



Leadership Council on Early Years Virtual Meeting Meeting Minutes DRAFT Pending Approval

June 1, 2023
9:00 – 11:00am

YouTube Link for Guest Observers: youtube.com/live/qKPfP8_SdEU?feature=share

Members Present: First Lady Kathy Evers, Emilie Amundson (Secretary, DCF), Ashley Andre (Policy Initiatives Advisor, DATCP), Peter Barca (Secretary, DOR), Kathy Bilek (Legislative Liaison, DOT), Kathy Blumenfeld (Secretary, DOA), Linda Hall (Executive Director, OCMH), Joseph Hoey (Assistant Deputy Secretary, DVA), Rebecca Murray (Executive Director, CANPB), Cheryl Olson-Collins (Secretary, DFI), Jill Underly (Superintendent, DPI), Sarah Valencia (Assistant Deputy Secretary, DHS)

Others Present: Jess Boling (WHEDA), Jane Penner-Hoppe (DCF), Melissa Roberts (Assistant Deputy Secretary, DOC), Daithi Wolfe (KidsForward)

Welcome, Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Secretary Emilie Amundson welcomed the council and meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM. Attendance was taken.
- Secretary Amundson called for the approval of the October 2022 meeting minutes and the February 2023 meeting minutes. The approval of the October 2022 meeting minutes was not completed at the February 2023 meeting.
 - Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld motioned to approve the October 2022 meeting minutes. Secretary Peter Barca seconded. All in favor; none opposed. Motion to approve minutes carries.
 - Dr. Jill Underly motioned to approve the February meeting minutes. Secretary Kathy Bilek seconded. All in favor; none opposed. Motion to approve minutes carries.
- Secretary Amundson recapped February meeting and provided updates on her recent travel throughout state.
 - Stated that all pieces of the Governor's Budget connect to help kids and families.
- Shared information about innovative programs that help kids and families.
 - Programs address issues like child care supply issues and provide resources to kids and families.
 - Secretary Amundson visited Dream Up! recipients, Head Start programs, community action agencies, and discussed how critical the Child Care Counts funding program is to meeting needs of child care centers and families.
 - Expressed that Child Care Counts is not just critical for families with young children and child care providers, but also for communities to have workers.
- Attended a celebration at the Governor's Residence to cap off Mental Health Awareness Month.
 - At this event, Governor Evers and First Lady Kathy Evers addressed how critical it is to address mental health issues in schools and communities.

- Secretary Amundson discussed upcoming announcement from DCF about funding via Dream Up! grant.
 - Opportunity for communities to work through on child care and early education challenges.
 - Program has been running since spring 2022 and has been awarded in 28 communities.
 - Recently closed third round of solicitations for third cohort of nine grantees next week.
 - This round offered \$2.5 million through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).
- Agenda overview was given.
 - Members were asked to share how child and family centered budget items are faring this budget and legislative process.
 - DOA will share information about neighborhood investment grant programs.
 - Daithi Wolfe from KidsForward will give a preview of 2023 Kids Count Data set and share trends for children and families in Wisconsin.

Agency Budget Updates

DCF Budget Updates given by Secretary Amundson

- Child Care Counts is an essential investment that we need in order to stabilize our economy.
 - If people cannot work due to lack of child care, businesses won't have employees.
 - Secretary Amundson visited legislators and had good conversation about child care.
 - Legislators have heard from all over the state how important it is, and Secretary Amundson believes they understand this importance.
- There has also been a lot of press about this critical need.
 - Cautiously optimistic that there will be something in budget that reflects sentiment that child care needs help in Wisconsin.
 - May look different or take a different form.
- Project Growth is also left standing.
 - Investment around Partner Up! Program that creates partnerships between businesses and child care providers to provide subsidized child care for employees is also left standing.
 - About \$11 million toward retention, recruitment, and career development for potential providers.
- Also pleased to see support for critical initiatives including foster care and kinship care rate increases. Will provide support to families that are caring for kids who are removed from their home.

CANPB Budget Updates given by Rebecca Murray

- OMCH has gone in front of the Joint Finance Committee (JFC).
 - Governor had provided \$4 million in his budget.
 - JFC granted \$1 million through a motion process.
 - \$500k of this \$1 million is for Family Resource Centers and the other \$500k to increase Triple P.
 - Still waiting to see what comes of Budget Bill.
 - Have not had a budget increase since 2015.

