

State of New Mexico

CHILDREN, YOUTH and FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

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NEW MEXICO EARLY LEARNING ADVISORY COUNCIL (ELAC)

December 4, 2014
Workforce Training Center - 5600 Eagle Rock Ave. NE – Albuquerque NM

Meeting was Call Order by Erica Stubbs, ELAC Chair. She welcomed the participants and thanked CNM for the use of the space.

Roll was called for the meeting. Present: Erica Stubbs, Janis Gonzales, Leighann Lenti, Beth Beers (new to ELAC; she manager of community programs for Socorro Community Hospital), Franz Joachim, Karen Ziegler, Larry Langley (by phone), and Ray Jaramillo.

Andy Gomm, excused; Dan Haggard, excused. Quorum established.

New ELAC members – Introductions and Welcoming

New ELAC members were introduced - Beth Beers, manager of community programs for Socorro Community Hospital including Home Visiting. Each member introduce him/herself and Erica asked other guests and audience present to introduce themselves. She reminded everyone that there was a sign-up sheet for those interested in talking to the committee at the end of the meeting.

People who want to get on the ELAC agenda to talk about an issue may email chair Erica Stubbs at Erica.stubbs@pmsnm.org or Alejandra Rebolledo Rea, at Alejandra.rebolledo@state.nm.us .

Motion to approve September 4 Meeting Minutes.

Heather Vaughn/Franz Joachim. No Discussion. All In Favor. Motion Passes.

**Update: Race To The Top “Early Learning Challenge” - FOCUS Alignment
FOCUS Leadership Team**

The governor-appointed Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) last Thursday heard a progress report on how the FOCUS Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System is progressing, including plans to include home visiting, early intervention and public school preschool programs, as well as child care and education programs in its efforts.

Alejandra Rebolledo, Bureau Chief of the Office of Child Development, said the process for implementing FOCUS quality improvement across departments already has started and that the RTT State Leadership Team is beginning the planning for sustainability beyond RTT. That funding has financed development of new FOCUS standards and hiring of consultants to work with programs on quality.

Alejandra: informed the council that the leadership team in Kansas City, Mo. She is the only member of the Leadership team present at today's meeting. She explained that the team is working on the Communications plan and Early Learning Governance plan. Presently, there is an executive leadership that is representative of each one of the secretaries (designees) to ensure that the departments are integrated into the process for the long term.

The CYFD FOCUS has about 200 programs in the pilot and is recruiting the next fifty starting next year by July 2015. There are a lot of programs that are interested in participating, including more Head Start and native programs. They are also looking at additional support for the head start programs so they can be aligned with the rest of the work being done. For home visiting programs, the state has started work aligning quality and performance standards. The quality standards will be TQRIS. The process of alignment will begin in January.

Linda Askew from the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) program at DOH reported on the progress of implementing FCUS at the FIT program. FIT has been meeting with a stakeholder group of about 32 programs to work on essential quality indicators for FIT. They are also working on a video demonstration project with six programs as a pilot to show how video can help assess early intervention programs and aid in continuous quality improvement, as well as using video in reflective practice.

Terri Tapia, UNM FOCUS Consultant for PED programs, has been working with public school preschool programs – Title 1, 619 (special education preschools) and NM Pre-K classrooms – to align program standards with FOCUS criteria. The PED FOCUS team has brought together stakeholders in three meetings. The group was so eager to keep working that it asked to have meetings sooner than next year to continue work.

FOCUS participation is voluntary for CYFD child care programs, but on the public schools. Participation in FOCUS is mandatory, Terri said. The first pilot will start Jan. 1, with close to 50 NM Pre-K classrooms being involved. The rest of the NM Pre-K programs will be brought on in July and August, including Title 1 and 619 classrooms.

ELAC chair, Erica Stubbs asked who is managing making sure what FOCUS standards are appropriate to each kind of classroom. Terri said that there is a leadership team that reviews the recommendations of the stakeholder group to see if they are appropriate. Erica suggested involving private providers in those discussions could be a good idea to make sure the standards are similar across CYFD FOCUS and public school FOCUS. They have looked at how they are going to support programs that are not familiar with the Focus and with tier quality rating improvement system.

There are some pre-k programs that have blended funds so they are already blending funds from 619 and Title 1. They have determined the quality of criteria indicators at what is being proposed at a quality level, high quality level and exemplary level.

