

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

August 18, 2023

Meeting was held at the Jack Huck Continuing Education Center, 301 S. 68th St. Place, Lincoln, NE

Council members present: Anthony, Borchert, Bunnell, Carmoney, Easter, Freeny, Hobson, Jara, Marinovich, Nunemaker, Ottoson, Robinson, Vint

Council members excused: Knust, Wilson

Also in attendance: Council Facilitator, Phillips; Council Secretary, Hoffman; Technical Assistants Auman, Braddock, Brehm, Cimino, Cromer, Johnson, Renn, and Shockley; guest presenters: Hallie Duke via zoom, and Susan Sarver.

This quarterly meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC) commenced at 9:04 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 [GoogleDocs](#) folder.

Council Meeting Convenes

ECICC Chairperson, Amber Jara, convened the meeting, quorum was confirmed, and introductions followed. The agenda was adjusted to add a vote for a Council Vice-Chair, which had been discussed at a Steering Committee meeting, but was inadvertently left off the agenda. The Public Meetings Act was announced and noted as being available in the room.

***Approval of minutes – May 5, 2023**

Motion made by Marinovich and seconded by Borchert to approve the minutes from the May 5, 2023, meeting; roll-call vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Roll call vote: 5-yes, 8-abstain

Yes: Borchert, Bunnell, Jara, Marinovich, Ottoson

Abstain: Anthony, Carmoney, Easter, Freeny, Hobson, Nunemaker, Robinson, Vint

At this time, Amy Bunnell made a motion to add a vote for a ECICC Vice-Chairperson to the agenda; was seconded by Hobson. The agenda was altered by consensus and nominations were opened. Melody Hobson nominated Nora Robinson who accepted. Nominations were closed and paper ballots passed out to voting members with instructions to indicate yes or no. Eleven ballots were counted, all were “yes,” electing Nora Robinson.

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

Amber asked for public comment or announcements that would be of interest to the group. Amy Bunnell invited members and Technical Assistants to attend the IDEA Part C Results Driven Accountability Stakeholder meeting on October 18th, from 9a-3p at the downtown Lincoln Embassy Suites, where attendees will review Part C data and updates about the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). More information to come. Nora Robinson mentioned the Western Nebraska Early Childhood Conference on October 14th at the Gering Civic Center with speaker Kristen Peterson, a proponent of play and developmental and appropriate learning. The group was encouraged to let Nora know if they have resources to be set out in the conference information room. Michelle Nunemaker shared about the inaugural Middle American School Mental Health Conference on May 29-30th, and School Mental Health Conference on the following day, May 31st. Both will be in Omaha.

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Update

Nicole Vint, CCDF Administrator with Children & Family Services at DHHS, shared updates about the Child Care and Development Fund, a block grant from the federal government with DHHS as the lead agency. Information was shared about childcare market rate and billing structure changes, and the proposed CCDF Rule regarding reauthorizing of current regulations that is currently out for public comment. Information about the proposed rule

can be found at this link: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/07/13/2023-14290/improving-child-care-access-affordability-and-stability-in-the-child-care-and-development-fund-ccdf>. Comments may be shared until August 28th.

Next, Beckie Cromer, Grant Coordinator with Children & Family Services at DHHS, shared a powerpoint about some highlighted supply and capacity-building work they have been doing. The Child Care Partnership Grant closed in July and Beckie shared some outcomes and successes from those efforts. A video was also shared about Lincoln's first and only bi-lingual Child Care Center. Nicole Vint and Beckie Cromer can be reached respectively at nicole.vint@nebraska.gov and beckie.cromer@nebraska.gov.

Early Childhood Update

Melody Hobson, Administrator for the NDE Early Childhood Office, shared that the school year is getting underway, and teacher shortages are being met with some flexibilities within state statute and Rule 11 that are helping address them. She shared about Dr. Brain Maher being the new state Commissioner of Education and some of his background. In 2014 the state legislature allocated money for an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation program that required a statewide grantee to provide services. A new RFP is currently being developed and will require statewide reach. A question was asked about possible financial assistance and/or incentives for future teachers, and Melody shared some information and examples of what is available. Melody Hobson can be reached at melody.hobson@nebraska.gov.

