



**NYS Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)
Membership Meeting
January 30, 2014**

Members:

Evelyn Blanck	Dana Friedman	Karen Kissinger	Meg McNiff
Kate Breslin	Robert Frawley*	Nancy Kolben	Anne Mitchell
Sherry Cleary*	Dana Friedman	Lee Kreader	Janice Molnar
Nancy Cupolo	Doris Fromberg	James Langford	Donna Noyes
Rachel de Long	Liz Hood	Patti Lieberman	Patty Persell
Christine Deyss	Jackie Jones	Karen McGraw	Jennifer Marino Rojas
Denise Dowell	Ira Katzenstein	Jim McGuirk	Sandy Rybaltowski
Maggie Evans	Kristen Kerr	Mary McHugh	Carol Saginaw

* Co-chair

Guests:

Dee Alexander	Victoria Graff	Melanie Pores
Patti Banghart	Lori McClung	Meghan Robinson
Scarlett Boudier	Jenn O'Connor	Ian Rosenblum
Brian Cechnicki	Lynnette Pannucci	Jocelyn Rodriguez

Staff:

Renee Nasadoski	Susan Perkins	Stephanie Woodard
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Welcome, Introductions, and Updates

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- **Guest Introductions** - Meghan Robinson from BUILD Initiative was introduced as a guest at the meeting. During the meeting, Brian Cechnicki, Assistant Deputy Secretary for Education from the Governor's Office was also introduced.
 - **ECAC Website** - Members Only Section: Members were reminded to get their log-in information from Renee Nasadoski (518) 473-3652 or Renee.Nasadoski@ccf.ny.gov. The member's only section of the new ECAC website has replaced Groupsite. This is where the members will be able to access information and documents associated with the ECAC.
 - **Next ECAC Membership meeting** is scheduled for April 3, 2014.
 - **New funding** - It was announced that the United Way of the Capital Region has provided funding to support programs in Troy participating in QUALITYstarsNY.

Early Learning Challenge Grant: Our Work Moving Forward

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- Bob Frawley reported that New York did not win an Early Learning Challenge Grant in December. New York's score (252 out of 315 possible points) was the eighth highest score and 11 points lower than the last of the six winning states. Not receiving the grant will make our work going forward that much harder. The Early Learning Challenge Grant provided a significant opportunity to not just continue our work, but to greatly expand what we are doing. The funding would have supported our ongoing work, including a

significant expansion of QUALITYstarsNY. Also the grant would have supported the implementation of several new strategies including: mental health consultation, kindergarten readiness assessment, and a concentrated effort to expand QUALITYstarsNY in rural communities.

- There are other opportunities on the horizon and there remains some possibility of the federal government funding additional states.
- Bob suggested that there were three main reasons why the New York State proposal was not funded:
 - 1) Lack of state funding for early childhood system building.
 - 2) Large states like New York were eligible for much less money per capita than small states, so it was difficult to propose activities that were as ambitious as smaller states were able to propose. Using 200 percent of poverty as an indicator of children with high needs New York would receive \$1.20 per child with high needs as opposed to \$2,500 for Vermont.
 - 3) Reviewers did not completely understand the complexity of implementing systems in large states.
- There is funding to support the ECAC Membership meetings; however we need to be creative in getting additional funds to support ECAC initiatives.
- The Steering Committee has changed its meeting structure from monthly conference calls to quarterly in-person meetings. The intent is to increase productivity. The Steering Committee met January 16th and began to identify and discuss top priorities for the ECAC. This discussion resulted in four priorities chosen, one from each focus area.
- Bob and Sherry led a brief but productive brainstorming session on budget/funding strategies to support the four strategies associated with each ECAC focus area:

ECAC Focus Area	Priority Strategy
Early Learning	Establish QUALITYstarsNY as the framework for all early childhood education programs under a common set of quality standards.
Healthy Children	Implement a comprehensive effort to support early childhood educators, primary care providers, and others in promoting the social-emotional development needs of young children and their families
Strong Families	Infuse Strengthening Families framework and family engagement into QUALITYstarsNY program standards and early childhood services.
Coordinated and Responsive Systems	Develop an early childhood data system that includes information on programs, professionals, and children and families.

