

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

**Friday, September 20, 2019**

**1:00 – 2:30 pm**

**Conference Call**

**The following members participated in the conference call:**

**Mandy Cohen, Susan G. Perry, Susan Butler-Staub, Lisa Chapman, Jerry Croan, Laura Gerald, Kathy Higgins, Velva Jenkins, Doré LaForett, Kelly Maxwell, Karen McKnight, Bernadette Rodgers, Meka Sales, Janet Singerman, Betsey Tilson, Banu Valladares, Kristin Walker, Cindy Watkins, Michelle Winstead**

**The following designees and staff participated: Dan Tetreault, Kristi Snuggs, Kristen Guillory, Rebecca Planchard, Geoff Coltrane**

Secretary Mandy Cohen, Chair, convened the conference call, read the conflict of interest reminder, and asked the Council to review the June meeting notes. The June minutes were approved.

Secretary Cohen provided an update on the state budget process, following the recent House override of the Governor's budget veto. She reported concerns about the proposed budget, including an administrative cut to DHHS, an insufficiently funded Medicaid program, no expansion of Medicaid, and a continued replacement of state funds for federal funds in early childhood. The Council asked questions and discussed the possibilities of a House bill on Medicaid expansion that includes some work requirements. Susan Perry reported the status of the early childhood workforce bill (S212/H882), which passed the House, but then stalled in a conference committee and was not likely to be approved this session. She thanked Janet Singerman, Banu Valladares, and others for their work to support this bill.

Kristen Guillory provided an update on the Governor's Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education, which is in the process of developing recommendations, including early childhood recommendations, that will help inform a court order and plans for meeting requirements under the Leandro case.

Rebecca Planchard provided an update on the Early Childhood Action Plan. She reported the three priority goals for intensive work this year include: Healthy Babies; High-Quality Early Learning; and Permanent Families for Children in Foster Care. DHHS will be using a facilitator to help internally on detailed planning across Divisions within the agency on these goals. In addition, future Council meetings will focus more intensively on these goals.

DHHS is also developing an application for a new round of the federal Preschool Development Grant to be awarded later this year. NC's plan for this grant is aligned to the Early Childhood Action Plan. In addition, DHHS is looking at its block grants for opportunities to further support the ECAP goals.

Susan Perry then led a discussion on a proposed option to write and submit an op-ed regarding the key early childhood budget issues, including Medicaid expansion, Smart Start, NC Pre-K, child care subsidies for working families, and the early childhood workforce bill. Several members proposed and supported an idea to ask others to sign on to the op-ed as well. Council members agreed to continue to work on this proposal.

The conference call was adjourned.