

Early Learning Council

March 13, 2012

Meeting Notes

Approved: April 17, 2012

In attendance: Erin Sullivan Sutton, Patricia Nordahl, Jill Timm, Denise Mayotte, Sara Carlson, Molly Rieke, Maria Erlandson, Carolyn Smallwood, Carol Miller, Karen Cadigan, Barb Yates, Sue Hoeft, Diane Haulcy, Fred Senn, Mariam Mohamed, Mary Vanderwert, Donna Henning, Senator Terri Bonoff, Victoria Campoverde, Jeanne Ayers, David Counoyer and Barb Fabre

Unable to attend: Jacqueline Cross, Representative Jenifer Loon, Scott McConnell, Art Rolnick, Representative Nora Slawik, Yeu Vang, Senator Pam Wolf and Michelle Zadra

Public members: Megan Waltz, Mary Orr, Laurel Briske, Maggie Diebel, Barbara OSullivan, Kelly Monson, Cisa Keller, Kevin Peters, Catherine Wright, Nancy Jost, Helene Douville, Rich Boyce, Deb Moses and Jennifer Barshace

1. Welcome and Goals for the Meeting:

Barb Yates, council chair, welcomed council members and the public. The agenda was reviewed. No changes were recommended.

2. Approve minutes of January 17, meeting.

Dianne Haulcy made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 17 meeting. Erin Sullivan Sutton seconded the motion. Jeanne Ayres asked if she should be taken off of the list of those unable to attend since Kelly Monson attended in her place. Motion carried with the correction.

3. Conversation on Council Committees

David Counoyer gave an overview of the work of the committee on committees and survey results.

- Everyone has had the opportunity to participate in the survey.
- Results have been summarized.
- The survey and the conversations at this meeting will help clarify what the important work of the council is given the current landscape of the early childhood field. Guidance for council responsibilities is also in state statute, federal statute and the governor's executive order.
- Three questions were discussed in small groups and key concepts were reported.
- The committee on committees will discuss and make a recommendation on how this will inform next steps and planning.

4. Guiding Principles

Denise Mayotte gave an overview of work of the committee on guiding principles. Feedback from the council on the guiding principles includes:

- Review for jargon and reading level .
- Include caregivers when children are not in the care of their parents.
- Use verbs that are within the councils abilities (i.e. ensure vs recommend).

5. The video, *Left Behind: the early learning crisis*, aired by Twin Cities Public Television was distributed to be used as council members see fit.

6. Barb Yates led a discussion on the frequency of council meetings. Key discussion points include:

- When appropriate, optional brown bag information sessions will be held prior to meetings.
- The council will meet monthly until a strategic plan is in place.
- Meetings will be held in various locations throughout Minnesota with the four transformational zones being first priorities.

7. Public comment

- a. Helene Douville, parent. Helene urged the council to support the critical window of early childhood experiences by investigating the cost and benefits of restructuring school districts funding to include early childhood. She encouraged the council to make recommendations to move funding from community services to general funds of the E-12 system.
- b. Melissa Boyd, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe- Mille Lacs Early Education, Minnesota Head Start Hero Award. Melissa is in the Master/Apprentice program and works with elders to learn the Ojibwe language and customs and at the same time developing a correlating curriculum for young children. Melissa told the council that indigenous people still feel the effects of history. She feels it is essential that the identity of people remains intact and urged the council to support efforts that recognize the importance and role of language and culture in a young person's life.
- c. Rich Boyce, Head Start CAPR&W. Described the experiences of his program and the families it serves with scholarships. This type of stable funding allowed a number of children to stay in the program. The fluid nature of Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) funds sometimes means that a child is unable to attend programming when his/her eligibility changes. The family must re-enroll in CCAP before the child can return. As plans for scholarship funding are developed, he urged the council to ensure that scholarships go to support a child's full preschool experience.
- d. Megan Waltz, Early Childhood Policy Consultant. Megan summarized the conversation by the public attendees during the world café conversation. In addition, she described the confusion by the general public about roles and responsibilities of the council,

children's cabinet and leadership team of the Office of Early Learning. She encouraged the council to develop an organizational chart. She also urged the council to develop a communications strategy and thanked the council for their work.

- e. Tammy Wickstrom, Director of Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. Tammy described her work with children who are at-risk for arriving at kindergarten unprepared. She told a story of a child with high needs. She described the variety of services and systems involved with this child and family. She urged the council to be aware of the number of obstacles that could be present in the life of a child, parent or family. She reminded the council that school readiness encompasses much more than the ABCs and encouraged the council to be mindful and inclusive of all types of families when making recommendations.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 4:20