

**Meeting Notes for the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council**

**Friday, December 14, 2018**

**1:00 – 4:00 pm**

**NC Department of Transportation Board Room, Raleigh, NC**

**The following members were present:**

**Mandy Cohen, Karen McKnight, Anna Carter, Susan Perry-Manning, Kristin Walker, Cindy Watkins, Banu Valladares, Ray Spain, Eric Hart, Janet Singerman, Kelly Maxwell, Stephanie Fanjul, Laura Gerald, Doré LaForett, Kathy Higgins, Jerry Croan, Betsey Tilson, Lisa Chapman**

**The following members participated by phone:**

**Michelle Winstead, Velva Jenkins, Meka Sales, Susan Butler-Staub**

Secretary Mandy Cohen, Chair, convened the meeting, read the Conflict of Interest reminder and asked the Council to review the September meeting notes. The September notes were approved.

Rebecca Planchard provided an update on the development of the Early Childhood Action Plan, highlighting changes that have been made since the last meeting in response to feedback.

Structural changes include: improvements in the accessibility of the language around the 10 priorities; added commitments to each goal; specified 2025 targets; added more detailed rationale behind each goal and target; developed annual benchmarks. Content changes include a poverty metric added throughout the plan and more consideration of how to intentionally address race and equity throughout the plan.

Kristen Guillory provided an overview of a Data Trends Report under development by the NC Department of Health and Human Services to provide more information to support decisions made about goals and metrics. Council members asked questions and provided feedback.

Comments included:

- Include data on Hispanic children and other groups to make sure they are visible (i.e. do not focus solely on the disparities between white and black)

- For infant mortality disparity ratio: have we really known about the gap since 2010 and not done anything? If we've tried things, what are they? Need to know we're not duplicating efforts.
- For data points that are percentages or ratios, should also include the actual number of affected children.
- Be aware of risk of setting targets using previous year's data only. Need to consider trends.
- Below each graph add some analysis/takeaways:
  - Need to make sure graphs don't fuel people's existing biases when disaggregating by race.
  - Also need to take caution around language used so as not to feed into implicit biases of those seeing the data.
- Relationships between metrics: sometimes the metrics are directly related and sometimes they aren't; should we be measuring strategies vs. metrics?
- Should have a document containing details about trends because people won't click all the data links.
- Need to acknowledge how long it takes to get data for the more outdated data sources that take longer (for example data that is at federal level)

Rebecca Planchard and Anna Carter then provided examples of strategies under consideration for the plan that have significant research support (for example, expansion of pre-kindergarten, expansion of home visiting services, family-friendly employment practices, and expansion of Medicaid).

Susan Perry-Manning then provided directions for the Council members to engage in structured small group discussion to identify 1-2 priority strategies for each of the Early Childhood Action Plan focus areas. After significant small group work, each group reported out to the full Council and made the following recommendations:

- “Learning” group
  - Strategy #1: Ensuring there is a well-prepared early learning workforce
    - Include focus on K-3 teachers

- Compensation for the early education workforce must be addressed
  - Strategy #2: Improving access through home visiting + universal pre-k strategy
    - Home visiting levels the playing field/improves “connectivity”
    - Increase funding for NC Pre-K
- “Safe and nurtured” group
  - Strategy #1: Utilize grassroots networks to generate metrics for socio-emotional goal
    - This goal is the least fleshed out – can’t be left this way
    - Educators themselves and others at the grassroots will have insights
  - Strategy #2: Leverage Guardian ad Litem program to get public buy-in for child welfare goals
    - The program can raise these issues at the county level
  - Strategy #3: Improved branding of parenting programs
    - Parents don’t know the difference between programs – leads to confusion
    - Follow California branding model
    - Reframe around the benefits of the different practices rather than the differences between programs
- “Healthy” group
  - Strategy #1: Statewide strategy on scaling evidence-based home visiting
  - Strategy #2: Closing the health care coverage gap/expanding Medicaid
    - Frame around children’s health
    - Leverage relationships with the business community to promote with legislators

Secretary Cohen thanked the members for their work in small groups and thoughtful recommendations. She asked for closing thoughts on how the Council wants to take a next step in supporting the Early Childhood Action Plan. The members agreed that expansion of Medicaid is currently at the top of the list and that they can speak out as a Council to highlight the connection between Medicaid expansion and child health and welfare. Secretary Cohen stated

that she would come back to the Council for possible development of a letter supporting Medicaid expansion. More information is also forthcoming regarding an event to publicly release the Early Childhood Action Plan in February.

The meeting was adjourned.