



Action Council All Member Meeting

Date: February 21, 2024 1:00pm

Attendees

In person: Sarah K, Ashley, Pam. Zoom: Roberta, Jenine, Lou Ann, Linn.

Agenda

1. Purpose of Meeting
2. Group agreements
3. Understanding I/ECMHC – Review list of mental health providers
 - Of the 27 counselors listed that indicate they serve the counties of Region 8, Council members only recognized three. Some Council members didn't even know a list existed. One Council member said she has reached out to some providers on the list and never got a response. They also indicated there are many challenges in trying to get mental health/behavioral services to all those who need it in our area. Yes, school districts do provide some mental health services, but often they do not go down to the preschool level and those kids are the ones that need it the most.
 - There also seems to be a gap because some services do exist for kids aged 0-3, but they stop at age 3 and don't start again until kids are enrolled in Kindergarten. So, who is providing mental health services for kids aged 3-5? Is there anyone or are these kids not getting services at all?
 - The topic of staffing also came up again and Council members emphasized that, while more space for classrooms is needed, there also needs to be qualified staff available to run those classrooms. It has happened that substitute teachers staff these rooms and they are not equipped to handle the needs of the students.
 - The result of that situation causes child care teachers to get frustrated and leave the field because of the hard work and low pay they are receiving.
4. Highlights of Gov. Pritzker's Annual State Speech

Since Gov. Pritzker started his speech an hour before our meeting, Lou Ann offered some highlights so far. She noted it appeared child care continues to be a high priority going into Fiscal Year 2024-25. There also are funding increases to address transportation needs and special education. An emphasis is being placed on allocating funds for teacher vacancies.

Next meeting:

- Next meeting date: Wednesday, March 6, at 1:00pm at the Stewart Centre 7th Floor or via Zoom (**with cameras on, please**)