

**Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)**  
**Open Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, June 7, 2023, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm**

Virtual Zoom Meeting

<https://dcfwi.zoom.us/j/83625086707?pwd=bm9EMTFkemtFRVExRStwNFZtbE9Vdz09>

**Present:** Emilie Amundson, John Ashley, Barbara Bales (designee), Priya Bhatia, Jillian Clemens, Morna Foy, Kia Kjensrud, Jose Martinez (designee), Kelly Matthews, Jennie Mauer, Charlene Mouille, Kathy Mullally, Lana Nenide, Duy Nguyen, Cailin O'Connor, Matricia Patterson, Stephany Pruitt, Deborah Rathermel, Katie Roberts (designee), Ruth Schmidt, Dr. Jill Underly, Dea Wright

**Excused:** Salvador Carranza, Eric Fulcomer, Daria Hall, Peng Her, Lupe Martinez, Suzette Mayotte, Mark Tyler

**Call to Order, Agenda Review, and Approval of Minutes**

- The meeting was called to order at 9:03 am by Duy Nguyen, Assistant State Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction (DPI).
- Duy asked for a motion to approve the March 15, 2023, council meeting minutes. Barbara Bales made the motion to approve, and Matricia Patterson seconded the motion. The council voted to approve the minutes.
- Slides were shared, and a review of the agenda was completed.

**Co-Chair Welcome and Updates**

- Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Emilie Amundson provided budget updates, indicating that the requests made by the Governor in alignment with the Council's recommendations have not yet been addressed by the Joint Committee on Finance (JFC). Emilie took time to highlight the Child Care Counts program, pointing out that it is an issue regarding economic development, not just child care. A number of DCF items are said to remain in the budget at this time.
- Secretary Amundson discussed participating in community site visits in which she was able to witness the partnerships and good work being performed through the Project Growth initiative and Family Resource Centers.
- The Governor recognized May as Mental Health Month with a celebration and praised the work of the Office of Children's Mental Health.
- Emilie provided highlights from the Governor's Leadership Council on Early Years' June meeting. Agency partners focused on the 0-5 space and identified proposals remaining in the budget which affect children and families. The Department of Administration shared the work of Community Partners Campus in Wausau, a

shared space in a convenient location consisting of non-profit organizations which offer multiple services and provide basic needs for their residents.

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/pdg/lcey>

- DPI State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly talked about how the time of transition is now, finding a way out of the pandemic. She cautioned against the urge to return to pre-pandemic times and indicated that the state must use what has been learned and recognize the investment needed in Wisconsin's families/the state's future. She discussed the one-time funding provided through COVID19 and verified the importance of budget decisions.

### **Budget Updates and Member Discussion**

- DCF's Division of Early Care and Education's Administrator, Priya Bhatia, reviewed the Council's 2022 Budget Recommendations to the Governor, as well as the Governor's budget recommendations which support them. She examined both the ECAC items and the early childhood items presented by DCF that currently remain in the budget. Advocacy for these efforts is said to be continuing.
- Tom McCarthy, Executive Director of the Office of the State Superintendent, provided DPI's updates. The school-based mental health system was stricken from the budget last month. The department is looking for new ways in which to have this proposal revisited, as the need for mental health supports is thought to be great. Tom reiterated the need for increased revenue for schools and DPI's quest to improve reading/literacy. Tom discussed the demand for special education funding. Advocacy is said to be met with open and reflective conversations with legislators.
- Council members discussed the best ways in which to advocate at this time, leading up to a JFC decision. Many agencies spoke of previous efforts and the impact of the tremendous outpouring by the industry. The council recognized the significance and power of the parents' voice. Concern was raised over the possible expansion of unregulated care.
- Mental health issues were said to be on the rise. Council members were referred to a report published by the Children's Equity Project on the mental health crisis occurring in early care educators and very young children, <https://childandfamilysuccess.asu.edu/cep/mental-health-report>.

### **ECAC Executive Order: Discussion and Information Gathering**

Priya Bhatia provided a recap of the ECAC Executive Order, as presented at the last Full Council Meeting, and shared the results of the previous meeting's Mentimeter survey. When asked which functions of the Executive Order the council would like to address more fully, they responded with 1) Executive Order 4b - identifying opportunities for collaboration and coordination among Early Care and Education (ECE) programs and agencies, 2) Executive Order 4a - conducting periodic statewide needs assessments, and 3) Executive Order 4g - developing recommendations across a range of ECE topics.

Members also listed data needs as a priority under "Other." Mentimeter results showed that council members would like to engage and discuss content with 1) sub-committee meeting structures/ad hoc meetings about specific topics, 2) large group discussions, and 3) small group breakout sessions. The council will consider this feedback as they move forward.

Priya reviewed the previous accomplishments of the council and the activities currently being conducted by the council in response to these three required functions of the Order. Duy Nguyen shared his excitement in the decision to include the ECAC in the review and revision of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and the cross-collaborative opportunity it presents.

A similar accounting of accomplishments and activities was provided for other Executive Order requirements addressing the topics of access, data, and the workforce. The council participated in an exercise in which its members were randomly divided into four groups. The teams were to discuss 1) the current and/or ongoing work being performed in connection to these themes, 2) what reports, data, and workgroups already exist in support of these areas, and 3) the strengths, barriers, opportunities, and gaps which live in this space. The groups were reunited to share out some of their team's ideas and discoveries--

- There are lots of gaps in the data system.
- There has been a lot of work done in the workforce space.
- Efforts in marketing the multitude of opportunities and resources available to ECE staff must be intensified and continual.
- It is important to grow Child Care Resource and Referral agencies because of the contributions they provide to all three areas.
- Some would like to see legislative aides return to the ECAC meetings, as the assistants are said to work closely with those that need the information.
- The concept of 4K outreach hours may want to be explored further.
- Consideration should be given to the dual roles of many child care providers-- provider and parent.

Notes from each team will be combined and a comprehensive list of thoughts and ideas will be shared with the council members.

### **Next Steps and Closing Remarks**

- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 27, 9 am until noon.
- A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Kelly Matthews; Katie Roberts seconded the motion. The council voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:49 am.