



Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL (ECAC) SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT SUBCOMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28, 2023 11:00AM

“Nevada’s children will be safe, healthy, and thriving during the first eight years of life, and the system will support children and families in achieving their full potential.”

Meeting Location: The meeting was held via Zoom videoconference.

MINUTES

1. **Welcome, Call to order, and roll call- Meeting called to order at 11:07 AM**

Julie Houchins, Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

Members in attendance:

- Julie Houchins, Co-Chair
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Co-Chair
- Dr. Diane Nicolet, WCSO Trustee
- Tina Springmeyer, Washoe County School District
- Anna Severens, NDE OELD, Education Programs Specialist, PreK
- Rachel Stepina, NDE OELD, B3
- Ashley Dines, Parent Leadership Coordinator, The Children’s Cabinet

Members not in attendance:

- Patrice Gardner, NDE OELD, Head Start Collaboration Office
- Denise Tanata, ECCS Director, The Children’s Cabinet
- Anna Marie Binder, Parent Representative
- Cynthia Magana, DWSS CCDP Chief

Guests:

- Vanessa Dunn, Belz and Case Government Affairs
- Rosa Tamayo, Parent Leadership Coordinator (North), The Children's Cabinet.
- Tiffany Olivias, The Children's Cabinet ECCS Manager
- Anna Villatoro, The Children's Cabinet
- Sabrina Jones, Early Childhood Advisory Council System Specialist, NDE OELD
- John Giammona Wilber, ECAC Administrative Assistant, NDE OELD



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2. Review and approval of Minutes

(Discussion/Action)

Julie Houchins, Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

Materials: Minutes for May 31, 2023

- Rachel Stepina pointed out that a technical correction is required to update the job title from "Administrative Assistant" to "ECAC Systems Specialist".
- Ashley Dines motioned to approve the minutes from May 31 with corrections.
- Rachel Stepina seconded the motion.
- No opposition.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward approved the May 31st minutes with corrections.

3. Public comment #1

- Tiffany Olivas, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Manager, provided an update on the status of the Health Resources and Services Administration grant she oversees. There have been great connections taking place in the ECCS leadership meetings. She has conducted sector meetings in early childhood education, maternal child health, and family support services. Yesterday, she met with the family support services. The partners within the sector are working together to build stronger partnerships, which has been a source of excitement and momentum. She mentioned a need to work together and collaborate within the sectors. She wanted to inform the subcommittee that the next meeting will focus on maternal and child health and will be led by partners at the maternal child health department. This is an exciting development, and she will continue giving updates.
- Sabrina Jones asked if the report was included in the work plan. Tiffany Olivas clarified that it is related to the work plan, strategic plan, and HRSA grant work plan. Although it's strongly aligned with Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) due to Denise Tanata's involvement in all of them, it's not directly in the System Alignment subcommittee work plan.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward added that the subcommittee looks for system alignment and how to make connections.

4. Systems Alignment Subcommittee Focus

(Discussion: SA Workplan aligned to 2022 SAGA; Review Goals and Objectives)

Julie Houchins, Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

Rachel Stepina & Denise Tanata, Subcommittee Member

Materials: [SA Workplan](#) & [2022 SAGA Summary Table](#)

- Rachel Stepina wanted to reflect on what they had learned from the SAGA during their last meeting. She asked the members whether they had thoroughly reviewed the SAGA and recognized that this sometimes adds extra to their workload.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet mentioned that she is currently on page twenty of the SAGA Summary and reviewing Goal 2, which includes four components related to Pritzker, PDG, Maternal and Child Health Action Plan, and CCDP. She inquired whether any individuals or organizations in the meeting were actively involved in enhancing coordination and alignment who are directly involved in those four components.
- Rachel Stepina stated that she represents the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) and confirmed they are working on the alignment pieces. She also mentioned the subcommittee roster and that they have discussed the importance of having cross representations.
- Tiffany Olivas responded she is overseeing the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems: Health Integration Prenatal-to-Three grant. She added that Denise Tanata established building relationships with maternal and child health individuals. She has been making progress and looking at what's happening in the Maternal and Child Health sector, and ultimately, the goal is to integrate and become a comprehensive system. An example is supporting their work to cover home visiting by Medicaid. They are also working with their federal program officer, who is connecting them with the infant toddler court program, another grant awarded to the state of Nevada through that office. So they are building on it. She does not believe anyone is representing Maternal in Child Health, and that is participating in the subcommittee meeting. But as she works on building the system, she sees they will have more Maternal and Child Health representation in the future.