They are also supporting an early care transition system that supports transition from one early care system to the next. Erica recommended that private providers be included that are not connected to the state to provide additional support for the transition.

Katrina Montano White, Early Childhood Education Supervisor/Administrator, was asked to talk about the goal of full participation of each child under FOCUS. Katrina said the state has brought in experts within the past few days to hold a symposium on family engagement and fatherhood, supports for Dual Language Learners as well as supports for Social/Emotional Development, working for several months with Dr. Rob Corso using the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (CSEFEL). The symposium included a presentation by Dr. Roberto Dansie who provided a presentation on Culture and Community. The symposium was attended by more than 200 early learning professionals in the field including but not limited to child care, PreK (PED and CYFD), Early Intervention, Home Visiting, Head Start, Early Head Start, Child Care Licensing, Consultants, Faculty, Court Appointed Child Advocates, etc.

An initial cadre of trainers are being instructed in the CSEFEL approach, often referred to as a Pyramid, which shows the various levels of support infants and young children need for social and emotional development. The thirteen Master Cadre has been selected for programs ranging professionals working with UNM-CDD, individuals working with APS, FOCUS consultants, Pre-K, TTAPS, and other early childhood and Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health professionals.

Katrina introduced Dr. Carola Matera from California State University who provided a brief presentation to ELAC. Dr. Carola Matera is working on the full participation goal by helping NM look at how best to support dual language learners.

Carola said she is looking at “how do we recommend practices that can be tailored (to specific programs) but can respond to the rigor dual language programs need. We know we need to address language and culture early on.” She talked about how the effort can begin with home visitors working with infants and their caregivers.

Dr. Carola said they have been talking about research and foundation, what are the challenges, the strengths and the needs of the state to better address culture and language in a responsive way. Not just documenting the process but also aligning and responding and learning about the needs.

Erica asked how early educators will be trained and educated for this work. Carola said California has developed Early Childhood Educator Competencies that includes a section on working with dual language children. Carola said she wants to help higher education and in-service training to develop the appropriate dispositions and skills for early educators.

She was asked to talk about how to address the different types of program, common issues of different communities, families.

She said, “By having the structure when addressing it with the home visits, many issues with the child can be addressed to see the whole development of the child. We are looking at it as a system, looking at who the players are with unique characteristics within those who are part of New Mexico”.

Alejandra told the ELAC that they will be developing materials. The Pyramid which is a subcommittee of ELAC. The bottom of the Pyramid is the competent workforce, the sustainability of our workforce is the consultation systems already in place. Research tells us that training is very good, materials are excellent but without having somebody on site we are not going to be successful. Need to work at different levels and right now working with the consultation piece. We have a cross-sector consultation orientation to get the workforce used to similar trainings and framework. The state is working on the training piece, the materials, the tool kits and the consultation competencies.

ELAC Strategic Plan Updates - Committee Chairs

ELAC heard reports from the chairs of various committees.

Access to Quality Committee – Committee Chair, Karen Ziegler, Andy Gomm and Janice Gonzales. Karen Ziegler, said the Access to Quality Committee has been working in various areas and closely with the Special Quest for Quality Subcommittee.

They have four priorities that they are working on: inclusion, culture and language, investment zones and social behaviors: social/emotional competence. There is a working subcommittee: the Special Quest for Inclusion group that has already given a presentation.

Erica Candelaria was introduced as part of the committee. Erica Candelaria of Parents Reaching Out talked about Special Quest's interest in looking at developing an "accessible icon" project such as has been done in Minnesota to change the image of "handicapped accessible" parking, for instance, to "accessible parking" and with an icon that shows movement and power. It would be a "real move forward to promote inclusion." The committee has been asked to review the inclusion guidance documents. As a committee, they want to provide support to the TQRIS FOCUS System.

Ray Jaramillo, director of Alpha School in Las Cruces and an ELAC member, asked if legislative changes would be needed. She said it might be possible to just change Department of Transportation regulations. "My wife and mom used to struggle with that (icon)," Ray said. "If there is anything I can do to help, let me know."

Erica said Special Quest has a video about the issue.

Under dual language learners, have been talking with Carola to see how they can get some work done in the committee. On challenging behavior is also the Pyramid. They have been working hard to broaden the committee's membership to include already existing and functional committee work.

Erica announced that public comment was closed.