DATCP Budget Updates given by Ashley Andre

- DATCP has gone before JFC.
- 4 items related:
 - Food Processing: one role of DATCP is for a safe food supply for families in Wisconsin.
 - Governor's proposal provided increases in meat and dairy processor grants to foster innovation, improve profitability, and sustain long term viability of food processing industry.
 - These increases were included, and DATCP is hoping they stay throughout process.
 - Food Security:
 - Since COVID, Governor Evers has provided significant funding for Food Security Initiative which included purchasing Wisconsin agriculture products for families and investing in the food security infrastructure.
 - Governor recommended additional funding in food security grants including for Tribal elders.
 - DATCP is hoping this goes through the process.
 - Farmer Wellness Program
 - Governor proposed restoring \$100k each year to provide mental health assistance to farmers and their families.
 - Includes counselling vouchers and a 24/7 help line.
 - Still moving forward, as well.
 - Land and Water Resources
 - Increase funding for producer-led watershed protection grants, county conservation department support, nitrogen optimization program, and crop insurance premium rebate program.
 - Governor promotes sound use of Wisconsin's natural resources, and these items are still moving forward in budget process.

DFI Budget Updates not provided

DHS Budget Updates given by Assistant Secretary Sarah Valencia

- DHS has not yet gone in front of JFC.
- Assistant Secretary Valencia reviewed items that were removed in Motion 10 that are specific to children's early years.
 - Medicaid expansion cut.
 - Lead poisoning prevention and response was removed.
 - Maternal and infant mortality prevention funding removed.
 - Child wellness grant was removed.
 - Medicaid reimbursement for community health workers was removed.
 - Expanded Access to Birth to 3 removed.
 - Food share pilot in accessibility at farmers' markets was removed.
- Newborn screening program is still in.

DOA Budget Updates given by Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld

- DOA has not gone in front of JFC yet.
- Secretary Blumenfeld shared some of the things that have stayed in.

- Wisconsin Front Door initiative: One single sign-on for Wisconsin residents to access all digital services provided by the state.
 - Residents can see what all they are eligible for in a “one stop shop”.
- Shelter for Homelessness and Housing grants: Hoping to be able to continue to fund Housing Assistant Program, State Shelter Subsidy Grant, and a Housing Navigator grant.
- Building a small team to help local governments write grants and build capacity for grant funding.

DOC Budget Updates given by Assistant Deputy Secretary Melissa Roberts

- Increased wage for security staff to address high vacancy rates across institutions; vacancy rates are anywhere from 34-50%.
 - Want to attract and retain talent.
 - Allows folks to have a work-life balance.
 - DOC is promoting increase that Governor included in his budget.
- Youth Justice facilities across state
 - Requested additional funds to complete construction of a smaller regional facility in Milwaukee.
 - Governor also asked for funds for a second Type 1 juvenile corrective facility in Dane County.
 - Would like to demolish and rebuild Grow Academy, which is a Type 2, or step-down facility in Dane County.
- These are priorities for DOC, but not hearing great things about what folks think about price tags on these asks.

DOR Budget Updates given by Secretary Peter Barca

- Next week Thursday, Ways and Means will take up earned income tax credit.
 - Tax credit helps families to stay out of poverty.
- Child tax credit: Governor would like to go to 100% of federal child tax credit.
 - This could help with child care affordability.
 - Research and policy division: putting together statistics that show both direct relationship of tax credit and getting people into the workforce, and the well-being of families.
- Earned income tax credit: important way to help get people out of poverty and keep them off welfare, provide family with dignity, and support them economically.
 - Doing a lot of traveling to share this message.

DOT Budget Updates given by Kathey Bilek

- Updates are mostly around road investments.
 - Transportation alternatives program that helps increase accessibility to transportation alternatives, which can be used bike/ped improvements.
 - Rural areas, that are under subscribed, and this will allow them to apply for grants.
 - Schools in rural areas tend to be located on busier, faster roads, so hoping to increase safety for kids and families who bike to school.
 - Safe Roads to School Program that provide safer intersections and walking paths.

- Workforce side: speaking to potential recruits and Aviation Careers Education (ACE) Program that provides outreach targeted to minority kids in the Milwaukee area.
 - Purpose is to increase interest in air transportation careers.
 - Offer paid internships to help realize careers in aviation and let it be known that these are in reach.

