



Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding

Commission Meeting #14

February 2, 2021

Meeting reminders



- **Add your name** to your Zoom (click on the 3 dots)
- **Consider being on video** to help with overall engagement
- **Mute self** when not speaking
- Technical issues can happen to anyone – **chat privately to Jennifer or Katie for any needs**
- If you are experiencing an unstable connection - **switch to phone call or close other applications**
- Members of the **public will have an opportunity to speak at the end** of the meeting

Today's Goals & Agenda

Agenda Item	Time
Roll Call Agenda, and Opening Remarks	12:00-12:10
Summary of Town Halls	12:10-12:25
Working Group Discussion Outcomes	12:20-1:20
Implementation Priorities	1:20-1:40
Draft Report & Next Steps	1:40-1:55
Public Comment	1:55-2:00

The Commission's Report, in response to the charge, will address our charge

"The Commission shall study and **make recommendations** to establish **funding goals and funding mechanisms** to provide equitable access to high-quality early childhood education and care services for all children birth to age five and **advise the Governor in planning and implementing** these recommendations."



1. Funding Goals: How much **increased investment** is required to reach **funding adequacy** across the state for early childhood education and care
2. Funding Mechanism: How the **system of funding** should be redesigned to promote the Commission's Guiding Principles
3. Implementation: How **management & oversight** should be structured to implement the new system of funding

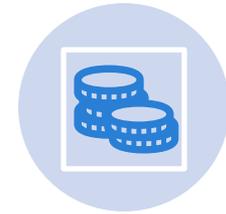
The Commission seeks to address critical challenges in today's ECEC system



INEQUITABLE ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY SERVICES, ESPECIALLY RACE, ETHNICITY, GEOGRAPHY, & AGE



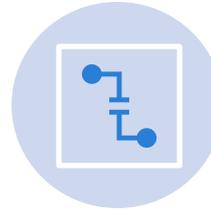
CHALLENGES FOR FAMILIES TO NAVIGATE THE SYSTEM



INSTABILITY OF FUNDING FOR PROVIDERS



INSUFFICIENT DATA TO INFORM EQUITABLE DECISION MAKING AND FUNDING



DISAGGREGATED **ACCOUNTABILITY AND DECISION MAKING**



INADEQUATE FUNDING, INCLUDING WORKFORCE COMPENSATION

The Commission's deliberations have been informed by our Guiding Principles

These Guiding Principles reflect the Commission's values and beliefs, guide how it operates, and lay a foundation for decision-making.

High Quality ECEC is a Public Priority

- It should be invested in as such as this is critical to our State's workforce, economy, and welfare of its residents.

Ensure Equity

- We will endorse a system that ensures equitable outcomes for children, with intentional focus on race, ethnicity, culture, language, income, children's individual needs, and geography.

Embrace Bold System-Level Changes

- Everything is on the table, including how funding flows, how funding decisions are made, and who makes them, to better serve all children and families.

Build Upon the Solid Foundation

- We will build upon the successes of Illinois' past and current system, its commitment to a prenatal to five system, the lessons from other states, and the expertise and research in the field.

Prioritize Family Perspectives, Needs, and Choices

- We will prioritize families' perspectives, needs, and choices as we make recommendations to improve the system.

Design for Stability and Sustainability

- We recognize our system must provide funding stability for providers, educators, and staff across mixed delivery settings to better serve families. System must embrace flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and family needs and must possess the human and technical capacity to do so.

Require System Transparency, Efficiency, and Accountability

- We see these as necessary conditions for all stakeholders, funding distributors, and funding recipients for any future ECEC funding structure.

Recognize Implementation Realities

- We will plan for meaningful change over a multi-year time horizon. We will respond to disruptions in the system to meet the reality of changing needs.

Taking stock

Where are we? What remains?

