

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL
EDUCATION
Early Intervention Committee Meeting

LOCATION
Governor's Council Conference Room
3601 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska
Teleconference

Meeting Date
November 9, 2010
9:00 a.m.

Attendees:

Amy Simpson, Chair
Mary Dietz
Dorothy Erickson
Patrick Pillai
Heidi Haas, Chair

Community Members/Guests:

Geri Benshoof
Amanda Faulkner
Mahala Slone
Lizette Stiehr
Melora Gaber

Staff:

Teresa Holt

Prepared by:
Paula DiPaolo, Peninsula Reporting

Call to Order – 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call

Welcome from the Chair, Introductions and Announcements

Teresa Holt announced that Maggie Ferry and Kama Gregory have resigned. Heidi Haas has agreed to be the co-chair with Amy Simpson.

Teresa also announced that she was approached by a preschool teacher in Barrow to join the EIC. Teresa will follow up with her.

Approval of Past Minutes

The approval of the minutes was postponed until the next meeting.

Election of New Voting Members

Lizette Stiehr volunteered to be a voting member.

Patrick Pillai suggested that due to reduced involvement with the CEEHI and the autism grant, he might step down as a voting member. This issue will be decided at the next meeting.

Heidi Haas **MOVED** to approved Lizette Stiehr as a voting member on the EIC committee. The motion **PASSED**.

Review of the Face-to-Face Meeting in Nome

Teresa Holt stated that they discussed how issues become a priority with the Council. Methods for gathering input for priorities include:

- Personal input of committee members
- Public testimony
- Correspondence
- Input from the Department
- Input from the full Council.

This input is gathered and the tentative priorities are presented to the full Council in the spring, which are then voted on and delegated back to the

committee. The EIC also discussed how different issues are weighted in an equitable way.

Teresa stated that the committee also discussed the meeting format, which includes discussing the Annual Performance Report indicators. They acknowledged that because the APR information is two years behind, it wasn't updated enough for them to make decisions based on data. They asked Linda Borghols if they could get information quarterly in a red, yellow, and green light format, and they will then review the information quarterly instead of monthly.

Teresa Holt had committee members share their highlights from the site visits in Nome. Highlights included:

Infant Learning Program

- Impressive how they expanded the program to serve more children.
- ILP serves Nome and 14 villages. It takes an entire day to fly to visit one family in a village.
- Impressed by the sensitivity to culture.
- If you live in the village, you don't knock on the door, you just walk in. If you are a visitor, someone has to introduce you, and then you can walk in.
- Need to do some grassroots level work in terms of connecting educated ILP providers to village community or homes.
- Tap into Native federation to educate parents on the importance of ILP.

Kawerak Head Start

- Thrilled to see multiple Kawerak Head Start classrooms with an exciting level of inclusion.
- Disability coordinator sailed the Northwest Passage from Greenland to settle in Nome as they are on their way around the world.
- Impressive staff training program.
- Saw a need and took care of it. Almost all of the eligible 4 year olds enrolled.

- School principal disappointed that a couple of entities didn't join them so that everyone is invested in early education.

Nome City School District

- Starting a very exciting project modeled after the Kennewick, Washington project which has 90 percent of students reading at grade level by third grade.
- Research that has been accomplished at this school is impressive.

Work Plan

1. Support/advocate for ILP eligibility change from 50% delay to 25%.

Amy Simpson stated that there will be some data coming out from the pilot project that ILP is doing for expanded eligibility. The three pilot sites are Sitka, Eagle River, and Soldotna. The data produced will help the committee in going forward to figure how much it will cost to change the eligibility.

Amy noted that the State is also in the process of developing Infant Learning as its own Medicaid classification. This means that ILPs will be able to bill for all 17 services that are Part C services instead of just three.

One other thing they are interested in learning from the pilot sites is the frequency of visitation for families when a child has a less intense delay.

