



The Voice for Early Childhood

Maine Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative
DHHS, State House Station #11
2 Anthony Avenue
Augusta, ME 04333-0011

*First Lady Karen Baldacci
Superintendent William P. Braun
Co-Chairs*

MEETING SUMMARY

September 14, 2009

Columbus Hall, St. Paul Center, 136 State Street, Augusta

1. In Attendance:

Peter Mills, Meredith Strang Burgess, Seth Berry, First Lady Karen Baldacci, Alan Cobo Lewis, Teri Petnov, Karen Heck, Jan Clarkin, Lori Fried Moses, Peter Lindsay, Jane Weil, Eloise Vitelli, Penni Theriault, Bill Braun, Commissioner Brenda Harvey, Donna Overcash, Sheryl Peavey. New members: Steve Meister, DHHS/Title V; Judy Reidt Parker for Ellie Goldberg; Kathy Colfer for Jane Adams; Deb Hannigan, DOE; Patti Woolley, DHHS/ECD. *Unable to Attend:* Joe Perry, Jim Clair, Dana Connors, Richard Pattenaude, Commissioner Susan Gendron, Todd Brackett, Heidi Hart.

Guests: Jessica Kundrata, Janine Blatt, Kim Gore, Bill Hager, Ed Cervone, Leslie Forstadt

2. Purpose of the Meeting:

The Maine Children's Growth Council was created to achieve sustainable social and financial investment in the healthy development of Maine's young children and their families. The Council reviews and addresses recommendations of legislative studies, advisory committees and the Children's Cabinet and is responsible for implementing the long-term plan for a unified, statewide early childhood services system, *Invest Early in Maine*. The Council must coordinate state and community providers and partners in this effort.

3. Council Record

Item 1. Approval of Meeting Summary (April 09): not done

4. Unfinished Business

Item 1. Business Leader Summits Update

Discussion: Karen Baldacci read the list of the September Summits (Portland and Bath) and those planned for October (Augusta and Bangor). Two more are planned for this fall. Philanthropists have been invited and the Bingham Foundation is participating in some of the funding.

Item 2. New Council Membership based on Legislation (handout): Donna Overcash

Discussion: Donna reviewed her handout. There are nine new positions to be filled based on new legislation. Those recently added were welcomed: Patti Woolley for Head Start Collaboration position. Other vacancies have been filled: Judy Reidt Parker for Ellie Goldberg, Kathy Colfer for Jane Adams. Council received and accepted Teri Petnov's resignation.

5. Requests for Action

Item 1. Draft Council Handbook and Proposed Structural Changes: Sheryl Peavey

Discussion: Sheryl reviewed the changes (see handout of Draft Council Handbook). Recommended changing structure from Accountability Teams based on topic domains to Committees based on function.

Members discussed how this new structure would affect the relationships with the Accountability Teams, citing concerns about too many meetings if we had both Teams and Committees. Recommendation was made to have Teams meet annually to review the progress of the ad hoc committees. Member noted importance of having crossover for information that you are not involved with that then helps you make new connections to synthesize the system.

One member liked the idea of the Legislative/Policy Committee, noting that sometimes things move slowly, but then the legislature moves quickly. Cautioned against too much structure that would make it difficult to respond to take action, to take endorsement or not. Important to look at this committee as proactive one as well as reactive during the session. Good to have key policy makers here to fill us in as well.

One area where things do move very quickly is last minute budget changes in appropriations committee room. That is where we need a general sense of where we stand on issues. Go and speak on issues as member of MCGC. This standing committee would need to stay on top of those bills.

Legislator noted three ways that the legislative piece comes together.

- 1) Proactively, we bring forth legislation to accomplish goals of plan and the Council. Everybody has been out there with “me, me, me” chorus of so many different asks. The Council gives us the opportunity to prioritize and together and be heard—the legislature is anxious for that! We need the experts to guide the conversation. We have huge potential to really make a difference.
- 2) Also need to be reactive to legislation after cloture for those bills that seem to come out of thin air.
- 3) A newer issue that has surfaced over the past few years is the appropriation committee dealing with aggressive budget decreases, hour by hour. We will clearly have to work on communication through council.

Discussion ensued about the appendices in the handbook with appreciation expressed for the visual aid of the system.

Comments ensued about the need to flatten the communications process and have fewer meetings, as it impedes our ability to get more work done. Silos have to come together. Question arose of relationship to the Children’s Cabinet, which includes the executive and judicial branches that meet monthly. Council does not see the Cabinet as duplication to Council work, rather a complement.

Committee membership can’t just be members of growth council. The vision is to have public be members, which is a way to get to full consensus in community, one voice. One member cited importance of parent leadership and development. Other member stated that it would be good to see legislative policy coming from leadership.

Item 2. Data and Children’s Budget Initiative: Judy Reidt Parker

Discussion (see Handout). Judy reviewed the work of the data/budget committee over the summer (noting that we have received a grant of \$150,000 to do this and other early childhood work.) Work is grounded in *Invest Early* and will be published in the Early Childhood Edition of the Maine Policy Review next month.

Judy explained the intent of the Children’s Budget and Data Report is more than government budget, community. It should reflect tax credits, etc. It is not intended to replace existing reports from other groups such as the Child Care Advisory Council—we can go there for detailed data.