**December
2020**

- Received updated findings from Racial Equity Working Group
- Reviewed outline of final report
- Hosted town halls

**January
2021**

- Working Groups reconvened to consider feedback received on the recommendations to date
- Hosted town halls
- Drafted Commission Report

**February
2021**

- Feedback on Commission Report
- Finalize planning and implementation priorities
- Formal Commissioner sign-on to recommendations
- Plan and review communications strategy and materials

**March
2021**

- Send recommendations to the Governor
- Communications roll out
- Commission close out

Town Halls – ~550 participants across stakeholder groups

Implementation and next steps.

Implementation timeframe, stakeholder roles

Programs and services.

Impact on mixed delivery system; interaction with Head Start

Workforce.

Workforce shortage, compensation, credentials/qualifications, and recruitment and retention

New agency and governance.

New state agency structure, the role of regional and local networks

Relationships and engagement with providers.

Improving communication, and engaging providers in decisions

Children with special needs.

Serving children in community and home based settings

Provider payment mechanisms.

Contracts (vs vouchers), family co-payments, and administrative burdens

Equity and inclusion.

Need for ongoing racial equity assessments and including stakeholders in new system equity conversations

Working Group Outcomes

Working Group Re-convenings

In response to Commission requests in our last meeting, Working Groups reconvened to formally consider stakeholder feedback, specifically asking:

How does this information impact our thinking about the recommendations?
What, if any, **changes to the actual recommendations** should be considered?

What **additional context** or detail should be included in the report based on this feedback?

What, if any, additional **planning, next steps or implementation considerations** must be included with the Working Group's recommendations in the report?

Common Themes among Working Group Discussions

- Re-emphasizing the importance of **racial equity** framing throughout our recommendations
- Additional work is needed to sufficiently address **English Learners and Families**; it should be a priority to consider how the recommendations may impact ELs and how to implement in a way that intentionally supports EL families
- Emphasize the **imperative of stakeholder engagement** including advisories in the future system – particularly with **parents / families and providers**, including representation by race, English Learners, and children with disabilities
- Both licensed and unlicensed **home-based care programs** need additional attention during implementation to ensure parent choice, equity, and provider support
- Provide more context for **why and how** key decisions and recommendations were made
- Be clear about **implementation** planning and next steps

Discussion Outcomes

Management & Oversight

- Ensure the recommendation is worded to explicitly recommend a New State Agency (not just centralization) but caveat that the costs are unclear
- Be clear that the State Agency must prioritize parent/family and stakeholder engagement
- Accountability mechanisms in the report (Accountability Office, Scorecard) must hold the State accountable
- Data analysis, research and evaluation should be a significant function of the new agency and must include an assessment of both the implementation and impact of the Commission recommendations
- Include more specific language and attention to community systems development work and the role local infrastructure and community collaborations can/should play in ensuring equity
- Acknowledge the critical role of intermediaries
- Must identify implementation priorities and recommend that there is a designated, accountable leader; implementation planning must include both government and external stakeholders to ensure equity and accountability
- Coherence in home visiting is needed, which includes consolidation of programs and funding; however, the group did not agree with the external feedback to recommend a home visiting department specifically – this should be left to the future agency to determine

Discussion Outcomes

Funding Mechanisms

- Contracts and vouchers: Directionally, the state should move toward contracts, but with the expectation that the final system will include a mix of contracts and vouchers that will attempt to maximize both stability and flexibility. This may include changing the state's approach to both contracting and vouchering.
- Provider accountability is important, AND accountability must be paired with transparency and funding.
- Data should be used to determine priorities for funding
- Funding priorities for infants & toddlers and geographies should be mentioned in the report; supported the intention of both ensuring an infant toddler set aside and ensuring a formula that supported regional/geographic equity
- Further work and study is needed to determine how funding for preschool English Learners should be addressed and whether funding should stay in the Evidence Based Funding Formula
- State should conduct an Inclusive annual audit and review of "how things worked" to assess the degree to which funding mechanisms fulfilled the state's intention and led to more equitable distribution of funding

