

State of New Mexico

CHILDREN, YOUTH and FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

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NEW MEXICO EARLY LEARNING ADVISORY COUNCIL (ELAC)

June 25, 2015

Continuing Education-Room 123 / 1634 University Blvd. NE - Albuquerque NM

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

Roll was called for the meeting. Present: Andy Gomm, Barbara Tedrow, Rebecca Dow (Zoom), Erica Stubbs, Larry Langley, Dan Haggard, Leighann Lenti, Ray Jaramillo, Heather Vaughn and Beth Beers.

Quorum established at 9:17 am by Erica Stubbs.

Motion to approve March 26, 2015 meeting minutes.

Beth Beers/Heather Vaughn. No discussion. All in favor. Motion is carried.

And public comment is open.

Town Hall Debrief - Heather Vaughn, Vice-Chair:

Heather Vaughn reported on Town Hall meetings. Four town hall meetings will be held:

- February - Gallup, NM,
- May 27th - Las Vegas, NM,
- August 27th - Portales, NM and
- Silver City, NM.

Town Hall Las Vegas, NM on May 27th.

Meeting was two hours long and had 9 people in attendance.

Discussed challenges & concerns happening in Las Vegas, NM area:

- Not getting services in their area nor the rural areas in some cases, though people were excited about Early Head Start coming to Las Vegas.
- Individuals are not staying in their community, high school graduates migrating to other places.
- Many systems in place to work with but they want more system alignment, such as with home visiting programs.

- Families are burdened by too many referral systems they have to work with, especially ones that are court-ordered, and sometimes they may have to deal with six different entities at one time.
- Discussed Race to the Top; how are providers being supported on requirements?
- Teaching system- teachers are not getting enough credit for what they do. Teachers have to pay for school supplies for children and families can't afford supplies either. Physical education and art classes have been done away with and children are missing out.

In general, it is a great experience to move around the state and get people's feelings, opinions and recommendations. The community was very appreciative and would like to see more involvement with the health field. People are interested in what's next.

FOCUS Questions & Presentation – Ray Jaramillo:

Ray Jaramillo led discussion about some FOCUS program's concerns and questions from providers and people around the state that haven't been answered. Questions were sent to Dan Haggard and a consolidated document was put together with questions and answers.

Dan Haggard was pleased to answer the questions and, discussed advantages and disadvantages on having the program implemented from day one in child care – not as a pilot but a permanent program.

New Mexico began implementation of FOCUS program even though the state didn't get a grant from its initial RTTT application.

FOCUS UPDATE

- 1. How many programs are currently participating in the FOCUS Pilot Program?**
169
- 2. How many state-approved accredited homes and centers are participating in FOCUS? (NAEYC, NAC, etc.)**
NAEYC = 3, NAFCC =3, NAC =3
(Altogether, there are 15 accredited programs participating in FOCUS)
- 3. Of the initial 50 or so programs that initially began the pilot program, how many have reached a 5 star FOCUS?**
Currently, there are no 5 star programs. However, there are 4 programs working toward their 5 Star verification.
- 4. How many programs have reached 3 and 4 Star FOCUS status?**
3 STAR= 63 4 STAR= 6
- 5. Have programs dropped out of FOCUS? If so, how many? Why did they drop out?**
Only 5 participating programs have withdrawn from participation in FOCUS. 14 participating programs have closed due to retirement and other reasons that are often not disclosed.
- 6. Does CYFD have a FOCUS waiting list for programs interested in joining the pilot program?**
Yes, there is a waiting list.
- 7. How long is the FOCUS Pilot program?**
The Race to the Top pilot phase will end on December 31, 2017. Child Trends will have completed their research by then and modifications will be made based on those findings.
- 8. What are CYFD's plans to sustain funding for FOCUS when the RTTT funding had been depleted?**
The State of New Mexico has made a commitment to sustain all the projects included in the Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge Fund grant. This includes significant work being done with data

systems, work in the Early Childhood Investment Zones, T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships and other professional development initiatives, as well as FOCUS (on young children's learning). You may recall that the state initiated the funding of these projects when the first application for Race to the Top wasn't awarded.

