve child care quality and availability
- Licensing requirements must be in place
- Funds are available for children in protective services
- Conduct public hearings to review plan
- Provide Market Rate Survey
- Submit all required reports to ACF
- Monitor programs
- Serve as single point of state contact for child care

MOTION: Director Jone Bosworth motioned to have Robin Higa and James Skucy as ELAC Liaisons.

SECOND: Sue Winn seconded.

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Council then had a brief discussion about families and providers in crisis, child care subsidies, food assistance eligibility, family friends and neighbors program, educational opportunities and requirements, and potential business planning for providers.

Lorena Lowell recapped the morning's work and the council broke for lunch.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Representative Ruth Kagi spoke to the Council informing them that the Thrive by Five Search committee, which she Chairs, has recommended Nina Auerbach as the new Chief Executive Officer. The decision will be announced soon.

Maria Vera reported on two items she is excited about, 1) Initiative "Babies Can't Wait" noting the many partners involved. She said they are moving towards the goal of the importance of early childhood development, and 2) The State Harbor Nursery received grant from DEL to educate themselves on childhood development.

James Skucy reported on an upcoming half day training on November 14, by the Health Care institute, a researched based program (200 people to attend the training). The curriculum will be based on helping parents make good health care choices. The training will be followed up by home visits for one year. Health care items such as thermometers will be included in the packet of materials.

Sue Winn said she is planning a biennial conference on April 24-26, 2009, at the SeaTac Marriott for family providers, and Family Friends and Neighbors. Anyone else who wants to attend is invited.

Amber Havens said she has been receiving emails regarding the upcoming Adult Educations Trainers Conference. She added that the conference ties directly to the earlier discussion about professional development. The conference is being held on May 18-20, 2009, at Lake Chelan in collaboration with ETP, WAEYC, Schools Out, and the State R&R.

Paula Smith reported that independent schools in the state have received the ability to become accredited in the state.

Linda Sullivan notes that the school board members and superintendents shared encouraging news about Pre-K successes. High percentages of academic success are directly related to Pre-K education.

Robin Arnold-Williams reported on two new DSHS programs:

1. Basic Food Program expansion: On October 1, the gross income limit for "Categorically Eligible" households was increased from 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 200% of the FPL. Under this rule change, almost all households in Washington are considered categorically eligible for Basic Food Benefits if their household income is no greater than 200% of the FPL. For example, a family of four is now categorically eligible if their income does not exceed \$42,400 per year. Previously, the upper income limit for a family of four was \$27,560 (130% of the FPL).

2. Children's Medical expansion: Under Medicaid children may be eligible for coverage if their family income is no greater than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Under SCHIP children are eligible for subsidized coverage if their family income is no greater than 250% of the FPL. For both Medicaid and SCHIP, the child must be a US Citizen or a legal alien. Under the new program (called Apple Health), eligibility limits (including premium requirements) are the same for all children regardless of citizenship or alien status.

Effective January 1, 2009, the family income limit for subsidized coverage is scheduled to increase to 300% of the FPL (subject to the availability of funds).

Jada Rupley reported that Clark County Senate spent two days in Vancouver testifying to the education committee regarding QRIS.

Representative Kagi added that the House and Senate would be having a Legislative Hearing and Symposium regarding QRIS.

Jada continued, noting that the Child Care Resource & Referral is looking at how to bring people together in the Gorge area regarding an ECEAP expansion into four new communities. They are looking at collaborative development through video conferencing.

She also reported that there are new USDA monitors for home providers.

Lastly, the National League of Cities is looking at school-age programs.

Ilene Schwartz shared information about an upcoming Professional Infant and Early Childhood Conference in Tacoma - 1200 people are expected.

She also reported that the University of Washington admitted its first full undergraduate class in early learning opportunities. Several internships and field research are part of the program. Susan Sandal is the Program Director.

Director Bosworth reported on the terrific new DEL website enhancement "just for kids". The next step will be the kindergarten transition page.

She also shared a wonderful experience she had over the weekend participating at the Buddy Walk for Down Syndrome. She was a speaker at the event and met some wonderful people.

Lorena Lowell expanded her business in Oregon with new centers. She noted the challenges Oregon faces relative to Washington in relation to providers and families accessing resources.

She also noted how refreshing it was to visit Washington DC with Director Bosworth and witnessing firsthand how the work being done in Washington State is affecting what's happening there.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Donna Horne - WSFCCA

She applauded ELAC's hard work! She said she attended two town hall meetings that DEL organized for providers and the two WSFCCA representatives that attended were horrified at the behavior of the audience members. She suggested that at future town hall meetings, the facilitators inform the audience who is in the room, including audience members, so they are able to determine who they need to work with on the issues raised. She said she plans to attend the next town hall meeting.

Suzi Wright

Thanked DEL for the tribal summit. She added that they are interested in the development of the Washington Head Start Program and would like updates on the project. They would also like to be at the table. She also hopes there is not an unnecessary burden placed on providers by adding too many educational requirements.

Hanna Lieberman

She shared that David Kirk will be speaking at the Seattle University on October 22, 2008.

COMMUNICATING OUR WORK - FUTURE MEETING DATES

Members reviewed the proposed 2009 quarterly meeting schedule and approved as follows:

- March 9 (time and location TBD)
- June 8 (time and location TBD)
- September 14 (time and location TBD)
- December 14 (time and location TBD)

The next quarterly meeting will be December 30, 2008 (time and location TBD).

Members also discussed having public comment prior to the lunch hour due to participation challenges after lunch. It was agreed that there would be two opportunities for public comment, one before lunch and one after lunch.

Lorena stated that the monthly conference calls that took place during the summer would discontinue. They will be scheduled on an as needed basis.

CLOSING REMARKS

Director Bosworth expressed her appreciation for all of the extra efforts of the members.

ADJOURN - THANK YOU!

Lorena adjourned the meeting at 1:30.

- HANDOUT 1 Legislative Citations for ELAC
- HANDOUT 2 ELAC Members by Designation
- HANDOUT 3 Early Learning Partnership Resolution