



**NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)  
Membership Meeting  
September 26, 2013**

**Members:**

---

Patti Banghart	Dana Friedman	Lee Kreader	Janice Molnar
Evelyn Blanck	Robert Frawley*	Patti Lieberman	Donna Noyes
Kate Breslin	Doris Fromberg	Dina Lieser	Sophia Pappas
Sherry Cleary*	Liz Hood	Barbara-Ann Mattle	Patty Persell
Nancy Cupolo	Ira Katzenstein	Karen McGraw	Sandy Rybaltowski
Denise Dowell	Nancy Kolben	Mary McHugh	Carol Saginaw
Maggie Evans	Kristen Kerr	Meg McNiff	

\* Co-chair

**Guests:**

---

Sam Stephens	Melanie Pores
--------------	---------------

**Staff:**

---

Phil Alotta	Renee Nasadoski	Bridget Walsh
Maggie McGlynn	Susan Perkins	Stephanie Woodard

**Welcome, Introductions, and Updates**

Patti Banghart was introduced to the membership and will be participating in the ECAC membership meetings for Melanie Hartzog. Maggie conducted an introduction exercise to kick off the meeting. There were some brief updates such as:

- The ECAC website will go live the week of October 7<sup>th</sup>
- ECAC published documents were on display in the back of the room. Members can order the publications using the order form that was provided in their folders. The publications that were on display and are available to order included:
  - The ECAC meeting folders including issue briefs.
  - ECAC Brochure
  - Partners in Early Learning: A letter to parents and teachers. (A companion piece to the Early Learning Guidelines)
  - Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core
  - Developmental Screening Awareness: Posters in both English and Spanish for parents, doctors and providers; ECAC White Poster on improving early childhood screening; and Developmental Screening Brochures in both English and Spanish.
  - New York State Early Learning Alignment Crosswalk booklet.
  - Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Recruitment brochures for providers.

## Updates and Discussions

---

Advocacy Update: Kate Breslin provided a presentation on the work being done by the advocates in New York State:

- **President's Early Childhood Proposal:**
  - The President's proposal brought advocates from around New York and the nation together to rally his efforts to increase funding for early childhood.
  - The proposal will be funded from the Tobacco Tax.
  - National partners included Center for Children's Initiatives (CCI) and CLASP.
  - In the month of June there were many press events associated with the President's Early Childhood proposal, these efforts included a campaign to send letters to Congress in support of the proposal. If you want to get involved in future efforts to support the President's proposal contact Kate Breslin (518-463-1896), Nancy Kolben (212-929-7604), Jenn O'Connor (518-465-5462) or Betty Holcomb (212-929-7604).
  
- **Early Learning Challenge Grants:** Winning Beginning and their member organizations are submitting letters of support for the grant proposal.
  
- **New York State Assembly Round Table on Early Learning and Child Care – Economic Development:** Speaker Silver appointed assembly members to hold roundtable discussions focused on early childhood education. To carry out this assignment three separate roundtable discussions have been scheduled to discuss the impact of early childhood education on economic development, the importance of quality, and lack of access for all families. The first roundtable discussion was scheduled by Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, Chair, Committee on Children and Families. Assemblywoman Lupardo established the agenda so the discussion would focus on understanding the connection between child care and economic development. Winning Beginning members attended the Roundtable and presented the video they developed on linking high quality early childhood education. Advocates who attended the Roundtable determined:
  - There is a need for strategic messaging similar to the approach that was taken when the Education Reform Commission was conducting their hearings.
  - Members of the Assembly are not all in the same place when it comes to early childhood education. Some understand the importance of high-quality programs, while others are only concerned with health and safety.

It was agreed that Winning Beginning will provide information to the assembly members that will help them better understand early childhood education system in New York State and develop ways to keep the members engaged. They will also develop a detailed plan to help Legislators understand the value of early childhood education.

- **New State Prekindergarten Funding:** The State Budget included \$25 million to convert part-day Universal Prekindergarten programs to full day and to expand the number of part-day programs in underserved areas of the state. To prepare potential applicants, the State Education Department publicized the Request for Proposal (RFP) prior to the release and Winning Beginning members worked with community organizations to let them know about the pending release of the RFP. There was a big push by the advocates to get the RFP out quickly as the 2013-2014 school year was fast approaching, however, the RFP was not released until Friday August 30<sup>th</sup>.

- **Women Equality Issues:** Coalitions that were established to push for the comprehensive equal right's legislation that was not passed by the legislature will continue to work on their efforts to address women equality issues such as paid leave. Senator Kristen Gillibrand is working on several major women equality initiatives at the federal level. Winning Beginning will look at how to use the federal initiatives to help move their state agenda.

