

***Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council
Meeting Minutes***

Date: May 11, 2018
Time: 8:30 am – 12:00 pm
Location: Teleconference: 907-334-2500, 1192019#
In-Person: 3601 C Street, Suite 902, Anchorage, AK 99508
350 Main Street, Suite 404, Juneau, AK 99801

Welcome and Introduction

Commissioner Davidson: Opened with where we are and where we going. There has been some confusion on what the AECCC is, we're looking at historical documents to do a deep dive.

Update from DEED Commissioner

Commissioner Johnson: This is an excited pause. Happy to spend some time talking with everyone about who we are and what we need to be in the future.

Discussion

Commissioner Davidson: When folks when looking back through the creation of AECCC by Governor Parnell there was a discovery that the order was never signed. Sometimes you don't have to be recognized to exist. The Administrative order exist but is not signed, we do not have a signed copy.

Paul Prussing: What we have is a delegation of authority that is signed by Parnell, we have the Department of Law looking at it to see if we can have it updated for the current administration. We do not have a timeline of when it will be finished.

Commissioner Davidson: we will find out from the Department of Law to see what we have and what we need to move forward. I think today we need to cover where we've been where we are at, where we are going. What needs to change so that the AECCC can be effective? We've had folks that didn't know they were on the AECCC so we can do a better job in ensuring folks know their role and participate.

Debbie Baldwin: Are we aware of any grants that's been identified for an advisory capacity?

Commissioner Davidson: I'm a person who believes in the truth and I would like to know and have an honest conversation with everyone on what we think is working. I think we really struggle now that Anji is gone from DEED. This work is really, really important for our state. One of the challenges with the staff for the AECCC is that they have other jobs with multiple duties in the departments, this role is on top of their other work. We think we need one person who is dedicated to do this work full-time. However, we are not in the position to do that with the cuts to our state budget.

Abbe Hensley: As we begin our conversation, I think that it's really worthwhile for us to look at what the AECCC is really supposed to do. If part of that is to advise the Governor then we need a better mechanism for that. We need to hear from the Governor's office what their vision is for that. There's never been that kind of communication, through various Commissioners there hasn't been direct communication with the Administration. Another thing to think about, thinking about the establishment

of an Office of Early Learning that would not be a new Department but rather bring together people, many of which are around this table, in an institutionalized collaboration that is going on already to expand the knowledge of early learning. One - We need to raise the stature, whoever that person who is responsible for it and a governing group for that. Two – if we did have this council have it as a governing group and not just as a council that got together.

Abbe Hensley: Can you expand on the Office of Early learning idea?

GABBY: I'm looking at the various ways that things can be organized in states. One of the ways is almost a virtual organization in which we would have some ways to collect people, information, reports and something that is a focal point for the public. My little vision is a way to sort of say we are in this together.

Comment: I'm asking to understand this but the difference between the office of early learning versus this council and the need for two or is it more of memorandums of agreement? And the other thing I wanted to share is from the perspective of a person who has been in various Departments and has worked through that transition from one department to another- it's taken over a decade to get regulations or policies and procedures, and people transitioned. It really does set you back as to being pushed forward.

Abbe Hensley: If we think of who manages the council that person then would be who we would consider to be managing the office of learning.

Debbie Baldwin: There are many states that have done this, really coordinated their early learning efforts and many are positioned in the Governor's office, the Lt. Governor's office or in a department. Programs feel the same way you feel about the transition, to become better at what we do is to streamline services and remove administrative burden for the people we serve. So again we've gone through many a tremendous change over the last decade about what programs are involved in early childhood so again I think a lot of the states from what I understand have decided to create some sort of entity that is at a higher level out of the Department where again there is some sort of administrative priority to coordinating and collaborating to move the initiative along. **The Alaska Head Start Association wanted to be sure I share today that they see one position- one function- possibly available to the work that this council does and that is the head start collaboration grant, office, position, function.** The federal government gives the State of Alaska money to promote head start collaboration to move again this mission forward that position at this point has the position in DEED. The association wants me to be sure to state today they are very supportive for this council, DEED, Gov office and Lt. Office to think about possibly using this position to elevate, to coordinate, to have a higher stature for what the initiatives are for young children.

Paul Prussing: We are looking at that head start collaboration position where it is best spot for this position. We rewrote the job description to increase the amount of focus on the head start program. We need to find where this position should be best utilized. It is a grant you have to apply for every year.

