



Attended: Maureen Weber (Chairwoman), Madeleine Baker, Kimberly Brooks, Tonia Carriger, Mark Chamberlain, Betsy Delgado, Erin Donovan, Rob Moorhead, Secretary Daniel Rusyniak, Sherry Searles, Kelli Servizzi

Meeting video:

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Slides of the following presentations can be viewed [here](#).

- I. Call to Order – Chairwoman Weber started the meeting at 12:01pm, and started with a round of introductions.
 - i. Chairwoman Weber asked new OECOSL Director, Courtney Penn, and new ELAC Director, Courtney Hott, to introduce themselves.
 - ii. Approval of minutes: Moorhead moved to approve, Delgado 2nd, motion passed

- II. Old Business
 - i. Summary of Early Learning Spending - Summary of Early Learning Spending (8:50) - Sue Withers

Questions and comments from the committee:

Weber: This is a helpful perspective and will help guide the committee in moving forward. Thank you for bringing us up to speed on the funds that have not been spent yet. We will discuss those more at the end of the meeting.

Chamberlain: If the funds aren't allocated by September 30, are they lost?

Withers: We have to have a plan by the end of this week, but we have flexibility between now and 2024 to use the funds. One situation we hear about is that, unfortunately, some providers closed before they could use all of their stabilization funds, so we have to re-obligate those into another grant opportunity.

- ii. Compliance Overview - (14:51) - Courtney Penn

- III. Establishing Public Policy Goals for the Early Learning Sector – Maureen Weber



The Heart of the Challenge (23:00)

Questions and comments from the committee:

Moorhead: I think these are spot on, especially number one about vulnerable children. I really like, “thrive in kindergarten and beyond” section too, so that kids can start kindergarten and be successful.

Brooks: I agree, especially the emphasis on vulnerable children. I also like the focus on families. Without access to the families, we can't get to the kids. Some families, especially if this is their only child or first child, they don't know what they don't know. I think we should work through these goals simultaneously.

Baker: I love the alignment from early education and moving forward. The focus on the workforce is also very important.

Donovan: I wonder if we can add wording “developmentally appropriate” to “opportunities”? I feel like you can have early learning opportunities without them being developmentally appropriate. In goal one.

Searles: In the second goal where it talks about convenient access, is that the same as affordable?

Weber: I think that is something we should add.

Chamberlain: Does convenient also mean technological solution?

Weber: Arguably. It might depend on that developmentally appropriate solution, but it might help add to the breadth of options we can offer.

Searles: When I think about convenience, I think about the new Marketplace, and that does help with convenience through technological solutions.

Weber: Yes, there is far more we can do with helping to meet supply with demand.

Delgado: Can we consider changing "that prepare" to "capable of preparing" to emphasize results?

Revisiting Art of Possible (33:40)

Questions and comments from the committee:

Weber: What do you think is the most urgent?

Baker: This is a great list. I wonder if we can put them into high, mid, priority? Can we categorize them in that way?

Delgado: That's good.

Weber: Yes, I think that will work. If you only had one star, Madeleine. Which one would get your vote?

Baker: That's a million-dollar question! Evaluate infrastructure investment. That's a big one. Some of the others can fit under that.



Secretary Rusyniak: We might also think about short term, intermediate, and long term. Some of these things could take less time, while others will take longer.

Baker: Yes, I think that's what I meant. That makes a lot of sense.

Chamberlain: I agree, it will be helpful to prioritize, and to cross-reference with things we can do quickly or are easily doable. We want to show we can move the needle on issues.

Delgado: Back on the goals slide, it talks about being "capable of preparing," and here on the chat we're talking about changing it to "that prepare."

Secretary Rusyniak: I think data becomes a big opportunity and figuring out what the data is that we need to move forward as a state, as providers, as stakeholders.

Especially now with the office of Kindergarten Readiness, and DOE, identify the data, and use the federal dollars to make those connections.

Weber: Yes, that's an important point.

Searles: I have been working with a church for two years in becoming a registered ministry, and it has been very difficult. I think we should look at how to modify and simplify that system before we add things. That way, when we do add programs, it is not as difficult.

Weber: Yes, that is also important.

Moorhead: I think modernizing the regulatory environment is a must. If we can find a way to modernize the regulatory environment, it will open access to the dollars that are available. There are barriers that are keeping programs and families to accessing dollars, and it comes back to the regulatory environment.

Weber: Can you say more, from your perspective, about the current state of kindergarten readiness in your world?

Moorhead: Yes, you can tell a difference between children who have had experience in a pre-K classroom before entering kindergarten to those who haven't.

Brooks: Yes, and now it is even more evident, after the pandemic. You can see who have been home the whole time versus those who have been in a program. I think you need to modernize the regulatory environment to expand high-quality care.

Weber: I think there is some sense that if you haven't been in a high-quality early learning environment, that you might have a hard first week or two of school, and then everyone sort of catches up and normalizes. There's data that suggests that high quality care continues throughout education. Can anyone speak to that?

Brooks: We have the data to show that children who have participated in our high-quality preschool programs are at level or above others. They can get where they need to be quickly.

Moorhead: I echo that. You can see it in the assessments early on, as well as anecdotally, with the way the children behave in class, that those who have quality ECE are ahead.



Brooks: We are also looking deeper in our district to see if half-day or full-day care makes a difference. We've always felt that even if children are there a half day, it's better than nothing.

Servizzi: It helps with the transition process. How are we transitioning them from ECE to kindergarten?