Listed below are highlights from the discussion:

- **Prek** - QUALITYstarsNY needs to be standard for accountability for New York State and New York City Universal Prekindergarten initiatives. QUALITYstarsNY standards should be imbedded as a requirement for the Universal Prekindergarten programs.
- **Sliding Fee** - Charge a sliding scale fee to participate in QUALITYstarsNY.
- **Tax incentive** - Use the tax system to incentivize programs, providers and families.
- **Private funders** - Access funds from private foundations (i.e. United Way Success by 6 – QUALITYstarsNY Partnership)

- **Economic Development** - Economic Development Zones allow for investment in Early Childhood. The ECAC should use “investment” language as a way to promote funding for quality early childhood programs and recognize the economic value of investing in early childhood.
- **Nontraditional sources of support** - Make it a habit to use the funding and resources that is already available, such as Public Television.
- **Communication Strategy** – Quality is the bases of providing funding and setting standards for health care initiatives. We should argue that quality should be basis for funding early childhood education.
- **Assets Mapping** –We need to take time to connect the assets we have across the state such as 211 and Parenting Education.
- **Targeting** – The Early Learning Challenge Grant targeted high needs communities should the ECAC stay focused on high need communities of should our efforts focus on the broader community?
- **Messaging**— The ECAC needs to be careful about talking about QUALITYstarsNY as a separate system. People see it as separate rather than the foundation for quality standards in early childhood. Funders do not like to support separate systems.

Professional Development: Effective Communication Strategies

Lori McClung from Advocacy Communications Solutions LLC presented information on how to develop a strategic communication plan. Lori defined a strategic communication plan as:

- based on research (ideally),
- uses both paid media opportunities as well as media opportunities that made available through the importance and interest in your message;
- uses messages and talking points that have been identified for specific target audiences;
- frames the message in a way that the target audience can understand and relate to; and
- uses both internal (people working the field) and external (people outside the field but who have more impact with the target audience) messengers.

Lori and her associate Scarlett Boudier lead an exercise to develop a strategic communications plan using the four priority strategies associated with the ECAC focus areas. Members were able to self-select which strategy they would work on.

Federal, State, and New York City Initiatives Updates on Early Childhood Initiatives

- **Federal:** Dee Alexander, Federal Legislative Liaison from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services provide a report on the Federal Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Omnibus Appropriations Bill several early childhood initiatives have been funded and existing early childhood programs (i.e., Head Start, Child Care and Development Block Grant) received funding to restore funds loss due to sequestration. In addition, funding was added to restore cuts made under the sequester in 2013 to the two largest PreK-12 formula grants: Title I grants for disadvantaged students and special education, Part C to Early Intervention grants. Funding for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) was also increased. For more information and funding levels, see the FY 2014 Omnibus Appropriations Bill handout. Other funds in the appropriation bill will support:
 - **Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships:** \$500 million will be available to provide “high quality Early Head Start services to approximately 40,000 additional children a one-third increase. *“This funding leverages investment through the Child Care and Development Fund and will further improve the quality of early childhood care and education options for infants and toddlers.”* These grants will allow Early Head Start programs to partner with local child care centers and family child care providers serving low-income infants and toddlers. Funding awards must be made by March 31, 2015. The bill also provides

\$10 million for Federal administration and evaluation of these Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships. Sherry and Bob announced that the ECAC will form an ad hoc group to explore strategies for maximizing this new funding and systems building opportunity and Janice Molnar (Division of Child Care Services) and Patty Persell (Head Start Collaboration Project) have agreed to chair the ad hoc group. Members will be contacted regarding participation on the group.

- **Child Care and Development Block Grant:** The Child Care and Development Block Grant received a \$154 million increase which fully restores the sequestration cuts and provides a small increase.
- **Preschool Development Grants:** The Department of Education received \$250 million in Race to the Top funding for preschool development grants. *"If awards are made to states to build capacity,"* the funding will be awarded competitively to states to build their capacity to develop, enhance, or expand high-quality preschool programs, including comprehensive services and family engagement, for preschool-age children from families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Grants will be jointly administered by the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, just like the Early Learning Challenge grants.
- **New York State:** Ian Rosenblum, Deputy Secretary for Education and Economic Opportunity from the Governor's Office provided a brief overview of the Governor's Executive Budget with regards to prekindergarten. The Governor's Executive budget includes \$1.5 billion for statewide implementation over 5 years of full-day high quality prekindergarten. To obtain funding, school districts would be required to provide implementation plans which would include plans to partner with community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide programming. The Governor's Office is confident that funding will be available as soon as districts are ready to receive their funding. The review process as envisioned is flexible and will be responsive to community needs. Ian clarified that the Governor's Office views quality prekindergarten as aligned with QUALITYstarsNY program standards. It is understood there will be more conversations regarding the alignment. The funds will be available for start-up in the fall 2014.

