



Delaware Early Childhood Council

DRAFT Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2019
10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Carvel Research & Education Center
16483 County Seat Highway
Georgetown, DE 19947

The mission of the DECC is to promote the development of a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system, birth to eight, which provides the highest quality services and environment for Delaware's children and their families.

DECC Voting Member Attendance: Debra Taylor, Office of Early Learning, Dr. Kim Krzanowski, Office of Early Learning; Cheryl Clendaniel, The Learning Center, Inc.; Madeleine Bayard, The Rodel Foundation; Carrette Monsanto, Sunshine Home Child Care; Heidi Beck, Head Start Association; Ed Freel, University of Delaware; Elizabeth Ritchie, DTCC; Leslie Newman, Children & Families First; Tanisha Merced, Department of Insurance; Meredith Seitz, DSCYF; Julie Johnson, Tender Loving Kare Child Care

Ex-Officio Member Attendance: Betty Gail Timm, Office of Child Care Licensing; Martha Buell, University of Delaware; Mary Moor, ECMHC/Division of Public Health

Additional Attendees: Tina Shockley, Office of Early Learning; John Fisher-Klein, Office of Early Learning; Christine Olley, Sussex Early Childhood Council; Christina Koutsourades, Office of Early Learning; Aisha Ferrell, Office of Early Learning; Michelle Spencer, DEAEYC; John Sheehan, Office of the Governor; Caitlin Gleason, Office of Early Learning; Christine Stoops, Parents As Teachers; Jeannette Short, Office of Early Learning; Kristy Sheffler, University of DE; Jacqueline Bensel, DHSS; Emily Cunningham, Department of Education Secretary's Office; Patricia Belle-Scruggs, Boys and Girls Club of Delaware; Toni Dickerson, Sussex Preschools; Kristy Handley, Brain Injury Association of DE; Dr. Amber Shelton, Office of Early Learning; Melissa Walter, PACTT Sussex Tech; Stephanie Wagner, Polytech Parents As Teachers; Cathy Lopez-Cooling, Children's House; Linda Zankowsky, Univ. of DE; Susan Campbell, Birth to Three Program DHSS; Michael Curry, Wilmington University; Casey Christophel, Primeros Pasos; Rita Hovermale, Department of Education; Catina McCray, DHSS/Purchase of Care; Cindy Gibbs, Wilmington Head Start; Nicole Kurz-McDowell, Caesar Rodney School District; Regina Sidney-Brown, Delaware Afterschool Network; Kristi Gamuciello, Lake Forest School District; Lisa Miller, DEAEYC; Lynn Kelley, Children & Families First; Debra Helman, Office of Child Care Licensing; Deborah Drain, University of Delaware; Molly Magarik, Department of Health and Social Services; Eunie Yoo, DEAEYC; Michelle Blankenship, Easterseals; Lisa Coldiron, Sussex Montessori Public Charter; Janette Henry;

Montessori Teachers Association of Delaware; Barbara Johnson, Delaware Readiness Teams; Andrea Prettyman, Children & Families First; Diane Frentzel, Delaware Readiness Teams; Audrey Carey, Indian River School District; Cindy Brown, Office of Early Learning; Dawn Alexander, Colonial School District; Veronica Commodore, University of DE; Melody Bush, DSCYF; Trisha Moses, Boys and Girls Club of Delaware; Ashley Davis, University of DE; Nanci Hersh, University of DE; Cheryl Doucette, PMG Counseling; Monique Martin, Department of Education; Peter Pizzolongo, Council of Chief State School Officers; Rolf Grafwallner, Council of Chief State School Officers

Welcome/Call to Order/Approve Minutes and Subcommittee Updates

Madeleine Bayard, DECC Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and welcomed everyone. The [minutes of the July 31, 2019](#) meeting were approved by Cheryl Clendaniel and Julie Johnson and passed unanimously. Subcommittee updates were sent out prior to the meeting. Julie Johnson of the Early Learning Programs and Workforce Subcommittee reminded everyone that plans are still underway for the Early Childhood Expo to be held April 21, potentially in Dover. Anyone interested in sponsoring or being involved should contact Julie Johnson.

