



## NOTES

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

**Date & Time: March 2, 2023, 9:00-11:00 am**

Members Present: Cindy Luzeniecki, Cindi Schimmelpfennig, Newcomb Mowrer, Erin Goldenstein, Rita Armstrong, Amanda Chorak, Marquita Cox, Rosemary Pistorius, Sheree Sykes, Rhonda Showers, James Duggan, Chrissy Nojd, Rebecca Kroiss

Members Absent: Amanda Parks, Lovice Brinkman, Christine Johnston, Pamela Powell, Rebecca Graham, Carolyn Short, Mary Self, Rhonda Pence, Holly Knupp, Theodis Pace

#### **9:03: Welcome, Permission to Record**

- Permission to record was approved.

#### **Community Agreements and Meeting Norms**

- Liz reminded the Council about our website, Google Folder, and meeting norms.

#### **9:05: Liz's Springfield Trip**

- Liz talked about her Springfield trip with the Birth to Five Illinois State Team.
  - Spoke with Senator Bennett, Senator Joyce, and Representative Bunting about our Action/Family Council and Regional Scan.
  - Springfield Birth to Five team pushed into the Health & Human Services, and Elementary & Secondary Education sessions.
  - All Officials are excited to see the Regional Scan and potentially meet in the future and/or attend meetings.

#### **9:08: Updated Schedule**

- Updated the Council on new dates for meetings as the Regional Scan's due date approaches.
- Workforce
  - A brief conversation was had on the Workforce with passion. "We can't service kids without space and staff." "If this is the most important age, why is it last on the list for school districts?"
  - Gov. Pritzker's 4-year plan, Smart Start, was discussed.

- Shortage of staff and students going into Early Childhood was talked about “Without the scholarship, they wouldn’t have been back at school.”
- Staff/Teachers will need training/support in trauma, and the foster care system, DCFS (and getting support for DCFS to be more accountable). “Lack of competency in connections - doesn’t seem like a priority for people who are working with kids in the school.”

**9:08: Review Priority Populations and Summarize Findings**

- Priority Populations should be present in every data point.
- Looked at Homeless students, IEP students, and LEP students last meeting.
  - Challenge in getting current data for these numbers.
  - Homeless definition is broad - many families are choosing to live with families, so a more definite homeless definition is needed.
  - IEP numbers seem low and there will be an increase with post-Covid.
  - LEP numbers also seem low and should increase post-Covid.
  - Our biggest Priority Populations with the highest needs include Black or African American, Caucasian, and Hispanic populations.
- Recommendations:
  - Birth to Five Illinois to create a data share agreement with school districts so that we can attain current data because it is updated nightly and will provide more accurate numbers.
  - Incentives for more speech therapists and financial support for those furthering their education.
  - “There is talk of requiring a PT or OT to have a Doctorate degree. This is going to greatly reduce the workforce, at least for Early Intervention.”
  - Changing the verbiage for mental health used with families could potentially help families attain those services in the community.
  - Support, communication, and urgency in getting children ready for school. “If you’re not ready for kindergarten, you only have a 12% chance of starting college.” “We are underestimating the first 5 years of life.”

- Emphasis on providing awareness to families beginning at birth.

**9:45: Early Childhood Education and Care Programs**

- Discussion on the number of children cared for by families is more than providers because of cost, trust, and fear of Covid.
- A surprising amount of licensed-exempt family care providers are accepting CCAP, more than provider locations.
- The number of children receiving EI Services has doubled, “The number of referrals is out of control.”
  - Families are wanting face to face services and there are not enough providers, or are selective in their services. “Families want face-to-face, and some providers are only virtual.” “Not necessarily a lack of task force, but the operations of our services are limited” (ex. Not paid mileage and if families do not open the door the providers do not get paid).
- IRIS System is recommended which allows entities to communicate with one another (connecting families to the services needed).
- Data shows the number of sites and capacity by child care type seems closer.
- Data was shared with the number of Sites / Slots
  - There is the capacity for more students but there is not enough staff for some locations.
  - Space and workforce directly affect how programs can be implemented.
  - Missing Early Head Start and Pre-School for All in Family Child Care numbers.
  - “Half Day programs are not getting kids ready for Kindergarten.”
  - “Starting at 3 years old is too late.”
- Data from Child Care Centers and Migrant Head Start was shared.
  - “Iroquois is a child care desert.”
- CCAP Data shared.
  - A question was asked if local employers have child care centers on-site. What would that be like?
  - The need for quality centers for higher education clinicals are needed.

**10:20:**

**Take-Aways or Utopias**

- Center and services are needed in Iroquois County.
- Referral increase in Early Intervention and how we need to be prepared for the services that will be needed from children/families.
- Mileage needs to be included with service providers.
- “Our system is kind of like a “plugging the dike system.” We keep adding more support because the need of families keeps growing and we never look at “Can we fix the dike?”
- Be more proactive before the delays. “We don’t support people until they have problems.” “We are always putting out fires in our State.”
- “We need to look at our programs holistically.”
- “We know different now” and have tools available in a common place for families.
- Every new parent should receive healthy visits - all parents.
- “Statement of value” is needed in our State; having home visits for everyone is normal so there is not a stigma.
- “Goal is family” equipping and supporting families.
- Connect with Obstetric doctors, pediatricians, doulas, etc. to get resources to new mothers.
- An apprenticeship program where students can get their education paid for in exchange for x - number of years of service.
- Funding for Early Childhood Centers specifically for school districts.

**10:50:**

**Next Meeting- Workforce**

- Levels of education behind workforce, demographic background, etc.

**10:50:**

**Family Council Updates (FACE- Kennilyn Hickory)**

- Kennilyn updated the Action Council on the Family Council.

**10:55:**

**Focus Group Updates**

- Liz updated the Action Council on upcoming Focus Groups.

**11:00**

**Adjourn**

**Next Meetings:**

**March 23, 2023  
9:00-11:00am  
Virtual Only**

**April 6, 2023  
9:00-11:00am  
KCC NEC & Virtual**