

## NH Early Childhood Advisory Council

Friday, August 20, 2010

2 pm – 4 pm

Early Learning NH, Two Delta Drive

### *Meeting Summary*

---

#### In Attendance:

Ellen Wheatley	DHHS
Christina Durkee	NH DOE
Pat Cantor	NH CCAC/Plymouth State
Ruth Littlefield	NH DOE/ICC
Bridget Goodwin	NH DOE/Bureau Special Ed. (Guest)
Barbara Hemingway	Preschool Special Education/Dame School
Debra Nelson	DHHS/Head Start Collaboration Office
Lisa Strout	NHCCAC Secretary, NHAEYC
Elissa Margolin	Margolin Consulting
Jackie Cowell	Early Learning NH
Deirdre Dunn	ECCS
Tricia Tilley	Maternal and Child Health
Michelle Lewis	ICC
Julie McConnell	CCAC/NH Community Loan Fund
Charna Aversa	SCHS/NH ICC

#### Regrets:

Patty Bradley Ewen	NH DOE
Carolyn Stiles	DHHS/FC ESS
Jackie Sparks	NH ICC
Gerry Santilli	Head Start Directors Association
Katie Brissette	Early Learning NH

#### **Meeting Summary from July 16, 2010**

Julie McConnell highlighted key points from the last meeting, which she had facilitated. The July meeting summary was adopted.

#### **Agenda Review**

Elissa Margolin reviewed the meeting agenda, objectives, and action items. At the request of the Planning Committee, she clarified the role of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee has been charged to form the ECAC and serve as the interim ECAC until the official launch of the ECAC. In its final version, the ECAC may not include all of the current Steering Committee members. The Steering Committee members indicated their agreement with this understanding.

#### **Grant Submission Update and New Grant Opportunity**

Debra Nelson reported that she had just found out that NH will get the \$500,000 grant award. All obligations were met in our grant proposal. She congratulated the group for their efforts.

There is now an opportunity to apply for a supplemental grant for up to \$200,000 (from funds left over from states that did not apply for the first grant). The application is a simple process, but it is due on Tuesday, August 24. It requires a \$466,667 match. Maggie Bishop at DCYF and the Governor's Office have agreed to allow the ECAC to apply for the supplemental grant and to use the Child Development Bureau cost share funds as in-kind match, as in the original grant application.

Debra sought the group's feedback on what to include in the application for the supplemental grant. The first grant included four goals: strengthening NH's early childhood infrastructure via the activities of the ECAC; coordinating strategic planning for early childhood; creating a data and evaluation task force to evaluate the outcomes of the ECAC's work and create an early childhood data system; launching a public engagement and media campaign.

The biggest cost item is the data system, which ideally would bring together any data and information related to improving quality, via child and family outcomes. Debra asked the ECAC's permission to request that the supplemental funds go toward the data system. For example, the funds might be used to hire a consultant to work with the Data Task Force to develop the data system. Some funds would need to go to the state Office of Information Technology because the data systems reside in the state. There is \$100,000 set aside for data systems in the first grant; this \$200,000 would augment that. Debra pointed out that the Fund Development and Sustainability Task Force had discussed the possibility of extra funding and recommended it be used toward data systems.

Discussion ensued. Discussion points included: the focus of the data system; the role of the Data and Evaluation Task Force; quality review and evaluation of impacts and outcomes of early childhood supports and services; use of data to inform decision making; the need for legislation to integrate current systems; efficient use of consultants; the inherent expenses; and the potential constraints of a \$300,000 budget (\$300,000 might only be enough to lead to recommendations for a data system and not a data system itself).

A motion was made to have Debra put through the grant request for supplemental funding for data systems, but the use of this funding will be discussed again at the September meeting, after members have had a chance to review relevant materials. This motion was made with the understanding that the budget can be changed. The motion passed.

## **NH ECAC Model Selection**

### *Background*

Dee Dunn briefly described the context in which the three models sent via e-mail to the ECAC were developed. They arose from an April 2009 meeting that was part of a series of meetings devoted to Building Leadership for a Unified Early Childhood System. At these meetings, a wide group of stakeholders discussed the purpose and focus, as well as the structure and formation, of the Early Childhood Advisory Council. Many stakeholders were involved in the creation of these models.

### *Models*

Jackie Cowell then presented the three models. Some highlights:

- Model 1: ECAC is an independent body not part of a government office. This model assumes that the ECAC will be created through state legislation. The ECAC has a relationship with the Commissioners and division leaders from the DOE and DHHS. The ECAC has staffing. It does its work through public meetings and ad hoc committees. It serves as the "go-to" body for early childhood.
- Model 2: The ECAC sits in the Governor's Office. Existing Councils such as the ICC and CCAC continue to exist and subgroups of the ECAC.
- Model 3: The ECAC sits in DHHS and has relationships with other councils but they exist separately.