Christine Olley of the Sussex Early Childhood Council provided an update on work their Council has underway. First, the number of partners they are partnering with has grown so they are able to work on more issues across the early learning spectrum. Secondly, Toni Dickerson has been doing some great work with the Sussex County Director's Group and it was noted that the New Castle county Director's Group is modeling their work after the Sussex County group. Thanks to Toni for her advocacy work. Lastly, SECC has been working with the Sussex County Health Coalition on the "Go Purple" Campaign, which is a grassroots community effort to come together to support substance abuse awareness. It is hoped that the whole state, not just Sussex County, will be going purple this year. You can show your support by attending the October 22 Sussex Early Childhood Council meeting and wearing purple clothing when you attend. Christine also proposed that everyone could show their support by wearing purple clothing at the November 13, 2019 DECC Meeting. She noted materials would be sent out to everyone regarding the [Delaware Goes Purple Campaign](#).

Leslie Newman, Chair of the Healthy Children and Families subcommittee noted that they are working on a campaign to engage parents to help them build better brains for their kids. Everyone is welcome to partner with her on this campaign. She suggested reaching out to Crystal Sherman or Debra Taylor to get involved. It was noted that a future meeting topic may be a report out on how this work is progressing.

Dr. Kim Krzanowski provided an update from the Office of Early Learning, which included a warm welcome to Dr. Amber Shelton. Dr. Shelton, who comes from Colonial School District, was hired to oversee the Delaware First and Parents As Teachers initiatives, as well as overseeing the DEAEYC contracts for the WAGE\$ and T.E.A.C.H. Programs. With this hire, the Office of Early Learning is now fully staffed.

John Fisher-Klein provided an update on the Delaware Stars Revision, noting that information sessions where public feedback was solicited on a set of [draft new standards](#). The draft new standard model is a hybrid system with building blocks at Star Levels one, two, and three, and points at Star Levels four and five. Each level emphasizes a different focus. At Star Level one, the focus is Health and Safety. At Star Level two, the focus is on Leadership and Administration. At Star Level three, the focus is on Environment. At Star Level four, the focus is on interactions. At Star Level five, the focus is on intentional teaching.

He noted that over 200 people came out to provide feedback, with the main discussion points at the information sessions being:

- The proposed ordering of the foci
- Items, beyond licensing regulations, that should be verified at Star Level one
- The identification of “leaders” in programs, and the supports necessary for that group
- The components of quality environments
- The supports needed for positive interactions and intentional teaching practices.

Next steps include working with centers, school age programs and family childcare committees to determine what portions of the new standards to keep, modify or cut. After that any additional new standards will be added in, and lastly there will be another round of information sessions to announce the new standards. It is anticipated that an update on the progress will be provided at the November 13, 2019 meeting.

Jon Sheehan of Governor Carney’s Office noted that work continues on the implementation of SB 187, which moves OCCL from DSCYF to DOE by July 1, 2020. State agencies have started meeting to discuss the various aspects of this change in early childhood governance (such as budget, policy, technology, space, human resources, etc.) He is excited that the Council of Chief State School Officers (Rolf Grafwallner) will be working with us, as he has done similar work in Maryland.

Questions from attendees included if the Office of Child Care Licensing will be placed within the Office of Early Learning . It has not been decided yet as several ideas are being explored. Input on this is welcomed. Also, it was asked if home visiting will be part of early childhood governance. It was noted that this is an issue on the table, but that it has not been decided if that will move yet. Funding source may need to be decided, staffing, billing, etc.

The main focus of this meeting was a presentation by Rolf Grafwallner who is Program Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers. He introduced himself and noted he has worked for CCSSO for three years following 23 years with the State of Maryland working on projects in early learning. He gave a presentation entitled, Governance – Making the Transition, which explained current trends in governance work nationally and how the state of Maryland made a similar transition.

Nationally, trends in governance typically include one of the following structuring:

- Create new state office as part of two state agencies
- Create new state agency that incorporate functions from two or more agencies

- Leave functions in existing agencies and create cross-agency leadership structure
- Consolidate functions in an existing state agency (most states did this, including MD)

As other states have done, he suggests that Delaware do the following when it comes to starting to look at governance and the changes that are needed:

- Make a case for it, rationale is sound (which Delaware has done)
- Identify problem to solve and goals to meet (which Delaware has done)
- Consolidate to solve problems and meet goals more efficiently
- Identify early childhood structure separate from K-12 system
- Develop Strategic Plan to follow the consolidation
- Involve stakeholders, including strong leadership to improve capacity and advance the

field

He highlighted elements of transitioning to a new governance, which establish an understanding and defining of functionality, including:

- Legitimacy
- Interdepartmental agreement
- Human Resources
- Administrative Processes
- Programming/monitoring (a.k.a Strategic Plan)
- Communications/marketing and branding

He noted that stakeholders, like the Delaware Early Childhood Council group, being involved is important to bringing people together to make this work.

