

Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2015 – 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Girl Scouts Center, DuPont

Welcome & Introductions

- ELAC Co-Chairs, Bianca Bailey and Nelly Mbajah welcomed all participants and introduced **Greg Williamson**, DEL’s Assistant Director for Partnerships and Collaboration.
- Greg expressed DEL’s commitment to advancing racial equity and highlighted DEL’s current efforts, including the work of the agency’s Leading for Equity Committee. He introduced **Maggie McGlynn** and **Gerry Cobb** from the BUILD Initiative who will be facilitating ELAC’s Racial Equity Planning session series and thanked the group that helped planned the session for the day: Bianca Bailey, Susan Barbeau, Rivka Burstein-Stern, Lois Martin, Jen Ross and Dan Torres.

Opening

- Maggie asked participants to introduce themselves, reviewed the meeting norms or community agreements, working definitions and then walked through the agenda for the day’s discussion of racial equity.
- She also reviewed the purpose of the planning series and the outcome for the meeting:
 - *Purpose of ELAC Racial Equity Planning Session Series*
 - ♦ To **fully embed a racial equity lens** into the work of the ELAC, including common language, framework and inquiries to address existing barriers and eliminate race and risk factors as predictors of success for young children in the state of Washington.
 - ♦ To **build on our successes**, such as the Racial Equity Theory of Change, current efforts and other tools to develop an equity lens that will help ELAC facilitate conversations and provide advice to intentionally and meaningfully inform policy, practice, program quality and access to services.
 - ♦ To **embrace the leadership opportunities** for the ELAC and partners to recognize and focus on closing opportunity gaps in the early learning system to ensure that all children and families have what they need to thrive.
 - *Intended Outcomes of February Meeting*
 - ♦ To align ideas and build confidence for creating a racial equity lens and implementation plan that everyone can support and contribute to its success.
 - ♦ To identify key elements of successful implementation and impact.

Begin with Our Stories and Imagine Our Success

The meeting began with stories from families and banners depicting Community Café conversations. It was followed by a brief data scan to imagine what could look differently in the future for Washington’s children when successful in embedding the racial equity lens.

ELAC Racial Equity Gallery Walk

Participants were then introduced to a gallery walk called **Resource Inventory of Where We Are and What We Need**. Everyone was asked to review the items on the wall and “speak with their dots” to highlight ideas they want as a part of ELAC’s implementation plan and to identify additional ideas, tools or skills to increase confidence about an implementation plan and follow-through actions.

- [Gallery Walk Materials](#)

Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Indian Father’s Plea really resonated with many participants. <u>Personal experiences and family stories capture hearts and minds and brings problems to the light</u>. It would be helpful to provide opportunities for people to figure out paths for action and support efforts over time. • There were many dots on the racial equity theory of change Step Four (listen and learn). Participants expressed hope that we don’t try and take action without listening to families
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	<p>in communities. <u>A level of trust is needed in this work.</u> Government needs to realize they are part of the problem and that they are not trusted. A lot of people come from that place. We will not get to good solutions unless that is acknowledged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The leadership advice emphasizes how people come from lots of different backgrounds and helps with <u>meeting people where they are and building on their strengths.</u>• The gallery walk is such a gift and <u>a nice combination of information.</u> There is data, theory, statements of promises, as well as practical grassroots ways to have table and staff discussions. There are also some lenses everyone can use to take a look at our everyday work and decisions. Until that is incorporated, it makes it difficult to move towards action.• The tool for <u>talking about racial equity when you don't know what to say</u> in situations was helpful.• Looking at some of the <u>indicators to show if we are making progress</u> is key to be grounded in what is changing for children and families.• We need <u>data (beyond population level) that can be used for continuous quality improvement</u> in the classroom.• Seeing <u>key ideas showing up in so many different tools and research over and over again</u> provides confidence that we are on the right track.• It might be helpful to look at <u>the relationship between race and equity work and the mapping of power.</u> Who makes decisions; who are the gatekeepers; what assumptions in play in when making decisions on budgets?• There was appreciation for the <u>emphasis on intentionality,</u> or the idea that you outwardly racist actors are not required. Autopilot continues and exacerbates the same disparate outcomes. Racial equity work disrupts that.• There are a lot of dots on Step Five, Gearing up for Action of the Racial Equity Theory of Change. Two versions of step 5 that were originally developed – one that had very strong recommendations for action by governmental actors and one with how <u>everyone can be a leader for racial equity.</u> There was a lot of debate as to which to choose, but at the end of the day, stakeholders selected the version that emphasized how everyone has a leadership role in the work. A spirit of partnership came out of that discussion.
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What Else Is Needed To Support Our Ability To Implement The Plan?