CYFD has continued to fund a portion of the FOCUS project with state funds and has plans to use both federal and state funds to continue the TQRIS after the Race to the Top project has ended.

9. How much will it cost to fund FOCUS yearly?

Just as we experienced with AIM HIGH, we anticipate that participation in FOCUS will level out in the next couple years with many programs reaching their Star Level goal. At that point, the costs for FOCUS will likely mirror what was budgeted for AIM HIGH, taking into account that important additional services are now being provided through FOCUS that weren't available previously.

10. What is the cost to provide 100% of homes and centers in consistent access to FOCUS training?

By taking advantage of the knowledge and experience of our Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance Programs (TTAPs) and the establishment of the statewide virtual training capabilities of the NewMexicoKids Training Hub, we anticipate being able to provide a wide variety of training modalities that will meet the diverse needs of early childhood educators statewide.

11. Training cost to reach FOCUS requirements are high for programs with large staff. How will CYFD support the high cost of training staff in the future?

An important part of the FOCUS pilot is cost modeling and working with FOCUS programs to determine their actual costs to attain higher levels of quality. Secondly, there is a significant amount of work being done to review funding strategies. As you are aware, the current strategy is primarily through differentiated subsidy rates. And, we are experimenting with the effectiveness of providing grants for planning time, which are not connected to the subsidy system.

12. How many FOCUS consultants are currently on staff? How many programs are each of them serving?

There are now 21 FOCUS Consultants and 3 Regional Program Managers. Caseloads vary from consultant to consultant depending on the needs of the programs they are serving. We are fortunate to have established consultation as a cornerstone of our TQRIS as a part of AIM HIGH. There are many states that do not provide on-site consultation. Programs are expected to make quality improvements and meet the quality standards on their own. Several states that do have consultants have ratios of about 50 programs for each consultant. We attempt to have ratios closer to 1 consultant for every 8 or 9 programs. This may increase slightly after the pilot phase.

13. How many FOCUS Verifiers are currently on staff?

There are currently 2 FOCUS Verifiers that work statewide.

14. How many would it take to see all providers requesting verification within 30 Days of their request?

So far, the 2 FOCUS Verifiers have met the 30 day verification protocol.

15. What type of feedback has CYFD received from FOCUS pilot participants?

We have received a lot of positive feedback from providers and teachers, stating that FOCUS is enabling them to provide higher quality. They appreciate using the framework of the Early Learning Guidelines and increasingly see value in the authentic observation and curriculum planning process as they have more experience with it. They also are expressing some "ah ha moments" when the continuous quality improvement process becomes real for them. We have also received constructive feedback on improvements, which we are in the progress of reviewing and making changes as necessary. Aside from early input regarding ratios and group size (which were changed based on that input), very few comments have been received regarding the FOCUS Criteria themselves. Most of the input is about the cost and the implementation.

16. Can we (ELAC) receive a copy of all feedback given to CYFD from FOCUS pilot participants in writing or through the email address given?

Of course. However, in order to sustain trusting relationships with our providers and to protect their privacy, if feedback is given to ELAC all identifying information will be deleted.

17. Has CYFD made any changes as a direct result from the feedback from FOCUS participants? If so, what changes have been made? Are there plans for additional changes to FOCUS?

As mentioned before, immediate changes were made to the ratios and group size criteria based on participants' input. Currently, CYFD and UNM CE are reviewing all of the input regarding training, such as the amount of training hours required and the method of delivery of the trainings. Our goal is to provide quality training, and in order to accomplish that we need to take the time to be intentional with the changes. Program personnel have been invited to be part of a workgroup that is making recommendations to improve the trainings. We also have opened the lines of communication with participating educators and have already had several meeting with programs to talk about their successes and challenges. We are excited to continue to work closer with programs and educators. So far, no additional changes are being planned for the FOCUS criteria except possibly regarding training, but we are always listening to the concerns with the educators in the field and will consider each concern expressed.

