



Washington State Department of Early Learning

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) Quarterly Meeting

December 30, 2008, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

M i n u t e s

IN ATTENDANCE

DEL STAFF

Amie Lapp Payne, Deputy Director - Presenting

Sonali Patel, Senior Policy Advisor – Presenting (on the phone)

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

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

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

ELAC MEMBERS

Nina Auerbach, Chief Executive Office, Thrive-by Five

Jone Bosworth, JD - Director, Dept. of Early Learning (on the phone)

Representative Roger Goodman - Washington State House of Representatives

Lorena Lowell - Child Care Center Director

Dr. Ilene Schwartz - Children with Disabilities

Jada Rupley - Associate Superintendent

Paula Smith - Head of School, University Child Development School

Sue Winn - Family Child Care Provider

ELAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Robin Arnold Williams, Secretary, Department of Social and Health Services

Peter Berliner, Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, Thrive by Five

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 Larry Haler - Washington State House of Representatives

Amber Havens – Educational Training Partners

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

Senator Mike Hewitt - Washington State Senate

Robin Higa - Parent

Senator Claudia Kauffman - Washington State Senate

James Skucy – Executive Director, Benton-Franklin Head Start

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

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

- Identify current Council members
- ELAC Workgroup Reports
- DEL Report to the Governor and Legislature – An Overview for ELAC
- Hear public comment

WELCOME, OVERVIEW OF DESIRED RESULTS & AGENDA

Co-Chair, Jada Rupley opened the meeting with an overview of meeting objectives. Kelli Bohanon, the new DEL Staff to the council, went through the agenda.

INTRODUCTIONS

Members introduced themselves.

Director Bosworth, attending by phone, gave opening remarks. She thanked the members for their role as advisors to the Department and for their continued support to the council during the past year. She also talked about how pleased she was with the successes DEL has experienced over the past two years and highlighted some examples. These included:

- Quality improvement plans and initiatives: Licensing, Negotiated Rule Making, and Seeds to Success—our Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
- Communications: Website, materials, improved public disclosure, Licensed Child Care Information System, and socioemotional data regarding our Early Care and Education Assistance Program (ECEAP)
- Commitment to our values, with children at the center of what we do
- Integration of services, programs, policies, and values
- Work with the tribal nations
- Children's partnerships with museums and libraries
- Workgroups signaling the future
- December 15th report to the Governor and the Legislature: QRIS, Child Care Consultation, Washington Head Start Study, and Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Jone also highlighted work that is taking place through workgroups—such as the need for indicators around early learning in Washington State, and that is taking place on the international level. Specifically, she referred to indicators work such as the 10 Benchmarks proposed by Unicef. Jone mentioned that it appears as though a parallel revolution to early learning is taking place around the world!

Director Bosworth spoke about the importance of quality care and how the most important determinant of that care is the relationship quality that the child has with parents, their caregivers, and anyone who provides care, and how this is highlighted in the international

benchmarks. In the big picture, folks around the world are realizing that benchmarks are nothing without indicators to measure whether we are meeting the standards we are setting for ourselves, and one example of that is child immunizations. Jone closed by acknowledging how critical the advice the Council provides is to the Department and to Washington State, keeping the importance of early care and education at the forefront of everyone's minds.

Nina Auerbach thanked Jone for her incredibly hard work for early learning and how inspirational she has been for the department. She also shared her commitment to working with the Department in moving the vision for early learning in Washington forward.

DEL REPORT-OUT ON PROGRESS OF ELAC WORKGROUPS

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Workgroup – Presentation by Lynne Shanafelt, Assistant Director, Parent Support and Programs. Handouts were made available in the packets each council member received and can be obtained on the ELAC Website. Lynne went through the CCDF overview: \$5 billion in federal funds were distributed to states for child care; the goals for care are to improve access, improve quality, support parent options and subsidies for work, training or school. DEL as the lead agency submitted to the federal government the first CCDF plan for activities October 2007 through September 2009. The CCDF ELAC Subcommittee is responsible for developing a timeline for the draft CCDF Plan; recommending types of data and information to be used and recommending method for gathering and sharing information with our community stakeholders. Lynne talked about the workgroups visit to Children's Village in Yakima and the data they collected. The workgroup has met several times during the months of October and November, 2008. During those meetings they drafted a timeline for completing the plan. They will be holding public meetings as these are required by federal law and regulations prior to submitting the plan. DEL hopes to submit the final plan to the federal government by July 1, 2009. Lynne will come back to the ELAC Meeting in March with further updates.

Early Learning Plan (ELP) Workgroup – Presentation by Dr. Amie Lapp Payne. Handouts were made available in the packets each council member received and can be obtained on the ELAC Website. The legislation that requires a statewide Early Learning (EL) Plan (SSSB 5828) was quoted. The purpose of this workgroup is to develop a work plan proposal for the council's consideration regarding development of the statewide EL plan. They are using two strategies: 1) conducting an analysis of the existing statewide planning efforts related to EL across the systems and sectors; and 2) to convene a large group of stakeholders to identify and define key indicators. The workgroup held five meetings during the course of the last two months. They made significant progress in a short time. The workgroup progress included: development of guiding principles; a work plan format; identification of the national comprehensive systems model; proposed work plan strategies (final recommendations for ELAC) and a non-exhaustive summary of statewide planning documents (included in final recommendations). Discussion of the model in the handouts – Statewide Early Learning System and the graph – Goal: All Children are Healthy and Ready for School.

