

NH Early Childhood Advisory Council

Friday, October 15, 2010

2 pm – 4 pm

Early Learning NH, Two Delta Drive

Meeting Summary

In Attendance:

Ellen Wheatley	DHHS
Heather Brown	Head Start PAC
Pat Cantor	NH CCAC/Plymouth State
Ruth Littlefield	NH DOE/ICC
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
Patty Bradley Ewen	NH DOE
Carolyn Stiles	DHHS/FC ESS
Gerry Santilli	Head Start Directors Association
Kim Kaiser (guest)	NCCIC T.A.

Regrets:

Toni Ellsworth	RISE for Children and Families
Deirdre Dunn	ECCS
Charna Aversa	ICC
Christina Durkee	NH DOE
Jackie Sparks	ICC

Welcome, Agenda Review, and September Meeting

Elissa Margolin welcomed the group, reviewed the agenda and meeting objectives, and highlighted some key points from the meeting summary of the September meeting. The meeting summary was adopted with no changes.

Director Search

Jackie Cowell asked members to review the latest draft job description for the ECAC Director. The job description was revised by the Planning Committee to incorporate feedback and suggestions offered by the Steering Committee at the September meeting. Carolyn Stiles moved to approve the revised job description. Ellen Wheatley seconded. The motion passed unanimously and the job description was approved.

The goal is to hire the Director to start in January 2011. The next steps in the hiring process are as follows:

- The Screening Task Force, consisting of Gerry Santilli, Carolyn Stiles, Julie McConnell, Trish Tilley, Barbara Hemingway, Deb Nelson, and Katie Brissette, will begin work right away to place ads, screen applications, and identify the pool of candidates for interviewing.
- The Interviewing Task Force, consisting of Ellen Wheatley, Jackie Cowell, Patty Ewen, Deb Nelson, and Pat Cantor, will begin meeting to develop interview questions. The first round of interviews of candidates will be done by the Task Force. The second round will involve the whole ECAC, perhaps at the December meeting. Maggie Bishop of DCYF will also be involved in the interviewing process in some way.
- **ACTION: Katie Brissette will convene meetings of the Screening and Interviewing Task Forces before the November Steering Committee meeting.**

All ECAC members were reminded that we must be completely confidential about who applies for this position.

Updates from Task Forces and Committees

Planning Committee (Jackie Cowell, Patty Ewen, Debra Nelson, Michelle Lewis, Dee Dunn, Pat Cantor and Katie Brissette): Patty Ewen reported that the Planning Committee meets to set the agenda for monthly ECAC meetings. The Planning Committee encourages input from ECAC members for agenda items. The Planning Committee will take on the responsibility for fiscal oversight until the Director comes on. The Committee will also start keeping minutes of its meetings.

Communications Committee (Michelle Lewis, Ellen Wheatley, Carolyn Stiles, Heather Brown, Katie Brissette): Michelle Lewis reported that the Communications Committee has two tasks at hand: Draft an announcement about the grant and prepare a two-page document explaining the work of the ECAC and progress to date. The Committee has not yet met. **ACTION: Michelle will work with Katie to set up a meeting.**

Fund Development Task Force (Jackie Cowell, Deb Nelson, Christina Durkee, Denise Littlefield, Ellen Wheatley, Heather Brown, Patty Ewen and Lisa Strout): Deb Nelson reported that this Task Force will stay active and focus on sustaining the work of the ECAC.

P-16 Task Force (Jackie Cowell, Deb Nelson, Patty Ewen, Ellen Wheatley, Dee Dunn, Pat Cantor): Jackie Cowell and Patty Ewen reported that the P-16 Task Force shared the recommendations from the ECAC regarding the integration of an early childhood perspective into the P-16 Goals with Deputy Commissioner of Education Paul Leather. He is representing the DOE on this. Paul has taken the ECAC input and incorporated some of it into the P-16 goals, but did not include our suggestion for a sixth goal focusing on early childhood. The P-16 Task Force is requesting a meeting with him to discuss the latest draft goals and talk about possibilities for additional revisions.

Membership and Governance Task Force (Lisa Strout, Carolyn Stiles, Ellen Wheatley, Jackie Cowell, Dee Dunn, Charna Aversa, Debra Nelson, Julie McConnell, Ruth Littlefield and

Heather Brown): Ruth Littlefield reported the Task Force has met three times to conceptualize a governance structure that is effective, inclusive, and sustainable. She described the process the Task Force followed, the resources consulted, research reviewed, and issues considered. She presented a draft model developed by the Task Force, which focuses on functions that the ECAC must fulfill.

In this model, which resembles a flower, the **Executive Committee** (at the center of the flower) would function like the current Planning Committee. The six petals represent the functions of the Council. The **Early Childhood Advisory Council**, also at the center of the flower, would comprise anywhere from 15-30 members.

Standing Committees (petals) and their areas of responsibility would include:

- **Investment Collaborative:** Financing, funding, sustainability, investors;
- **Professional Development:** Provider/practitioner support;
- **Research and Development:** Standards, monitoring, accountability; data and needs assessment; evaluation outcomes, and quality;
- **Communications:** Public awareness; website; family support.

Two additional petals represent the important functions of the ECAC to **Advise State Agencies** and **Advise the Governor and Legislature on Public Policy**.

