

School Readiness Committee

Meeting Minutes

Full Committee Meeting

Patrick Henry Building

West Reading Room

1111 E. Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219

September 8th, 2016- 10:00am-1:00pm

Attendees

Present Committee Members:

Maritsa Alger, Delegate John Bell, Dr. Rosemary Burton, Dr. Irene Carney, Dr. Chris Chin, Dr. Rick Clemons, Delegate Mark Dudenhefer, Senator Siobhan Dunnavant, Senator Adam Ebbin, Navine Fortune, Kathy Glazer, Mark Gordon, Bonnie Graham, Delegate Tag Greason, Phillip Hawkins, Secretary Bill Hazel, Secretary Dietra Trent, Lisa Howard, Andrew Ko, Rob Krupicka, Shelley Lingamfelter, Dr. Sara Miller, Laurie Moran, Delegate Roxann Robinson, Dr. Christine Schull, Commissioner Margaret Schultze, Walter Stosch, Senator David Suetterlein, Gary Thomson, Janet Turner-Giles, Anne Marie Twohie, Barry Weinstein

Christine Harris served as designee for Dr. Steven Staples

Craig Ramey was present via conference call.

Absent Committee Members:

Gail Johnson, Henry Light, Toni Marchese

Scribe

Maggie Chambers

Agenda

- **Welcome & Introductions**
- **National Perspective on the Early Childhood Workforce**
- **Research Base for Early Childhood Workforce**

- **Assessing Skills, Competencies, and Capabilities**
- **Small Group Reflections and Discussion**
- **Public Comment**
- **Adjournment**

Welcome

- **10:00am** – Secretary Dietra Trent began the meeting
- Secretary Dietra Trent, Secretary Bill Hazel, Delegate Tag Greason, and Mark Gordon provided welcome remarks to the group.
 - Secretary Trent introduced herself and provided background on her experience in higher education, and thanked the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation, Delegate Greason, and committee staff for their work on the committee so far.
 - Secretary Hazel commented on the importance of early childhood education as providing new opportunities for children. He stressed the importance of the work of this committee, as they will be able to impact policy during and after the McAuliffe administration.
 - Delegate Greason spoke to how much he appreciates having so many knowledgeable parties in the room for this committee, and stressed the importance of getting these policies right as a way to build a solid foundation for early childhood policy.
 - Committee chair Mark Gordon welcomed the committee, and spoke to his background with education and early childhood education in particular. He commented on the diversity of the committee, and encouraged committee members to be as engaged and transparent in the work as possible.
- Chair Mark Gordon asked committee members to pair up and introduce each other to the rest of the group.

National Perspective on the Early Childhood Workforce

- Rhian Evans Allvin of NAEYC presented to the Committee to give a national perspective on the early childhood workforce. She focused her remarks on NAEYC's goals for the early childhood education workforce to define excellence,

and discussed the key ideas & obstacles for the committee to keep in mind as they focus on the issue.

- Allvin noted that first and foremost, the biggest obstacle for improving the education level of the early childhood workforce is wages. In the private sector economy, the price of early learning is primarily funded by parents, and the wages paid to early childhood educators are too low to encourage educators to improve their education level.
- She emphasized that the funding system defines all of what early childhood education looks like, in that the regulatory structure follows the funding at the federal level, and these interactions continue at every level of government.
- In discussing ways to improve the education level of the early childhood workforce, Allvin stressed that it is an issue of vertical integration to plan how educators can progress from associate's degrees to bachelor's degrees and so on, creating a better structure and pathway to move up in education level. She suggested looking at the Institutes of Medicine study on the issue as showing examples of ways of system building & transforming the workforce.
- Another key point of her presentation was the need to align requirements for educators. She emphasized that "keeping kids safe" isn't enough for early childhood education to aim for, and that they need higher standards for teachers to improve the learning environment.
- Allvin spoke about NAEYC's theory of change. She said that the priority focus for their organization is changing the image of the early childhood profession both among educators themselves and outside of the profession. NAEYC has assembled a task force to agree on the name for the profession, the scope of practice, and the code of ethics.
- Allvin provided advice on the task ahead for the committee members. These included grounding action in science, embracing early childhood education as a profession, unpacking current structures rather than adding something new, engaging higher education, being agnostic to the setting of early childhood education, aligning quality and access to education, acting with the child and family at the center, and finally, emphasizing that early childhood education should not be approached with the same lens as K-12, as it is fundamentally different.

