

## Integration and Alignment Committee Meeting Minutes

August 28, 2023

1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

**Members Present:** Shauna Ejeh, Trish Rooney, Jill Andrews, Karen Berman, Kristy Doan, Lauri Morrison-Fritchl, Phyllis Glink, Marcy Mendenhall, Bethany Patten, Bryan Stokes II, Joanna Su and Josie Yanguras

**Non-Members Present:** Ana Maria Accove, Steve Akins, Jasmine Thompson Blum, Lisa Bock, Deyanira Cabrera, Nekeda Confer, Heidi Elliott, Cicely Fleming, Autumn Glass, Mya Hellenthal, Arielle Jones, Kim Lamz, Jess Lovera-Matter, Lorena Nunez, Lori Orr, Catrina Parker, Kisha Petties, Michelle Ramirez, Linda Rios, Maureen Sollars and Janet Vargas

**Welcome:** Shauna Ejeh, IAC Co-Chair, began the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. She also reviewed the agenda with the group.

**Definition of Racial Equity:** The definition of racial equity was read by Josie Yanguras.

**Recap Goals, Scope, and Opportunity Areas:** Wendy McCullough, IDHS Consultant, provided a recap of the scope for Priority 1. Wendy explained that Regional Intermediaries are State-funded, nongovernmental infrastructures that help facilitate the efficient administration of early childhood education and care programs at a regional and/or county level by supporting community members to access and utilize State funds to address local needs. The entities that are the focus of this project include: 1.) Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&R), 2.) Child and Family Connections Offices (CFC), 3.) Local Interagency Councils (LIC)- Early Intervention Program, 4.) Birth to Five Illinois, 5.) All Our Kids Networks (AOK), Coordinated Intake-MIECHV Home Visiting Program and 5.) Regional Offices of Education (ROE).

**Objectives and Goals:** Wendy McCullough, IDHS Consultant, reviewed the objectives and goals of the PDG B-5 Assess and Align Capacity of Intermediary Structures project. Wendy shared the objective of the project is to develop recommendations to integrate and align the functions of early childhood education and care regional intermediaries to create a more efficient and seamless experience for families to connect to services, enable more collaboration between regional intermediaries and with local collaborations to improve services and align supports to local needs, expand service providers access to more uniform professional development and technical assistance and streamline operations to increase funding efficacy and expand equitable access to services.

**Review Survey Results:** Wendy McCullough, IDHS Consultant, shared a summary of the stakeholder engagement process. Feedback from the stakeholders included:

- **Direct Services:** Disjoint programs and systems cause families to work with regional structures individually and repeat burdensome intake and application. State-wide regional structures don't currently have the capacity, expertise, and access to do cross-systems intake and referral; AOK Networks have resources for this, but they are not state-wide
- **T&TA:** Little training & coaching is being provided by regional intermediaries (not present/prioritized in contracts, consumed by systems assistance). Disparate training requirements make it hard for regional entities to provide credit-bearing cross-sector training; job embedded PD provided by regional entities is also not credit bearing. Multiple training systems makes it hard to help providers find training that meets their needs and provide cross-sector training.
- **Community Development:** There are disparate agendas, structures, and unclear roles across regional structures; entities are supporting each other but not integrating efforts in most regions. Duplicative meetings and activities spread resources thin (misaligned / overlapping service areas, individual needs assessments & surveys). There is great variation in collaboration models across the State, concerns of sustainability, progress, and equity in many communities.

**Discuss Potential Synthesis/Starting Recommendation:** During the discussion, a member of the IAC shared, the State does not have many statewide programs that provide training and technical assistance services. They recommended that the IAC take a more comprehensive look at training and technical assistance services for Providers. There was feedback from the Committee that training and technical assistance is not as strong as the other intermediary functions. A member from the Committee also recommended to clarify what is meant by regional/statewide and local/statewide. In the past, counties and regions did not have one shared agenda. Another member emphasized the importance to ensure we are building on each other's work rather than duplicating the work. During the discussion, it was also recommended that we ensure communities are able to maintain their identity.

**Tying it All Together:** Wendy McCullough, IDHS Consultant, asked the Committee to take three minutes to read and reflect on PowerPoint Slide #18 entitled Tying it All Together. The logic behind the message in this slide is if we have aligned systems and services at the State level, then we have more opportunity to integrate services at the regional level. The Committee typed their reactions to this slide in the chat. Some of the reactions from the Committee were:

- State administrators need to agree whether or not they will accept the use of IRIS as part of the Integrated Intake and Referral System. Also, there is a great need for staff support to implement the IRIS system across each region.
- Definitions need to be created to ensure everyone is clear about terminologies.
- Clarify what is meant by unifying into one Parent Council for each region.
- Include all of the current regional intermediaries in the system.

**Identify Outstanding Questions and Additional Details Needed:** Wendy McCullough, IDHS Consultant, asked the Committee to write 1-2 questions they would like to be addressed in the meeting that will be held in September 2023. Responses included:

- Where do we want to see the system in two years? Perhaps the IAC could break out the three recommended functions and make recommendations for the future.
- What are the consequences of success?
- Maybe our recommendations can have some short-, mid- and long-term goals identified.
- How would it look if we convened all grantees for each of the 6 entities (indicated on slide 9) within a region to learn from each other about their function and capacity to support families and develop increased alignment?
- Focus on the first recommendation- Aligned Governance System.

**Review Plan for Next Meeting:** It was acknowledged that September 25<sup>th</sup> is the Jewish Holiday, Yom Kippur, therefore, the IAC Co-Chairs shared they would select a new date for the next IAC meeting and will notify the Committee via email.

**Closing & Public Comments-** There were no public comments. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 PM.