Pat Sidmore: Looking back, an important concept to remember is the more people get into running grants the less they are able to coordinate the council. If we do this, we should not have them doing grants or managing programs, so they are more focused on the initiative of the council.

Mary Jo Toregeson: Where is the Governor in this? Would this fall under the Governor, will it provide better support or more priority?

Commissioner Davidson: That's what we are trying to determine here in this meeting is. What's the recommendation of how we can be more effective?

Commissioner Johnson: The answer is it depends on who the governor is. I'd like to say I value hearing people saying, what does the AECCC do? Put together a to-do list, off of that I can reflect on what it should be where AECCC should be going.

Matt Hirschfeld: Abby had a great description on early learning. I just don't want to lose focus on early health in young children as well as mental health. I think all 3 of those things would be a very important part of the AECCC that children are very well rounded.

Paul Prussing: Are these still the 9 priorities for the council? Is it too many, do we need to narrow them down?

Commissioner Davidson: Looking back on the bylaws for the mission and the purpose of what the AECCC is one thing, the other is the priorities which came about as part of the strategic plan, and then another document that has seven priorities. I am going to suggest we start with the bylaws.

[Someone:] They put together a plan and overview of what the initial advisory council was supposed to do. (the document that got copied at the meeting)

Commissioner Davidson: Can we go into the mission, the purpose and the bylaws: Typically they are broader so you have lots of opportunity to be able to implement that is helpful so you can actually do stuff. Is there anything in the mission that people think we should change?

Rebecca Morisse: This council is about coordinating everything kids and there are so many different components that feed into the health of children and families. If we can have a person dedicated to this they can coordinate. Talk about early learning were not just talking about education we are talking about the whole child and it gets wrapped up into early learning. We have prenatal through age 8, a lot of our coordinating work is with programs up through 12. I know there's been some difficulty with trying to create some alignment. By age 8 it aligns with a lot of the federal programs. Going back to the mission statement, I've struggled with how wordy and too long it is. I think it should be simple and concrete (second sentence). **"The AECCC promotes and supports a unified sustainable system of early care health education and family support for young children and their family." - Pending**

Paul Prussing: For me I always go back at the original delegation of authority, I look back at head start 642 is the reason why the council is put together, it outlines the intent of the council, membership requirements, etc.

Commissioner Davidson: There is a request for a matrix outlining the commitment and responsibilities that the AECCC is responsible for and then incorporate that into the new and improved plan moving forward. Erin Shine will put together a matrix. We also need to get some census about the mission. For the Mission, there is no objection of removal of the first paragraph and going with a shorter version of the second paragraph. Please send Erin Shine your suggested edits to the Mission section and she can compile those for consideration at our next meeting.

Comment: There is one component of the first paragraph which was the span of what early childhood is. Do we want to include that into our mission statement? "Prenatal to eight."

Commissioner Davidson: For the purpose, are we okay with it? Is it broad enough? The bylaws say we have to provide 30 days' notice so I want to make sure that we can do that.

Comment: After mental health and before... insert early intervention.

Commissioner Davidson: Moving down to membership: #6 should be the "Division of Public Health" is this appropriate membership, should someone be taken off, should some be added. Not only 1 thorough #11 and but also 12 through 25.

Comment: Recommend a representative from Public Libraries and three parents.

Commissioner Davidson: Let's bring a little reality if we add those it brings the membership to 28.

Reminder that the meetings are public.

Comment: There is a requirement which we have not done is having public meetings like town halls or hearings.

Christy: I want to suggest two other members that have wanted to be members in the past, one All Alaska pediatric partnership, the other one is the Governor's council of disabilities and special education.

Becky: Consideration of public assistance.

Matthew Hirschfield: I would not overlook the funders, either the trust or Rasmussen foundation.

Pat Sidmore: what I go back to the purpose, we have health, mental health, education, family support, public and private practices?

Comment: I think what has been missing in my mind in the group is the private sector, as the council was sort of taken from the governmental group, I'm wondering if we think about the council not as a everyone comes here to report but rather what is the work and the aligning systems. Maybe we have what we need on the public side with enough people and maybe we need to think more about the private sector and how they bring information to the government side.

Commissioner Davidson: I don't know necessarily if it's about numbers but about how we are structured. We should avoid having funders on the membership.