DPI Budget Updates given by State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly

- Dr. Underly shared items DPI is tracking in this budget:
 - Special education funds that would bolster services for most vulnerable youth.
 - DPI has heard some interest but nothing specific on dollar amounts.
 - Revenue authority for schools
 - Schools are coming off of pandemic funds, and did not receive an increase during that time, as costs were met by using pandemic money.
 - Have heard that there is traction, but not heard anything specific yet.
 - Conversations around reading and literacy to support evidence-based strategies in schools.
 - Hopefully that this is headed in a good direction.
 - Working with DWD around education workforce pipeline and apprenticeship opportunities.
 - DCF/DOC efforts to raise age and keep youth out of adult correctional system.
 - JFC removed categorical aid to support districts with mental health.
- Have been hearing that overall numbers for schools are a record investment; however, schools have been operating on one-time funds from pandemic and received no increased spending during last budget.
 - Increases this time may include large increases for private voucher funding.
- DPI also attended mental health event at the Executive Residence.
 - Will continue to advocate for mental health support for those who need it.

DVA Budget Updates given by Assistant Deputy Secretary Joey Hoey

- Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program
 - Provides mental health services, case management support, treatment and recovery services.
 - Governor has proposed expansion of this program (was initially funded with ARPA dollars).
 - Budget item that would have expanded program permanently, but JFC did not fund it.
 - Will have to shrink program within next year.

DWD Budget Updates not given; no DWD representative in attendance.

OCMH Budget Updates given by Director Linda Hall

- Recapped Children's Mental Health event at the Governor's Residence.
 - Have done a lot of good work and was happy to be able to celebrate this work.
 - Were happy that young people were there to help celebrate.
- Director Hall shared some of the top 10 list of things OCMH would like to see in budget.
 - First is categorical spending for school mental health.
 - Seems to be out, but OCMH is hopeful that they will increase funding for grants that schools have been applying for.

- Request for new staff position to use to support effort to develop statewide youth wellness network.
 - This individual would bring together state leaders who are staffing youth councils in a community of practice to share resources, best practices, and information and to do outreach among the 200 schools that have a youth-led mental health program.
 - These youth would, in turn, develop agenda for what we should be doing around youth mental health.
 - Have already started community of practice aspect and folks seem energized about it.
 - Would like to have this community of practice happen even if they don't get the position they are asking for.

WEDC Budget Updates given by Secretary Missy Hughes

- WEDC went before JFC last week Thursday.
 - There was a discussion about role child care as it relates to talent attraction and retention.
 - If we want people to come to Wisconsin to work, need to provide child care that is affordable and accessible.
 - Proposal for Child Care Counts to go through WEDC.
 - The proposal did not move forward.
 - WEDC did receive increase in budget, which is their first increase since 2012.
 - WEDC will continue to connect dots between economy and child care.

WHEDA Budget Updates given by Deputy Assistant Director Jessica Boling

- All policy changes suggested for Governor's budget were stripped.
- Some Republicans have reintroduced a few housing bills.
 - One of these bills is related to an infrastructure loan program that WHEDA would administer and is gaining traction.

Neighborhood Investment Fund Grant Program

Kathy Blumenfeld, Secretary Department of Administration

- DOA Shared information on Community Partners Campus.
 - One of many Neighborhood Investment Grants that were awarded across the state.
 - Sec. Blumenfeld just visited yesterday.
 - Technical College put together video that Sec. Blumenfeld shared the first minute of about the Community Partners Campus.
 - Community Partners Campus is located in central part of Wausau.
 - Houses 7 nonprofits and 1 non-profit and serves as a one stop shop for families in the community to have basic needs met including food, shelter, health care, mental health, and social wellbeing.
 - Campus is an example of a public-private membership.
 - Located in a modern building with welcoming space.
 - Campus was a result of a vision of 2 individuals in Wausau; one of these individuals tried for over 20 years to create a place like this.
 - Community itself raised about \$4 million for this effort.
 - Purchased a former job center site and gutted and expanded it so that it can house up to 15 nonprofits.

