

School Readiness Committee
Meeting Minutes
West Reading Room, Patrick Henry Building
1111 E. Broad Street, Richmond VA 23219
February 3, 2017
1 – 4pm

Agenda

- Welcome
- Report from the December Workgroup Meeting
- Discussion on State Priorities
- Learning from Others: A Panel Discussion with Early Childhood Leaders in North Carolina and Georgia
- Subcommittee breakout time
- Public Comment
- Next Steps and Adjournment

Welcome

Mark Gordon welcomed the committee back to Richmond, and outlines the goals for today's meeting, which are:

- Reports from subcommittee discussions from December meeting;
- Reach an informal agreement on the scope of the committee (ages, settings, we will prioritize);
- Discuss joint resolution for the General Assembly; and
- Engage in plenary and small group discussion with early childhood leaders from North Carolina and Georgia in plenary and small group conversations.

Dr. Dietra Trent, Secretary of Education, then provided a brief welcome and remarks.

Dr. Bill Hazel, Secretary of Health and Human Resources, then did likewise.

Report from the December Workgroup Meeting

Mark reported on the December meeting of the 3 subcommittees, and began by reminding members of the chairs and driving questions of the committees; and the timeline on which the Committee is working in order to develop recommendations by summer.

The subcommittees are as follows:

Subcommittee on State Priorities for the Early Educator Workforce

Co-Chaired by Walter Stosch and Rob Krupicka

Primary driving question: What are our state priorities for this workforce?

Subcommittee on Professional Development Standards

Co-Chaired by Irene Carney and Chris Chin

Primary driving question: To what extent do Virginia's professional development standards and structures reflect current research and knowledge?

Subcommittee on Professional Development Pathways

Co-Chaired by Sara Miller and Christine Schull

Primary driving question: To what extent do professional development options provide a clear, stackable, affordable continuum for the early childhood workforce?

Mark also reported that the three subcommittees affirmed the NAM Principles which were also reviewed at the last full committee meeting.

Irene and Chris then provided a short update on the Standards discussion, which was focused on the merits of Virginia-specific standards vs. adopting national standards of some kind. There was concern expressed from many about national standards and the group seems to be headed for VA-specific standards.

Sara and Christine then reported on the Pathways discussion, which was focused on the barriers that exist for professionals trying to obtain additional education and credentials.

Discussion on State Priorities

Mark then presented on the state priorities conversation in greater detail, given the implications of their discussion on the work of the other two subcommittees.

The two issues the state priorities committee is bringing forward are:

1. Define the scope of the committee/ reach consensus on a definition of the ages and settings of children that the committee will focus on initially.
2. Update on the Joint Resolution for the General Assembly

With regard to defining the scope of the committee the Subcommittee recommends that the School Readiness Committee consider initial focus on early educators:

- serving at-risk infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (ages 0-5)
- employed in center-, faith-, and school-based early education programs

- providing services funded in part or in whole with public funds (state and/or federal) including child care subsidy, Head Start, Title I, and VPI
- serving as lead teacher, assistant teacher, and/or administrator in an early childhood program

Mark explained the reason for this definition as:

- These children are spending the majority of their time in early education settings that receive public funds.
- These settings include a disproportionate number of at-risk children.
- These settings may already have requirements for certain levels or increasingly rigorous levels of staff training and education, which position them well for participation in a focused professional development initiative through the recommendations of the School Readiness Committee.
- These settings receive public funding, which can be used as an accountability lever for setting and achieving goals for the workforce.
- These programs may be more likely to already be focused on quality improvement (participating in Virginia Quality, accreditation, and/or focused on professional development goals).

The group agreed that this definition of scope made the most sense as a starting place for the committee's work.

Mark then explained that the Priorities subcommittee had planned to bring forward a joint resolution for the full Committee's consideration; but given the nature of the timing with this being a rescheduled meeting, it was no longer relevant to the full committee.

Learning from Others: A Panel Discussion with Early Childhood Leaders in North Carolina and Georgia

Mark introduced Dr Steve Staples, State Superintendent for Public Instruction, and Commissioner Margaret Schultze, Commissioner of Va. Department of Social Services – who co-hosted the panel conversation with:

- Christi Moore; Professional Development Systems Manager, GA Dept. of Early Care and Learning
- Bentley Ponder; Director of Research & Senior Policy Advisor, GA Dept. of Early Care and Learning
- Cindy Wheeler; Senior Manager, Early Education Branch, NC Division of Child Development & Early Education
- Erin Speer Smith, Early Childhood Education Instructor, Johnston Community College (NC)

Subcommittee Conversations

Pathways and Standards

The Pathways and Standards subcommittee members stayed in the reading room, and were joined by Erin Smith (NC Early Childhood instructor) and Cindy Wheeler (Sr. Manager with the NC Division of Child Development & Early Education) by phone.

State Priorities

The State Priorities subcommittee members adjourned to another room, and were joined by Bentley Ponder, Director of Research and Senior Policy Advisor in the Georgia Dept. of Early Care and Learning, by phone.

They discussed how GA evaluates its early childhood programs to inform how VA might think about doing so.

They also drafted language for the Chamber Blueprint 2025 to elevate the early childhood workforce and draw attention and priority to it in the coming year.

Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

Next Steps and Adjournment

Mark announced the following upcoming meetings will be:

- March 23rd 11-2pm, Richmond VA: This meeting will be structured like the December workgroup meeting)
- May 17th, 11-2pm Richmond VA: This will be a full committee meeting where the subcommittees present preliminary recommendations to the full committee for discussion and consideration
- July meeting (date TBD) – The committee will meet in July to take a vote on final set of recommendations