Work Force Development Committee

Alejandra noted that a new representative for higher education has yet to be appointed by the governor for ELAC. (Shannon Rivera from the faculty of Western New Mexico University in Silver City has been endorsed by the Early Childhood Higher Education Task Force for the position at a recent meeting.)

Alejandra said the Higher Ed task force is looking at how to meet the needs of all communities, after hearing that many educators are taking classes on-line from out of state. CYFD is making sure that higher education faculty are familiar with all the FOCUS initiatives being undertaken, and will have another higher education institute for faculty to provide more information about FOCUS efforts.

Alejandra reported that the Higher Ed task force, a sub-committee of ELAC is looking at how can we make it so that it is more accessible for communities and for those educators that are already working that may not have the time or ability to go into the classroom setting and allowing those learning groups to still connect within the community but without having to come to a classroom. She said, "We want to make sure that they are not disconnected from all of the state initiatives". They are getting ready to organize the next higher education institute. This is where faculty and adjunct faculty can learn more about the early learning guidelines so they have part of the competencies implemented into the workforce so that it is certain that if they are going to any of the institutions in New Mexico system they are getting similar support.

Dan Ritchey, director of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarship program and INCENTIVES pay supplement program at the NM Association for the Education of Young Children (NMAEYC), reported that more than 800 early educators are using T.E.A.C.H. scholarships – the largest number in the 10-year history of the program.

He said INCENTIVE\$ has exceeded 300 applications for the first statewide pay supplements, based on teachers' level of education, made possible by a \$296,900 grant in the CYFD budget. INCENTIVE\$ will be able to serve about 100 of those applicants, who will be chosen at random to give each person an equal chance. (The random numbers will be established around mid-December after all the applications are evaluated and entered in the INCENTIVE\$ database.)

The applications have come from throughout the state. NMAEYC Executive Director Baji Rankin noted that applications are still being accepted even though a Nov. 30 deadline for being included in the initial round of supplements has passed. NMAEYC has applied for private funds, and will seek additional state funding to add more early educators to the program.

Ray Jaramillo said it is great that NMAEYC has grants to do T.E.A.C.H. scholarships and INCENTIVE\$ supplements, but he said it isn't just about the money. The programs are about relationships, he said. His

personal experience as a T.E.A.C.H. scholar and a program director with staff using T.E.A.C.H. made clear to him how knowledgeable and responsive are the staff at NMAEYC.

Dan said they are really excited that so many people are interested and they will be able to provide supplements to approximately 100 people. They will be going back to the Legislature to seek more funding. They hope this will make a difference in making it possible for people to look at working with infants and toddlers as a career. Have been looking at how to provide more compensation and support to early education childhood teachers through the T.E.A.C.H. scholarships that will get people to work with children under five.

Erica asked where the applications are coming from and how they are being allocated. Dan responded that the money was divided into four pieces according to the TTAP areas to make sure that the funds are distributed throughout the state. They want to support head start and public pre-k teachers. The questions was asked that in order to be a part of incentives, what is the person's commitment. Dan said that in the TEACH scholarship program there is a commitment to work through the year of the program that is sponsoring them plus one additional year. With incentives the commitment has already taken place. They have been given a pay supplement check for the previous six months.

Alejandra stated that a few months back there was talk about the possibility of providing funding for planning time for FOCUS childcare and head start participants. The contract is now in place so programs that are participating with FOCUS under licensed childcare will be getting an e-mail letting them know the process for applying for those grants to allow teachers release time for planning and documentation time which can be very costly. They hope the applications are submitted between now and January in order to award the grants or funding for the programs participating in FOCUS.

School Readiness Committee

Heather Vaughn of Albuquerque Public Schools, Chair of the School Readiness Committee. Reported that the state defined school readiness in 2011 but the document is still in draft form. She wants to see that formalized. It is the criteria of being ready for school, looking at schools being ready for children and the community being ready for children and families. Five areas are looked at for children to enter school: physical wellbeing, motor development, social-emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, general knowledge and cognition.

A big project within Head Start in Albuquerque and across the state has been transition, another component of school readiness. Early literacy is also a component of school readiness. She has connected with the Santa Fe public schools and United Way are currently working on the definition of school readiness. She is looking for

committee members. In terms of readiness, it is not academic readiness so much as a whole array of areas that children need to be ready—among them physical well-being, language, and social-emotional development.

She noted that a new kindergarten assessment is being piloted now with kindergarten teachers that includes an observational assessment done within the first six weeks of kindergarten. That assessment is part of the Race to the Top grant work.

