

Draft Minutes: Nebraska Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC)

May 5, 2023

Meeting was held at the Lincoln Firefighter's Reception Hall, 271 Victory Lane, Lincoln

Council members present: Borchert, Bunnell, Howard, Jara, Knust, Lester, Marinovich, Ottoson, Wilson

Council members excused: Anthony, Easter, Freeny, Hobson, Nunemaker, Robinson, Vint

Also in attendance: Council Facilitator, Phillips; Council Secretary, Hoffman; Technical Assistants Auman, Braddock, Brehm, Cimino, Cromer, Johnson, Shockley and Texel; guest presenters: Wende Baker, Jackie Farrell, Christina Krasov, Susan Sarver, Kailey Snyder, and Jen Goettmueller Wendl

This quarterly meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) commenced at 9:00 a.m. Public notification of the meeting was on the Nebraska Department of Education website and in the Omaha World Herald. The Public Meetings Notice was available online and onsite in the meeting room. Presentation materials may be found in this [Google Docs](#) folder.

Council Meeting Convenes

ECICC Facilitator, Mary Phillips, convened the meeting, a quorum was confirmed, and introductions followed. The agenda was confirmed, and the Public Meetings Act was announced and noted as being available in the room.

***Approval of minutes – February 10, 2023**

Motion made by Howard and seconded by Marinovich to approve the minutes from the February 10, 2023, meeting; roll-call vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 7-yes, 2-abstain, 0-no

Yes: Bunnell, Howard, Jara, Knust, Lester, Marinovich, Wilson

Abstain: Borchert, Ottoson

**** Public Comment, Announcements, Upcoming Events**

Dr. Lester asked for public comment or any announcements that would be of interest to the group. None were shared.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Update

Beckie Cromer, Grant Coordinator with Children & Family Services at DHHS, shared some updates about subsidy activity fees and hours as well as grants and programs. There is a targeted focus on meeting unmet needs in rural Nebraska as well as with the English Language Learners population. Pandemic funds, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRSSA), and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds continue to be dispersed. Beckie can be reached at beckie.cromer@nebraska.gov.

Early Childhood Update

Steph Knust, Office of Early Childhood, stepped in for this update that included information about a free training for early childhood education and care providers occurring from June 1, 2023, through May of 2024, with funding through federal ARPA funds to NDHHS. New and expanding grants are awaiting notification of funds once state aid calculations are completed and certified. Steph finished by sharing about a new round of ARPA-funded applications for PreK to second grade specialists.

Head Start Update

Steph Knust, Head Start State Collaboration Office Director, continued by sharing a powerpoint with updates about the Federal Office of Head Start (OHS) priorities for Early Head Start and Head Start programs. A new OHS Director, Khari Garvin, is now in place and leading Federal funding updates. Steph shared current Nebraska Program information and enrollment numbers, and her powerpoint included links to updated program information. Programs are working to have participation numbers rise again following the effects of the pandemic. New Head Start Collaboration Office (HSCO) priorities have been sent out recently from the Federal Office of Head Start that include five priorities, which were shown on a slide. Steph can be reached steph.knust@nebraska.gov.

Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Updates – multiple presenters

Wende Baker, a member of the PDG Management Team, shared an update following four years of highlights and progress that included assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of PDG efforts. Currently at the end of year three, the Evaluation phase is underway. Wende shared that race equity and family engagement have both been revealed as a need. Planning for a second family conference is in process for October of 2023. A data sharing system “dashboard” is in development and testing. Wende encouraged the group to reach out to Ben Baumfalk for a link to go in and test this tool. Next, Jackie Farrell, with Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, shared about the second one-year planning grant and the activities and planning efforts currently underway. Wende Baker can be reached at bpscontracting2000@gmail.com, and Jackie Farrell can be reached at jfarrell@nebraskachildren.org.

The PDG update continued with Susan Sarver PhD, Director of Workforce Planning and Development at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute (BECI), who provided a summary of the stakeholder engagement process for updating for the Nebraska Early Childhood Strategic Plan, which the ECICC approved in 2020. The priority for this round of stakeholder engagement was to listen to the voices of people in more communities across the state, including rural areas, Black, Brown, indigenous, and other people of color, families of children with disabilities, and more.

Since July of 2022, 56 meetings have been led by local facilitators with over 300 people to identify strategies to increase access to quality early care and education. The demographic summary indicated success in reaching a more diverse group of stakeholders than in the 2019 process. Feedback obtained during these meetings is being used to update the Nebraska Early Childhood Strategic Plan. The goals of the strategic plan will continue to provide the overall structure for directing systems change to improve equitable access to early care and education. In addition to updating the objectives and strategies, a new definition of quality as informed by stakeholders will be presented in the final plan.

