

## NOTES

### **Region 32 Action Council Meeting**

**Location: Virtual Only**

**Date & Time: April 6, 2023, 9:00-11:00 am**

**Members Present:** Cindy Luzeniecki, Carolyn Short, Chrissy Nojd, Theodis Pace, Mary Self, Rebecca Kroiss, Rosemary Pistorius, Cindi Schimmelpfennig, Jim Duggan, Erin Goldenstein, Amanda Chorak, Sheree Sykes, Rachel LaGesse

**Members Absent:** Christine Johnston, Amanda Parks, Pamela Powell, Marquita Cox, Rita Armstrong, Newcomb Mowrer, Holly Knupp, Rhonda Showers, Lovice Brinkman, Rebecca Graham, Rhonda Pence

**9:00: Welcome, Permission to Record, Community Agreements, and Meeting Norms**

- Liz welcomed Action Council members and permission to record was granted.
- Rachel LaGesse, guest for Riverside Hospital, was introduced to the Action Council.

**9:10: Springfield Trip**

- Liz explained her recent trip to Springfield where she spoke to the Illinois General Assembly's Early Childhood Committee about pre-K deserts.
  - Kankakee and Iroquois Counties were well represented in her presentation with letters from Carolyn Short, Jim Duggan, and two parents from our Counties.
  - Liz was able to speak with all three of our local Senators during her time in Springfield about our current work.

**9:15: Review Workforce and Summarize Findings**

- Workforce data was reviewed from the previous month's meeting.
  - "How can we glamorize child care positions?" as it is "just not babysitting but taking care of our prized possessions."
  - Recommendations: CDA data, more bilingual staff, and diverse visual representation.

**9:35: Regional Scan Questions and Data: Parents/Caregivers/Families**

- Liz presented quotes that were shared at Family Council meetings.
  - Data on Foster children and INTACT families is needed (we do not have quotes from these populations).

- “How can we educate the parents to raise our children instead of pushing it into the communities – it should be in our homes.”
- We need to focus on school readiness, which begins at birth. A priority for younger children needs to be made.
- There is a lack of knowledge in our area of funds available and the community needs to utilize these funds.
- We have a limited family voice and hope to expand the family voice in future months.
- Demographic Data Quotes were shared:
  - The Federal Poverty Level was discussed in detail.
    - A member shared a parent’s testimony that she received a raise but lost CCAP assistance, so she did not take the promotion because she could not risk losing her support from the State.
- Child Care Parent Focus Group meeting information was shared with the Council.
  - Quality and Transportation were key issues in Early Education and Care:
    - Testimony was shared by a parent who could not afford the \$90/ month extra for the only pre-K in her area and “now my kid just sits in front of the tv all day.” (Iroquois County)
    - “I may not send to pre-K and just send to Kindergarten because there is no transportation.” (Iroquois)
      - Parents are wanting:
        - Iroquois County - more Child Care centers and Early Intervention services.
        - Kankakee County– center for special needs, trauma, more free options, evening / overnight Child Care, bilingual options, better awareness of programs, more parent education on milestones, and socialization for parents.
- Child Care Staff Focus Group meeting information was shared with the Council.
  - More staff is needed, and the current staff is feeling overwhelmed.

**10:15: Recommendations: Region 32**

- Liz challenged the Action Council to think about their own role and influence. How can we make this Utopia list of what is needed in our area and prioritize the needs?
  - Spanish- speaking population needs an outreach program and more representation.

- We need to target High School students with information on ECEC and offer internships or credit hours for students wanting to go into ECEC (especially smaller communities, ex. Momence).
- Partner with local businesses in implementing programs.
- Promote and remove the “stigma” of Early Education and Care.
- IRIS system – all our schools need to be using this referral system program.
- More space is needed for programs and services in both Counties.
  - To meet the needs of students, Bourbonnais School District would like a “designated building for ten classrooms, gross motor space, meeting and screening space, and a conference room.”
- Continued funding for ECACE and sustainability for ECACE.
- New verbiage for ECEC workforce job titles.
- More staff and better pay.
  - “When our employees are getting free lunches for their own children then we have a problem.”
- Parenting classes.
  - Birth to Three: “If you get it right during this time frame then you don’t have to worry about school readiness.”

**10:55: Regional Scan Update**

- The Action Council approved Land Acknowledgement, FPL chart, Family Quotes, and Local Collaboration sections.

**11:00: Family Council Update**

- Kennilyn gave an update on Family Council, more specifically thanking them for their honest voices and input.

**11:05: Adjourn**

**Next Meetings: April 20<sup>th</sup>, 9:00-11:00am  
\*Virtual Only**

**May 4<sup>th</sup>, 9:00-11:00am  
KCC NEC & Virtual**