ELAC Logo

ELAC member Franz Joachim of [KNME-TV](#) reported on efforts to develop a logo for ELAC to use. A flyer will be sent out to school superintendents across the state and other public school officials to encourage students in their schools to submit possible designs.

The winning entry will get an electronic tablet as well as recognition. The deadline for applications likely will be the end of February, with ELAC making a decision on a logo at its March meeting.

Franz will be the facilitator who will make sure that the designs are technically suitable for use in print, television and the web. The winner will be getting recognition on air in the three public television stations throughout New Mexico and will be given a page on the NM PBS web site as well as the new ELAC website.

Alejandra said the logo will give identity to the ELAC as a Council, and as the ELAC website is being developed as a Race to the Top project, they are still working with the designers. Anthony from PED, Jamie for CYFD and Andy from DOH are working on developing the RTT website that has a portion of ELAC where all the Council's information will reside. The logo will be the key part of that.

Finance Committee - Finance discussion was tabled.

Policy Committee

Ray Jaramillo noted that many ELAC members have been serving on a NM Child Care and Education Task Force, which is developing recommendations for the legislature. Ray said he will help present ideas of the task force to the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) at its meeting Dec. 10 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Roundhouse in Santa Fe. The presentation is a part of CYFD's presentation to LFC. Katherine Freeman of the NM Early Childhood Development Partnership will be the primary presenter.

Ray said they did give an unofficial invitation to speak about the policy and recommendations that will going in front of the legislative finance committee for the New Mexico Childcare and Education Task Force Committee. Their final report has come out. The task force met over several months. They came up with some policy

recommendations. There were three town hall meetings: Farmington, Las Cruces and Albuquerque. The report is the result of some of the recommendations that was heard from the public input.

Public Comment

Amanda Gibson-Smith, president of the NM Head Start Association, said the Region 6 training conference was held in Albuquerque Nov. 10-13 with 250 people attending. "It went off very well." She said that the NMAEYC and Head Start will be collaborating on an Early Childhood Public Policy and Parent Advocacy Leadership Institute on Martin Luther King Day (Jan. 19) and the opening days of the legislature (Jan. 20 and 21). Information on how to register for the Institute is now available.

"It is very exciting to participate in it," she said.

Baji Rankin of the NMAEYC talked about her organization's 2015 annual conference, which is a great collaboration among lots of organizations, the Department of Health and PED and CYFD, as well as the Center for Development and Disability and NM Association of Infant Mental Health. NMAEYC has a keynote speaker who is very talented, Helen Whellock, who is an interactive storytelling expert. More than 1,000 people will gather for the conference at the Albuquerque Convention Center. Information on how to submit a proposal for a workshop OR to register for the conference is on the NMAEYC's conference webpages.

Heather Vaughn said she wanted to recognize Baji for introducing New Mexicans to the approach Reggio Emilia, Italy, uses in its world-renowned early childhood programs. Baji was the point person in bringing the Wonder of Learning exhibit to the Museum of Natural History for six months this year, she said.

Baji said Heather herself is doing amazing work in bringing great professional development opportunities for APS teachers to see children as researchers and teachers as co-researchers.

Baji said she plans to continue fund-raising to provide Reggio-inspired activities. "One idea is to have an NM exhibit to show the capacities of NM's children. Then with the support of teachers, amazing projects happen with math and science and language." She said she wants to keep up the inspiration of the wonder of learning in NM.

Establishing Meeting Schedule for 2015

ELAC also scheduled its meetings for next year – regular meetings from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on March 26, June 25, Sept. 24 and Dec. 3. ELAC decided to hold four meetings on the road as well – in Portales, Las Vegas, NM, Silver City and Gallup – to hear about early childhood issues in those areas. ELAC will be looking at exact locations and dates for the road meetings. These meetings will be more informational and focused on discussions to learn what is going on in the communities and collaboration.

A small sub-committee will establish dates within the communities: Heather (chair), Karen and Franz. Everyone should try to commit to at least one of the community meetings to be held one month before the quarterly ELAC meetings. Erica requested that the meetings be scheduled by January 31st and let ELAC members know so schedules can be arranged to attend the meetings. A flyer for ELAC will be designed in order to connect with other associations.

Motion to adjourn: Karen Ziegler/Heather Vaughn. All in Favor, Motion Passes.
Meeting Adjourned.