The ECICC Steering Committee will be asked to help guide the next steps of reviewing the Strategic Plan and be informed about future progress. A goal is to present the final plan at the August ECICC meeting. A motion was made for the Council to grant permission for the ECICC Steering Committee to participate, review, and approve the updated Strategic Plan, and allow the ECICC Chairperson to sign off on the updated Strategic Plan. It was moved by Wilson and seconded by Bunnell, followed by a roll-call vote; the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 8-yes, 0-abstain, 0-no

Yes: Borcher, Bunnell, Howard, Jara, Knust, Lester, Marinovich, Wilson

Next Christina Krasov, from the Center for Early Learning Funding Equity (CELFE), led the group in thanking Susan for her committed work, followed by presenting the progress being made to develop an Action Agenda, which builds on the work of the Strategic Plan and input from key partners. The Action Agenda project is to identify a more specific set of action steps for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Teams are working closely together to integrate findings from stakeholder engagement with the priorities identified by state level partners to create a set of actionable priorities that will make measurable change to improve outcomes for Nebraska’s children. A list of six Emerging Priorities were shared. Susan Sarver can be reached at ssarver@nebraska.edu, and Christina Krasov can be reached at christinakrasov@gmail.com.

Part C Update

NDE Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor and Early Development Network Part C Co-lead, Amy Bunnell, shared a brief update about the Part C Application, which the Council previously received a link to review. Timing for submitting the Application was shared, as was the amount of funding Part C will receive and how those funds will be used. Next steps include updating the part C budget since there is to be a 7% increase provided. A link to the updated report will go out to the Council. Amy can be reached at amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov

Rooted in Relationship (RiR) Report

Lynne Brehm, with Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, and ECICC Technical Assistant, teamed with Kailey Snyder, a Munroe Meyer Institute Evaluator, for this presentation. Lynne shared the history and context of RiR,

noting it is in its tenth year of existence. A powerpoint and update was shared that included the timeline and evolution of RiR, how it has grown, the use of the Pyramid Model (a comprehensive, multi-tiered framework of evidence-based practices that promotes the social, emotional, and behavioral development of young children), program evaluation and outcomes. Both home and center-based programs that utilize Pyramid were reviewed and measured. A slide showed the many entities that work together to create the infrastructure development and support that has occurred in Nebraska. Funders for RiR were also noted. Lynne Brehm can be reached at lbrehm@nebraskachildren.org, and Kailey Snyder at kasnyder@unmc.edu.

Shared Leadership & Financing (SL&F) Task Force Update

Jen Goettemoeller Wendl, Consultant with Nebraska Children & Families Foundation, provided information about the Shared Leadership and Financing Task Force, whose objective is creating a fully funded and aligned system to ensure access to full-day, year-round, high-quality early care and education for children regardless of the setting and experiences parents choose. Functions of the Nebraska-specific model of SL&F were shared, as were some recommendations within three Governance Models. A goal is for providers to have an ideal setting and the tools they need to thrive. A handout entitled “Nebraska Child Care Cost Modeling” was reviewed. Jen described a possible, future tool that providers can use to estimate costs for various scenarios and levels of care and programming. Next steps include both Direct service cost and Systems cost models coming in the summer and fall of 2023, respectively. Jen Goettemoeller Wendl can be reached at jen@prairieoakpublishing.com.

Governor’s Report Activities Update

Council Facilitator, Mary Phillips, shared an update about outreach to the Governor’s office for the purpose of sharing the most recent Report, and requesting an update about applicants to the Council’s voting membership. A meeting is set for June 29th with the Governor’s staff to present the latest Report and Summer. Mary and Amber will attend. Mary also plans to meet with the Governor’s chief of staff and Administrative Assistant to review Council vacancies.

Discussion was had to reconvene the membership AdHoc committee prior to June to review the list of applicants. Karen will send out a Doodle Poll.

Mary also shared about the upcoming July OSEP conference in Washington D.C., and what a great opportunity it is collaborate with other state ICC members. Mary is encouraged and reminded, when attending this conference, to know that Nebraska has great collaboration partners.

Mary also shared that this will be Dr. Lester’s last ECICC meeting, as she is going to focus more on her rapidly growing business. Karla was thanked for her commitment to the Council and the group showed its gratitude to her. Nominations were requested and Amber Jara, the Council Vice-Chair, was tapped to step in as Chair. Motion to elect Amber was made by Marinovich and seconded by Knust. A roll call vote was taken, and Amber was elected unanimously.

Roll call vote: 9-yes, 0-abstain, 0-no

Yes: Borcher, Bunnell, Howard, Jara, Knust, Lester, Marinovich, Ottoson, Wilson

August Meeting – Length and Components

It was noted that the next ECICC meeting on Friday, August 18, 2023, will be in-person, with the location to be determined. Members are welcome to email Karen agenda suggestions for the Steering Committee’s consideration. Mary and Amber will provide a report, both from the meeting with the Governor’s staff, and about the summer OSEP conference. Hopefully there will be new faces at the August meeting, and some orientation efforts being planned.

Adjournment

Karla shared some parting words with the Council before closing the meeting at 11:50a.m.