- ⤴ **A way to reach everyone** with the information and stories shared today. How can everyone be part of the solution, if they do not know what the problem is?
- ⤴ ELAC is emergent and racial equity is a new lens being applied. It is implied that this will be part of anything we develop in the future and baked into ELAC's work. **We've heard family stories, but how do we bring family voice to the table and have families be part of the process?**
- ⤴ The power of this table is being the voice for young children. We spend less than 1% on early learning in the state budget. There is such a disparity of investment. ELAC has statewide reach for increasing public awareness in the state on the importance of early learning. There are business owners and others that don't think about young children all the time and that we are not getting young kids what they need. **How do we speak to this work powerfully and find ways to resonate with folks?** ELAC can be a more powerful body in getting those messages out. Could we develop a tag line and clear messages to take with us when we speak decision makers, or a one-pager that captures the most compelling data and stories?
- ⤴ The systemic and multi-generational nature of this issue can be overwhelming until you **look to places where change has happened in one or two generations.** Sharing powerful stories, having a plan, using data, giving concrete ideas for action, inspiring community volunteer efforts. What if high school youth get credit in high school for making community change?

- ⤴ People may not even know what DEL or ELAC is. **What are the expectations that we have for each other?** What does DEL expect of ELAC and the regional coalitions, and what does ELAC expect of DEL? There could be synergy if we were sharing expectations.
- ⤴ Many raised the need for **intentional workforce development**. More bilingual and staff that are representative of the communities they serve is necessary. We have a system that is the product of inequities. We need to increase “grow your own workforce” efforts. Heritage University has an innovative program where the candidates do a 2-year internship at the school. At Mountain View Elementary, candidates spend 4 days a week in the classroom and then have a seminar on Friday. It’s exciting to see we can provide in service and pre service professional development. West Valley School District now has a new program in the high school that is aligned with the Yakima Community College. High school students can get 12 college credits in early childhood when they graduate from high school through this program.
- ⤴ We must also address barriers for parents entering the workforce because of history with incarceration.

Moving the Racial Equity Lens into Practice Today!

There was a two-part process for break-out sessions. Maggie explained the concepts and the instructions for each.

Round One

- **Common Language to Frame the Issues** (identify 2-3 agreements, with rationale)
- **Appreciative Inquiries to Encourage Breakthroughs** (develop 2-3 topics of inquiry, with questions)

Round Two

- **Requests and Offers to Nurture Collaboration** (complete matrix with 5-7 exchanges)
- **Leadership Positioning to Foster Shared Agreements** (propose timely/turnkey strategies, with rationale)

Closing

Participants had an opportunity to share with a partner what was most intriguing from today’s conversation, or comment on what they appreciated from what was shared today. Many thanks were given to the participants, facilitators and all who organized the meeting. Evette announced the schedule of workgroup meetings for those interested in forwarding the ideas generated during the session.

2015 Legislative Session

- **Justin Montermini**, DEL’s Government Relations and Communications Manager provided an update and led a discussion on the 2015 Legislative session. DEL is tracking about 95 early learning-related bills. The major bill of interest is the Early Start Act ([SB 5452](#)).

Discussion	<p>The following questions were raised during the discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is full-day being defined in the Early Start bill? • Can we get more information on the Central Washington story of raising the ratings of predominantly Hispanic providers? • Where are the majority of resources allocated? Rewarding providers who rate at 4s and 5s or supporting providers who rate 3 or below? • DEL is required to support providers, but what if the bill passes and DEL doesn’t get the funding to provide coaching and TA? • Will there be facilities/capital budget requests, so school districts can meet the standard of the ECERS? • As parent, if ECEAP is successful at a half day level, why are we rolling out full day? Especially for some cultures/communities that don’t want or need it? • Can we get a one-pager that outlines what Early Achievers is now, what the new Early Start would do, how it would impact communities and how it improves our efforts based on what we learned?
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Adjourn

- The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2015 at the Lacey Community Center, from 9am to 4pm.