Discussion Outcomes

Funding Adequacy

- Cost Model Transparency
 - Make clear that the few cost elements that need further refinement (i.e. EI, ECSE, FFN, Infrastructure) are included in the model as estimates, and that the working group is recommending further research to validate or adjust that estimate to make it more refined.
 - Need to be clear what should be included in the provision for infrastructure (~\$1B), provide more robust guidance for implementation on next steps for refining the cost of infrastructure, and that these costs must be looked at from a racial equity lens
 - Capture key cost model goals and assumptions more clearly in the report, including making explicit the goal to increase compensation alongside workforce development
- Be clear that the cost model is not intended to “spit out” prioritization decisions but is a tool (among others) that can be used to inform prioritization discussions
- Update the model annually for not just inflationary factors and material changes, but for equity considerations
- Provide more specificity on who should be included on an advisory group for cost model updates to ensure diversity, looking to EBF experience for guidance

Discussion Outcomes

Inclusion

- Need for stronger emphasis on Inclusion and equity throughout the report
- Refer to the work Illinois did (prior to this Commission) to identify definitions and goals for inclusive environments and recommit to that in the report
- Provide more clarity on the cost modeling done for EI and ECSE and work remaining. The implementation plan and timeline must prioritize modeling for ECSE and EI.
- Be clear what issues were identified in EBF for ECSE; The state must prioritize further work to determine the implications of adjusting funding for ECSE in the EBF formula
- To the degree possible, we believe that EI and ECSE should be together and in a new agency. However, more research is needed to understand the degree to which ECSE might be impacted if pulled out of ISBE, as well as funding for ELs if they are dually identified.
- Share the rich discussions had on funding mechanisms and governance for EI and ECSE, and be clear and specific about what must happen next

Final reflections on Working Groups



Recommendations: Implementation

Commission's Recommended 2021 Implementation Priorities



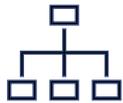
Establish the framework for effective stakeholder engagement through advisory council coordination and/or consolidation



Plan and begin build out of Regional and Community Systems



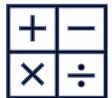
Update the adequacy cost model with more robust analysis through follow-on studies (EI, ECSE, FFN, Infrastructure)



Plan the new centralized system of funding and governance (i.e. create a blueprint)



Map adequacy and associated plans for rate increases, prioritizing where to invest incremental funding



Pilot centralized funding formula components



Develop goals and business requirements for Data Systems supportive of Commission recommendations



