

Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding

January 14, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Opening Statements (12:05-12:20PM)

Deputy Governor Ruiz welcomed Commissioners to the second Commission meeting and reminded everyone of the Commission's charge. He acknowledged the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development for the recent award of the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five. At the Deputy Governor's invitation, Theresa Hawley discussed the grant purposes and its connection to the Commission's work.

Senator Manar reminded the Commission of the work done in Meeting 1, including the deep background on early learning in the State. He then shared today's goals, which are to:

- Align on guiding principles for this work
- Determine approach to the work ahead
- Ground ourselves in work done to date
- Set next steps

Introductions of all participants were done per request. Mr. Davis then reminded everyone of the Commission's charge, and Ms. Currie reminded everyone of the Commission's timeline. Deputy Governor Ruiz provided a reminder of the dual goals of ECEC, and then moved the meeting to the first goal of the day – to establish guiding principles.

Guiding Principles (12:20PM – 1:00PM)

Senator Manar provided an overview of the Commission's goal to refine and align on guiding principles. Co-chairs Deputy Governor Ruiz, Mr. Davis, and Ms. Currie reviewed draft guiding principles that were developed in response to the themes heard by Commissioners and the public in Meeting 1. Commissioners then participated in an activity to refine guiding principles. Feedback included:

- Need to emphasize the importance of streamlining current complicated mechanisms
- Noted a natural tension between the principle of building on work done to date and the principle of thinking bold
- Discussed the need for sustainability and stability to be for both providers as organizations and for individuals within those organizations (educators and other support personnel)
- Noted that the Guiding Principles are not in priority order
- Noted that embracing bold change includes re-evaluating the way decisions are made
- There was significant discussion on the Guiding Principle of Funding Equity – commissioners debated if the principle should be about funding equity or equity of outcomes or both
- Bold systems should include the need for better alignment with the K12 system
- Promoting equity should include ethnicity and priority populations
- Prioritizing family perspectives should include culture and language
- Need to ensure parental choice is prioritized
- Building on solid foundation should note the historical emphasis on supporting infants and toddlers, which is a strength
- Designing for stability should recognize the importance of the mixed delivery system and wanting the system to be sustainable for all
- Requiring transparency should be meant for all stakeholders -- distributors and recipients
- Guiding Principle for boldness must be matched with the outcomes
- Regarding Guiding Principles on equity and sustainability, this needs to be as easy as possible for parents with varying needs and for providers, which are small business owners. Must eliminate silos. The need for simplicity for parents could be incorporated into the principle of prioritizing family perspective and needs.

Approach to the Work Ahead and Work Done to Date (1:00PM – 1:20PM)

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The Co-chairs shared that there will be four working groups established to manage the work ahead. Co-chairs noted that the full Commission will ultimately be responsible for providing recommendations to the Governor in regard to the Commission's Charge. Working Groups will research, analyze, and propose recommendations for the Commission to consider. The Working Groups are:

- Funding Adequacy
- Funding Mechanisms
- Management & Oversight
- Inclusion

It was noted that the Inclusion working group is being established to investigate questions on Special Education and Early Intervention deeply, and then provide input into the other Working Groups. Working Group leaders were announced as follows:

- Funding Adequacy – Jodi Scott and Rey Gonzalez
- Funding Mechanisms – Elliott Regenstein
- Management & Oversight – Robin Steans
- Inclusion – Pat Chamberlain

Mr. Davis thanked the Working Group leads for their willingness to guide this work. He then invited Theresa Hawley to provide an overview of the work done to date in regard to these working groups. She shared that significant work has been done to date, in particular on funding adequacy as well as documenting the current situation with regard to funding mechanism, management, oversight, and inclusion.

Working Groups Key Questions to Answer (1:20PM – 1:45PM)

Commissioners were asked to review the draft charge for each Working Group, framed as Key Questions to Answer, through a facilitated activity completed in groups. Commissioners then reconvened to discuss recommended revisions:

- Management & Oversight – the team feels aligned with the questions but believes a more high level question is necessary to simply ask, how do we design the best system? This includes items such as: who is creating the vision, maintaining, and upholding policies; how do we ensure transparency, efficiency, effectiveness and greater coordination?
- Funding Mechanisms – Feedback from the team included: the need to think about funding across each of the funding streams and not take as given that they should remain siloed, emphasizing supporting quality; encourage partnering; and reducing administrative burden. They also noted that providers also include individuals (parents), and that mechanisms must respect parent choices.
- Adequacy – the team feels the questions are on track with one adjustment - add “for each program type” for question.
- Inclusion – the team discussed several updates, including: ensuring the cost question accounts for costs for identification/assessment as well as for those being served; considering the barriers with conflicting funding sources; making sure family voice is present in terms of what funding will look like for special education and early intervention children; and finally, addressing funding issues that delay services after identification.

Next Steps (1:45PM – 1:55PM)

Co-Chairs shared next steps, noting that Working Groups will begin their work in the coming weeks. The next Commission meeting will receive working group updates, identify interdependencies, and further discussion on stakeholder engagement. Other topics may be determined. Location was discussed, and while location is not yet finalized, Deputy Gov. Ruiz noted the Commission will want to hold meetings in various locations around the state to ensure all can attend and all public comment can be received. February and potentially March meetings will be

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in Springfield and Chicago as today due to winter weather. In addition, it was asked if Working Groups would have expert staff from various offices and organizations, which was answered affirmatively.

Public Comment (1:55PM – 2:05PM)

The meeting was opened for public comment. Members of the public were provided two minutes each for public comment. Three attendees commented.

Meeting Adjourned (2:05PM)

The Deputy Governor thanked the Commission members and adjourned the meeting.