

Illinois Early Childhood Strategic Visioning and Planning Retreat
205 W. Wacker Drive, Suite 202, June 10, 2019, 9:00 am-3:30p

Minutes

In attendance:

Elliot Regenstein, Ireta Gasner, Jennifer Alexander, Jason Helfer, Carolyn Newberry Schwartz, Dan Harris, Robin Steans, Grace Hou, Cynthia Tate, Marcy Mendenhall, Karen Berman, Cristina Pacione-Zayas, Irma, Cornelia Grumman, Nakisha Hobbs, Phyllis Glink, Tim Carpenter, Abby Holicky, Sara Slaughter, Tasha Green Cruzat, Tracy Occomy-Crowder, Jesse Ruiz, Irma Snopek, Wendy Uptain, Gaylord Gieseke, Maria Whelan, Stephani Bernoteit, Brandon Thorne, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Maggie Koller, Lori Orr, Bethany Patten, Janice Moenster, Carisa Hurley, Sean Noble, Denise Dell Isola, Lori Longueville, Trish Rooney, Rebeca Vonderlack-Navarro, Kristy Doan, Jonathan Doster, Teresa Ramos, MacKenzie Eisen, Stephanie Hernandez, Kayla Goldfarb, Shauna Ejeh, Kimberly Mann, Amy Zimmerman, Sylvia Puente, Josh Kauffman, Pam Calvert, Samantha Aigner-Treworgy, Jennifer Alexander, Kristin Bernhard, Iveree Brown, George Davis, Brenda Eastham, Melissa Figueira, Maggie Koller, Sol Flores, Carisa Hurley, Ty Jiles, Sonja Knight, Mitch Lifson, Carolyn Newberry-Schwartz, Tracy Occomy-Crowder, Ann Whalen, Lizzy Whitehorn, Josie Yanguas, Yolanda Williams, Janet Vargas, Katie Kelly, Yvette Alvarado, Lori Baas, Pam Calvert, Yeny Duran, Alex Enyart, Ngozi Ezike, Ty Jiles, Rebecca Vonderlack Navarro.

8:15-9:00 a.m. Check-in and breakfast

9-10:15 a.m. Introductions and overview of the day

- **Welcome from Deputy Governors Jesse Ruiz and Sol Flores**
- **Introductions**

Elliot Regenstein welcomed everyone and thanked them for their time today. He then introduced Jesse Ruiz to give an introduction from the Governor's Office.

Jesse Ruiz welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted that he is happy to be involved in state government at a time when we're going to have a renaissance, which begins today. Jesse reminded everyone that we all need to do this work collectively and thanked everyone for being here today.

Sol Flores thanked her colleagues in the Governor's Office and the heads of agencies in Illinois. She stated that she oversees the health and human services portfolio at DHS, her goal is to break down silos and increase efficiency, and that she is looking forward to working with everyone.

Elliot Regenstein thanked Sol and Jesse and asked everyone in the room to state their name and the organization with whom they are affiliated. After everyone introduced themselves, Elliot acknowledged how many backgrounds and areas of the field were represented today.

- **What will our end product be, and what happens after this?**
 - **Ambitious goals**
 - **Some possible metrics and activities**
 - **A set of unified work that helps drive us to our vision – the larger context**
 - **Next steps in the process**

Elliot Regenstein stated that the goal of today is to leave with a handful of highly prioritized goals and some metrics and strategies attached to those goals. This morning, we'll take the temperature on what

the goals should be. This afternoon we'll work on what needs to be done to achieve those goals. Elliot thanked the Irving Harris Foundation and the W. Clement & Jesse V. Stone Foundation for funding today's meeting. He then asked everyone to give a round of applause for the planning committee and acknowledged folks in the room from the Pritzker administration.

Elliot then introduced Phyllis Glink from the Irving Harris Foundation and Dr. Cynthia Tate from the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD) to talk about how today's meeting fits into the larger context and what happens after today.

Phyllis Glink noted that today is a launching of a lot of work being funded through a Governor's Commission, the Preschool Development Birth Through Five (PDG B-5) grant, active committees on the Early Learning Council (ELC), and efforts in the individual agencies and in the Governor's office. We have a huge system in Illinois; the goal is to come up with a strategy for how to integrate and best use the dollars we have allocated for early childhood. Under the PDG B-5 grant, there is work around Governance, a statewide Needs Assessment, and a Strategic Plan for Illinois. Soon the Governor will be establishing a commission to look at financing the EC system; what does it cost to deliver cost to families comprehensively? The Pritzker's Children's Initiative is another effort to develop a strategy to increase the number of young children ages 0-5 in high-quality programs. Phyllis noted that the work we do today is connected to all these efforts. The ELC will be oversight body for all of this work as it's legislated to be in a public/private way, but we'll keep utilizing the Early Childhood Inter Agency Team (IAT) and our state agencies to move this work forward. Phyllis conclude by noting that we will also be sure to use a racial equity and diversity and inclusivity lens.