Donovan: I feel the workforce, and training the teachers, is most important. We have the space, and we have the kids on the list. We need the teachers to add spots. If we have that, then we have high-quality care.

Weber: What is your perspective on this, Erin? Can you share what you hear about why people aren't coming into the field, or are they leaving? Is it just about the compensation? What are the issues?

Donovan: We don't have new students coming in to be teachers, and those that are in the program are leaving. It's a lot of stress, and little pay, and I've had students leave because they don't earn enough to feed their families. There is not a lot of difference in pay between someone who has a CDA, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree.

Weber: And they aren't making anywhere near what their peers in k-12 make.

Chamberlain: Modernizing the regulatory environment is very important as it would help mobilize the business sector. If I'm an entrepreneur, I wouldn't want to open ECE because it's too hard and needs to be streamlined. We have a business here in NW IN that would probably start their own program for their employees, and they would pay for it all, which would potentially allow ECE to 4,000 employees, but it's not approachable now.

Weber: Because it's too hard to navigate?

Chamberlain: Yes, if it's hard enough for someone like Courtney who spoke earlier and explained how hard it is to be in the space, it's not going to work for someone who is not familiar with it.

Weber: Yes, well said.

IV. Prioritizing Work Streams (52:28) – Maureen Weber

V. Early Progress Reports

i. Licensing Work Group (54:04) - Courtney Penn

Questions and comments from the committee:

Weber: This sounds like a high priority for this group. Can you give us a timeline and next steps?

Penn: The goal is to begin at the end of October and be finished by the end of December. The funds will come from BLG funds. Recommendations will come to ELAC



in 2023 and will help us think about what will be quick wins, and then intermediate and longer term goals.

Weber: How do we make sure we “don’t build a faster horse,” and are thinking broadly enough?

Penn: Some of that will come from national experts and experts from other states and looking at those models.

Searles: You said there will be some town halls, when will those be happening?

Penn: We are starting with phase one, and those will be more midstream, probably in phase 2, or our community-based phase.

Chamberlain: Do you feel like the bullet points we were talking about [Revisiting Art of Possible], address the data you have found in your surveys and workshops?

Penn: I think we will hear similar feedback once we start the workshops. These are things we are hearing across the country and other states.

ii. Early Literacy (1:10:51) - Karrienne Polk-Meek and Kelli Servizzi

Questions and comments from the committee:

Weber: It’s inspiring to see this and how you are incorporating early learning providers into your thinking. That is an incredible resource, thank you.

Brooks: We are excited to see what this does at our school, one of our schools is a pilot school, and has a preschool, and I’m looking forward to the coaching there.

Weber: I appreciate thoughtfulness in connecting community-based providers along with school-based providers, so they all have access to this.

Moorhead: This is the first time I realized you are intentionally connecting providers and schools, and that is an excellent way to remove barriers.

VI. Leveraging Remaining Relief Funds - Leveraging Remaining Relief Funds (1:34:25) - Courtney Penn

Questions and comments from the committee:

Weber: There is great alignment in how you are planning to use the funds and what we’ve talked about today

Chamberlain: Since these are one-time funds, are these funding buckets one-time costs, or will they take more money over time?

Penn: Both. There are opportunities where this funding will support a very broken system that will help it be “less broken,” but there are other components that will take legislative changes too.

Weber: One thing I think about is that even if it is only giving us funding for families now, it is giving us data points to use in the future.



Penn: Yes, and from a provider perspective, previous dollars that were used for providers showed that those providers made strides in growing a network who went from being non-licensed to accredited.

Baker: This is a springboard on our ability to demonstrate why ongoing investment is needed.

Brooks: Is there anything that stands out that you want to attack first?

Penn: Yes. The funding will pay for the licensing workgroup and subject matter experts. Also, building out a workforce structure that is less fiscally burdensome to providers. Also, the modernization of systems, and the landscape of Paths to Quality (PTQ). We'll see some toggling back and forth.

Weber: There are a lot of things to do that take a lot of time and focus, but maybe not a lot of money. So hopefully these dollars can help there. Then the dollars can be used at the family-facing things.

Penn: Yes, family facing and/ or provider facing. Maybe putting dollars in providers' hands to help families. There are a lot of dynamics where I think we can put the power in the providers' hands.

Searles: In the third bucket, do you think we'll be seeing some updated market rates coming out this fall?

Withers: We have to update our market rates, and it is something we are working on it now. We want to get them out as soon as we can.

Moorhead: What do the market rates reference?

Withers: Rates that we will reimburse a provider, based on county, auspice type, and age.

Baker: Will the market rates look at the true cost of operating child care?

Withers: Yes, that is one thing we are looking at. We are looking at the cost information we got from the stabilization grants and are currently analyzing those costs to see how they will correlate to market rates.

Baker: I appreciate that. When you don't look at the true cost, it misses the point on a providers' ability to have a break-even point.

Withers: That was one reason we wanted to collect that information through stabilization grants and allowed them to override those costs if they were, in fact, higher.

Baker: I wonder if there is an opportunity to support providers by helping to prepare a business plan, so they can identify the true expenses in providing high quality child care.

Withers: Yes, and we have rolled out business support training to providers. We want them to see themselves as businesses and know their true costs, so they set their rates appropriately.

Weber: Great discussion. Thank you.



VII. Public Comment – Weber opened public comment and there was none

VIII. Adjourn – Weber adjourned the meeting at 1:51pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 25, 10am – 12pm