WEST VIRGINIA
Early Childhood
Planning TASK FORCE

FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2013 • SUMMIT CONFERENCE CENTER

West Virginia Early Childhood Planning Task Force
Meeting Summary – Friday, May 17, 2013

Task Force Members Present:
Robert Kiss, Task Force Chairperson, Bowles Rice Attorneys at Law
Michelle Foster, Kanawha Institute for Social Research & Action
Kay Goodwin, WV Department of Education and the Arts
Lloyd Jackson, Jackson Gas
Arthur Rubin, DO, WV School of Osteopathic Medicine
Justin Seibert (via conference call), Direct Online Marketing
Rachel Tompkins

Other presenters:
Clayton Burch, Office of Early Learning

Task Force Resource Team Members Present:
Julie Pratt, Project Director, Ridgeline: Ideas in Action
Jenny Lancaster, Project Associate, Terzetto Creative
Kim Tieman, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
Gretchen Frankenberry, Early Childhood Advisory Council

Welcome and Introductions

Task Force Members and Resource Team Members introduced themselves

Task Force purpose and timetable

Julie Pratt described the creation of the West Virginia Early Childhood Planning Task Force via Executive Order 5-13, which charged the group with producing a Development Plan for Early Childhood by December 31, 2013. The plan will define the components, priorities and costs of a quality early childhood system and strategies for its implementation and governance. The Task Force will include extensive involvement of state and local agencies and organizations, as well as parents, professionals and the public, in its work. The Task will collaborate closely with the Early Childhood Advisory Council and its member organizations.

Lloyd Jackson provided a historical perspective, including the 10-year development of the state's nationally recognized Pre-K program, which illustrates the ability of state and local agencies to develop effective programs for young children.

Also see these handouts available at www.wvecptf.org:
- Executive Order 5-13
- Planning Framework
- Timetable for Plan Development

West Virginia's Early Childhood System: Presentations and Discussion

Kim Tieman, Program Officer, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, presented an overview of research on the importance of early childhood development and key considerations in developing an effective system of early childhood services and programs. Her presentation "Early Childhood in West Virginia" is available at www.wvecptf.org.

Kay Goodwin, Cabinet Secretary, WV Department of Education and the Arts, and Chairperson, Early Childhood Advisory Council, presented an overview of the Council and its work. She highlighted what the Council views as three of the most pressing issues that need to be addressed in early childhood system planning:

1. Data: every early childhood program collects data for their own reporting needs. However, these different data systems do not "talk" or interact with each other. This means that there is no way to track a child through multiple programs and no way to truly gauge program effectiveness from birth through adulthood. Not only is this bad for our system and our kids, it has, numerous times, meant that we are leaving federal money on the table because WV can't answer basic data compilation questions about our programs. .

2. Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): The Council believes that a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs is desperately needed. QRIS has been put in state code, a cost analysis has been completed, and planning for the system continues to take place. However, there has been little to no investment put forward to bring this system to fruition.

3. Comprehensive approach to serving infants and toddlers: Finally, and most importantly, West Virginia must develop a comprehensive approach to serving our infants, toddlers, and their families. For most families in WV, there is no real choice for infant and toddler care. Fewer and fewer centers accept infants and those that do are raising their costs rapidly. This need, more than any of the other initiatives that will be mentioned over the course of the next few months, is complicated. For the infant and toddler population, there is no one program or silver bullet that will suffice. What is needed for a family with two working parents might be different than the services needed for families with a stay at home parent or a family care giver. But all families need services. Truly serving this population requires funding many different programs and guaranteeing that many different services are available to families.

Also see these handouts available at www.wvecptf.org:
- Secretary Kay Goodwin's presentation about the Early Childhood Advisory Council

Clayton Burch, Executive Director, Office of Early Learning, WV Department of Education, presented information on the state's school readiness efforts and referred people to the website ReadySetGo WV at http://wvde.state.wv.us/ready-set-go/. West Virginia's school readiness definition focuses not only on ready children, but also on ready families, ready schools and ready communities.

Clayton also provided information from the WV School Readiness Profile for 2012 and the most recent report on WVBE Policy 2525: West Virginia's Universal Access to a Quality Early Education System (access report at www.wvecptf.org). Highlights for 2011-2012 include:

- WV Universal Pre-K enrollment was 15,268 children, including all 4-year-olds and 3-year-olds with an IEP.
- Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of Pre-K classrooms were in collaboration with community partners, e.g. Head Start and child care programs, far surpassing the state mandate that at least half of Pre-K classrooms be collaborative.
- Total state aid funding generated by Pre-K was more than $85 million, in addition to federal Head Start and child care funding.
- The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) found that WV Pre-K met 8 out of 10 quality benchmarks; WV Pre-K is expected to be one out of 6 states that meets all 10 benchmarks next year.
- NIEER also ranked WV Pre-K 5th in the country on access for 4-year-olds and 7th on access for 3-year-olds
- Inequalities exist in Pre-K across the state in terms of number of hours per day and days per week All families need access to full-day Pre-K five days per week.
- Importance of closing achievement gap at 3rd grade: If we do a better job in pre/birth to 3 year old will improve benchmarks for Pre-K -3rd grade benchmarks
- One of biggest gaps is for children between 3 to 4 years old.

Creating a Development Plan for Early Childhood in WV: Discussion

Julie presented a draft Planning Framework for discussion. Julie made revisions to incorporate the suggestions from Task Force members, and the revised document is posted at www.wvecptf.org.

Next meeting

Possible dates were discussed. After the meeting, Julie did an online poll of members for monthly meeting dates through the summer, and the best dates for the most people were:
- Friday, June 21
- Wednesday, July 31
- Wednesday, August 28

Meeting summary prepared by:
Jenny Lancaster and Julie Pratt
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