Recent advances include the DOE longitudinal data system, a comprehensive birth to 20 year old system, made possible by the legislature who passed the law to use social security numbers. The process for data is to follow Educare, Head Start.

Jane Weil said we should look at Harold Alfond scholarship group to track those children. Washington County is promoting this heavily. Young parents can't believe that they don't have to put money in to qualify. We should track how many kids went on to postsecondary education; how many other family, etc. put in money; how did families change the way that they think about post secondary education since they never thought they had a chance; and analyze if an early childhood program contributed to that change.

Item 3. Review of Grant Opportunities and implications for the Council

Discussion (see Handout). Matrix of potential grant opportunities, some of which are still being debated in Congress. Group this summer began to plot where our current work fits when we cross walk it, looking at where the gaps are while starting early with this process. Brenda Harvey noted that what drove the meeting was a lot of arrows pointing at the same targets—now we are more focused. This is a systems infrastructure opportunity.

Item 4. LD 1069: Working Group to Study the Connections between Higher Education and Early Childhood Education: Alan Cobo-Lewis

Discussion: Council has been tasked to create a working group to look at the connections between higher ed and early childhood ed. Council reflected on its intended meetings of the University Presidents, which did not come to fruition over the summer.

Context: This came out of a bill but has huge pieces from parts of both Departments (DOE and DHHS). The workgroup must report back to the HHS committee on its findings, but Council members suggested addressing both HHS and Education committees. Also suggested that committee chairs be involved.

Early childhood professional development system of Higher Ed has been meeting bi-monthly for years. Will include Allyson Dean.

Alan Cobo-Lewis moved that the Council authorize its chairs to appoint members to working group immediately and make additional appointments once we have more information.

Peter Mills noted that “buried in this language is a desperate plea for information...” that will require staffing to do a lot of work.

Other member noted that USM Allyson Dean just received a grant to redo the Higher Ed Guide online through MRTQ. The Guide looks at each campus, for people looking for education. Question was posed: Are there other resources out there for university based child care: subsidized child care, Head Start?

Seth Berry noted that the core question behind the bill is the closure of facilities, but also the framing that was used in the press release when some child care centers were closed. Answer: university needs to focus on core mission of education, but then they cut early education. If this group is successful, relationships will be forged, new partnerships, new funding streams forged, so that statement can never be made again.

Action: Alan is point person and Judy will do the data work to review resources campus by campus, looking at available resources for higher ed and lab school type resource AND child care for students.

5. Accountability Team Reports (Discussion and Action Requested of Council)

- 1) Family Accountability Team: Jan Clarkin and Pam LaHaye

Jan. quiet summer. Handed out prioritization of goals to fit into new structure.

- 2) Health: Jane Weil and Susan Mackey-Andrews

Group identified three issues: Health Insurance (Ellie Goldberg, MCA, is monitoring); Title V priorities (will be monitored); and Home visiting. Discussion about home visiting and definition of universality—does mean every child in Maine, but what can we do to make sure that every child has best outcomes and that every baby has a medical home? How can families be helpful to one another...Family networks? What can we do to make sure that we get everybody better in parenting abilities---health and mental health? See handout.

Question posed about nutrition...WIC is a supplemental food program, not a complete nutrition program. Also have resources in Cooperative Extension and Farmer's Markets. Peter Lindsay noted that it was one reason why home visiting is important—as a comprehensive program that connects families to community resources. Commissioner Harvey asked for clarification about the medical home—as patient centered medical home or primary care? Maine care is supposed to do this. Karen Heck noted issue of screening of domestic violence in physicians.

3) Early Care and Education: Terri Petnov and Allyson Dean

See handout report. Report recommended splitting the state government role of Head Start Collaboration Director and State Child Care Administrator. Patti Woolley is assuming Carolyn Drugge's former role as Head Start Collaboration Director. OCFS is in process of interviewing new candidate for child care administrator.

Note: we have 30 NEW PreK programs, total of 160.

4) Community: Sheriff Todd Brackett and Peter Lindsay

Short report--Due to medical leave, the team cancelled two meetings. Our next step is to reconvene and use prioritization and new structure as a model

5) Statewide Accountability Team: Jim Clair and Karen Heck

Focusing on public education, first piece is Summit. Another piece is working to craft a consistent message that people will hear—using the Frameworks group, funded by Nellie Mae. There are very specific ways to get our message across rather than people putting up their habitual block. That is our leadership. Can we include ACES?

Also working with BRECI in its recommendation to create one entity that funnels everything out, working on 501c3. One specific nonprofit entity, funnels investments and endowments. (BRECI recommendation: "We recommend the establishment of a nonprofit, tax exempt, state-level entity that (a) enables partnerships to accept public and private funding, (b) conducts ongoing resource development, (c) provides grant making activities, (d) maintains a consistent bipartisan focus and (e) holds accountable the myriad levels of Maine's emergent early childhood system.")

LAST ISSUES

- Consensus vote to work with the new committee structure. Volunteers included: Heck for Communications; Berry, Strang-Burgess and Mills for Legislative.
- Health Team will meet this month.
- Announced: Step Up for Kids Events for second week of October. See website for locations and times.

Meeting dates for upcoming year:

Noon

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting Date: **October 19, 2009**, Columbus Hall, St. Paul's Center