In 2005-2006, the state of Maryland undertook a similar change in early learning governance structure. Case of Maryland and how we accomplished this 2005-2006. He explained how they utilized legitimacy, and interdepartmental agreements; how they addressed human resources and administrative processes; how they aligned programming and monitoring; and lastly how they communicated the change in governance structure through branding and internal communication.

A question and answer period followed his presentation. The following were some issues that were brought up:

Q: Did any of the states you worked with have strong partnerships between early learning and K-12 programs? There were only one or two states that had this, but most had a mixed services delivery system which allowed for stronger partnerships between the two to be established.

Q: Was there a transition of the states' professional development system? Yes, training, approving the trainer, registry of training options were all streamlined to be available to anyone. Then, professional development systems were expanded to bring in themes that needed to be added. There was also work with higher education to get training to be recognized.

Mr. Grafwallner noted that there were local issues such as how local districts were emulating how the state was functioning. Ultimately, they developed local early childhood councils which were helpful.

Q: Would Title I money be used for early childhood? Yes, this was done in many other states. Maryland received CCDBG and TANIF \$ and state Head Start money.

Q: How did Maryland brand this change in governance outside of the agency? They visited early childhood education programs and had the media there. They also worked with library services on early literacy in order to get to families. They produced materials that went out as well. In one of their final phases, they worked with the early childhood education community to get to families/parents to improve how they have access to services and to produce and push out major initiatives (one way was through the State Board of Education).

Mr. Grafwallner's Governance Presentation can be found [here](#).

Next, Caitlin Gleason gave a [presentation](#) on the Delaware Early Childhood Council's Strategic Plan (note this work is being funded by the Preschool Development Grant B-5). She and the EY Team are currently working on User Experience and Data Systems. Most recently the team conducted field research to gain feedback on what families are experiencing in early learning. She noted that the information is broken down by Family Insights, Professional Insights and System Insights.

Family insights were gathered following the first round of interviews (from August) with families. The team created activities to engage families (cards, I value statements, etc.) in order to get them to provide feedback on how they feel about their child's and families' early learning journey (birth to 5). Such feedback include real issues such as families experiencing high staff turnover, childcare hours not aligned to employment hours, finding childcare - especially care for special needs children.

Professional insights were also gathered and included issues with political, regulatory and administrative obstacles. It was noted that relationships between the professional caregiver and the child and their family is based on trust, support and flexibility. Also, poor compensation of early learning workforce takes its toll on caregivers, families and teachers. Ultimately, it was documented that more training is needed to support the issues families are bringing into early childcare today.

Systems insights consists of a review of feedback on various early learning systems. For example, lack of sufficient or supportive therapeutic and diagnostic services were found to be a major barrier to families with children with special needs. Also families experiencing poverty and trauma believed that interacting with the agencies that are supposed to help them was a burden. Also, families don't understand how Delaware Stars works.

A second round of interviews was conducted in parks and state service centers. There was a positive interaction with parents which garnered some great feedback.

Meanwhile Caitlin and others are continuing to encourage families to complete the PDG survey (in [English](#) or [Spanish](#)), and ask that families text @EARLYDE to 35134. Anyone wishing to provide further input can contact Caitlin Gleason at Caitlin.gleason@doe.k12.de.us.

Caitlin note that the next phase, which comes after the user assessments and data systems work is the actual development of the strategic plan. Future engagement opportunities for this group will be happening in the next few months. Also, there is time dedicated at the November 12 Vision Coalition meeting and at the December 18 meeting to work on the Strategic Plan.

Finally, Linda Zankowsky of the University of Delaware gave a brief update on the Montessori Teacher Residency Prep Program, and noted material was available for individuals to take. She spoke about the charter application for Sussex Montessori School (located on Stein Highway in Seaford). She announced that Lisa Coldiron is head of school. She is working on community engagement which will assist families in the school choice process as it relates to the Montessori option. She gave out the website (www.sussexmontessoricharter.com) for anyone who wants obtain more information. Also as part of her work at the University of Delaware, she is working to launch Montessori programs to be available elsewhere. She is available if anyone is interested in learning more about this.

Diane Frentzel noted that kindergarten registration kick off date is October 18 at the Dover Public Library. The Delaware Readiness Teams have updated all flyers to include new centers, checklists have been updated, and folders are being put together. She noted that this year books will be provided to children, along with extension activities. Diane also announced that March 27 and 28, 2020 is the Make a Difference Conference.

Chair Madeleine Bayard adjourned the meeting at 12:05PM.