



MEETING NOTES

Region 13 Action Council Meeting

Location: 644 North Second Street, Suite 6, Breese IL 62230

Date & Time: February 16th, 2023, 12:30-2:30 pm

Council Members present: Kara Boozer, Tranae Brockhouse, Jennifer Clark, Ashley Griffin, Christy Jean, Jessica Palazzolo, Jill Wardlow

Council Members absent: Emma Conway, Crystal Donoho, Shirley Gordon, Makyla Hargrave, Mary Hart, April Higgins, Maria Koehler, Deborah Lewis, BreeAnna Pelcynski

12:30 Welcome, Introductions, Ice Breaker & Community Agreements (9 mins)

Notes:

- Birth to Five Staff: Heather Pruettt – Regional Council Manager, Brittany Lemons – Family & Community Engagement Specialist, Jessica Chin – Administrative Support
- Members: Kara Boozer – Youth development educator at the University of Illinois Extension, Tranae Brockhouse – Director of Project Child and Child Care Resource and Referral Office at Rend Lake College, Jennifer Clark – Owner of Clark Academy School, Ashley Griffin – Director of Ivy League Day School, Christy Jean – Director of Rend Lake College Children’s Center, Jessica Palazzolo – Manager at Lincoln Prairie Behavioral Health Center, Jill Wardlow – Program Director for the Regional Office of Education Preschool for All
- Members introduced themselves and talked about their favorite or most unique thing on their desk or office.
- Community Agreements for an effective meeting space were reviewed.

12:39 Family Council Updates (6 mins)

Notes:

- Brittany reviewed updates from the Family Council.
- Shared the feedback from the Family Council on the proposed question from the last meeting.

Decisions made:

- The Action Council can continue to pose questions or request information from the Family Council to continue working side by side.

12:45 Priority Populations Update/Review (8 mins)

Notes:

- Reviewed the Regional Scan and what was captured during our last meeting.
- Shared feedback from Child and Family Connections (CFC) on the proposed question from the last meeting.

Next Steps:

- Email Heather if any additional information should be added to the Regional Scan about Priority Populations.

12:53 Early Childhood Education and Care Program Review & Discussion (1 hour 26 mins)

Notes:

- Presented Region 13's Early Childhood Education and Care Program data and asset map.
- Gave a brief overview of the Early Childhood Education and Care Program sites in Region 13 and discussed their slot capacity.
- Tranae discussed the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).
- "Many of our families who get help paying for their child care do not select a licensed home or center. They are using a family, friend, neighbor, or relative because they have odd-hour care, have infants, or there are no slots available."
- "One thing we find hard to navigate sometimes dealing with multiple programs is that the way we communicate with them is different. There are differences in the way the offices are run. It makes it difficult for someone to assist families."
- Jill discussed Preschool for All (PFA).
- "The issues with the workforce in facilities have been challenging this year. We have cycled through many different hires. School districts will take them, they will find something that pays better because our grant has not increased, and we are not competitive. With that comes the subbing issue. I have subbed so much this year. We are constantly subbing in classrooms because there is nobody available."
- "We regularly see that parents with job changes or promotions have to pull their children out of school mid-year because they can't handle the transportation to and from any longer. It is really hard for families. This is a huge problem they face. They would love to participate in these great programs but it (the barrier) is the transportation."
- Reviewed other Early Childhood Education and Care Programs in our region.
 - Head Start
 - Early Head Start

- Preschool for All Expansion
- Prevention Initiative
- Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV)
- Early Intervention
- Early Childhood Special Education

Decisions made:

- The application process is lengthy for families that are trying to apply for assistance. This can cause delays in payments. Fortunately, families only need to do this application yearly instead of every 6 months.
- The barrier that we see in our programs is transportation, especially for our half-day sites. We have a lot of working parents that have no way to get their child to or from the half-day.
- The Regional Office of Education 13 Early Childhood Collaboration plans on creating an Early Childhood Education and Care Program Fair in all 4 counties of our region.
- Families might not try to seek out assistance because:
 - They think they do not qualify
 - Fearful to apply
 - Fear of being denied
 - Process is overwhelming
 - They do not want to share their personal information

2:19 Meeting 6 Preview, Review Training Opportunities, Closing Comments (7 mins)

Notes:

- The next Action Council meeting will include Early Childhood Education and Care Programs and Workforce.
- On-demand foundational trainings were shared.
- Discussed focus groups and interviews and requested members to send the consent form to anyone they believe would like to share their experiences.

Decisions made:

- The Action Council decided that getting information from Early Childhood Navigators would be helpful during our Workforce discussion.

Next Steps:

- Our next meeting will be March 9th at 12:30pm.