Agda Burchard, Executive Director for Washington Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC) did a short presentation with handouts available "Additional Recommendations to ELAC." Agda was part of the ELP workgroup. She went through the additional recommendations that some individuals developed in addition to and separate from

the work of the ELP workgroup, which included the following key concepts: 1) ELP should build directly from the 5-year history of early childhood systems work through Early Childhood Comprehensive System/BUILD-Kids Matter. 2) Need broader representation and input before a “plan to create the plan” can be developed. 3) There needs to be a broader process to delineate the overall plan outcomes before indicators can be chosen; and there needs to be a stakeholder engagement process around the plan itself, not just choosing indicators. Their overall recommendation: DEL/ELAC, Thrive by Five Washington, and Kids Matter/BUILD leadership come together as partners to recommend a process for the development of the statement early learning plan.

Comments and Questions

Sue Winn asked about Kids Matter and who makes up this group.

Ilene Schwartz and Nina Auerbach talked about challenges associated with ensuring that everyone is heard and the need to be clear.

Representative Goodman suggested that perhaps we should spend time on indicators and called attention to the worldwide indicators for Unicef that Director Bosworth had shared in her opening remarks.

Professional Development Consortium Workgroup (PDC) – Presentation by Dr. Juliet Torres. Handouts were made available in the packets council members received. Juliet went through the overall purposes, identifying the following goals of PDC work, mapping current professional development system for early care and education; identifying gaps in current professional development system; developing recommendation for a statewide, integrated professional development system; and developing specific strategies with clearly identified outcomes and timelines. She then shared progress of the workgroup, which included: establishing a definition to ground the work for the Consortium; discussing the audience and age range of children as a key decision for DEL to make; and professional standards being set as a priority focus for which the PDC agreed to use the NAEYC blueprint. Juliet also talked about some of the “Framing Questions” for the workgroup which included : 1) what are the professional standards in Washington State for EL professionals responsible for care of children, birth to 12?; 2) what are career pathways available to those interested in advancing their knowledge, skills and abilities?; and 3) what articulations need to exist between professional development providers to ensure a smooth advancement opportunity for early learning professionals? The workgroup’s next steps include: analyzing professional standards already in place in Washington; and researching professional development systems in other states and determining gaps/themes across state systems to help build Washington’s professional development system.

Juliet also gave an update on one of the subgroups of the larger Professional Development Consortium – the Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) Report to the Legislature. The 2009 budget proviso directs that, in quotes, “*The department (DEL) in conjunction with the early learning advisory council, shall report by June 30, 2009, to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature regarding the following: An evaluation of the child care resource and referral network in providing information to parents and training and technical assistance to child care providers.*” An overview of this report was discussed. The progress of the R&R Evaluation Report as of December 2008: DEL internal linkage team; meeting with DEL and CCR&R staff about the evaluation report and process; and report due June 2009.

The other subgroup of the larger Professional Development Consortium is the State Training and Registry System (STARS). Juliet gave an overview of STARS including an overview of the legislation - ESHB 2687 that required the department, in conjunction with ELAC to report to the governor and appropriate committees the administration of STARS, including annual expenditures; and participants and average hours of training provided per participant. STARS progress and next steps: Meet statutory requirements; identify gaps and report due June 2009.

Comments and Questions

Ilene Schwartz noticed that during the presentation she did not hear talk about children with disabilities, noting that parents of those children have a much harder time finding appropriate care with providers willing and able to serve the children. Where does that fit into Professional Development work? Juliet talked about other states and Sue Winn relayed that there are a lot of resources for parents with children of disabilities in some parts of Washington State, but none in other parts. We need a mapping project where we can look at how anyone from anywhere in the state can access specific professional development opportunities across the system.

Jada Rupley, the ELAC Co-Chair running the meeting, thanked all the people who worked on these workgroups – there were approximately 120 that she counted.

Further discussions were held on the workgroups. There was concern about how these workgroups would be moving forward with the timeframe given. At the next meeting on March 9th, the council will look again at these workgroups and their updates and how they have moved forward. A question was asked about BUILD and what it was. Vaughnetta Barton, Executive Director of the Foundation for Early Learning, was present in the audience and gave the background of BUILD to all the council members – it is a collaboration that started back East with a variety of early learning funders. They provide technical assistance to states that want statewide comprehensive systems. BUILD approached Washington State back in 2005/2006 and is currently very active in supporting Kids Matter work. BUILD is based out of Colorado. Council members discussed the Kids Matter presentation from December 2007 and the need to either select Kids Matter or choose another framework. Members noted that the important thing is that we make a decision and move forward with the work of the Early Learning Plan. Co-Chairs will work on this with DEL before the next meeting in March.

