



MEETING NOTES

Region 56 Action Council Meeting

Location: 201 E Jefferson, Joliet, IL 60432

Date & Time: December 14, 2022, 11:00am-1:00pm

Council Members present: Amy Martin, Sherry Coe, Ellise Boy-Johnson, Elizabeth Kaufman, Kathy Fudge-White, Debrah Clark, Stephanie Budziak, Sandifer Thomas

Virtual Attendance: Amy Loy, Paula Kennedy

Council Members not in attendance: Hassan Von Schlegell, Stephanie Thompson, Cherita Tousson-Bowens

Welcome, Introductions, and Social Event

Notes: After welcoming, snacks, and Photo Release Waiver, Region 56 Team introduced themselves individually. Region 56 asked Action Council members to introduce themselves, brief backgrounds, and reasons for joining the council. The Action Council Members were asked to mention one thing that excites them about Early Childhood Education and Care. The members all answered individually.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Community Agreements

Notes: Community Agreements were reviewed, brainstormed together for our Region 56 Community Agreements.

Decisions Made: Action Council Members agreed on a few. The agreements were cell phone on vibrate, step out to take a phone call, use “I” statements, move up / move back, assume good intent, but accept responsibility for the impact, saying “ouch” when words hurt, mindful of body language, listen to understand, and name to stay, lessons leave.

Next Steps: Madalyn will provide a board of Community Agreements for next meeting.

Updates:

Notes: Keven started off with updates with Family Council, Events / Outreach, Elected Officials, ISBE Report, and Focus Groups.

Family Council: Our first Family Council Meeting was scheduled for December 15th, 2022. There are currently eight interested, and five attending. The Family Council will meet every second Thursday at 5:00pm-7:00pm every month. Many different families



are represented on the council, and all families have children under the age of eight years old, as well as some children with special needs. Interest forms are closing soon. It was expressed that if there are any families that may be still interested, that they would need them to fill out the form soon.

Region 56 requested that Action Council may have a connection / network to families, and to see if they are interested to joining the Family Council as well.

ISBE: ISBE Report information was conveyed to the Action Council. A question was provided to be answered and brainstormed within the council: What are the needs of our region? ISBE asked to identify our highest areas of need. Discussion was brought to the table, and inquires were addressed such as:

- Some areas are having a hard time finding care in general. Areas are traveling into other larger areas to have / find care.
- Some areas are in high demand / need of staff. In need of money for staff, and COLA raises are not nearly enough.
- The idea that there are statewide qualified applicants who are not applying.
- The notion that the standards are too high for education/qualifications for teachers and the pay is too low.
- It was mentioned that centers have a hard time finding and keeping staff due to not being able to offer benefits / summers off / higher pay like school districts are. Some teachers are not longer interested in working in the classroom anymore.
- Members mentioned that there needs to be more funding to continue, and it needs to be written into legislation.
- An Action Council Member mentioned that there are not enough slots for children in our areas, and there are not nearly enough slots for children specifically for early intervention.
- It was mentioned that it is hard for working parents to find full day childcare / blended care.
- Members mentioned that there are more people in need of childcare assistance then those who qualify and the timing to approve the childcare assistance is a slow process.
- An Action Council member also mentioned that caring for children with disabilities has become more difficult.

Focus Groups: Focus Group updates and information was shared with the Action Council.



- Information was shared to the council that Region 56 has our first connection with the Spanish Community Center and Grandparents caring for Grandchildren.
- Spanish Community Center Focus Groups start in January.
- Region 56 asked the Action Council Members to brainstorm who is not here and who we can add to our Focus Groups and Interviews.
- Action Council Members will tap into their own network and communities.
- More information will be sent to our Action Council Members on Focus Groups.

Events: Action Council Members were asked to share some community and outreach events with region 56 to attend. Two events were shared:

- Cookies with Santa – Peotone
- Christmas Concert – Joliet

Elected Officials: The Region 56 team shared the connection with elected officials to the Action Council Members. Region 56 connected with three elected officials thus far. Region 56 asked the Action Council Members if they have any elected officials' connections to share with the region as well. Region 56 connected with:

- Congresswoman Lauren Underwood
- Senator Meg Loughran Cappel
- Senator Rachel Ventura

Region 56 requested that the elected officials also attend an Action Council Meeting as well.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding Report

Notes: Region 56 presented on the key findings about the current system. Explanation of Illinois underspending on early childhood education and care and having three agencies that cause confusion and undermines equity. Explanation of the parent and providers ongoing conflicting information.

Information on our current funding system presented. Explanation on how the funding system can be more equitable and streamlined and asked the council members on how we can get there with how challenging it could be due to all our areas of different funding. Discussion amongst council members continued.



Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Data Review

Notes: Data review was presented. Topics that the state has asked region 56 to cover were shared. It was explained that next meeting the Action Council Members and Region 56 will discuss the demographics and regional overview.

Handouts were given to each Action Council Member and housed in our shared google docs folder along with resources to share.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: N/A

Open for Additional Questions

Notes: Questions that were asked:

- How can we include all of Will County, when asking about Family Council, Focus Groups, and Interviews?
- Can we get different providers from different areas to come and talk about their experiences?
- Can we have the state senators come in to talk?
- Can we have Family Council information?

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Answers will be provided in follow up email as well as answered in next Action Council Meeting.

Meeting Schedule Discussion

Notes: Region 56 asked the Action Council Members to solidify the next Action Council Meeting date, time, and location.

Action Council verified the next date.

Decisions made: The next meeting date will be Wednesday, January 18th, 2023, from 11:00am-1:00pm at the location of 2455 Glenwood, Joliet, IL 60435.

Next Steps: An email invite will be sent out to all members.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 18th, 2023 – 11:00am-1:00pm

Location: 2455 Glenwood, Joliet, IL 60435



Follow-up/Next Steps: N/A