



## MEETING NOTES

### Region 24 Action Council Meeting

**Location:** Hybrid- 1304 Sunset Ave. Suite B, Yorkville, IL

**Date & Time:** March 15, 2023, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Council Members present: Glenda Love, Genny Haggard, Ann Marie Kuta, Jessica Kubiak, Nancy Beal, Corey Mehnert, Michelle Polivka, Jami Mast

Council Members Absent: Melissa Vargas,

#### **11:00 am: Welcome & Introductions (5 Minutes)**

#### **11:05 am: Meeting #7 Follow-Up (20 Minutes)**

Notes: Followed up with council members to wrap up previous discussions from the last council meeting.

Items addressed:

- Plan for the release of the Regional Scan into the community and how the council members will be involved.
- Questions or comments from the previous meeting regarding the Kendall County 2-1-1 presentation or Early Childhood Programs information.

#### **11:35 am: Workforce Intro Video (30 Minutes)**

Notes: Council members watched the training video on Workforce in Early Childhood Education on Illinois Action for Children's website.

#### **11:55 am: Early Childhood Education Workforce Presentation (1 hr.)**

Notes: Regional Council Manager facilitated a discussion by asking the following questions:

- What is the Region's early childhood education and care workforce landscape?
- What initiatives exist within the region to support/recruit providers?
- What higher education, high school, or training programs are available for early childhood educators?
- How diverse is the ECEC workforce and is the workforce representative of the communities they serve?
- What would a truly representative ECEC workforce look like for your Region?
- What does the data tell us about what our region might need in the future?

Some highlights from this discussion are as follows:

- Regarding existing initiatives to support/recruit providers:
  - All the initiatives are really making a difference within the local school district. Five out of twenty of their paraprofessionals are working towards their ECE

degree. This is the most this school has ever had in school at the same time. These initiatives are making it possible for them to go to school since paraprofessionals do not typically get paid well.

- When bonuses went out, they excluded home-visiting professionals even though they are required to have the same credentials as ECE educators. It is crucial to recognize home visiting as an important part of the industry.
- The roll-out of these initiatives is not done well. Many people don't even know they exist. There were 2300 people in ECE programs at local colleges, but less than 10% received the ECACE scholarship. This is due to a lack of awareness and the requirements being so rigid that it excludes a lot of people. The roll-out of initiatives needs to be more intensive, intentional, and accessible.
- It is difficult to support teachers to prevent burnout or to retain them because of the amount of data-collecting teachers must do and too high of ratios.
- Education is still very segregated. It is heavily female- dominated, with many being Black females.
- There are very few males in the ECEC field. We need to find a way to promote both genders in the field so men feel more included. We also need to shift our thinking as a society about men working with young children. Many times people are not wanting to hire men due to stereotypes associated with men and children.
- The data is telling us our Region needs more funding, more affordable education, and confronting our own biases through honest, hard conversations.
- More funding is needed to increase teacher salaries and recruit more teachers to provide additional coverage inside classrooms to lower ratios.

### **12:55 pm: Council Planning (5 mins)**

The council members discussed the next meeting's topic and possible expectations and outcomes that should be brought to the meeting for in- depth discussion.

### **Next Meeting:**

Date- April 5, 2023

Time- 11:00 am-1:00 pm