



## MEETING NOTES

### Region 13 Action Council Meeting

**Date & Time: April 20, 2023, 12:30pm-2:30pm**

Council Members present: Kara Boozer, Tranae Brockhouse, Jennifer Clark, Emma Conway, Shirley Gordon, Ashley Griffin, Mary Hart, Jessica Palazzolo, BreeAnna Pelcynski, Jill Wardlow

Council Members absent: Crystal Donoho, Makyla Hargrave, April Higgins, Christy Jean, Maria Koehler, Deborah Lewis

#### **12:30 Welcome, Introductions, Ice Breaker & Community Agreements (8 mins)**

Notes:

- Birth to Five Staff: Heather Pruettt – Regional Council Manager, 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, Emma Conway – PreK Teacher at Germantown Elementary, Shirley Gordon – Elect Lady at Southtown Apostolic Church, Ashley Griffin – Director of Ivy League Day School, Mary Hart – Parent/Family Member, Jessica Palazzolo – Manager at Lincoln Prairie Behavioral Health Center, BreeAnna Pelcynski – Special Education Teacher in Nashville, Jill Wardlow – Program Director for the Regional Office of Education Preschool for All
- Members introduced themselves and talked about their favorite teacher.
- Community Agreements for an effective meeting space were reviewed.

#### **12:38 Family Council Updates (2 mins)**

Notes:

- Heather reviewed updates from the Family Council's meeting on workforce and parents and caregivers.
- We will compare and contrast the strengths, needs, and recommendations of both Councils.

## **12:40 Regional Needs Assessment Review – Parents, Caregivers, and Families (12 mins)**

Notes:

- Heather shared what was captured from our Parents, Caregivers, and Families discussion.

Decisions made:

- The Action Council agreed to add a need to the Regional Needs Assessment.
  - Expand speech services from birth to three to birth to five outside of the school district.

Next Steps:

- Email Heather if any additional information should be added to the Regional Needs Assessment.

## **12:52 Regional Strengths (13 mins)**

Notes:

- The Council discussed the strengths that Region 13 has in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).
- “When someone walks into a program and they do not necessarily meet their needs, they are going to try to connect them with someone that does the best that they can. I think that’s a huge strength and show the hearts and the people who are in this field.”
- “We do have a better understanding of a community and know that it requires us to work together, know where resources are, and know the people. We are more community-based, and that helps a lot to make people feel more comfortable and feel like they trust where they’re at.”

Decisions Made:

- The main strength that Region 13 has is that we know the community and work together to help solve issues parents, caregivers, or families have.
- We currently have great preschool spots for kids that have transportation during the day.
- We have programs and centers that exist in our counties but not necessarily to the level that would make things easy for families.

## **1:05 Regional Needs (1 hour 11 mins)**

Notes:

- Heather shared a Jam Board activity to help prioritize each category of needs collected in Council meetings, Focus Groups, and interviews.
- The Action Council combined and clarified any needs that we currently had, added needs, and selected the top three needs in each category.

## Decisions Made:

- Programming and Slots
  1. Funded transportation to and from publicly funded ECEC programs.
  2. Adding additional slots for Full Day Preschool programming in the way of Preschool For All, Preschool For All-Expansion, or Head Start while also adding before/after school care programs for wrap-around service.
  3. Adding Birth to Three Home Visiting services through Prevention Initiative or Early Head Start across all found counties in the Region.
- Mental Health and Behavioral Health
  1. Improving access to high-quality family counseling and mental health services in all four counties.
  2. Incorporating on-site Mental Health services and supports for both students and staff, while also providing professional development and training for teachers and staff on Mental and Behavioral health.
  3. Expanding locally available behavioral support and services for children under the age of five across the Region.
- Family and Community Supports and Services
  1. Growing and developing the newly recognized Early Childhood Collaboration to become a central organization navigation system for families and providers, while developing shared values and buy-in from community partners and organizations.
  2. Increase or expand community services to be more local and easier to access in every county in the Region.
  3. Develop an easier way for families to navigate the enrollment processes and applications for programs and services.
- Workforce
  1. Increase wages and/or benefits for ECEC staff and workforce.
  2. Enticing more people to enter the ECEC field by increasing pathways to certification/credentialing, increasing the “Grow Your Own” partnerships with local colleges, adding Dual Credit opportunities in Early Education and Child Development in local high schools, and changing the narrative surrounding the ECEC field.
  3. Increase longevity and reduce turnover in the current workforce by creating better working conditions, supplying additional professional development and training, and providing resources and support for teachers and staff in the field.

## Next Steps:

- Jessica will send out the list of needs that were developed. Each Action Council member should email Jessica back with their top five needs that should be our recommendations.

## **2:16 Meeting 10 Preview – Recommendations, Review Next Steps, Closing Comments (10 mins)**

### Notes:

- Heather shared the information on the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) Request for Proposals (RFP).
- The next Action Council meeting will include recommendations, Regional Needs Assessment, dissemination plan, and summer plans for the Councils.
- On-demand foundational trainings were shared.

### Decisions Made:

- The Birth to Five Illinois Regional Team is available to provide technical assistance throughout the RFP grant writing and application process.

### Next Steps:

- Our next meeting will be May 11th at 12:30pm.