



Combined Council Meeting

Date: November 21, 2023

Attendees

Council members present: Peter Kang, Starkesha Rogers, Megan Schulz.

Agenda

1. Review Group agreements.
2. Introduction of Guest Panelist.

a. Transportation Services for Early Childhood Education in Rockford Public Schools:

Panelist discussed transportation services for students in the context of early childhood education in Rockford Public Schools. She clarified that transportation is not mandatory, but can be provided with adequate funding. She further explained that specialized transportation services are required for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), and that students in K-12 can use public mass transportation for free with a school ID. The panelist also shared that Rockford Public Schools has contracted with outside vendors for transportation services. Additionally, she mentioned that transportation to daycare providers can be arranged, provided the daycare personnel can handle the child's transportation.

b. Transportation Needs of Diverse Student Groups:

The team discussed the transportation needs of different student groups, including those with special needs and homeless students. Teresa clarified that specialized transportation for students with an IP must be specified in the IEP, and homeless students or those involved with DCFS might qualify for transportation services under the McKinney Vento Act or the Every Student Succeeds Act. Panelist also highlighted a worker shortage in transportation providers, which is causing challenges. The possibility of using funds from a specific grant to cover transportation costs for preschoolers was raised, but explained that it could be complex due to different funding sources for preschool and K-12 education.

c. Extended Early Childhood Programs for Working Families:

Panelist and other participants discussed the need for extended early childhood programs in the community to cater to the needs of working families. They highlighted the challenges faced by families who have to juggle multiple drop-offs and pick-ups at different locations. Panelist shared that the Illinois State Board of Education provides grant funding to early childhood programs and outlined the priorities for full-day programming, which includes students who are homeless, have an IEP, are in foster care, or whose family income is at or below 50% of the Federal poverty level. The discussion also touched upon additional risk factors that could influence a child's eligibility for full-day programming.



Before next workgroup...

- Council member will send an email to connect people for a potential volunteer driver program for veterans to Region 4 staff.