**Developmental Screening Recruitment:** Dina Lieser pointed out that in a recent survey, New York ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in the percentage of children who receive routine developmental screenings. The Promoting Health Development Work Group has been working on systems and policy changes that could be taken to address this issue. This includes adding information regarding developmental screenings to forms that physicians need to fill out prior to a child's enrollment in child care and other programs, improving communications among providers, and engaging in a public outreach campaign. She provided a presentation on the material that has been developed by the Work Group for informing parents, doctors, and early childhood education providers about the importance of developmental screening of young children. These materials include three different posters focused on parents, doctors, and child care providers. The posters are available in English and Spanish. The purpose of the posters is to drive up demand from parents for screening through education. The work group is seeking more places to distribute posters so please contact Dina at didijoy@yahoo.com or Patty Purcell at (518) 474-9352.

**Superstorm Sandy Social Services Block Grant (Sandy SSBG) Funding:** Janice Molnar provided an update on the grant proposals they received associated with Request for Proposal (RFP) for Superstorm Sandy Social Services Block Grant (Sandy SSBG) Funding. New York State received \$250 of which \$200 million will be used to address the needs of child care centers and family child care homes and other providers that were impacted by Superstorm Sandy. The Office of Children and Family Services Division of Child Care received 615 applications totaling \$505 million.

### **Early Childhood Advisory Council/Early Intervention Coordinating Council Joint Task Force on Social-Emotional Development**

Evelyn Blanck provided a presentation on the Early Childhood Advisory Council/Early Intervention Coordinating Council Joint Task Force on Social Emotional Development.

The goal of the task force is to develop guidance on:

- Assessment and evaluation tools;
- Strategies and interventions when there are identified delays; and
- Referrals to appropriate services especially at discharge from Early Intervention.

The Joint Task Force is comprised of nine members from both the Early Childhood Advisory Council and the Early Intervention Coordinating Council (EICC). Mary McHugh who is one of three ECAC members who serve on both the ECAC and EICC has agreed to chair the Joint Task Force. In addition, the members of the Joint Task Force will be reaching out to the members Strong Families and Promoting Healthy Development Work Groups to obtain support for their work.

The presentation included a brief review of the research on early childhood mental health including: the prevalence of early childhood mental health challenges; why early childhood mental health is important; why the Early Intervention program is ideally suited to address mental health needs; and challenges in the existing Early Intervention system, including training needs of the workforce.

**Discussion:** As much as New York has an outstanding Early Intervention program, the data suggests that the weakest area is in the assessment of and intervention with children that have social emotional challenges. Particularly given the high numbers of very young children in foster care, we need to ensure that we are addressing the social emotional challenges of these children.

At the meeting, ECAC members offered many suggestions for key areas the joint task force should consider addressing. These suggestions were tabulated by Maggie McGlynn and given to Mary McHugh for consideration.

**Next Steps:** The first meeting of the Joint Task Force will be convened after the Early Learning Challenge Grant is completed. They will hold monthly conference calls and quarterly in-person meetings. The goal will be to complete the guidance document in one year. Members of the Joint Task Force will provide updates at the ECAC quarterly meetings.

### **Race-To-The-Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant**

---

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, the federal Department of Education released the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the third round of Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant. New York is eligible for \$75 million. Prior to the release of the RFP, Governor Cuomo decided that New York State should develop and submit an application. Once the decision to apply was made, a Leadership team comprised of De'Shawn Wright, Lonnie Threet, and Gabe Friedman from the Governor's Office; Bob Frawley and Sherry Cleary from the ECAC; Janice Molnar and Shelia Poole from OCFS; Beth Berlin, Nicolas Storelli-Castro, and Renee Rider from SED; Rachel de Long from DOH; Mary McHugh from OMH, Amanda Darling and Anne Bink from DOB, and Abby Thorman a grant writer contracted with to support the development of the proposal.

**Status of Application:** As a result of the work of the ECAC, New York State is in a much better position to apply for the ELCG this year than it was two years ago. The ELCG leadership team has been meeting and strategizing long before the ELCG Request for Proposal (RFP) was released. In addition writing teams have been established and have begun work on each section of the proposal. Although many people were recommended for writing teams, not all were approved and the teams are much smaller than two years ago.

The Governor's Office appointed the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) as the lead agency. Janice Molnar is leading the efforts on behalf of OCFS. Abby Thorman, a professional grant writer has been hired to support the development of the proposal. Ms. Thorman served as a reviewer two years ago in the first round of the ELCG and has extensive experience with ELCG process.

The application is due October 16, 2013 and the awards will be announced by December 31, 2013.