18. NAEYC has established a percentage of compliancy (80%). As it stands now.... it's all or nothing for training requirements. Does CYFD plan to add a compliance percentage? Right now, FOCUS states "All". What does "All" mean?

Currently, "All" means "All".... and those that have been verified to date have met these criteria for their initial verification. However, this is part of the training criteria that is being reviewed and input is being solicited.

19. Are there equivalents for FOCUS training? If so, what are they? If not, why are degrees and experiences not valued with FOCUS?

Degrees are valued with FOCUS and educators have been submitting equivalency requests to the Office of Child Development for their degrees. Equivalency forms are posted online at newmexicokids.org under the FOCUS tab. UNM CE is working on aligning their trainings as is the Office of Child Development. This will take some time as we need to ensure that individual have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet quality criteria.

20. Does CYFD plan to give a monetary incentive to be both FOCUS 5 Star and nationally accredited programs? That would certainly be an accomplishment for a program to celebrate!

And, it is something that the department could consider if programs wanted to establish that as a quality marker.

21. Does CYFD plan to eliminate accreditation as Star 5 in the future?

No. We want to recognize programs for their hard work and dedication they are making to providing high quality early childhood care and education for the children of New Mexico. There are no discussions to eliminate approved national accreditation as a way to attain a 5 Star rating.

22. Does CYFD plan to make FOCUS a part of CYFD regulations or will this remain voluntary? If so, when?

All programs will continue to be rated. And, participation in the Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System will continue to be voluntary. Just as in AIM HIGH, programs are able to work independently to meet the FOCUS criteria and then request to be validated when they feel they are ready.

As you know, differentiated rates and the approval of national accrediting entities is already in regulation. There are discussions about the pros and cons of having more than that in rule.

23. What is being done to enable Head Start programs to participate in FOCUS and meet the Head Start Performance Standards?

Our understanding is that the primary issue is the requirement to have a "valid and reliable" assessment tool that measures children's growth and development - and that the assessment process is integrated with a "research-based" curriculum. Although we will have to carefully review the newly released Performance Standards, CYFD has contracted with Child Trends, a nationally recognized early childhood research firm, to conduct research and request that the Office of Head Start approve

New Mexico's Authentic Observation Documentation and Curriculum Planning Process as meeting this requirement.

Until this approval is given at the federal level, Grantees are advised to integrate FOCUS (use of the ELG's observation, documentation curriculum planning process) with their approved program.

Home visiting research study – Michael Weinberg, Thornburg Foundation

Home Visiting's Research Grant: "Family Support Marketing Research Overview".

This project was initiated in the fall 2014.

The foundation is working on 3 areas:

- Early childhood education,
- Food and agriculture and,
- Good government reform.

The goal is to influence policy outcomes in the state.

Family Support Marketing Research Overview

Background

- Interest in increasing capacity and appropriation levels
- Uptake gap- challenge of enrolling families, particularly the most vulnerable
- Thornburg Foundation grant to Pew Charitable Trusts to contract with Public Opinion Strategies and the Mellman Group

Process

- Focus groups (those not receiving services)
- Individual interviews (those receiving)
- Online bulletin board (providers)
- Replicated in Detroit, Los Angeles County and Memphis

Key findings

- Address the needs of mom first: "Once the needs of the mother are met, she is able to meet the needs of the child."
- Distrust of the system:

-Fear of negative judgments, of having baby taken

-Meeting somewhere else, at least initially, more appealing than home

- Passive versus personal introduction
- Naming -- Anything other than "Home Visiting" (i.e. "Family Support")

Next Steps

- Collaborative of early childhood funders
- Coordinate with CYFD (re-branding, resource and referral) and Race to the Top (early childhood awareness campaign)
- RFP to develop pilot in a geographic area

Where are we now?

Trying to coordinate with CYFD. We would like to pick a geographic region to pilot and then roll out on a wider scale.

Nancy Lopez, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Sociology

PRESENTATION:

“New Mexico Statewide Race, Gender, Class Data Policy Consortium, established July 2014”

How can leaders in early childhood, K-20, policy makers, practitioners, and researchers engage in productive dialogues about equity focused data collection, analysis and reporting that examines race, gender, class and ethnicity together for advancing equity-based policies in NM?