After Ian's presentation, ECAC members expressed that districts are concerned about sustainability and the demands and ability of the districts and the role of the social workers in prekindergarten programs. Ian recognized that was a concern of the districts but that the funding is a solid commitment. In response to other questions posed by ECAC member, Ian said that the Governor's Office is aware that:

- Teacher qualifications are important and there is a need to ensure the teachers are well prepared.
 - QUALITYstarsNY is the standard of quality and there is willingness for the Governor's Office to engage in a conversation with the ECAC to frame what quality means in full day prekindergarten, and how we know when it is happening.
 - The ECAC will play a critical role in this work.
 - CBOs will continue to be a part of prekindergarten service delivery, but, at this time he is not sure if there will be a requirement of 10 percent participation. (Currently about 55 percent of Universal Prekindergarten programs are run by CBOs across the state.)
- **New York City:** Nancy Kolben, Executive Director from the Center for Children's Initiatives (formerly Child Care, Inc.) presented the New York City Universal Pre-Kindergarten initiative. New York City's Mayor Bill de Blasio is committed to implementing a Free, High-Quality, Full-Day Universal Pre-Kindergarten system. The Universal Pre-Kindergarten Planning and Implementation Task Force includes ECAC members - Sherry Cleary, Nancy Kolben and Elba Montalvo, and other representing early childhood education providers and representatives of several city agencies including:

- Office of Management and Budget
- Department of Education
- Administration for Children’s Services, and
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Some aspects of the implementation plan include providing:

- free, high-quality, full-day prekindergarten to approximately 73,250 children beginning with 53,604 in September 2014;
- specialized programming designed to serve children whose primary language is not English
- start-up and quality grants.
- Teachers will have the B-Grade 2 Certificate
- Pay for pre-k teachers holding the B-2 Certificate, in CBO’s, will be paid a comparable salary.

Updates and Discussions

BUILD National Conference: Maggie Evans provided a report on the state team that attended the BUILD national conference in October. Highlights included:

- There was an open discussion by the BUILD states on what is working and not working in their state - New York State’s experience and struggles are consistent with the other states;
- The need to exercise strategic thinking and effective communication and get buy-in from the business community;
- The importance of replicating Head Start’s framework for family engagement, because it has been developed over many years and has been proven to be successful.

Shared Services Update: Kristen Kerr, Executive Director from the New York State Association for the Education of the Young provided a report on the implementation of the Shared Services Initiative. Shared Source ECNY is a web-based platform that offers a variety of cost savings, tools and services to help New York early childhood education providers raise the quality of their programs while saving time and money. The ECAC funded this project in fall, 2012, making New York the eleventh state to offer such services to early childhood education providers nationally. ECAC funding covered the development of the branded New York web site. A pilot test of the site was conducted from October-December, 2013. The formal launch of the site is scheduled for April, 2014, to coincide with the NYSAEYC Annual Conference held in Verona, New York on April 10-12, 2014.

It is projected that up to 2000 providers can be supported in this first phase of the program. The next step is to promote the site to Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, New York State Association for the Education of Young Children (NYSAEYC) members and QUALITYstarsNY participants. The NYS Association for the Education of Young Children (NYSAEYC) and Early Care and Learning Council (ECLC) are the managing organizations overseeing the initiative.

QUALITYstarsNY Presentation to the Board of Regents:

There was a small delegation (Sherry Cleary, Rachel de Long and Ola Friday) that made a presentation to the New York State Board of Regents focusing on QUALITYstarsNY and the impact on children’s early learning and health. This was a full Regents meeting and although the delegation was given thirty minutes to present, their presentation lasted an hour. The members of the Regents were enthusiastically engaged; asked great questions, and clearly understood the value that excellence in early childhood produces.

Wrap Up

- The next ECAC membership meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2014
- There will be more information regarding the task group that will explore opportunities associated with the federal Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships funding.
- Members who have not received their user ID and password for the ECAC website Members Only Section should contact Renee 518-473-3652 or Renee.Nasadoski@ccf.ny.gov for your login information.
- Sherry and Bob will work with the Steering Committee on how best to proceed in developing a communications strategy.
- Sherry and Bob will work continue to work with the Steering Committee on how we effectively guide federal, state and New York City early childhood initiatives.

Next meeting: April 3, 2014 at the Empire State Plaza