**The Commission on Early Education and the Economy**

**Q3 2014 Meeting Minutes**

**June 24, 2014 9:00 AM – 11:30 AM Buena Vista, New Castle, DE**

**Attendees in bold:**

Members: **Paul Harrell**, Co-Chair, **Nick Marsini**, Co-Chair, Polly Mervine Adams, Bill Allan, Jeff Castellano,

**Ed Dulin**, Tara Elliott, Kim Fortunato, **Daryl Graham**, Matt Haley, Ellie Corbett Hannum, Lynne Howard, Jackie Ivy, Lynne Kokjohn, **Charlie McDowell, Casey Melson, Terry Murphy**, **Michael Rasmussen**, Steve Rose, Lisa Hastings-Sheppard, S. Renee Smith, **Halsey Spruance**, Jocelyn Stewart, Gary Stockbridge, Meredith Tweedie

Guests: **Mary Liz Biddle, Ed Freel, Jennifer Ranji, Dan Rich, Ranie Good**

**9:00 – 9:15 AM Welcome Nick Marsini, Commission Co-Chair**

Nick opened the meeting at 9:10 am and welcomed members

Introduced Terry Murphy, CEO of Bayhealth Medical Center, new member

Reiterated members’ role in advocacy and sustainability:

The Commission will serve as the state’s leading business advocate in support of state-level public investment in effective early learning programs. Members will actively lend their voice, influence and network to advocate for quality early learning.

Members will participate in at least one Delaware Stars site visit per year and take at least one action to educate elected officials about the value of early learning, the state’s early learning priorities, and their support for public investment in early learning.

Nick also briefed members on the May 7 Early Childhood Advocacy Day at Legislative Hall where – for the first time – Early Childhood advocates included a broader stakeholder group including parents, pre-k providers, kindergarten teachers and business/community leaders. This group led a rally on the steps of Legislative Hall, received proclamations in each chamber, and thanked governing officials for their continuing commitment to Early Childhood Education.

**9:15 – 10:00 AM Sustaining Delaware’s Dan Rich, University of Delaware**

**Early Childhood Priorities Ed Freel, University of Delaware**

Dan Rich shared a brief history of education in the US. He outlined how public education has grown by adding higher grade-levels in k-12, but not by adding pre-kindergarten grades where learning opportunities are foundational. Pre-k is historically haphazard and unconnected to k-12, but quality early childhood experiences provide the best opportunities for students to succeed in later learning.

In 2009 Delaware began to review education policy and how it affected young children in the early years of education. Findings included fragmented policy, nonexistent governance, and an inscrutable finance structure. Delaware responded by:

* Reconstituting the Early Childhood Council and the Interagency Resource Management Committee with the goal of establishing a quality early childhood system & implementation
* Reconfiguring Delaware Stars with financial incentives to have the largest positive impact
* Establishing tiered reimbursement against quality improvement in early childhood education

These actions and the creation of a Strategic Plan for Delaware’s Early Childhood System resulted in Delaware being awarded a federal early learning challenge grant. We’ve made significant strides forward, but there is still work to do and to sustain.

Ed Freel defined community-based advocacy and shared strategies and tips for effectively sharing messages with various audiences. Establishing clear messages, goals and projects around the successes and sustainable portions of the strategic plan is important. He also stressed the importance of building relationships consistently and for the long-term.

**10:00 – 10:20 AM Office of Early Learning Leadership Jennifer Ranji, Secretary**

**Delaware Children’s Department**

Sec. Ranji briefly joined the meeting to share plans for leadership continuity in the Office of Early Learning, and to communicate the state’s ongoing commitment to establishing a quality Early Childhood system. Harriet Dichter, Executive Director of the Office of Early Learning departed in June after achieving more in two years of the grant work than ever anticipated. These successes will be continued under new leadership that the state hopes to have in place this fall.

**10:20 – 10:30 AM BREAK**

**10:34 – 11:00 AM Exploring Constituencies Casey Melson, Commission Member**

**Ranie Good, OEL**

Casey and Ranie led members through a break out session providing Commission members with the opportunity to create their own advocacy work plan, timeline, and expectations. The exercise entailed identifying professional networks, governing officials and personal spheres of influence with which to share the importance of quality early learning in Delaware. Members also selected the message and advocacy outlet (phone call, letter, early childhood program visit, etc.) to construct a work plan. OEL staff and volunteer CEEE members will be on hand to assist with these individualized plans.

**11:00 – 11:20AM CEEE Member Sharing Paul Harrell, Co-Chair**

* Casey Melson – Early Learning Challenge Grantee meeting recap
* Halsey Spruance & Nick Marsini – PNC/DMNH Seeing Science Everywhere 5-year anniversary and nationwide web site launch ([www.pncgrowupgreat.com/lessoncenter](http://www.pncgrowupgreat.com/lessoncenter))
* May 7, Early Childhood Advocacy Day at Legislative Hall – see folder for article & photos. Broader stakeholder group than ever before representing educators, parents, business & community leaders.
* Ranie shared Ellie Hannum’s sample email to 100 legal colleagues. Found in packets, may be customized for other members’ networks.

**11:20 – 11:30 AM Upcoming Events Ranie Good, Commission Director**

* Tuesday, October 14, 2014 is the next meeting of the Commission on Early Education and the Economy. The meeting will be held in Dover, DE at the Governor’s office in the Tatnall building in Dover.
* Delaware Stars Early Childhood Program Tours – contact Ranie or she will contact you to schedule a tour of an early childhood program in your area.
* Fall 2014 – Office of Management and Budget hearings for the Office of Early Learning, Dept. of Health & Social Services, and the Department
* Nov. / Dec. 2014 – Invitation for CEEE members to present to the Kids Caucus

**11:41 AM Adjourn, Safe Travels Nick Marsini, Co-Chair**