- One nonprofit manages real estate itself so that breakrooms, kitchen, meeting space, etc. can be shared and reduce rent for the other nonprofits.
- Building is sustainable with solar being added.
- Can offer nonprofits very reduced rates.
 - Tenants used to spend so much time worrying about the building itself, so now they can focus on their mission.
- Neighborhood Investment Program was \$210 million of ARPA funds.
 - This CPC received \$1.5 grant and was able to raise a lot of money within their community.
- Brought in community to help paint mural.
- Nonprofits include:
 - North Central Community Action Program: key partner in child care; serve so many people with needs.
 - Neighbor's Place (the Market): named a market rather than a food pantry. Have individuals who help folks pick out health food choices.
 - Receive deliveries from local organic farms.
 - Accessible, friendly, and as nice as a regular grocery store.
 - Teach people about cooking.
 - Working with other stores to collect donations.
 - Kitchen onsite with the hope of teaching people how to cook in crockpots, which is helpful for people who don't have stoves.
 - Baby's Place – diaper bank: have developed relationships with diaper manufacturers.
 - Also have other items like crocheted blankets, hats, other things that babies will need.
 - Wausau Free Clinic: retired doctor with Marshfield Clinic. His dream was to be able to offer a truly free clinic in the area along with a free pharmacy.
 - Also knows other doctors who are asking to be a part of the clinic.
- One day a week, center is open in the evenings, so that people don't have to take off work to go.
- No matter where people come in, they are made aware of all other services that they can access with no cost.
 - Hoping that this is a model that can be replicated throughout the state and the nation.
 - Calls from people who want to come in to see how they did it and how it's working.
 - Nonprofits meet monthly to evolve service model of entire organization.
 - Many AmeriCorps members are stationed in CPCs.

Secretary Amundson Introduction of Daithi Wolfe of KidsForward

- KidsForward is the State Kids Count affiliate represented by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
 - We are excited to getting a sneak preview about the soon-to-be released data set and how it helps us paint a picture of children and families in our state.
 - The official release of this data will be on June 16, 2023.
- Daithi Wolfe serves as the Senior Early Education Advisor for KidsForward.

- Daithi is an active partner with DCF in coordinating the new Parent/Caregiver Equity Advisory Cabinet.
 - Also works to improve nutrition and increase physical activity in child care settings.
 - Co-chairs the Healthy Early, an award-winning state-wide coalition that promotes healthy eating, gardening, active play, and outdoor learning.

Who are Wisconsin Children and Families? What Are Their Challenges?

Daithi Wolfe, Senior Early Education Advisor, KidsForward,

- Daithi shared review of data and full data set will be released in a couple of weeks.
 - If folks need data for presentations, they can contact KidsForward.
 - Want to be able to share data with stories.
- Three areas today
 - Child Care Costs
 - Decline in Family Child Care Programs
 - Medicaid Postpartum Extension
- Child Care Costs
 - Lack of child care in WI short changes children and holds back women, especially women of color, back professionally.
 - Child care is unaffordable.
 - Government states that families should not pay more than 7% of income for child care.
 - Typical married families are paying 11%.
 - Typical single mother family with income of \$36k pays 34% if income.
 - Housing is defined as 30% or less of income.
 - Those earning minimum wage cannot afford housing and child care.
 - To keep child care in business and make it more available, programs like Child Care Counts is important.
 - Supply of child care is also an issue.
 - While WI has recovered in many industries, child care is still down.
 - Was already in crisis before Covid started.
- Decline in Family Child Care Programs
 - Smaller environment, often a more flexible schedule.
 - Analysis showed drop in regulated child care programs.
 - Declined from 6,801 to 2,063 in last 15 years.
 - Family child care centers are more racially diverse than center-based child care settings.
 - Immigrants, women of color, Spanish speaking providers reflect the need of the families that they serve.
 - Discussed interest in outdoor learning and grants to allow child care centers to install outdoor classrooms for play and learning.
- Medicaid Postpartum Extension
 - Extending from 90 days to 12 months of coverage.
 - Shared statistic that in Wisconsin, Black women are 5 times more likely to die from pregnant-related causes than white women.
 - \$30 million to extend Badger Care up to one year.
 - Would begin to address racial disparities and ensure parents they have what they need to have a strong start.

- What's next?
 - KIDS COUNT data available at aecf.org.
 - Data set info
 - National release has 16 main indicators, which includes everything from whether families have health insurance, are they in poverty, are they employed, kindergarten readiness, etc.
 - Wisconsin will have their own release.

Wrap-up and Next Steps

Emilie Amundson, Secretary, Department of Children and Families

- Secretary Amundson thanked Daithi Wolfe and KIDS FORWARD for sharing presentation.
 - Flagged that KIDS FORWARD is a great resource and partner for many of us on the call.
 - Thanked WCCF around our partnership to lift up voices of those with lived experience.
 - Allow us to get better as state agency.
- Shared that we are trying to formalize format to these LCEY meetings where we share updates, do a little bit of learning, and sharing success stories from the State of Wisconsin.
 - Grateful when folks on council can share things that they are seeing throughout the state.

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Housing for the ECE workforce – DWD and WED
 WHEDA – affordable housing
 DHS supportive housing
 Have a tribe present
 Tribal language revitimau