

## **Early Childhood Advisory Council/**

**October 20, 2016**

### **MINUTES**

#### **Handouts Associated with the Meeting:**

- Governor's Executive Workforce Board Workgroup Topics
- Governor's Executive Workforce Board: Future of Ohio's Workforce Discussion
  - ODH Proposed Food Rules: 3701-21-02.3 and 3717-1-02.4
- Every Student Succeeds Act, Early Childhood Provisions summary
- Every Student Succeeds ECAC Group Discussion Questions
  - Publicly Funded Child Care Rate Change & Impact
  - Possible areas for ECAC Recommendations

**In Attendance:** Valerie Alloy, Anita Armstrong, Todd Barnhouse, Michael Batchelder, Kara Bertke-Wente, Day Chesney, Joni Close, Rebekah Dorman, Tess Elshoff, Wendy Grove, Kimberly Hauck, Asyia Haile, Margaret Hulbert, Shancie Jenkins, Karen Lampe, Robyn Lightcap, Susan Peet, Angel Rhodes, Stephanie Siddens, Yolanda Talley

**Absent:** Stephanie Wright Byrd, Marcia Egbert, Barbara Haxton, Lowell Howard, Judy Romano, Debe Terhar

**Facilitator:** Jacqueline Romer-Sensky

**Guests:** Laura DiCola, Scott Hasselman, Eric Karolak, Devon Keithley, Katie Kelly, Wendy Patton, Dee Smith

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve: Susan Peet; Second: Todd Barnhouse; Unanimous approval.

#### **Preparing Children for the Workforce**

*Ryan Burgess, Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation*

Director Burgess provided ECAC members with a brief history of the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation and the Executive Workforce Board. The Office works with a myriad of partners and programs focusing on three priorities:

1. Assisting people with maximizing their talents to obtain jobs and pursue careers
2. Helping businesses thrive to create a vibrant economy
3. Ensuring Ohioans can compete in the global economy as a skilled and productive workforce

The Office of Workforce Transformation is strongly pursuing its priorities to ensure the financial security of Ohioans by obtaining a full-time, year-round job. It was shared that just 2.4% of people working full-time, full-year remain in poverty. This compares to a poverty rate of 14% of those who do not work full time or year round, and 32% of those with no job. These statistics underscore the need to help Ohioans be employed.

In determining a workforce strategy, technological changes that greatly impact the labor market and associated occupations must be considered. Projections show many occupations could be computerized in the foreseeable future. The velocity of change also means many current grade-school students will have jobs that do not exist today. Ohio has finalized an "in-demand occupation list" to drive workforce development strategy. Strategic initiatives include:

- Increase the number of adults with high school diplomas or equivalents,
- Promoting Apprenticeship Programs, and

- Finding ways to prepare and continuously re-train Ohioans of all ages to prepare for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

The Executive Workforce Board has established five workgroups, one being a Pre-kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade work group to develop budget-neutral recommendations on strategies that will help prepare children in this age group for jobs of the future. Director Burgess asked ECAC members for thoughts around strategies for Pre-k through 5<sup>th</sup> grade children. ECAC members may also share any insights beyond today's discussion with workgroup members.

There was significant discussion around workforce issues for the current workforce. In regard to the request for feedback on Pre-kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade strategies, members identified:

- Early childhood standards are designed to help children learn "soft skills" and social and emotional development. The standards for K-3 must focus on retaining the growth of early childhood.
- A member shared that an average student leaves a state university with \$70-80,000 in debt. Teacher and early childhood position wages mean paying off this debt will take decades. Student debt + wage levels can become a barrier to getting a degree in early childhood. Providing high-quality professional development for early childhood professionals who do not have a degree is crucial to employing high-skilled employees. Those employees are necessary to develop the kinds of future skills the Executive Workforce Board is seeking from today's children.
- The push for developing creativity skills means students are being taught radically different today versus a decade ago. Training people in creative, problem-solving approaches promotes change.
- While considering the velocity of change, the demographics of change must also be taken into consideration. In the early childhood space, the demographics of the workforce and the children require customized approaches and an understanding of the culture of poverty.
- A Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) evaluation being done in Stark County, including focus groups with low-income Ohioans, provided significant insights regarding how to move people to jobs that support their families. These findings will be shared for the Office's consideration.
- Members discussed the constraints of federal funding. If the federal government demonstrated interest in a combined return on investment for federal investments in child care, health care and food security programs, the federal funding model could be adjusted to better serve the current and future workforce.
- Some studies have examined cliffs in public assistance programs. Ohio has removed the child care cliff, but others may need attention.

