EEC Board Committee on Policy and Programs

Monday, February 2, 2009
3:00-4:30pm
Department of Early Education and Care
51 Sleeper Street, 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02210

MINUTES

Members of the Committee Present:
Elizabeth Childs, M.D, Chair
Carol Craig O’Brien
Mary Pat Messmer (by phone)
Sharon Scott-Chandler (ex officio)
Sherri Killins, Ed.D, EEC Commissioner (ex officio)

EEC Staff Present:
Amy Kershaw, EEC Deputy Commissioner for Programs
Dena Papanikolaou, EEC General Counsel
Corey Zimmerman, EEC Director for Strategic
Nicole Yacovone, EEC Policy Analyst
Talia Gursky, EEC Consultant

The meeting was called to order at: 3:15 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Policy and Programs Committee Charge / Meeting Logistics

Discussion:
Dena Papanikolaou, EEC General Counsel, informed the Committee that it was subject to open meeting law requiring that the agenda be posted in advance of the meeting, that brief minutes would be taken that reflect the discussions had and decisions made, and that by-laws indicate that members may join the Committee meetings via conference call as long as any two members of the Committee were present at the meeting location. Agendas will be sent to all Board members within 3 days of the Committee meeting and any Board member may attend.

Decisions Made:
It was also discussed that it was the preference that the Committee operate on a consensus, but if there was not general consensus, a member may call for a vote and the majority would be used to indicate support for a recommendation; highlights of the discussion and diverging views would also be represented at the full Board for its consideration.
**Task(s) Assigned:**

1. Dena Papanikolaou will outline additional details regarding Committee operating procedures and will send that to all Board members (including a position regarding public comment at Committee meetings).

**Committee Charge**

**Discussion:**
Dena Papanikolaou advised that Board Committees should be charged with task(s) at a meeting of the full Board; agenda items may be recommended to the Chair within three days of the Committee meeting.

**Decisions Made:**
At the February 10, 2009 meeting of the full Board the standing Committee meetings will be announced and the Board will vote on each Committee’s standing meeting and charge; Board members will also be released from their duties as liaison to EEC initiatives at the Board meeting due to the new Committee structure (if they would like to be released).

The Committee reviewed and provided feedback on a draft Charge document that Chairperson Childs asked Amy Kershaw to develop. The Committee decided to add more information regarding the purpose of the Committee; comments included:

- A purpose should be included in the Committee’s Charge (e.g. provide a greater opportunity to engage and discuss / delve deeper into relevant topic areas).
- Language should be used to explicitly connect vision/purpose to Strategic Plan.
- Reorder bullets to better reflect Committee’s role.
- A clarification by the Board Chair that the Board is not delegating any of its responsibilities to the Committee but that the Committee is where more detailed conversations and review are had that can then be brought to the Board to allow for more informed decision making.

The following list of FY2009 Program’s Division Projects was offered for consideration:
- Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program development and evaluation;
- Child Care Regulations Overhaul
- Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation expansion?
- Workforce Development Task Force Recommendations implementation
- Quality Rating and Improvement System/Quality Infrastructure Development
- Family and Community Engagement Infrastructure Development
- Income Eligible Access Limits/fiscal reforms within financial assistance system
- FY2009 Renewal Grants/Invest in Children License Plate Funds
- Updating Search Function for EEC Website

The Committee discussed how the Charge could represent the three Committees working together. It was suggested that full Board meetings are the opportunity for the Committees to discuss their work with one another and if the need arose, joint committees could be formed, and members may always attend any other standing Committee meeting. Each Committee should include a shared charge of seamless collaboration and the integration of shared information across Committees.

It was decided that the standing meeting of the Policy and Programs Committee will be held the first Monday of each month, 2-3:30pm, at EEC’s Boston Office, unless that day falls on a holiday; schedule to be posted on the EEC website.

**Task(s) Assigned:**


1. Amy should update draft charge with 2/2 discussion and send to Sharon/Beth for review – then the draft will be passed on to Committee members for review. Draft charge and standing meeting date/times should be ready for Board review on 2/10.

**Concept Design and Elements of a Statewide Quality Infrastructure**

**Discussion:**
Amy Kershaw and Corey Zimmerman presented the Committee with a preliminary concept design for a statewide family support and quality infrastructure. The concepts, still in the initial stages of development, discussed included *Quality Hubs* (regional entities), *Local Family and Community Engagement Entities* (local entities) and the vision for their potential future roles in a new aligned infrastructure that would offer consistent coordination and services statewide.

The vision of this Infrastructure comes from looking at what services and functions should happen at the regional level and which should happen at the local level; if services belong regionally they would be performed by the *Quality Hub*, if locally, then by the *Local Family and Community Engagement Entities*. Currently, “what” is being bought may be the right goods, but the way is which they are purchased are not organized as efficiently as possible and are not in alignment with the future Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

The question was raised if programs would purchase services for fee; although the details are not solidified, the new infrastructure would ideally provide access to a coordinated menu of services and vendors that providers need in order to make some measured improvement in their program (via the QRIS). Resources could also be strategically deployed by EEC to meet gaps/needs in the system and vendors could be held accountable to some set standard. It was recognized that the internal structure would need to change to match the new external structure.

A discussion regarding the Universal Pre-Kindergarten program focused on whether that program would morph in order to align with this future infrastructure; although UPK is a different model, UPK providers could access the same menu of services and there may be some economies of scale achieved (i.e. professional development regarding assessment).

The Committee discussed moving forward with the more developed and less competitive concepts of the local coordination of services for families but spend more time on design for quality hubs.

Due to “9c” cuts the timing of the design and implementation of this system are coinciding; options for the timing of the Quality Hub initiative included: six-month transition grants, optional participation in joint grant applications, or waiting for the next fiscal year.

**Decisions Made:**
- Additional piloting and planning is needed (more so with the Quality Hubs)
- With such a bold systemic plan there will be shifts and it needs to be clear that this design intends to restructure existing services and be transparent about where fall-out may occur;
- Be clear that funding for these functions currently exists in the private vendor community and those resources should stay there, not be shifted to the state
- Ensure strength of local systems are not lost; need to address the unique needs of each community (i.e. language differences, income level etc.)
- In a proposed process for moving this vision forward, it would be helpful to see funding streams represented that are implicated.
- Identify the funds that are required to make such a large shift
- Acknowledge that moving forward there would be some risk, as with any bold systemic change
- Recognize that we want to keep the positive aspects of the current system – be concrete about what those good things are and clearly outline the functions that work well
- Include measures of accountability – who will be accountable for what; which outcomes belong at which level
- Clarify what the optimal regionalization level is and justify why (e.g. are 15 Quality Hubs optimal etc); ensure regional structure works/ balance with local structure
- Include ideas for mandating coordination with local public schools (e.g. in the format of a Early Childhood Coordinator etc.)
- Provide options for rolling out pieces of Quality Hubs (i.e. just accreditation – how could that be piloted)

Other Pressing Policy and Program Agenda Items
N/A

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.