



DELAWARE EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL

Meeting Notes

March 10, 2015

1:00p.m. to 3:00p.m.

Community Service Building – Room 109

100 West 10th Street (Building Address)

111 West 11th Street (Parking Garage)

Wilmington, DE 19801

Attendance: Madeleine Bayard, Janet Carter, Cheryl Clendaniel, Debbie Gottschalk, Mary Moor, Leslie Newman, Susan Perry-Manning, Gwen Sanders, Marcie Shahan, Judy Stang, Denise Stouffer, Verna Thompson & Jamie Walko

○ **Welcome and Approval of Minutes**

- Madeleine Bayard welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.
- Madeleine Bayard asked if there were any changes to the February 10, 2015 meeting minutes. No changes to the minutes were suggested.
- The April 14, 2015 Council meeting was cancelled and a new meeting will not be scheduled. Notice will go out within the next few days to everyone about the cancellation.
- The next meeting will be March 31st, 2015. After a short business meeting, the Council will adjourn so that members can participate in the focus group on sustainability, which will immediately follow the Council meeting.
- The May 6, 2015 meeting will be held at 9 am at the Dover Public Library in conjunction with advocacy day.

○ **Wilmington Education Advisory Committee – Discussion about Strengthening Wilmington Education: Interim Report**

- The group reviewed the recommendations of the Wilmington Education Advisory Committee, particularly the areas where early childhood is mentioned. The group discussed that many of the goals of WEAC align closely with Sustaining Early Success, the Council's 2013-18 strategic plan, including:
 - Aligned and effective early learning system
 - Support for children's healthy social-emotional development
 - Strengthened family, community, and school engagement in early learning
 - Strengthened governance, service integration and funding
 - Implementing continual improvement in state services
 - Mobilizing community partnerships and public commitment
- The group reviewed areas in the interim report that referred to early learning and the Council, including:
 1. Recent improvements in early childhood programs should be accelerated. The Early Childhood Council, Office of Early Learning, and Wilmington Early Childhood Council should **develop an early childhood community plan for Wilmington** that would provide access to high-quality early childhood programs and services for all children. This initiative should align with the state's already approved early childhood strategic plan.
 - **Group Comments**

1. It needs to be determined who will lead this work and who will be implementing the plan.
 2. Ensure this is aligned with many efforts underway.
 3. We need to look at resources that can potentially be leveraged and model from others districts that are currently doing it well.
2. The Advisory Committee endorses **the increased investment** needed and already anticipated to sustain and accelerate advances in early childhood learning and in workforce and college access.
- **Group Comments**
 1. We need to invest more in early childhood education.
 2. Resources should be focused on quality improvement and all early childhood learning and development services should be considered.
3. Addressing the unique needs of students in poverty and the challenges facing schools with concentrated poverty requires a **developmental approach** that focuses on the alignment of needed supports and services starting in early childhood (or prenatal care) and extending through entry into a career or higher education. Alignment of supports and services requires a strong partnership between the community and its schools. All sectors of the community should be mobilized.
- **Group Comments**
 1. This is aligned with the direction as the Council.
4. A key step will be the development of a **citywide partnership** that includes all providers (family and center-based), Early Head Start, Head Start, school districts, and higher education. This initiative should be supported actively by the Governor’s Commission on Early Education and the Economy, with the shared goal of working with providers to establish easily accessible and affordable high-quality services (including needed screenings and interventions to identify and address developmental needs) for all Wilmington children. This initiative should be coordinated with the existing Early Childhood Readiness Teams and should also include a formal partnership among early childhood providers and districts and charters serving Wilmington to facilitate the effective transition of children from early childhood to K–12 education.
- **Group Comments**
 1. We need to create some type of provider community/support groups with a clear focus.
 2. The providers are the feeder systems into the schools and they need to have more of a connection with K-12.
 3. There is a need for a special focus on Family Child Care.
 4. We need to assess the children before they go into kindergarten and find a way to empower child care providers.
 5. We need to work with the resources and groups we already have (leveraging existing resources).
 6. Early childhood efforts should be coordinated with evidence-based home visiting programs that provide services in the City of Wilmington.
 7. We should engage the representative for each district who represents early childhood.
 8. Parents need help to better support the social-emotional health of their children.
 9. We should explore connecting services to the actual school buildings.
 10. The Wilmington Early Care and Education Council will need resources to support this work.
5. The governor and state legislature should **mandate the IRMC to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for state and local services**, including partnerships with private and nonprofit institutions, which will create a community of support for low-income children and their families.
- **Group Comments:** The IRMC has an important governance role.

6. The Governor should **re-direct the Delaware P–20 Council, representing Pre-K through higher education, to recommend improvements in the alignment of resources and programs** to support student learning and development from birth through access to college and careers.
 - **Group Comments:** The group discussed the importance of the P-20 Council.
7. The governor should call upon the Council of Higher Education Presidents to create a coordinated and aligned partnership program to help **strengthen Wilmington education from early childhood through college access.**
 - **Group Comments:**
 1. Possibly allowing higher education students to do their student teaching in a community center so they will be able to get specific experience with child care centers and in urban settings
 2. Leveraging existing resources
8. The Wilmington Education Alliance, supported by the Office of Education and Public Policy, should play a leadership role in **strengthening parent engagement** in student learning, beginning in early childhood and extending through college and career choice.
 - **Council Response:** The group discussed ensuring there would be expertise in the Office.

The group discussed including an additional recommendation in their letter to WEAC: The Wilmington Education Improvement Commission (WEIC) should include a representative of early childhood education (from ECC or WECEC).

- **Next Steps from WEAC discussion**
 1. Madeleine will draft a letter.
 2. Madeleine will circulate draft to Council members for feedback. Feedback is requested within a 24-hour turnaround time.
 3. The final letter will be signed by Mary Kate Mouser and Madeleine Bayard.

Thank You and Wrap Up

- Madeleine Bayard thanked everyone for coming.
- Susan Perry Manning spoke about the 7 different focus groups that will be held with and for providers all over the State and encouraged participation at the Council-hosted meeting on March 31st as well as others.
- **Next Meeting - March 31, 2015**
Business meeting followed by Focus Group on Sustainability
Division of Developmental Disabilities Services – Fox Run Office
Large Conference/Training Room
2540 Wrangle Hill Road, Suite 200, Bear, DE 19701