



MEETING NOTES

Region 1 Action Council Meeting

Location: ZOOM meeting

Date & Time: October 24, 2023 3:00pm – 4:15pm

Council Members present: Brooke Walker, Carol Harlow, Katie Janssen, Shelly Sheffler, Tina Combs, April Darringer.

3:02pm: Meeting begins with welcome, community agreements, and icebreaker activity:

Bridget acknowledges that some people have had some scheduling issues, and a survey will be coming out to determine if we need to make some changes, and possibly have three or four meetings instead of just two so that everyone has the best opportunity to contribute and attend.

3:10 pm: Review of Recommendations to Date.

Recommendations:

- Action plan is due to DHS in early February.
- They want to see what we are planning to do and what steps we are going to take. We will choose 2-3 recommendations and will evaluate us based on our ability to achieve these goals. We want to make sure we aren't biting off more than we can chew and make sure the goals we set are attainable and realistic.

Goal 1: Support the formation of three new collaborations or subcommittees of current working groups in Region 1 that are specific to ECEC systems by **June 30, 2024.**

- Reminder in January we will be looking at mental health services needs assessment with groups/interviews - this may make this deadline difficult to achieve.
- No one opposes a change to **December 30, 2024.**
- We will reevaluate our action items from the Jamboard activity from the October 10 meeting and change them into SMART goals in November.

News that might impact our work/recommendations/timeline: Governor announced an Early Childhood focused state agency to combine departments currently housed under three separate state departments: ISBE, DHS, and DCFS.

3:18 pm: Recommendation #2

Recommendation #2 was voted by the group- increased birth to 3 services. This has three potential working goals from the Regional Needs Assessment.

- Maximize publicly available funds to establish more programs and services. Increase the use of PI and EHS FUNDS.
- Expand child care slots for infants/toddlers in home and center based settings.
- Identify collaborations between private providers/community based organizations and public funding opportunities.
- Increase the number of evening and weekend home visiting hours for working parents/caregivers.

Consensus Building Activity: Bridget shares the Jamboard and asks everyone to create sticky notes with numbers and drag them under the ones you view as priority number 1 and priority number 2. [Consensus Building Activity](#)

Discussion regarding efforts to “open slots”

- Question about relating this to the new bill to all children with DCFS cases eligible for EI services. Spirit of bill is that any trauma can set any area of development back and they are looking at the whole child. Conversation turns to workforce realities that prohibit these best practices from being carried out.
- Everyone wants to prioritize that but we don't have enough workers for the need now. Those who are in DCFS care are supposed to be prioritized in child care, too. Just because that is said doesn't mean the center has openings to provide. Hoping there is something to boost the workforce for EI to provide those services and we should certainly consider this.
- There aren't slots to be made aware of. We can't tell parents about new slots because there aren't any. WCCC efforts to open slots has tried to go to each county for an evening informational meeting for home providers or anyone who is interested in taking care of children but had to cancel in Cass County because not enough people showed up.
- Another area to address is the process of moving from license-exempt to licensed. Each time someone requests the license packet, there are resources to help them through the process. This could also increase slots
- Some Birth to Five Regions report DCFS licensing reps are providing licensing info sessions that are open to the public to understand that process. Potential to combine the two things and see if the licensing reps in our area are willing or already doing that? Maybe Councils could provide support in this area?
- FC also has a WCCC staff member - possibility for her to help facilitate these efforts with FC members. We can write that into the Action Plan.
- PACT Head Start is looking at opening up center based EHS in Quincy.
- Region 1 staff were contacted by two women in Cass County who are interested in addressing this issue.
- Virginia School District has expressed some interest in expanding slots for 0-3. No specifics available at this time.
- There are some ways we can look at slots where they don't currently exist but we need to be mindful of how difficult it is on the licensing side.
- JWCC is interested in hosting some sort of community based education course on the JWCC calendar that could be in relation to finding out family childcare, how to start, and create a

pipeline for child care working closely with WCCC then maybe they will take some classes. It's a long term plan and goal but that's an option for us to look at as well.

3:42: SMART Goal Discussion

Goal: Within one year, facilitate in collaboration with CCR&R and higher ed events to educate prospective providers on licensing requirements in designated areas of highest need within Region 1.

Goal action planning activity: The goal was entered into Jamboard for feedback about who will be responsible? What steps must be taken? How will we know when the goal is achieved? How long does you think this will take? [Goal Planning Activity](#)

Subsequent workforce discussion to support human resources pipeline:

- Western School District has high school students come into view classrooms at her school as prospective teachers.
- Mendon Unity doesn't have it yet, but they have a program where HS students can come be a general ed assistant, but not specific to EC.
- CCR&R' can speak in high schools.
- Confirmed 18 is legal age to be eligible for DCFS licensing

4:00pm: Updates

- We are making headway in Scott County. We have 10 people who want to hear more about potential collaboration in Scott County. We have a Zoom meeting and don't feel pressure to attend if that is not your SDA but we want to extend that invitation. It is Nov. 9th at 4pm. We will discuss our work, findings, and propose to the group that they complete a Community Survey.
- Brown County is sending a collaboration formal recognition.
- Cass County
 - We have two women wanting to start a center in Beardstown that are mobilizing a collaboration there. We may replicate a Community Survey suggestion to them, as well.
 - Interest from Virginia School district to support the ECEC landscape. They have one center that is struggling and she sees it as a huge loss if it has to close and are looking at ways to use public funding and expand their 0-5 offerings - possibly through a public private partnership.
- Faith based organizations: If you have connections please help us connect. We didn't get to them in Year One and we are wanting to hear from them when we look at slots.
- Resource Guide: happening and underway with initial focus on Morgan and Scott Counties. Current efforts being undertaken by Region 1 staff with assistance from Council members.

4:05pm: Upcoming Meetings - November 14 is next meeting, but keep an eye out for an alternate meeting time based on Council survey feedback

4:08pm: Announcements

- Budget hearings coming up on 10.30 for ISBE.
- El Town Hall Meetings will be 11.9.23.
- Council Resources:

- Media Release Form.
- Google Drive Folder.
- Optional On-Demand Trainings.

4:15pm: Meeting Ends.