### **Overview of the Proposal:**

- **Section A: Successful State Systems.** This section provides the reviewers with a sense of the current landscape and outline's New York's past commitment to early childhood services, rationale for the state's early learning and development reform agenda, and existing strategies to align and coordinate early learning and development across the state. A budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant is outlined in this section.
- **Section B: High Quality Accountable Programs.** This section focuses on building/expanding a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). New York's application focuses on expanding QUALITYstarsNY to

more UPK, Head Start and Early Head Start, programs serving children with special needs (through Part B/C), and programs serving children who receive child care subsidies; specific targets have been developed. A validation study of QUALITYstarsNY will be completed to ensure it meaningfully differentiates levels of quality and is related to learning, development, and school readiness.

- **Section C: Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children.** In this section, New York proposes to increase the number of children who receive developmental screenings; enhance the health standards in QUALITYstarsNY; expand training on QUALITYstarsNY health standards; support early learning programs to more effectively support healthy eating habits, nutrition and physical activity; and provide training and support to early learning programs to support children’s social and emotional development.
- **Section D: A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce.** New York’s existing Core Body of Knowledge (CBK) articulates what early learning professionals should know and be able to do. Through this grant New York will integrate the CBK across all professional development experiences, from training through degrees; provide targeted professional development on the CBK to ensure broad knowledge and implementation to practice; and integrate the CBK into training requirements.
- **Section E: Measuring Outcome and Progress.** New York will develop a strategy to better understand the status of children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry. Developed in partnership with teachers and other stakeholders, an Early Learning Inventory of Skills (either a single instrument or a broader battery) that informs instruction and services will be identified, piloted, refined, and taken statewide by the end of the grant.

**Priority Areas:** The state plans to include responses to the following priority areas in the grant proposal:

- Priority 1: Absolute Priority- Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs
- Priority 2: Competitive Preferences Priority- Including All Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems
- Priority 3: Competitive Preference Priority- Understanding the Status of Children’s Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry
- Priority 4: Competitive Preference Priority- Creating Preschool through Third Grade Approaches to Sustain Improved Early Learning Outcomes through the Early Elementary Grades
- Priority 5: Competitive Preference Priority- Addressing the Needs of Children in Rural Areas

**Writing Teams:** The writing teams are comprised of current ECAC members, including:

- Section A: Bob Frawley, Sherry Cleary, Nicolas Storelli-Castro, Janice Molnar, Rachel de Long
- Section B: Dana Friedman, Lynnette Pannucci, Janice Molnar, Bob Frawley, David Voegele, Patty Persell, and Sandy Rybaltowski
- Section C: Rachel de Long, Mary McHugh, Dina Lieser, Evelyn Blanck, and Patty Persell
- Section D: Sherry Cleary, Kristen Kerr, Patty Persell, and Meg McNiff
- Section E: Renee Rider, Nicolas Storelli-Castro, and Meg McNiff.

In addition several people have been asked to read and comment on the proposal. They include: Denise Dowell, Susan Perkins, Melanie Pores, and Sophia Pappas.

**Letters of Support or Intent:** An in-depth discussion took place regarding letters of support and intent. To date, many letters of support still remain outstanding. The ECAC members who were present committed to contact community partners to request letters of support. The deadline date for submittal is no later than October 10, 2013. The letters of support should include how their organization contributes to the work of the ECAC and ELCG proposal. In addition, the membership discussed the need for federal, state and local elected officials to submit letters of support. Bob Frawley will draft a model letter of support for ECAC members to share with their federal, state and local elected officials.

Each ECAC member who was present at the meeting self-selected who they would contact as a warm reminder to send in their letter of support to Phil Alotta by October 10, 2013. They should email the letter to Phil as a PDF. The presentation included an overview of how the sections in the ELCG RFP link to the ECAC strategic plan are tied to:

<b>ELCG Sections</b>	<b>ECAC Strategic Plan</b>
Section A	Coordinated and Responsive Systems, Data Development work group, and Finance work group
Section B	QUALITYstarsNY and Shared Services
Section C	Family Engagement initiatives, Community Cafes, Obesity Prevention, Health Consultants, and Early Learning Guidelines and Core Body of Knowledge.
Section D	<i>New York Works for Children, Aspire, Core Body of Knowledge</i>
Section E	Kindergarten readiness tool and common metric.

**Continuing the Conversation: the future of the ECAC**

---

All members affirmed their commitment in the future of the ECAC.

Maggie reminded everyone of the scenario planning (three tiers of future planning: with no money, some money, a lot of money) and accompanying strategies at each level that was completed during the June ECAC meeting. The Early Learning Challenge Grant provides an opportunity for a lot of money.

During the winter meeting the group hopes to celebrate getting the grant or regroup and move forward. The challenge is to stay focused on a comprehensive system of children’s services and how to do it ‘all’ using a balanced, holistic approach. While ELCG is targeted on early learning, the commitment is still to develop a comprehensive system of supports and services for young children and their families.

There was a discussion to change the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting to January. Once a date has been confirmed members will receive the new date.

**Next meeting: January 30, 2014**