Debbie: Validating why we need an office of early learning if we have one staff member that is more than an executive secretary or more that an administrative assistant instead having someone with authority that will be the real meat of this council.

Proposal on the table: to make a change in another proposed bylaw change on page 2 in section F the council will be co-chaired by a member of representatives group from a non-state

That should drive who the chair of the council are, there is always a fine line of who. We need to think about not setting that person for an awkward situation. I like the idea as leaving it as is now until we get the position figured out until we get the clarity of what the legal status of the council is.

Commissioner Davidson: In your dream world what would this look like?

Pat: The council becomes similar to our Alaska Mental Health Board or the Governor's Council, they can operate independently with a staff person. So they then can advocate outside the scope of the department, they can coordinate the efforts within the department in an advisory role.

One round of edits that we can do over the next 30days.

Commissioner Davidson: had a conversation of what the AECCC, no objection to hiring someone and not have other duties of assigned. That is the interest of the group. The other is I really appreciate Pat providing on what his dream of what this would be. So what would we do in the meantime which is a part of the bylaw review but also a part of the workgroup structure. If you move to page 3 under committee there is a list, is this the right list. Do we need more, do we need fewer.

Comment: More conversation about what we really mean with these groups and what action is anticipated?

Comment: How realistic is it to lead a workgroup and managing a full-time job.

Commissioner Davidson: How are these committee's chosen, why were these the focus areas? Are they still the right ones.

Comment: our priorities came out before the new structure committee came out.

There is a proposal on the table to combine public education and

Commissioner Davidson: Is there anything else in the bylaws that folks want to revisit? One thing I Lead agency and staffing will be fleshed out as we move forward to the new structure as we concentrating. We will add a date, and page numbers.

Comment: Talks about release of information, it's never been clear and there is not a process.

Commissioner Davidson: Are there any other proposed changes to the bylaws before we move to priorities? No comments .The priorities need to be cleaned up in terms of what committees is actually working on those priorities. We need to find out who worked on these priorities so we can determine.

#1 Early care and learning – should be “high quality early learning and education”

- Was identified by an earlier group because expanding services to children and families and we wanted it to reflect those in home and out of home services.
- We want to hold the council to something tangible
- We need to identify what is that magic number
- As data being tracked over the time during 2015 – 2017? Where we had a large amount of budget points.
- Expanding services to children doesn't mean we are doing a great job.
- Which committee has been doing this? Suggest data and system alignment to work on it.

Workgroup structure will make sense once we've done the priorities conversation

More conversation about priorities need to happen next.

Where the good stuff happens is in the committees, I am going to suggest, in terms of looking at these 9 priorities, I'm going to suggest that the committees meet and discuss if these are the priorities. If the subcommittees can meet and really have a conversation about the 9 priorities. If you had your choice what would these be and then also which do you think are the most important priorities that your committee should be focused on. Looking at it top-down/bottom-up.

Suggestion – have parents involved

Suggestion – all of the committee representation be there, sometimes its 50% participation, have the whole membership, do folks know which committee they are on.

Add to matrix, of column which committee they serve on or would like to serve on.

RECAP: Consensus around having a fulltime dedicated leader that can move us where we need to go. We've had not had a conversation about where it should be or how it gets funded. Should be housed within the Gov office or Lt Gov office or a department.

Recognizing that those kinds of decisions also get to be made by other people, we are just going to let them know this is our recommendation

Some various bylaw changes so we will do a red-line version of the proposed changes to the bylaws. We will first send out a draft so we make sure we accurately capture what your recommendations were.

Where we have heard a couple of options and included both options. Once we have the summed up proposals that those reflections are accurate then we can we can send out an official meeting to update the bylaws and determine 30 days of notice.

Elizabeth: A great forum to hash out some things that I am hearing about from parents and people involved in early childhood. The things I'm hearing about, they were surprised kindergarten registration, and more outreach around that. Changes to childcare provider regulations, what is that waitlist look like?

Stephanie: From our face to face in October, we don't have a vision statement for what we want for early childhood in our state. I still don't think we have a strong definition as what our vision is so we know what we are working toward – add to next agenda

Abby: Best beginnings is doing some work now that will help with lack of information to parents to Elizabeth's comment

Debbie: next agenda item – What is happening to zero to 3 services

Jamar: ASQ and outreach that this is one of the main components

Mary Jo, Rachel Nash will be representing for the next meeting and they will be more involved.

Adjourned