Invest in building the state's diverse ECEC workforce

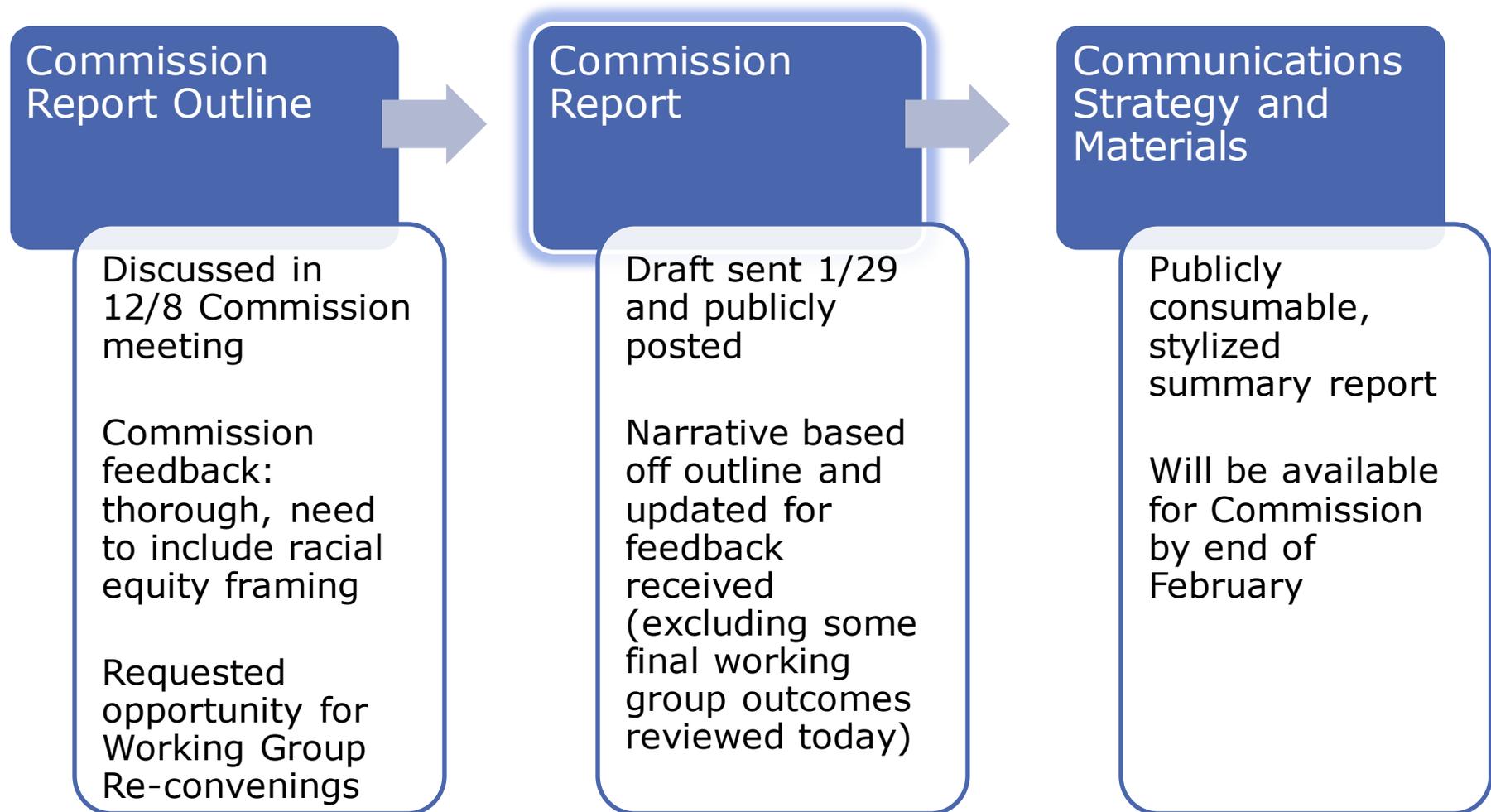


Recommended actions upon Commission conclusion

- ✓ Establish this work as a priority for the State with State leadership
- ✓ Establish an intentional focus on equity, including racial equity, from the beginning
- ✓ Establish formal process through which an advisory body will inform and guide the work
- ✓ Ensure stakeholder engagement is paramount from the beginning (including hearing from diverse parents and providers)

Draft Report and Next Steps

Moving toward Report completion and publication



Report Timeline and Feedback Process

- Draft received by Commissioners Friday 1/29; publicly available on Commission website
- Commissioner feedback to staff by **Monday 2/8**
- Please provide ***specific feedback***
 - How would you propose changing any specific areas of concern? What wording would you recommend?
 - What specific additions do you recommend in what areas of the report?
- Feedback should be sent to Jennifer Hernandez (jennifer.hernandez@illinois.gov)

Questions about this process?

(We will have time throughout February for content-related questions and comments)



Roadmap through Commission Finalization

Today: February 2nd Commission Meeting	February (prior to 2/23 Meeting)	February 23rd Commission Meeting	March
Commission discusses Working Group outcomes	Feedback on report by 2/8	Commission approves report*	Plan for sharing with Governor finalized
Alignment on recommendations	Report finalized based on feedback and shared back out	Commission reviews communications roll-out strategy and draft materials, including publicly consumable report	Report formally delivered to the Governor
	Communications roll-out strategy and materials drafted and shared with Commissioners		Execute on communications plan
			March TBD Commission Meeting for final reflections and close out

*Opportunity to acknowledge disagreement to be provided

Public Comment

Thank You