Research Base for the Early Childhood Workforce

- Dr. Robert Pianta of the University of Virginia presented to the Committee on the existing research base behind the impact high quality instruction can have on young learners.
 - He stressed that the goal for early childhood education is that every child in need has access to a highly effective preschool program before they enter Kindergarten, with the sufficient intensity to close achievement gaps. He stressed that this comes about with the infrastructure, robust governance, stable funding, accountability, and regulation to target the essential elements of a quality education program. The biggest obstacle now is the fragmented implementation of existing (ineffective) early childhood programs.
 - Dr. Pianta emphasized that the current workforce system is a “non-system,” with weak training regimes, and policies that are having too little effect on children. In seeking to improve this, Pianta noted that teacher credentials do not on their own drive learning, but that teacher skills, knowledge, and interactions do matter.
 - He discussed the CLASS Instruction Dimensions, which are a way to assess quality of teaching through analyzing emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Pianta noted that courses on teacher-student interactions improved quality of teaching across the CLASS dimensions, and that classrooms with more high poverty students benefit even more from targeted coaching.
 - He presented on ways to improve impacts via program design and professional development, and strengthening the workforce through higher education and professional development. Overall, the goal should be an integrated, effective, and scalable system of implementation.
 - This presentation is available in the Committee’s Dropbox, accessible on the website.

Assessing Skills, Competencies, and Capabilities

- Marilyn Rice of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation presented on methods of assessing early childhood educators.
 - She began her presentations by showing videos of quality teacher-child interaction, and emphasized the differences between quality teaching in a K-12 classroom and quality teaching in a preK classroom.

- She discussed the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and emphasized that children benefit most when teachers engage in stimulating interactions that support learning *and* are emotionally supportive.
- She gave an overview of the domains within the CLASS analysis, including emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Emotional support includes building social and emotional functioning in the classroom. Classroom organization relates to processes of organization and management of students' behavior, time, and attention. Instructional support focuses on the way teachers implement curriculum to effectively support cognitive development and language development.
- Throughout her presentation, she showed specific examples through photos and videos of quality teacher-child interaction.
- This presentation is available in the Committee's Dropbox, accessible on the website.

Small Group Reflection and Discussion

- Chair Mark Gordon broke the group up into smaller discussion groups, and proposed the following questions for discussion.
 - What are your reflections on the information presented?
 - What issues do you see as surfacing for this Committee's attention?
 - What other information do you need to help further your understanding of these issues?
 - Other reflections or questions?
- He asked the groups to report out to the main body on their discussion.
- Group 1: Reflecting on the presentations, the group emphasized the need to focus in on one goal, rather than spreading out efforts, and foresaw breaking down silos as being the biggest challenge for this body. They expressed interest in the Institutes of Medicine Report on Workforce mentioned by Rhian Evans Allvin, and wanted to learn more.
- Group 2: A takeaway for this group was that the K-1 system may not align well with preK, and that the Committee will be working on a complex system. They requested additional information on what choices look like for parents deciding on their child's education, and what defines teacher quality if it's not a college degree. They expressed the importance of aligning Higher Ed and training programs.

- Group 3: This group was struck by the early childhood system being a “nonsystem,” as described by Dr. Pianta. They also emphasized the need for keeping elected officials informed of classroom level knowledge that only teachers have. This group believed the plan of action should be to focus on expectations for what we want for a kindergartner, and to reverse engineer the system from that example, creating a feedback loop for regulators & educators. This group agreed with group #1 that the Committee should focus on one aspect of early childhood education, the workforce, rather than spreading out.
- Group 4: This group noted that presenters focused on the scope of the work that needed to be done, and emphasized the need to put children first. They wanted to explore further the question of whether bachelors degrees confer necessary experience for early childhood educators, and wanted to see more analytics on metrics for teacher quality indicators. They also wanted to better understand the professionalization of the early childhood profession as discussed by Rhian Evans Allvin, and explore more of the inconsistencies between public and private settings.

Next Steps

- Chair Mark Gordon explained that the next meeting of the Committee would take place on November 10th from 10:00am-1:00pm in Richmond.

Adjournment

- Chair Mark Gordon adjourned the Committee at 1:00pm.