Consortium objectives & deliverables

- Explicit attention to intersectionality looking at race, gender, and class, etc. together for the formation of effective health policy.
- New research methodologies and innovations in data collection, analysis and reporting.
- Use-inspire and accessible data policy and other policy briefs for researchers, policy makers, practitioners and broad diverse communities.
- Common collection instruments for detailed Hispanic origin/ethnicity, race, gender, class and other policy areas (sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, etc.)

Challenges & Opportunities

- **Lack of systematic class data:** zip code, free lunch inadequate; need detailed self & parental education attainment as reliable class measures.
- **Conflation** (measurement equivalence) of race (master social status; street-level race that is ascribed by assigning meaning to a conglomeration of one’s physical appearance such as skin color, hair texture, facial features, etc.) with ethnicity or national origin or ancestry without justification.
- **Homogenization of Latin@s:** Lack of Detailed Hispanic origin and generational status. It is important to underscore that the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) does not prohibit any institution from collecting detailed data on race, ethnicity, generational status, or language; however whatever data is collected must be aggregated to their official categories.
- **Lack of Longitudinal Data;** inability to track the same individual across time (e.g., early ed. programming through high school/college graduation; curriculum tracking and/or disciplinary action in K-12 and contact with law enforcement; ex-offender postsecondary training and gainful employment; type of childhood housing/neighborhood and asthma or other health condition, etc.)
- **Lack of Contextual Variables:** Individual records seldom include institutional variables.

How can we harmonize data collection, analysis and reporting on race, gender, and class to guide effective and statewide equity-based policy that advances social justice?

Strategic opportunities for harmonized data on early childhood.

POTENTIAL COLLABORATIONS ...

PROJECT 1: Collecting detailed parental educational early childhood through higher education (e.g., 24% of NM Hispanics have less than high school compared to 4% of Whites)

PROJECT 2: Measures of schools within a school phenomenon (e.g., intra-classroom, school level de facto segregation.

PROJECT 3: Developing and piloting a common instrument for the collection of multidimensional and multilevel measures and data on race, gender, class data in K-20. Eventually the pilot instrument will be tested in different types of institutional settings of policy relevance including education and health (e.g., colleges/universities, K-12 schools and early education sites as well as well as facilities that provide health care) in the state of New Mexico.

PROJECT 3: Policy Briefs on Statewide and National Data Collection that look at race, gender, class, ethnicity together

Institute for the Study of "Race" & Social Justice Advisory Board.

QUESTIONS: Dr. Nancy Lopez, nlopez@unm.edu

Website: <http://healthpolicy.unm.edu/about/initiatives/isrsj>

In the community input portion of the meeting:

Rebecca Dow spoke as policy chair of the NM Child Care and Education Association, said CYFD realizes that centers want quality, and she said her organization was very excited that Secretary Monique Jacobson is an advocate of early childhood, as evidenced by the rate increase that child care providers received.

Rebecca expressed concern that the \$40 million to implement FOCUS is coming to an end and she wasn't sure how the state was going to continue to pay for FOCUS, and also for the changes being planned as a result of the reauthorization of the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant. She was concerned that she had not seen cost projections for the reauthorization changes and continuation of FOCUS. Improving the lives of NM's children is the mission of CYFD, she said. It is achievable, she said, by looking at quality standards that are achievable and affordable, too.

Ray Jaramillo spoke as a citizen that he is concerned about the new minimum wage in the Las Cruces area which will see the minimum rise to \$10.10 over several years. He said he would research the effect that the higher minimum wage will have on making families using child care subsidy ineligible for subsidy because of higher wages. There may be "unintentional consequences" of a higher minimum wage in loss of child care subsidy. He said ELAC might have a role to play in asking the right questions.

Motion to adjourn: Erica Stubbs/Heather Vaughn. All in favor. Motion passes.

Meeting adjourns at 1:59 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Janette Peñuñuri.