

Illinois Early Childhood Funding Commission Meeting (Virtual)

Meeting Minutes

August 18, 2020

Introductions and Agenda (12:00 – 12:10 PM)

To begin the meeting, Bethany Patten took roll call and reviewed housekeeping items. Co-chair George Davis thanked Commissioners for joining the meeting virtually. He reminded Commissioners that in the last two meetings, they heard from all of the Working Groups on their initial conclusions, and that since then, the Working Groups have been refining their findings, and the Commission is moving into a new phase of work – which is to begin to consider potential Commission recommendations.

Mr. Davis then shared the goals and agenda for the meeting's discussion. Topics included hearing from providers on their experiences, continued discussion on Funding Mechanisms and Management & Oversight recommendations for a centralized system of funding and governance, and discussing the Commission's timeline and plan from now through January 2021. Additionally, there was a presentation by the Ounce of Prevention on a Prenatal to Three (PN3) Strategy, followed by next steps and public comment. Finally, Mr. Davis reminded Commissioners of the Commission's charge, that the work pertains to ECEC which is within a broader system of state supports for children, and that the Commission is adhering to its Guiding Principles.

Provider Perspectives (12:10 – 12:30 PM)

Senator Manar introduced the first item on the agenda, which was to hear from providers in the ECEC field. He reminded Commissioners of the importance on continuing stakeholder engagement efforts and how those efforts are shaping recommendations. He then introduced the meeting's guest speakers, asking them to share their perspectives on today's system. He noted that questions should be sent to Bethany Patten for consolidation and distribution. Speakers were as follows:

- **Mary Reynolds** - Vice President of Children's Services, Casa Central, who shared her perspectives on the importance of a strong home visiting program and supporting professionals providing these services.
- **Eunique Drinkard** - Inclusion Consultant, Erikson Institute, who shared her perspectives as an Early Intervention service provider, particularly around inadequate funding and compensation as well as disparities in access to services.

Potential Centralized ECEC System (12:30 – 1:30 PM)

Deputy Governor Ruiz introduced the next component of the agenda, which was a discussion of the possibility of a centralized system of funding and management & oversight. He reminded Commissioners that the Mechanisms and M&O Working Groups have already shared their initial conclusions:

- M&O has concluded that centralization of into one agency likely makes sense
- Funding Mechanisms has concluded that funding should be coordinated upstream, and that funds should be allocated through a consistent funding formula.

He shared that these Working Groups came together to combine their individual workstreams into one vision for a centralized system of funding and governance, which will then be presented to the Commission for reaction and feedback. Elliot Regenstein, Funding Mechanisms Working Group Lead, presented the combined Working Group's vision. The Commission then broke into small groups to discuss. After discussion, there was general consensus that Commissioners were generally in favor of the centralized system of governance and funding, agreed that it is the right vision in response

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to the major concerns in today's system, and that it promotes the Commission's Guiding Principles. Questions or hesitations were primarily around implementation considerations and unintended consequences, and included topics such as:

- What flexibility will be in place to ensure implementation is done effectively?
- How will the funds and systems come together to meet both the values of this envisioned system and the federal requirements for all the funds?
- How can TANF be integrated into this centralized system?
- How can we ensure we don't lose what does already work well?
- How will the mixed delivery system be protected?
- How will we ensure continued focus on infants and toddlers?
- What will the technical execution of stakeholder engagement look like?
- Is it right to keep Family, Friend, and Neighbor care separate from the centralized system?
- One authority limits provider ability to leverage one source when the other is delayed, so how could potential delays in state payments impact providers in a new system?
- What regional or local components to management and oversight will exist?

Commission Planning through January 2021 (1:30 – 1:40 PM)

Following the discussion on the potential for a centralized system of funding and governance, Leader Currie moved the Commission forward to a discussion on timeline and planning for the Commission's remaining time together. She reminded Commissioners that they are entering a new phase of work – as Working Groups complete their research and analysis, the Commission will begin coming to conclusions as it works to meet its charge.

She shared that priorities for the second half of the Commission's year of work are to:

1. Solidify recommendations with the feedback from the racial equity impact and technical working groups, and
2. Thoroughly engage key stakeholders for feedback

She shared the Commission's anticipated major discussion topics in upcoming Commission meetings that will allow the Commission to stay on track to meet its charge, and also shared anticipated timelines for Stakeholder Engagement, the Technical Working Group, and the Racial Equity Working Group. She asked Commissioners to reflect on roles they can play in stakeholder engagement and support they may need. Facilitation guides and talking points were requested.

PN3 Strategy – the Ounce of Prevention (1:40 – 1:50 PM)

Simone Santiago, Prenatal to Three Director at the Ounce of Prevention, shared the Prenatal to Three Strategy (PN3) as developed by the Illinois Prenatal to Three Coalition.

Next Steps (1:50 – 1:55 PM)

Deputy Governor Ruiz closed out the meeting by thanking presenters and Commission members and sharing next steps. He reminded Commissioners and members of the public that there is an open call for written feedback, which can be submitted in writing to Bethany Patten at bethany.patten@Illinois.gov. He also shared another opportunity for stakeholder engagement via a survey on the Commission's website.

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Public Comment (1:55 – 2:00)

Three members of the public made comment: Lisa Savegnago, Mitch Lifson, and Sonja Clark.