Finally, ECAC members were invited to visit [OhioMeansJobs.com](http://OhioMeansJobs.com) to review resources and tools for Ohio's workforce.

### **Proposed ODH Food Rules**

*Shancie Jenkins*

The ECAC discussed a proposed Food Handler Rule that is now under active discussion. The rule remains in proposal format and have not been reviewed by the Lt. Governor's Common Sense Initiative or submitted to the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review.

If the rule was approved as proposed, any individual within a child care center who touches, prepares or serves food will be required to undergo a new level of training. At a stakeholder meeting yesterday, it was discussed that child care providers and school districts should be exempted from these proposed

rules. The draft language continues through the process. Members can contact Sydney King in the Lt. Governor's Office to voice opinions.

Another rule impacting child care providers becomes effective in March 2017. Rule 3717-1-02.4 requires at least one person in charge per facility (not per shift) to obtain level two certification in food protection. The rule applies to risk level III and IV facilities as defined in OAC 3701-21-2.3.

#### Member Discussion

- Members were reminded that the proposed food handler rule remains in process, with no final decision regarding the proposed child care/school district program exemption.
- A member shared concerns that many child care providers may not know of the 2017 rule and that a new, two-day training for a senior person could prove burdensome to small businesses. ODJFS and ODJFS committed to sending out an e-mail notification to all providers to help with awareness

#### ODJFS Updates

*Kara Bertke-Wente*

- \$2 million in SUTQ Mini Grants (Step Up To Quality)

The awarding of \$2 million in SUTQ Mini Grants provided an opportunity for non-profits to secure grants with a maximum individual award of \$200,000 in Child Care Development Fund quality funds to help providers move up in quality by providing service and technical assistance for SUTQ outreach, recruiting, CDA credentials and licensing and compliance support. These funds were previously used for Quality Achievement Awards (QAAs). 14 entities submitted proposals. Ten proposals, providing statewide coverage, were awarded grants. Eight of the awardees will provide support in all four potential service areas. Awardees are:

- |                                   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Early Childhood Resource Center | • Starting Point            |
| • 4C for Children                 | • Action for Children       |
| • InfoLine, Inc.                  | • Sidney Shelby County YMCA |
| • Child Care Resources Center     | • YWCA of Northwest of Ohio |
| • YMCA of Greater Dayton          | • C.O.A.D.                  |

- Quality Achievement Awards (QAA) Follow Up

One-time QAA payments to 385 providers were distributed this week. Programs who had applied to be a 3,4 or 5 star prior to the QAA deadline remain in the queue. It's expected that approximately 100 more providers will receive one-time, QAA payment following SUTQ determination.

- Curricula Supports

Creative Curriculums Teaching Strategies Gold and High Scope have been selected by ODJFS to provide curricula, child assessments, and training to help eligible providers move up in quality at no charge. Funds for this initiative were previously used for QAAs. Providers have received notice of the new curricula support. An initial "Frequently Asked Question" document has been generated. To date, 127 providers have requested the curricula, and 67 have been processed. The 67 providers are serving 3,000 children who will now receive curricula-enriched programming.

#### Member Discussion

- Curricula are provided by age-cohort served. (Infant, Toddler, Preschool).
- A member shared that providers were very excited that the State is paying for curricula to help mitigate the loss of QAA funds. Unfortunately, many providers who lost QAA are not eligible for the free curricula support at this time. If a provider already has purchased a curricula set, the State is

not now paying for another set. ODJFS is keeping lists of providers who requested an additional set or a newer version. If funding allows, ODJFS may revisit paying for these additional supports.

- Other members pointed out that the new rate increases now mitigate the lost QAA, and the goal of the quality funds is to bring new providers up into the higher quality ratings.
- It was clarified that all providers, even those who previously purchased the curricula, may receive a subscription for individual child assessments for children enrolled in PFCC.
- Given current data constraints, the State cannot obtain accurate counts of the total number of private-pay children attending SUTQ programs. As more data is obtained, providing assessment subscriptions for private-pay children can be reviewed again.

- **Lead Poisoning Assessments**

ODJFS is working closely with sister State agencies to share pertinent information to providers. ODH has prepared an information sheet to help programs operating in targeted zip codes explain how families can obtain lead tests for their children. ODJFS will be distributing this information to providers.

