

Illinois Early Childhood Funding Commission Meeting (Virtual)

Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2021

Opening Remarks and Town Halls (12:00 – 12:20 PM)

To begin the meeting, Katie Morrison-Reed took roll call and reviewed housekeeping items. Co-Chair Davis thanked Commissioners for joining the meeting virtually and shared the goals and agenda. The goal of the meeting was to come to conclusion on our recommendations and shift toward report development.

Co-Chair Davis reminded the Commission and members of the public on the call of the Commission's charge and guiding principles, the topics covered throughout Commission meetings, and where those topics move forward through recommendations to address the Commission's charge and address critical challenges in the system for both families and providers. Co-Chair Davis reviewed the timeline for finishing the Commission's remaining work, which concludes in March and, for the next month, will be focused on ensuring the Commission's report appropriately reflects the Commission's recommendations.

Co-Chair Davis reviewed the questions and comments raised by stakeholders during the three town halls that took place in December and January. He thanked members of Illinois Action for Children and Advance Illinois for their work pulling together and summarizing the content of these well-attended events. Adequacy Working Group member and IAFC member Teresa Ramos shared her observations of town hall participants' interests in how the Commission work would take shape from here.

Working Group Discussion Outcomes (12:20 – 1:20 PM)

Leader Currie noted that the Commission had requested that Working Groups come together one more time to discuss feedback received from stakeholders and the racial equity report, and any implications those findings may have on our recommendations. Following those discussions, in this meeting Working Groups would report any proposed changes to our recommendations or additional context that they feel must be included to frame those recommendations and implementation considerations in the report.

Leader Currie highlighted common themes discussed by all or most Working Groups, including racial equity, English Learners and families, representative stakeholder engagement, home-based care programs, reasoning behind recommendations, and implementation planning. Leader Currie then asked members of each working group to present and asked Commissioners to provide feedback, particularly if they had any major objections to each working group's recommendations or objections to the content in the report itself.

Robin Steans presented for the Management & Oversight Working Group, followed by discussion. Commissioners debated the needs of both state agencies and stakeholders, proposing a continuous thread of communication that would hold the agencies accountable for their work (particularly for racial equity work) and would keep up public enthusiasm and participation, without hindering the agencies' ability to do their work.

Elliot Regenstein presented for the Funding Mechanisms Working Group.

Christina Hachikian presented for the Funding Adequacy Working Group, followed by discussion around racial equity, family engagement, and the complexity of untangling the line item costs of community infrastructure.

Pat Chamberlain presented for the Inclusion Working Group.

Illinois Early Childhood Funding Commission Meeting (Virtual)

Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2021

Implementation Priorities (1:20 – 1:40 PM)

Deputy Governor Ruiz reminded Commissioners that the Commission's charge includes addressing recommendations for implementation and that stakeholders have asked "what comes next". Deputy Governor Ruiz highlighted the potential next steps to follow the Commission's work and the priorities that state agencies are actively planning toward.

Deputy Governor Ruiz explained that the implementation priorities are captured in detail in the Draft Commission Report. He asked Commissioners to provide initial reactions on implementation priorities before they give deeper feedback on the draft report, which will be discussed at the next Commission meeting. Potential implementation priorities included the following:

- Establish the framework for the state to effectively engage stakeholders through coordinating and/or consolidating advisory bodies
- Plan and begin build out Regional and Community Systems
- Update the adequacy cost model with more robust analysis through follow-on studies (including analysis of Early Intervention; Early Childhood Special Education; Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care; and Infrastructure)
- Plan the new centralized system of funding and governance
- Map adequacy across the state and plans for rate increases, prioritizing where to invest incremental funding
- Pilot components of a centralized funding formula
- Develop goals and requirements for Data Systems to support Commission recommendations
- Invest in building the state's diverse ECEC workforce

Commissioners discussed the potential role of the Early Learning Council in the stakeholder engagement/agency accountability structures that the Commission proposed. Commissioners noted the need for evolving community structures to facilitate communication and discussed how communities would engage with a system undergoing centralization.

Deputy Governor Ruiz also presented recommendations for immediate next steps to move the Commission's priorities forward. These included:

- Establish this work as a priority for the State – meaning, empower the agencies to lead this work
- Establish an intentional focus on equity, including racial equity, from the beginning
- Establish an Implementation Guiding Body to inform and guide the work
- Ensure authentic stakeholder engagement is a priority from the beginning through clear, established processes

Secretary Hou and Superintendent Ayala discussed the work their respective agencies have been undertaking in diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as working out the staffing, legal, and budgetary logistics of migrating early childhood programs out of/into an agency.

Draft Report & Next Steps (1:40 – 1:55 PM)

Co-Chair Manar provided context for how the report was developed from the outline and how the current draft will become a final report. He noted that the draft included, to some extent, outcomes of working group conversations, with the intention of discussion those conversations today, and that once finalized, the content of this report would be used to inform communications materials, including a summary, publicly consumable report.

Illinois Early Childhood Funding Commission Meeting (Virtual)

Meeting Minutes

February 2, 2021

Co-Chair Manar explained that through the support of the McCormick Foundation, the communications firm Kivvit will help ensure the work of this Commission is communicated effectively and reaches various stakeholder groups in a way that works for them. Commissioners will have a chance to preview communications materials in the next meeting.

Co-Chair Manar asked Commissioners to send highly specific feedback on the report by Monday, February 8th, including any wordsmithing. Feedback will be incorporated into an updated report to share by the next meeting on February 23rd.

Public Comment (1:55 – 2:00PM)

Two members of the public provided public comment: Kevi Jackson and Kathy Fudge-White.