Head Start Update

Melody continued, stepping in for Steph Knust, Nebraska Head Start State Collaboration Office Director, and sharing a power point. Updates included a new Head Start Director, Khari Garvin, being in place, as well as Office of Head Start (OHS) National Priorities for Grant Recipients, and Head Start Eligibility Criteria. Data for FY2023 enrollment was shared, as were updates regarding policies, OHS Covid-19, budget, and the Nebraska Head Start State Collaboration Office (NHSSCO) Needs Assessment. Steph will have Karen send out a questionnaire to the Council to assist her in preparing her grant for next year. Finally, a resource page was shared, and Melody encouraged the group to review the Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKS) website, for a wide range of relevant and helpful information regarding Early Childhood programs. Steph Knust can be reached steph.knust@nebraska.gov.

Part C Update

NDE Early Childhood Special Education Supervisor and Early Development Network Part C Co-lead, Amy Bunnell, shared a power point that included a brief update about the Part C APR, Annual Performance Report, which is submitted annually to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and details the status of Nebraska programs. The Council heard about the report in November, and the Council Chair signed off on and certified that the Council reviewed and approved the submission. Amy shared next steps that include a state determination; Nebraska received a Meets Requirements rating. The report can be found here: <http://edn.ne.gov/cms/annual-performance-reports-apr>. A report on the annual performance of Nebraska's 27 Planning Region Teams on the APR targets can be found here: <http://edn.ne.gov/cms/regional-public-reporting-tables>.

Next, an update was shared about the Part C Application for federal funding, which is also sent to OSPE. Nebraska received approval and received funds July 1st that will run through June 30th of 2024.

Jessica Anthony, DHHS Medicaid and Long-Term Care Coordinator, and Early Development Network Program Co-Coordinator, recapped some American Rescue Plan Funds (ARPF), that Nebraska IDEA Part C utilized between July 1, 2021, and September 30, 2023. Power point slides listed out how the funds were used. Jessica finished by, once again, sharing about the Nebraska IDEA Part C Results Driven Accountability Annual Stakeholder Meeting which will be October 18th from 9:00a.m. to 3:00p.m. at the Embassy Suites in Lincoln. Amy Bunnell and Jessica Anthony can be reached respectively at amy.bunnell@nebraska.gov and jessica.anthony@nebraska.gov.

The Nebraska Early Childhood Strategic Plan Updates

Susan Sarver PhD, Director of Workforce Planning and Development at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute (BECI), and Consultant, Hallie Duke, co-presented and shared a power point and update for the Council about the Nebraska Early Childhood Strategic Plan. Key concepts and plan objectives were shared that address individual community needs and inclusive professional networks. The process of refining and updating the plan has included conversations with partners and community collaborators to ensure community voices are heard and represented. A slide detailed Action Agenda Priorities for 2024-2027, should there be additional funding provided. The presentation concluded by sharing next steps and then gratitude to the Council for its participation and partnering with these efforts. Susan Sarver can be reached at ssarver@nebraska.edu, and Hallie Duke can be reached at hallie@drdukeconsulting.com.

Governor's Report Activities Update

Council Facilitator, Mary Phillips, shared an update about recent communication with the Governor's office for the purpose of sharing the most recent Biennial Report, and requesting an update regarding applicants to the Council's voting membership. Powerpoint slides showed a listing of vacancies and some recent applicants. There have been recruitment efforts and the Steering Committee directed Mary to reach out to known, interested parties. The group was also encouraged to reach out to Mary and/or Karen with names of other possible applicants. Mary Phillips can be reached at dmphil2936@gmail.com

November Meeting – Length and Components

It was noted that the next ECICC meeting on Friday, November 17, 2023, will be virtual, with a hopeful Orientation occurring the day prior and being a half-day. It was noted that this was the final meeting of the 22-23 terms. The Steering Committee will meet in October so please share suggested agenda items with Karen for it to consider.

Adjournment

Amber thanked the group for attending today before closing the meeting at 11:32a.m.