#### Member Discussion

- A member asked what the follow-up will be when a child's lead level is high. ODH will help link families to Medicaid for treatment and appropriate services, like Help Me Grow, for example. Invest in Children can share its comprehensive approach with ODH to review.
- Discussion also centered on how to test homes for lead contamination and how to remediate contaminated homes. This would also apply to home-based providers.
- ECAC members and the State agencies agreed that a more comprehensive presentation on lead poisoning issues will be scheduled at a future agenda. Information can also be found at the following link: <https://www.odh.ohio.gov/-/media/ODH/ASSETS/Files/eh/lead-poisoning---children/2014/Updated-Brochures-Forms/BloodLeadTestingRequirementsandZipCodes.pdf?la=en>
- **Online Module Professional Development Update**

The state launched on-line training modules this week. In week one, 361 individuals completed the course on Quality, and 204 finished the module on Child Development. Initial registrations for the courses were also strong, 2,964 for Quality and 2,681 for Child Development.

- **SUTQ Update**

August to September saw a net gain of 26 programs serving PFCC children enroll in SUTQ programs. The program will be tracked closely to see if the rate increase, the mini-grants, and the curricula supports impact future SUTQ provider participation.

#### **Every Student Succeeds Act**

*Dr. Stephanie Siddens, Dr. Wendy Grove*

ECAC members reviewed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Early Childhood Provisions Summary (See Handout). ESSA replaces the No Child Left Behind Act. Potential federal grant opportunities associated with ESSA have still not been clarified. ECAC members will be updated when grant information becomes available.

The State must submit a plan to the federal government addressing the ten "Titles" of the new federal law. The state plan must also address how local schools should use these resources, with opportunities for early childhood in most sections of the law. The Ohio Department of Education has hosted regional stakeholder forums to gain input for State planning. ECAC members worked through a series of questions to add their insights to planning. Major discussion points are captured below.

1. How can Ohio better utilize early childhood education as a driver of overall school improvement?
  - a. Consider how to revive the “Ready Schools” initiative to secure improvement. It provides a solid framework for partnership.
  - b. Encourage discussions of a more comprehensive child development approach to K-3 practices. It would also be helpful to encourage more in-depth cross-walks between how K-3 and early childhood administrators regard child development approaches. Program and school/curricula administrators need enhanced relationships and knowledge.
  - c. “First School” is focused on African American, Latino and low-income populations and could also be a helpful tool in this discussion.
  - d. The issue is not new ideas; the issue is having current ideas generate larger impact. Consider how to take available approaches to scale.
  - e. Consider how to galvanize protective factors within this conversation.
  - a. Early childhood is trying to encourage creative thinking. When children enter kindergarten, they too often encounter frontal thinking. Consider how to keep the focus on creative thinking as children enter elementary school.
2. What are the key leverage points where early childhood education can assist Ohio in addressing issues such as improved literacy education (Third grade reading guarantee) and reducing achievement gaps?
  - a. The longitudinal data that is being collected needs to be utilized to provide more feedback to early childhood providers. Allowing early childhood providers to track how their students do in K-3 grades would be a powerful driver for program improvement.
  - b. How do we continually reinforce for parents the need to read to their child, promote creative thinking, be engaged with their child and move away from video games?
  - c. If funding can serve children beginning at birth, consider the home visiting fit.
  - d. Review previously generated Third Grade Reading Recommendations for some solid ideas.
  - e. There is a nexus opportunity for parent engagement pilots, libraries, and other areas where families naturally engage. Often, sharing working models is more important than providing funding.
  - f. The system needs to be in better alignment with engagement, assessment, curricula. The systems approach similar functions in different ways.
3. What tools can Ohio provide to districts to help them make decisions regarding allocating resources to early childhood programs and services?
  - a. The data is very important to drive change. Without compelling data, there will be no strong case for change in investment or focus.
  - b. Districts have historically been reluctant to redirect current investments to early childhood priorities. Even when district officials know funding is flexible, which most do, it is allocated. District officials are reluctant to redirect current funding in a zero-sum allocation. They are reluctant to pull funds away from something else that is also a priority. On a district-by-district level, officials must be won over to investing differently.
  - c. ODE promotion of funding flexibility is very important. Share that Title I funds could be used to take ECE slots to full-day slots. Promote this as a viable, pragmatic option. Share dosage information that helps make the compelling case for full-day Pre-K. A Tulsa, Oklahoma study may be helpful. Members suspect the currently available studies may be inconclusive.
4. Ohio has three existing measures of accountability related to third grade reading (Third Grade Reading Guarantee promotion rate, Third Grade Reading Indicator, K-3 Literacy Measure). Are there

better options for accountability measures for grades K-3? Incentives that would encourage additional focus on early childhood outcomes?