Dr. Cynthia Tate starting by explaining how the PDG B-5 is an opportunity to build greater coordination across early childhood systems. There are 43 states participating in this initiative and Illinois is one. Every state is required to submit a needs assessment and a strategic plan. For the needs assessment, Illinois has a wealth of data: Risk and Reach Report; Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM); IFF Report. Our job is to go through all of them and figure out what we know and what we need to know. For strategic planning, this meeting today is foundational. We will work with ELC committees, subcommittees, work groups, and existing bodies to move this work forward. The next step, once the strategic planning contractor comes on board, is to look at all existing strategic plans, communicate with other bodies, and to cast a wide net for stakeholder engagement. In our plan we've also agreed to engage in focused planning for inclusion, children and families experiencing homelessness, and other groups who are often overlooked. Additionally, there is focused planning around governance: does the way we're organized effectively support what we're doing on the ground? Dr. Tate noted that there are many efforts under this grant, and it will all coalesce into a beautiful piece of work.

- **What has happened to lead us here?**
 - **Preschool for All**
 - **The development of the vision document**
 - **Affirming our vision statements**
 - **Illinois' commitment to equity**

Elliot thanked Phyllis and Cynthia and introduced Sara Slaughter from the W. Clement & Jesse V. Stone Foundation and Maria Whelan from Illinois Action for Children to give some history on Preschool for All (PFA) and how we got to where we are today.

Sara Slaughter noted that more than a decade ago, a group that looked like this one engaged in a strategic planning process that developed PFA. She acknowledged that we did great work in the past

and we can do it again. Sara reminded everyone that how we will get there is by keeping the lens on children and families. Today is about our vision for children and families and how we help change their trajectory.

Maria Whelan noted that we now have a Governor who understand the importance of early childhood; it is crucial that we take advantage of this opportunity. The past four years we've played defense, protecting our individual programs and funding streams. Now we have the opportunity to play offensively and work together. Maria encouraged everyone to be strategy-, not tactics-driven today and to maintain our focus on the most under-resourced and overburdened children and families.

Elliot Regenstein thanked Sara and Maria for their context setting and then introduced Cornelia Grumman from the McCormick Foundation to describe how the vision document came to be.

Cornelia Grumman noted that last fall, several individuals in the field started asking: what is the 20-year vision for what we want to see for children and families in Illinois? Their first step was to capture everyone's ideas and organize them. They decided that articulating a high-level vision of the "what" was important before we started engaging in the strategic planning of the "how". They viewed step 1 as getting this all down on paper. Step 2: today. Step 3: Strategic planning. Step 4: Implementation.

Phyllis Glink then asked if we can affirm the vision statement in the document Cornelia described, noting that the document has been validated by the ELC.

Phyllis read from the document:

"We envision Illinois as a place where every young child – regardless of race, ethnicity, income, language, geography, or other circumstance – receives the strongest possible start to life." Phyllis noted that this vision is a combination of the ELC's vision, Governor's Office vision, GOECD vision, and the vision document's vision. It's a combination of all so it reflects the decisions made from past to present. She then asked if everyone agreed with the vision statement. There was a brief discussion about possibly tweaking some of the language. Phyllis again asked who agreed to the vision. All in favor were asked to raise their hands. With majority, the vision was affirmed.

Phyllis (again referencing the vision document), noted that there are four buckets: medical/maternal health; high-quality learning; workforce; community supports and resource. She asked if we can affirm that this is a good framework to do our work today. The group unanimously affirmed the framework.

Elliot Regenstein thanked Phyllis. Referencing a slide in the projected PowerPoint, he noted that the slide was presented at ELC Executive Committee earlier this month. Elliot then introduced Dr. Kimberly Mann from DCFS (who is a member of the Illinois State BUILD Team) to present the racial equity priorities the BUILD Team has established for the ELC moving forward.

Dr. Mann asked everyone in the room on the Illinois BUILD Team to stand so they could be acknowledged. Providing a status update on the racial equity work of the ELC that has been facilitated and supported by the Illinois BUILD Team, Dr. Mann noted that the first step was to develop a definition of racial equity. Next, they looked at the current work plans of the ELC committees. This year, the BUILD Team created a list of priorities around racial equity; all will support the ELC's work to ensure one's racial identity does not inhibit one's ability to achieve their potential. Dr. Mann noted that there will be a racial equity retreat later this summer to figure out how to advance the priorities.