Jackie noted that Model 1 was the one recommended by the stakeholders at the April 2009 meeting.

We were reminded that today we would vote on a model but not on membership or numbers for the ECAC.

Discussion ensued. Discussion points included: Model 1 is most similar to where we are at now; appreciation for operating outside of state government; serving the mandates of other Councils, collaboration and/or mergers with other Councils; incorporation questions (quasi-governmental agency via statute/501c3); accessibility to available funding.

Elissa proposed a process for establishing criteria for the decision about models. Members listed these criteria:

- The ECAC must be the body that represents early childhood in NH, the “go-to” body.
- It must have the ability to access private and public funding (as a quasi-governmental agency).
- It should combine independence with the ability to influence relationships with government agencies.
- It must be able to carry out its designated functions according to the Head Start Reauthorization, and its structures and authority must support that ability.
- It must have staffing.
- It must have flexibility to take on future functions that the ECAC designates for itself (which might include ICC and/or CCAC functions).
- It must be able to respond in a timely fashion to current issues.
- It must include a broad range of stakeholders across disciplines and both horizontally and vertically.
- It must have the capacity to pursue its guiding mission and follow the guiding principles.
- It must be “sellable” to the powers that be—it must have influence.
- It must be sustainable.

The group agreed that Model 1 has the attributes that best meet these criteria. The ECAC must be independent from the Governor’s Office and state agencies, perhaps as a quasi-governmental agency or incorporated as a 501 C 3. We agreed to pursue this later. ACTION: Trish Tilley volunteered to learn more about quasi-governmental agencies.

### **ECAC Membership Process**

Michelle Lewis proposed a short-term Membership Task Force to determine who must be represented on the ECAC, by position. That group will also decide on the number of people who should sit on the ECAC and will make recommendations to the Steering Committee.

The goal is to ensure comprehensive membership while still being able to move effectively. The ECAC needs to be functional, open, and connected. The Membership Task Force was encouraged to look at models other states are using.

This task force will also consider such issues as whether officers will be elected or appointed and what kinds of officers there will be. There could also be discussion of how to involve people in the work of the ECAC.

The following Steering Committee members volunteered to serve on the Membership Task Force: Lisa Strout, Ellen Wheatley, Jackie Cowell, Dee Dunn, Christina Durkee (or Patty Ewen—so as to have a DOE rep), Chara Aversa, Debra Nelson, Julie McConnell, and perhaps Heather Brown (who was not at this meeting).

The Membership Task Force will meet before the next ECAC meeting on September 17. ACTION: Katie Brissette will schedule the meeting. The Task Force will use the September ECAC meeting to run some ideas by members and will have its recommendations ready for the October meeting.

Elissa brought up the official “launch date” of the ECAC. It was felt that January would be too soon, and that the new Director should be on board before the change over. No final date was decided, but March 2011 is a strong probability.

### **Early Childhood Summit**

Jackie distributed information about the February 24-25, 2011 event, currently entitled the Early Childhood Summit. Rob Grunewald of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis will be speaking at three events: a state legislative breakfast; a meeting of North Country partners involved in the Economic Development and Early Childhood Initiatives of the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation; and a Business and State Leader Summit on Early Childhood Investment on February 25 in Concord. Jackie asked for volunteers to help organize the Grunewald visit. Trish Tilley, Julie McConnell, Barbara Hemingway, and Lisa Strout (if possible) volunteered.

### **ECCS Survey**

Dee Dunn asked for volunteers to work on the ECCS Survey. The grant requires that three members of the ECAC be involved. Jackie Cowell and Charna Aversa volunteered and it was suggested that Carolyn Stiles would also be a good choice.

Dee also noted that Maternal and Child Health has a grant for \$600,000 for a needs assessment for Home Visiting. This must be done in collaboration with the ECAC.

### **Conclusion**

Pat Cantor observed that the members of the Steering Committee are being called on to engage in many activities and that it would benefit the group to figure out ways to involve people who do not necessarily attend the meetings, so that this group does not get overwhelmed with responsibilities.

Ellen Wheatley suggested that each meeting end with information about what the Communications Task Force can and should communicate. For this meeting, that information includes the news that NH has been awarded the \$500,000 grant for the ECAC.

**NEXT NH ECAC Meeting:** Friday, September 17th, 2 pm – 4 pm, Early Learning NH, Two Delta Drive, Concord