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- During the meeting, Rachel Stepina informed the subcommittee that Cynthia Magana represents the Child Care and Development Program (CCDP) and is a subcommittee member. However, she was absent during today's session.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet mentioned that she asked because Rachel Stepina has been pivotal in providing information on what they are working on and how it relates. Dr. Nicolet also thanked Tiffany Olivas for sharing important information. Lastly, she asked about strategies to bridge any gaps that may exist.
- Rachel Stepina noted that these various initiatives and funding sources each have their own organizational goals. For each initiative, they aim to meet specific needs and achieve their goals within their respective sectors and organizations. She shared that the HRSA grant is linked to both ECAC and the Preschool Developmental Grant, which work together. These programs are also aligned with the Childcare Development Program, managed by The Department of Health and Human Services and implemented by the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services. They are responsible for distributing Covid relief funding, which has amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars for these sectors. While the subcommittee continued to prioritize patience, Rachel is optimistic about their progress through the partnerships and focuses on systems alignment. In fact, she believes that this work is directly relevant to their work with AB 113 which aimed to establish the Governor's Office for Early Childhood Systems. This bill did not pass, but it's an opportunity to continue to lay the foundation for the next legislative session.
- The goal was to compile the efforts of the Early Childhood Advisory Council, but they lack authority despite being a governor-mandated entity under the NRS. The ECAC comprises members from diverse sectors, but their ability to utilize these memberships to drive progress in a cohesive manner across sectors will truly advance Nevada's system. There is already commendable work being done, but their work plan needs to clarify the necessary action steps and what are those things in which the sector is working on.
- Rachel Stepina stated that Sabrina Jones will assist with the development of the workplan and completion of upcoming tasks in her role as the ECAC System Specialist.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward acknowledged gaps and opportunities in the alignment process but asked about the barriers impeding progress. Over the years, a continuous effort has been made to address alignment issues and systemic challenges that hinder progress. However, it is essential to examine the bigger barriers that are preventing this work from moving forward. Dr. Weglarz-Ward pointed out that the SAGA does not specifically address the identification of persistent, deeply rooted obstacles that obstruct system alignment work.
- Rachel Stepina added that's something good to add to the work plan. She appreciated Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward for knowing the barriers in her sector.
- Sabrina Jones asked for clarification on updating the work plan and what she needs to do to support the subcommittee.
- According to Tiffany Olivas, the SAGA served as a tool for people to identify Nevada's current status, but it does not provide clear solutions for addressing the identified issues. Essentially, it presents the problems and indicates the current situation. Tiffany thinks the ECAC strategic plan, the system alignment subcommittee, and the HRSA grant she believed are vehicles they can utilize for change. She agreed with Dr. Diane Nicolet and Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward's suggestion to consider the next steps. She has observed that people are not always on the same page and are not working together effectively. Her current focus is on breaking down the barriers that prevent collaboration. She added that, particularly in early childhood education, there is a strong connection, but this is based on relationships. She believes that the Systems Alignment subcommittee group and the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems leadership group are progressing towards addressing these issues.
- According to Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, their initial goal was to gather information, and they were still determining what they would discover, which would help them determine their next steps. During the meeting, it was reported that Objective 2.1, which involved gathering information through the HRSA grant and other ongoing projects, has been completed. Moving on to Objective 2.2, which was to produce and disseminate an Early Childhood Systems Assets and GAPS analysis, Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward proposed that this might no longer be necessary due to the comprehensive information provided in the report. She also requested feedback on whether additional information on the Early Childhood System is required.
- During the discussion of the fourth key activity in Goal 2, which involves collecting additional information, Dr. Diane Nicolet inquired if this is the stage where they can ask and identify any barriers. Rachel Stepina mentioned that even though they have a lot of information, their reach through the ECAC and subcommittee is limited due to the small size.



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Looking at the activity, whatever it used to be, what could it mean now? How can they leverage it? She is still determining what forums they can utilize, but they can collaborate with the Communications and Engagement subcommittee.

- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward clarified if the PDG grant was conducting the needs assessment. Rachel Stepina replied that the PDG grant is moving into a contract for the needs assessment in August. They are working with The Nevada Institute For Children's Research And Policy and with UNLV The Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual, and Special Education (EMS) to examine the access piece. She believes this work should be a different item in their plan. Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward suggested rewording this item and discussing it at their next subcommittee meeting.
- During the review, the subcommittee assessed the fifth key activity related to goal 2, which deals with the sorting of data and information with other subcommittees. Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward noted that this was established during the restructuring of the ECAC, but she is unsure if it has been completed or how it will be accomplished. Rachel Stepina suggested that this appears to be more of a collaborative effort between subcommittees.
- The subcommittee reviewed how to collaborate more effectively with the other subcommittees. They will continue this discussion and possibly make changes to the workplan at the next meeting.
- Anna Villatoro inquired about the necessity of formal meetings for the purpose of sharing information and data. Tiffany Olivas confirmed that such meetings are required to be formal, as any discussions or decisions made pertaining to ECAC do. Rachel Stepina added that's why delegating the review of the minutes is important.
- Preschool Development Grant (PDG) will take on the following strategic planning for the changes for 2024.
- According to Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, the objectives cannot be altered, but the activities can be modified.

5. Subcommittee membership for representation across different sectors of Nevada ECE system

(Discussion: Realignment of committee members)

Julie Houchins, Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

Tabled this one.

- During the upcoming meeting, Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward mentioned that much of the time would be spent reviewing the work plan.
- Tiffany Olivas has informed the group that the ECAC will have new members, including a pediatrician, a parent, representatives from the Maternal and Child Health Department, Welfare and Social Services, and the tribal community. She suggested pausing the discussion related to this agenda item for now.
- Rachel Stepina indicated that additional memberships would be added through AB 114 to the general ECAC, but they can join the subcommittees.

6. Discuss agenda items for next meeting (Last Wednesday of Month @ 1PM – July 26, 2023)

(Discussion: TBD)

Julie Houchins, Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Subcommittee Co-Chairs

- According to Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, the upcoming meeting will mainly focus on the work plan.
- Rachel Stepina would like to bring updates regarding the PDG support for System alignments.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward suggested that updates on ECCS from Tiffany Olivas be included as a regular agenda item.
- Rachel Stepina suggested having all of these items in one single agenda item. They can call it a systems update.
- The next meeting will be on July 26th at 1:00 PM.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet will not be able to attend the meeting. She will be at a conference. Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward asked Dr. Diane Nicolet if she could send her feedback on the work plan.
- For the next meeting, Anna Villatoro suggested asking why members joined the ECAC as an icebreaker.

7. Public comment #2

No public comment.



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8. Adjournment- 12:07 PM