Teresa Holt added that they changed the short-term goals for this goal and divided it in to three parts. They also incorporated goal four, workforce development, into goal one. The new short-term goals under goal one are to:

- A. Identify funding for eligibility expansion
- B. Increase EC workforce to meet eligibility expansion needs
- C. Systemic changes needed for eligibility expansion.

2. Address ILP concerns about the early intervention services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Amy Simpson stated that this will require that they really look at this to make sure that families are receiving a well rounded, full menu of services once their children are identified. They will also need to make sure that children are receiving the education they need to be successful. Amy noted that according to Diane Poage, from the Alaska State School for the Deaf, the graduation rates for children with hearing impairments is very low at about 30 percent.

Patrick Pillai stated that they also discussed at the face-to-face meeting the nature of education and the different methodologies of communication and the ILP role to disseminate information rather than engage in discussions of one method being preferable to another.

Amy Simpson suggested another bullet point under this goal that would address ensuring families' access to information of all modalities and that they can be supported with whatever they choose.

3. Support the Stone Soup Group parent conference.

Amy Simpson stated that the committee came up with many ways for Stone Soup to fund families coming in and ways to support that process.

Teresa Holt stated that she will forward those ideas to Stone Soup Group.

4. Early childhood workforce development.

Amy Simpson stated that with the SEED registry, they are working on a series of modules that all ILP people will need to take at different levels. The modules will contain culture aspects as well as all facets of early intervention.

Amy stated that they discussed how to draw and keep professionals in rural Alaska.

Teresa Holt stated that the Alaska Teacher Education Loan or ATEL program allows students to borrow up to \$7,500 a year if they agree to teach in rural Alaska. If they stay and teach for a specified amount of time, 100 percent of the loan is forgiven.

Another program they discovered is the State Loan Repayment Program, which is for people who are primary care, dental, or behavioral health workers. The EIC thought maybe they could get OT, PT, and speech included in that.

Teresa Holt stated that she will list out specific tasks from the work plan and contact committee members to volunteer for those tasks.

Amy Simpson stated that the remainder of the goals are ongoing ICC duties.

Report from OCS/ILP

There was no report available from OCS/ILP at this meeting.

Report from AILPA

Lizette Stiehr stated that she is the current president of the Infant Learning Program Association. She stated that they teleconference monthly.

Lizette stated that they are working closely with Erin Kinavey on the issues of services for children who have vision impairments. She stated that the State is setting up some trainings with Vanderbilt as well as teleconference and phone call coordination. They are also looking at ways of using some ARRA funding to fund someone in the state of Alaska that would live here and work as a consultant to programs that house someone who has been trained in vision services.

Lizette stated that AILPA is also doing some work with the State on the Medicaid reimbursement, which is on the EIC work plan.

AILPA is getting ready to send out another survey to ask programs to identify their primary priorities and concerns. She will report the survey feedback to the EIC.

Lizette stated that AILPA has revamped the bylaws. She stated that now all of the ILPs have a representative on the AILPA board. They have had good attendance at the teleconferences.

Report from DEED

Melora Gaber did not have anything additional to add.

Report from SESA

Patrick Pillai stated that the program they have right now is the consultant services for autism spectrum disorders. The focus is on gathering resources, referrals, and the initial level consultation and support to the regional agency staff. The specialist in that position is Abby Simonson, and people can call her if they need any information.

Important Future Meetings/Conferences/Trainings

Anchorage Association for the Education of Young Children, February 3 – 5, 2011 at the Hilton Hotel.

Heidi Haas stated that there will be Carol Grey workshops in Soldotna, December 6th; in Fairbanks, December 7th; and in Anchorage on December 8th. Carol Grey is the creator of Social Stories for Children with Developmental Disabilities.

Alaska Head Start Association Conference, Juneau, February 8 – 10, 2011.

Time and Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled teleconference will be December 14, 2010 at 9:00 a.m.

Adjournment

Heidi Haas **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. The motion **PASSED**. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.