

# Illinois Early Childhood Funding Commission Meeting (Virtual)

## *Meeting Minutes*

*December 8, 2020*

### **Introductions and Agenda (12:05 – 12:15 PM)**

To begin the meeting, Bethany Patten took roll call and reviewed housekeeping items. Leader Currie thanked Commissioners for joining the meeting virtually. Leader Currie shared the goals and agenda for the meeting. Goals included the following: consider findings of the Racial Equity Working Group, consider an update from the Technical Working Group, share reactions to draft report outline, and determine process for implementation planning.

Leader Currie reminded Commissioners of the Commission's charge, and the need to address critical challenges in the system for both families and providers, the Commission's guiding principles, and the timeline to conclude by March 2021. Leader Currie laid out the next phase of work: to fully consider the feedback and recommendations from Commissioners and stakeholders, the National Panel of Experts, the Racial Equity Working Group, and the Technical Working Group. She emphasized the need to ensure recommendations are child-centered, and that there is a detailed plan for implementation in 2021 that stems from the Commission's recommendations.

### **Racial Equity Working Group (12:15 – 1:10 PM)**

Co-Chair Davis presented the findings in the Racial Equity Working Group's report. He reminded the Commission of its commitment to address inequities in Illinois' early childhood system through its recommendations and the creation of the Racial Equity Working Group. He reminded Commissioners that this Working Group's goal is to evaluate the draft recommendations through a racial equity lens, identify any red flags, and propose guidance to ensure racial equity in implementation of the recommendations. He noted that the work has been facilitated by Senior Fellows with Chicago United for Equity (CUE), drawing largely from focus groups of CUE Fellows, parents, and providers.

Co-Chair Davis explained the limitations that the working group faced to engaging authentic stakeholders outside the network of the Commission and Early Learning Council during a pandemic, while adhering to a short timeline. He said that the Working Group's recommendations call for greater capacity to support participation of parents and providers in decision-making moving forward and were inspired by CUE's Racial Equity Impact Assessment tool.

Co-Chair Davis emphasized that the Working Group believes that providing equitable access to high-quality early childhood education and care services will not, alone, solve racial inequity in Illinois, and creating racial equity in early childhood education and care must involve other systems outside of early childhood. He explained the Working Group's outstanding questions about the impacts of the recommendations in the context of community- and state-level resource distribution and prioritization, as well as the cultural changes and values that are needed to create racial equity.

Co-Chair Davis provided a summary of the Working Group's feedback in the slide presentation, which focuses on either clarifying the draft recommendations and ways to ensure racial equity is prioritized in implementation. He noted that the recommendations on accountability are important in times of scarcity, particularly scarcity of funding. He then opened the floor for discussion.

### **Technical Working Group (1:10 – 1:20 PM)**

Deputy Governor Ruiz explained that an internal team of staff across ISBE, IDHS, and DCFS has formed to begin answering due diligence questions to vet the recommendations. He explained the team is estimating the cost of administration and infrastructure for the state's current early childhood system as well as projected cost and savings from a centralized early childhood system in a new agency. Deputy Governor Ruiz explained that the estimate will help to hone the current infrastructure estimate included in the Commission's cost model, which is currently a placeholder

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based on a national estimate. He said that much progress has been made, this work is continuing, and a further update will be provided in January.

### **Draft Report Outline (1:20 – 1:40 PM)**

Senator Manar reviewed the Commission's draft report outline, reminding Commissioners that the main audience is the Governor and the broader audience includes families, early childhood care and education providers, legislators, advocates and advisory councils, state agency staff, and the general public.

He explained that Commissioners have the opportunity and should take the opportunity to share feedback on the outline. He set the stage for discussion with the following questions:

1. What aspects of the draft report outline are strongest in answering the Commission's charge?
2. How can the draft report outline be strengthened to better answer the Commission's charge?
3. What content specific changes or additions do you recommend, and why?
4. What do you envision in a final, written report to include that you do not see in the outline?

Senator Manar noted that the Racial Equity Working Group analysis has not yet been incorporated into the outline and asked Commissioners to describe what they liked about the outline so far.

Members highlighted several items, including:

- The comprehensiveness and transparency of the overall outline and its message of centralization
- The indication of a full-funding number and the methodology used to calculate it
- The description of strategies for distributing funding and building capacity at the local and regional levels
- The use of family/child experience as an anchor to the whole report

Then Senator Manar asked the Commission to provide constructive feedback. Discussion included the following suggestions:

- Describe comprehensive needs and services, and in the governance/agency structure, show commitment to intentionality of cross-system work
- Show provider and workforce/educator experience and how that will change "on the ground" as the system strengthens.
- Outline implementation steps and processes with timelines in more detail
- Include accountability: who is responsible and how implementation will be tracked
- Clarify what is considered an implementation detail vs what is within scope of the Commission
- Add an appendix of unanswered questions from the commission that most inform implementation
- Show more of the process to come these recommendations
- Thread the Racial Equity Working Group findings throughout
- If there are any final recommendations for which consensus is not reached, how will those concerns/dissenting perspectives be memorialized in the final report?
- Clarify how the report will discuss the recommendation for a new agency
- Create a crosswalk between the recommendations and feedback to provide transparency and understanding as to why recommendations changed or stayed the same
- What is the accountability to finish the ECSE and EI work in the future?

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### **Implementation Process Planning and Next Steps (1:40 – 1:55 PM)**

Deputy Governor Ruiz emphasized how the Commission’s long-term vision is already shaping how the state moves ahead in the immediate term, including efforts by GOECD, ISBE, IDHS, and DCFS to formulate a detailed work plan—which will be shared with the Commission—for multi-agency collaboration in early childhood for 2021 to address the following:

- Funding policy initiatives
- Capacity planning for service providers
- Data systems development
- Workforce initiatives
- Community systems planning
- Centralized agency planning
- Family engagement system
- Advisory group re-alignment
- Home visiting system blueprint

Deputy Governor Ruiz reviewed the Commission’s timeline, month-by-month objectives, opportunities for engagement and review of the recommendations, and immediate next steps.

### **Public Comment (1:55 – 2:00PM)**

Four members of the public made comments: Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Meghan Jansen, Patricia Twymon, and Joanna Varda.