The Membership and Governance Task Force (MGTF) is still working on: identifying the membership of the ECAC itself; standardizing guidance for each function and the people carrying out that function; exploring state councils in other states and their mandates; and considering the process for membership (elections and/or appointments).

They expect that all committees will be asked to follow a standard set of guiding principles and processes. Committees will have protocols to follow and there will be a framework for groups to work within. Each committee will have a chair who sits on the ECAC.

The MGTF believes that this model will enable the ECAC to bring in other voices and technical expertise beyond the 15-30 ECAC members. The MGTF is still trying to figure out how people on the committees can feel part of the ECAC without sitting on the ECAC.

The Task Force asked for questions, comments, and feedback on the draft model. They asked for the ECAC to give approval on the direction they're following.

Discussion ensued. ECAC members commended Ruth Littlefield's clear and thoughtful presentation and asked for copies of her notes to be used in presenting this model to others. The model was commended for being clear and easy to follow. It shows that people who want to join the work of the ECAC have a place within the model. It seems like a "communities of practice" model.

Members sought clarification about the "Advise State Agencies" function, because that function also listed the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) and the Child Care Advisory Council

(CCAC), along with “etc.” to represent other groups. It was asked whether there are actually two functions here. In addition to representing that the ECAC will advise state agencies, does this also suggest that the ICC and CCAC will be involved with the ECAC through this function? Or could ICC and CCAC be involved with the ECAC across other committees?

The ECAC strongly supported the idea that people from other groups and organizations be encouraged to join relevant subcommittees.

The MGTF was encouraged to include “Access” as a function of the ECAC.

The ECAC unanimously expressed confidence in the model and the direction that the MGTF is pursuing.

New Opportunities

Jackie Cowell reported on the Needs Assessment RFP that was briefly mentioned at the September meeting. The ECAC submitted a proposal to do a needs assessment through the Bureau of Developmental Services. Ultimately, UNH was awarded the \$10,000 grant. This process did provide an opportunity for ECAC to be in the public eye.

As a follow up, Carolyn Stiles asked the ECAC to provide feedback on what information would be useful to solicit through the needs assessment. She will send information to the ECAC regarding the areas of focus specified in the RFP.

Patty Ewen reported that the Striving Readers grant was submitted and decisions are expected next week.

“**Air Time**” has been added to the agenda to provide an opportunity for members to share information and discuss topics of mutual interest. Topics discussed during Air Time included:

- The need to advocate for using the term “child care” instead of “day care,” especially among policymakers. Ellen Wheatley and Patty Ewen brought this up because both feel strongly about the need to raise awareness of nomenclature issues and encourage others to talk about the distinction between child care and day care and the associations with each. Using “child care” brings children to mind, while using “day care” brings the calendar to mind. Members noted that this is a reminder of why language is important, and that education is needed for families and providers as well as policymakers.
- Michelle Lewis shared a copy of the new magazine from the Parent Information Center, “Parents Make the Difference.” Thirty thousand copies have been printed and are being distributed to schools, Family Resource Centers, and Head Start programs. It was suggested that these be sent to Resource and Referral Agencies as well. Michelle will bring more copies to the next meeting.

- Ellen asked if anyone had questions or concerns about the wait list. She explained that the Child Development Bureau is now releasing 50 children from the wait list each week. They have released 150 since October 1 and gained 50, for a net release of 100.) The list is now at 2,565. They will continue to release children for the next several months. She noted that the Child Care Advisory Council has requested the creation of a task force to develop messaging about the wait list release, in order to frame the issues effectively.
- Jackie Cowell noted that the NH Children’s Advocacy Network (NH CAN) has adopted eliminating the wait list and restoring realistic child care assistance. The NH CAN Summit will be held on November 9.
- Trish Tilley noted that the Leah Organization and other health groups have put forth a moratorium on pesticide use at child care programs and schools as a CAN priority.

Elissa asked the group as to whether to continue to incorporate Air Time in the agenda; all agreed.

Communications Directives

It was reiterated that the Communications Task Force has two tasks at hand: developing an announcement of the grant and creating a two-page document regarding the work of the ECAC.

The Steering Committee then had a lengthy discussion regarding the process for sharing information about the draft model for the ECAC, following a request that Ruth give the same presentation at the next ICC meeting.

Ultimately, it was agreed that this model can be shared under the following conditions:

- Ruth’s notes will be used as talking points and the model will only be shared at the same time as the talking points.
- The model will be clearly identified as a draft, and will be dated.
- The model will not be disseminated publicly. Drafts may be distributed at meetings for participants to look at, but must be collected again at the end of the meeting. Preferably, a large diagram will be used, as at today’s meeting.
- The model must be presented by someone from the Steering Committee.
- The presentation should be framed as an update on the current process, rather than as a presentation on the model.
- It should be emphasized that the number of members of the ECAC is not yet known and a member list has not yet been developed.

The Steering Committee also discussed the pros and cons of providing a series of questions to guide feedback after the presentation. Simply asking, “What do you think?” seemed to be the most widely accepted way of requesting feedback.

It was agreed, after much discussion, that Ruth Littlefield will present this model and update on the current process to the ICC, in the same way as today. The model may also be presented to the CCAC, the Parent Advisory Council, the Head Start Directors Association, and the Early Childhood team of the Department of Education. In each case, the conditions agreed on above should be followed.

Conclusion

The meeting ended with a quick review of action steps to follow. Elissa noted that we had achieved both of our meeting objectives.