- a. Members inquired if “accountability” implies repercussions or implications based on results. ODE should consider how to hold districts accountable when they do not coordinate with local pre-K or early childhood programs on data exchanges, training, etc. All too often, these coordination plans are on paper, but are not being implemented.
  - b. All districts must have baseline information regarding the child’s readiness for kindergarten at kindergarten entrance. This baseline information puts the Third Grade Reading Results into perspective and, potentially, drives change.
  - c. Parents should know more to make informed choices. Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) data should be publicized and on the district report card. Accountability to the public is foundational. The KRA on the district report card will raise its profile and spark better relationships/coordination between early childhood and K-3.
  - d. The early childhood field initiating school district discussion rarely works. The school districts must be the initiator. Past success was driven by ODE directives or incentive grants/funds.
  - e. Application for joint grants via required collaboration can be effective. A caution to this approach is ensuring the relationship is genuine and workable on a daily basis.
  - f. Kindergarten Readiness Coalitions often feature early childhood programs from neighboring communities due to student enrollment patterns. A Kindergarten Readiness Coalition provides a forum to review data and develop improvement strategies jointly. A forum helps identify the primary early childhood feeder programs by school. Some coalitions want access to State data to begin outreach to the families of projected students very early in their lives.
  - g. Parent supplied information about a child’s previous experiences can be collected at kindergarten enrollment. This can be matched with KRA results as a starting point. This encourages districts to reach out to the programs that attract their students.
5. What opportunities exist to address ensuring that PK-3 students, especially high-needs students, have equitable access to effective educators?
  6. How can Ohio improve data collection, analysis, and reporting on early childhood programs and services?

Given time constraints, members were asked to forward additional thoughts on the questions discussed or the two questions remaining to Stephanie or Wendy directly.

### **General Updates**

*Dr. Angel Rhodes*

Given the two PFCC rate increase over the past year, preliminary data was shared showing current PFCC payment rates in Categories B, C, and D in relationship to the 2014 Market Rate Study Percentile (See Handout). Categories are based on how counties were characterized by 2008 market place rate clusters.

The Market Rate Percentile reflects information obtained from a provider survey asking what current providers customarily charge for child care. This survey requests the provider’s full, customary fee for non-state funded children, not a sliding scale rate or a PFCC rate. The information is charted and broken into percentiles. For example, a 60<sup>th</sup> percentile means that 60% of providers’ full fee are at or below this rate and 40% of providers’ full fee are at or above this rate.

The data is in for the 2016 Market Rate Survey, but the overall 2016 Market Rate Study is not final. Once the 2016 Market Rate Study is completed, the rate comparison chart will be updated.

Four potential future discussion areas for ECAC were shared to begin the thought process.

1. How do we get families to choose quality options that are available?
2. How do we increase weekly attendance rates in child care?
3. How do we ensure our programs effectively incorporate and promote career awareness in children as early as ages birth to age 5?
4. How do we ensure our programs effectively incorporate drug prevention into their classroom practices or family engagement activities?

A sub-committee was formed to explore proposals. Todd Barnhouse, Day Chesney, Margaret Hulbert, Karen Lampe, and Robyn Lightcap volunteered to participate. Kara Bertke-Wente will Chair.

#### Member Discussion

- Members noted that significant progress is being made.
- It was noted that school-age rates may require attention.
- A member noted the challenge of using 2008 county categorizations given how markets have changed in some places.
- Starting in December, all licensed provider will be required to share customary rates. The ongoing availability of this data will eliminate the need for a provider survey when conducting the next Market Rate Study. Once implemented, this rule change will require an amendment to the State's CCDF Plan. Discussion of a federal plan amendment will be on a future ECAC Agenda.
- It would be helpful to know the number of PFCC children served by category and age.
- One member requested a future discussion about the ratio between the base rate and the incentive rate components of the total PFCC rate stating that there is currently a large financial loss for providers who engage in an activity that leads to losing quality stars.

#### General Announcements

Cuyahoga County submitted a proposal for the federal Pay for Success Grant and thanked ODE for its support and partnership with the proposal. Rebekah Dorman will keep us posted on the status of the application.

#### Next meeting

The ECAC next meets on November 17, 2016 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at OCCRRA.