

Meeting Minutes

January 22, 2025 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83221962084?pwd=1c6g6C64akAMBSTGgtbbU0Y5obbNqR.1>

Meeting ID: 832 2196 2084

Passcode: 561901

Meeting Objectives:

- Draw connections between Transition Advisory Council and workgroup conversations
- Continue to review and discuss regional listening session preliminary findings and ChiByDesign themes
- Identify themes that resonate and are missing, and discuss short-term ideas
- Discuss next steps for workgroup

Agenda:

Welcome, agenda and connector	10 minutes
Early Intervention update	10 minutes
Preliminary findings and December meeting ideas	10 minutes
Themes and ideas by participant role	20 minutes
Public comment	5 minutes
Next steps	5 minutes

Padlet (for use during meeting):

For workgroup members-

<https://padlet.com/erin674/SupportingMLs>

For members of the public-

<https://padlet.com/erin674/MLsPublicComment>

Participants:

Luis Narvaez

Michelle Ramirez

Charlotte Rivard-Hoster

Leslie Perkins

Kate Estrada

Gaddys Ybarra

Joanne Clyde

Debra DeValdivielso

Edgar Ramirez

Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro

Welcome, agenda and connector

Erin welcomed everyone to the meeting and proceeded to discuss the agenda for the day, which included a review of the Transition Advisory Committee connection, an update on Early Intervention, a review of work done in December, and a discussion on new themes and ideas. Erin also reminded everyone of the community agreements developed by the workgroup members. The conversation ended with Erin expressing her appreciation for everyone's participation.

Erin discussed the role of the Transition Advisory Committee (TAC) in connecting the dots and making meaning of the work done in various workgroups. She highlighted the importance of centering families and providers in the work and the goal of focusing on the current state and developing a vision for the future. Erin then invited two TAC members to share their thoughts from the last TAC meeting, which focused on multilingual learners. One TAC member emphasized the need for consistency and safety in accessing services, and the other TAC member appreciated the parallels between the themes discussed and their application to other groups. Both agreed on the importance of addressing the unique needs of multilingual learners and their families. Finally, the TAC members brought up civil rights protections for undocumented and vulnerable student populations that should be considered in the new agency.

Early Intervention update

Ann Whalen introduced a report on the costs of providing Early Intervention services in Illinois, acknowledging the changing context with the new agency formation. The group plans to further explore recommendations and design for birth-to-three developmental support services based on this report. More discussion will occur during the February meeting.

Ann also mentioned the need for deeper engagement with parents, including co-design sessions to understand their experiences and pain points with the system. Erin agreed, emphasizing the importance of gathering information from various sources and considering the unique opportunities for early intervention beyond just cost models.

Preliminary findings and December meeting ideas

Erin led a discussion about the progress and future plans of their workgroup. She mentioned that they would revisit certain topics in their February meeting and encouraged the use of Padlet for communication. She also highlighted three focus themes: accessible and affordable services, communication and coordination for cohesive support, and consistent and culturally responsive relationships. These themes were derived from a report and were discussed in their previous meeting in December. Erin also mentioned specific barriers to accessing care, such as information navigation and accessibility, and encouraged the group to continue sharing ideas centered on families and providers.

Erin reviewed the outcomes from the December meeting focused on addressing barriers for families and providers, particularly in the areas of transportation, bilingual doulas, and the shortage of teachers and therapists. She highlighted the need for consistent common communication, resources, and collaboration in families' preferred language. Erin also mentioned two additional points that touched on cross-referencing these ideas with the birth to 5 initiative and the AOK network and exploring additional funding for child care programs and pay increases for bilingual staff. The discussion then shifted to prioritizing equity through access and affordability, with suggestions including providing services and resources in multiple languages, streamlining applications, and equitable distribution of resources and funding.

Erin continued to gather feedback and insights from the participants about the issues they are facing and what is missing from their perspective. One member expressed concerns about the underutilization of services within the Latino community due to lack of information and trust. Another member acknowledged the challenges and mentioned the need for creative solutions, particularly in relation to Federal funding and school-based programs. She also highlighted the importance of a strong communications arm within the new state agency to disseminate information effectively. The need for workshops on mental health and family well-being was also discussed. Another member agreed with the points raised and expressed her own concerns about the issues.

The workgroup discussed the challenges of recruiting diverse candidates for teaching positions in their school districts, particularly from the Hispanic population. She mentioned the implementation of a pre-educational pathway at their high school to encourage multilingual students to consider bilingual education. Erin then asked others about their experiences in their communities, to which one member responded by expressing his interest in the role of higher education institutions in preparing the next generation of educators. It was added that staff involved in Hispanic Serving Institutions and other Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) related programs had recently been laid off, which could affect the pipeline. Members expressed concern about how to respond to the current situation, given the challenges of working in these communities.

Members expressed concerns about the lack of clarity and the unknowns surrounding their work. The discussion also touched on funding, with members discussing the potential for blending and braiding dollars, particularly for young multilingual learners. They also discussed the possibility of partnering with Head Start programs for wraparound services. Lastly, the group considered the need for early childhood advocacy and implementation work at the national and international levels, with a focus on best practices for multilingual learners.

In the meeting, a member expressed concerns about the transition from early childhood to elementary schools and the need for a smoother process. Erin agreed and emphasized the importance of system navigation and community representation in early childhood systems.

Public comment

One member of the public brought up the issue of undocumented students and the potential impact of federal funding cuts on early Head Start programs. Another member of the public highlighted the underutilization and underfunding of the Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) care in their community. Erin acknowledged these concerns and emphasized the need for comprehensive recommendations. The group also discussed the importance of parent mentor programs and the need for early childhood representation in these programs.

Erin ended the conversation by discussing the next steps, including a meeting in February and the need to consider using future meeting times to work directly with families and providers.

Next steps

- Erin to send out the Early Intervention cost model report, presentation slides, and proposal to workgroup members before the next meeting.
- Workgroup members to review the Early Intervention materials before the February meeting.

SUPPORTING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS WORKGROUP

- Erin to schedule an optional meeting for workgroup members to unpack the Early Intervention cost model report.
- Erin to connect with the support workgroups to provide more information on funding sources and availability for early childhood programs.
- Erin to share Early Learning Council information with the workgroup members.
- Erin to send specific questions from the Data, Analytics and Insight workgroup to members ahead of the next meeting.