DEL Report Out and Budget Overview: Presentation by Dr. Amie Lapp Payne with handouts for council members (these materials can be accessed online).

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment: Discussed the legislative charge: DEL, OSPI and Thrive by Five Washington will research and make recommendations to the governor and legislature on a statewide kindergarten assessment process. The content of the report shall contain: purpose of the assessment process; “best practices” for assessment of young children; example of large scale assessment used around the nation; local kindergarten assessments used in our state; and stakeholder priorities for a statewide assessment and recommendations and considerations for next steps. Information that was gathered was from online surveys, focus groups, interviews, statewide and national research; 1,500 Washingtonians provide input (included educators, parents, caregivers, tribal nations and cultural competency experts). Through the process, we learned at least 19 other states use kindergarten assessment process and that in a survey of 593

Washington elementary schools with kindergarten classrooms – 80% of those who responded already use some form of assessment process. Overall there is a stakeholder agreement with the idea of developing a statewide kindergarten assessment process.

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) – Some key successes from our work on QRIS include: 1) we were able to get more than 3,000 Washingtonians involved in the design phase; 2) we based decisions on research and data; 3) we built one statewide model that is clear for parents and providers; and 4) we learned about communication needs around QRIS. Due to budget circumstances, there is now a decision to suspend this system. Expected discussion will be held this legislative session about how to continue some elements of this work with limited funding.

“Washington Head Start Study” Bill – the budget is \$250,000. The study and recommendations about aligning ECEAP and Head Start were discussed. The study is currently suspended due to budget impacts.

Child Care Consultation Pilot Project – funding is \$500,000; legislative charge is to *“link child care providers with evidence-based and best practice resources regarding caring for infants and young children who present behavior concerns.”* Amie reviewed all pilot project participants and those receiving services so far. Next steps include a subsequent evaluation of this project over this next year: what works and what could be replicated in other parts of the state?

Legislative Updates

Sonali Patel, attending by phone, gave Legislative Updates. On December 18, the Governor released her proposed budget. The proposed cuts and savings measures included no raises or increases that have been collectively bargained, including those from collective bargaining with family home and exempt child care providers. The state funding that the Child Care Resource and Referral network received this past biennium is proposed to be eliminated, however, the network will continue to receive approximately \$7 million in funds through federal block grant. Funds are proposed to be suspended for the Career and Wage Ladder program; and Parent, Family and Caregiver support programs. One additional proposal includes an average of a \$10 co-pay increase in the Working Connections Child Care subsidy program for non-TANF families for which further discussions are happening with OFM on what this may look like. The budget does include funding for DEL to have a Background Check Unit, given that by July 1, 2009, the agency will need to fully take this function over from DSHS; \$1 million for continuing the QRIS pilot in collaboration with Thrive by Five Washington; and on-going funding for the five quality improvement specialists.

Comments and Questions

Jada commented that co-pays are at times very hard to collect from parents, especially now. Sue Winn commented that the biggest issue she has is that in some circumstances, a parent may be earning \$50 more in a paycheck, but then the co-pay is raised to \$100 or \$200, meaning some parents choose to forego a raise to keep their child care subsidy benefits at a level they can actually afford. Many members commented on the federal poverty level. Lorena mentioned that she would like to see information about the federal food program. Members mentioned that the food program comes from the federal budget whereas what was discussed today was the state budget.

Leslie Goldstein, in the audience, from the Governor's office spoke to the budget. Leslie said that this legislative session was facing a difficult time, but that they were committed to being successful. She said there was nothing in the budget that Departments didn't feel.

Representative Goodman commented on how happy he is to be on the council advocating for all the issues the council itself is encouraging. The House Committee that he served on included Representative Kagi and they are working hard on the lack of home visiting. They both want more funding for QRIS. He and Representative Kagi spent 4 days in Atlanta at a Pre-K Summit. As a general theme – Washington standards across the board are among the highest in the country. However, he feels that we are way behind in quality matters. He learned that when it comes to early learning, it's about the interaction with the child – the quality of the trained person/teacher that really matters. He discussed coaching models available. Representative Goodman feels there will be a lot of partnership with the Obama Administration. We are fortunate to be in a field that deserves all these resources.

Ilene Schwartz applauded Representative Goodman for all his work and Nina Auerbach echoed her thanks as well. Nina stated that in the Seeds Model that was developed by DEL, coaching was the center piece. Thrive by Five still has monies to look at this.

Sue Winn asked about what would happen next with the leadership now that Director Bosworth had left. Dr. Payne said at this time nothing was decided. Leslie Goldstein, the Governor's Early Learning Policy Advisor, said there is no new information to report at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joan Sharp, Executive Director, Council for Children and Families made some comments. First of all she felt that the Professional Development was all about child care educators and thinks it should be broader. She also commented on home visitation programs – noting that they produce early learning outcomes – and encouraged the council and DEL to help prepare parents to be successful. She appreciated all the work that ELAC is doing and applauded Representative Goodman for all his work.

The next quarterly meeting will be March 9, 2009 (time and location TBD)

ADJOURNED – Jada Rupley adjourned the meeting at 12 p.m.