- **Our current status: Key data about the system**

Elliot Regenstein thanked Dr. Mann. He then gave thanks to Theresa Hawley who contributed to the update on ECE data we are about to hear but couldn't be here today. Elliot then introduced Cristina Pacione-Zayas from Erikson Institute to present key data in Illinois' early childhood system.

Cristina Pacione-Zayas presented data on kindergarten readiness, healthy beginnings, supported families, quality care and learning, the early childhood workforce, community support and resources, and public expenditures in early childhood vs. K-12

- **Public comment**

Elliot thanked Cristina for her presentation and asked if anyone wanted to give public comment today. No one signed up or raised their hand, so we moved forward with the agenda.

10:15--10:45 Identifying Potential Goals (Section II of the materials)

- **Review potential goals submitted in advance**
- **Open the floor to new suggestions**

Elliot noted that now we will begin identifying high-level, cross-program, cross-system potential goals that are easily explainable to the general public. What do we want for children and families in Illinois? Goals that were submitted in advance were posted around the room on poster board. Elliot reminded everyone that they can still propose goals related to finance, data, workforce, and governance, but to remember that work in those areas is already underway. As folks around the room suggested new goals and changes to existing goals, ideas were written down on poster board throughout the room. Then, Elliot told the group to take a 15-minute break, noting the time to return.

10:45-11 Break

11-11:30 Full-group Exploration of Potential Goals

- **Discuss the rationales behind the proposals**

Elliot welcomed everyone back and asked Melissa Figueira to read all the goals on the wall aloud. Then Elliot explained that each table has two votes. He asked everyone to come to a consensus at their tables. What is the most important issue to solve and what on the wall best represents that? We're trying to see where the energy in the room is and around which themes.

11:30-12 Tabletop Conversations: Prioritizing the Goals

- **Each table will vote as a table**
- **Discussion will be of which goals to prioritize**

Everyone spent thirty minutes discussing with the group at their table.

12-12:15 Prioritizing

Elliot asked reporters from each table to share the two goals that have been prioritized at each table. Tables 1-11 shared their goals, which were written down and grouped into categories on poster board. Elliot read the four goals aloud and noted that the group would break for lunch.

FOUR GOALS IDENTIFIED

1. Comprehensive structure
2. K readiness and the prenatal to 5 services that support it
3. Family navigation of the system
4. Workforce

12:15-12:45 **Lunch break**

12:45-1 **Introduction to the afternoon: Metrics and Strategies**

- **Assignments by table**

After lunch, Elliot introduced a table activity where everyone was asked to identify metrics and strategies to meet the highest priority goals we identified before lunch. Elliot noted that the role of the notetaker (one assigned per table) is to capture as much as they can during your conversation. The notetaker will send the notes to Elliot, who will ultimately develop a full report. The report out to the full group at the end of this session will be of high-level points, not word for word capture. Tables were assigned a topic and were told they could pick on a second topic of choice if time permitted.

1-2:15 p.m. **Tabletop Conversations: Metrics and Strategies**

- **What are the metrics of success for our chosen goals, and what strategies will best support improving performance on those metrics?**

Tables discussed metrics and strategies to meet one of the four goals to which they were assigned.

2:15-2:30 **Break**

2:30-3:15 p.m. **Report out: Metrics and activities**

Elliot thanked everyone for their participation in the exercise. Each table shared out the proposed metrics and strategies they generated for the goal to which they were assigned.

3:15-3:30 p.m. **Wrapup and next steps**

After all groups shared out, Elliot thanked everyone for their time today. He reminded everyone of today's accomplishments. First, we generated high level ideas, big system problems to solve. For each, we then generated a list of potential metrics and activities. What we didn't do today was to organize it; Elliot and his team will do that as follow-up, and a report will be provided to the incoming Strategic Planning contractor for the PDG B-5 grant. This report will be developed with today's planning team and GOECD. Elliot acknowledged that today he forced everyone to have conversations that may have been outside of one's comfort zone; folks will be encouraged to come back later in the process to talk more about specific areas of focus. Via the emails used to RSVP for this event today, everyone will be notified about upcoming opportunities for engagement.

Jesse Ruiz gave thanks to the funders and to Elliot. Everyone gave Elliot a round of applause. The meeting was adjourned at 3:07pm.