



## Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

### NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL (ECAC)

SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2023**

**1PM**

*“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:**

This meeting will be held virtually via Zoom videoconference:

<https://ndezoom.zoom.us/j/84224785643?pwd=dHRqc0thS2R5akM0WG42aTVxU1dDZz09>

Meeting ID

842 2478 5643

Passcode 061152

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*The Subcommittee Co-Chairs reserve the right to call items of the agenda out of order as needed.*

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*This public notice has been posted at the offices of the Department of Education in Carson City and Las Vegas; Department of Health and Human Service in Carson City; and at the Nevada State Library and Archive in Carson City. Notice of this meeting was posted on the Internet through the Nevada ECAC website at <http://nvecac.com>.*

*The support materials to this agenda are available, at no charge on the Nevada ECAC website at: <http://nvecac.com/> (under the meeting date referenced above) or by contacting Sabrina Jones at 1771 E. Flamingo Road, Suite 200B or [sabrina.jones@doe.nv.gov](mailto:sabrina.jones@doe.nv.gov).*

## Minutes Summary

### **1. Welcome, Call to order, and roll call**

*(Discussion/action)*

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

- Julie Houchins called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.
- Members in Attendance
  - Julie Houchins, System Alignment Co-Chair, Senior Director of Early Education, United Way of Southern Nevada
  - Patrice Gardner, Educations Programs Supervisor, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning & Development
  - Anna Marie Binder, Parent Representative
  - Dr. Diane Nicolet, Board Vice President, Washoe County School District
  - Tina Springmeyer, Child and Family Services Director, Washoe County School District



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- Members not in Attendance
  - Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, System Alignment Co-Chair, Associate Professor, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual, and Special Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
  - Anna Severens, Education Programs Specialist, Pre-K, PDG B-5, Nevada Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development
  - Ashley Dines, Family Leadership Coordinator (South), The Children's Cabinet
  - Cynthia Magana, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Childcare and Development Fund
- Public in Attendance
  - Mary Regan, Las Vegas Urban League- Early Childhood Connection
  - Rachel Stepina. Grant Manger PDG 5, Nevada department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development
  - Denise Tanata, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Consultant, The Children's Cabinet
  - Tiffany Olivas, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Manager 2, The Children's Cabinet
  - Sabrina Jones, ECAC Systems Specialist, Nevada department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development
  - Vivian Bolanos-Sanchez, Birth-3<sup>rd</sup> grade Specialist, Nevada department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development
  - John Giammona Wilber, Administrative Assistant Nevada department of Education, Office of Early Learning and Development
  - Elyse Monroe

### 2. Flexible Agenda Motion

*(Discussion/action)*

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

- Dr. Diane Nicolet motioned for a flexible agenda.
- Anna Marie Binder seconded the motion.
- The motion passed.

### 3. Review and approval of September Minutes

*(Discussion/action)*

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

- Anna Marie Binder made a motion to approve the minutes from September.
- Patrice Gardner seconded the motion.
- Tiffany Olivas abstained because she was not in attendance in the last meeting.
- The motion passed.

### 4. Public comment #1

*Public Comment will be taken during this agenda item regarding any item appearing on the agenda. No action may be taken on a matter discussed under this item until the matter is included on an agenda as an item on which action may be taken. The Co-Chairs may impose a time limit of three minutes. Public Comment #2 will provide an opportunity for public comment on any matter within the Subcommittee's jurisdiction, control or advisory power.*

- Anna Marie Binder shared that they are meeting many of the goals they have set out in the Data and Evaluation Subcommittee.
- Julie Houchins announced that Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward is stepping down as Co-Chair for the System Alignments Subcommittee.
- Julie Houchins also announced that she herself would be stepping down as Co-Chair as well in order to focus on the



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Nevada Ready State Pre-K Program.

- Julie Houchins opened up to members to show if they have interest in becoming a Co-Chair for this subcommittee.
- Anna Marie Binder asked for clarification if chairs must be members of the ECAC team.
- John Giammona Wilber reminded the council that there is to be no questions asked during public comment per Open Meeting Law.
- Denise Tanata suggested discussing the matter of new co-chairs back in Agenda Item 1.
- Julie Houchins concluded with reminding ECAC members who are willing to take on the upcoming vacant chairs available through the System Alignments Subcommittee to do so and to bring it up in the near future.

### 5. Definitions of Early Childhood Systems & Sectors

*(Discussion/Possible action)*

*Julie Houchins, Jenna Weglarz-Ward, Subcommittee Co-Chair*

- Julie Houchins mentioned that Denise Tanata shared a definition of Early Childhood Systems & Sectors in the last meeting that could be relevant for the meeting.
- Denise Tanata shared a document titled “What is an Early Childhood System?” on the screen, which shares a couple-page-long definition that Denise Tanata is suggesting for Early Childhood Systems.
- Denise Tanata outlined and walked through the framework of the document by distinguishing between a basic system and a comprehensive one.
- Denise Tanata explained that the basic system includes all programs and supports needed by children and families, and notes that the definition should specify age ranges.
- Denise Tanata further explained that the comprehensive system delves deeper, focusing on the structure and organization required for a holistic approach to child development.
- Denise Tanata broke the system into four main sectors: early care and education, health, mental health, and nutrition services, while also fully recognizing that this can be divided in many different ways, deciding to keep these health-related services grouped together despite some debate.
- Denise Tanata paused and asked for feedback.
- Rachel Stepina suggested keeping the wording of “early care and education” consistent throughout the document since it is sometimes noted as “early education and care” in the document.
- Rachel Stepina expressed her appreciation of Denise Tanata's document that outlines the definition of Early Childhood Systems and Sectors.
- Rachel Stepina suggested adding more detail to the idea of separating the components in point two and asked how this definition fits into their subcommittee's and the full council's work plans for the upcoming year.
- Rachel Stepina pondered how Denise's definition of Early Childhood Systems can guide their future activities and achieve their subcommittee's goals within the full ECAC.
- Rachel Stepina ensured to direct these questions to everyone, not just Denise Tanata, and aim to ensure their efforts are aligned and effective.
- Julie Houchins announced that she included Denise Tanata's document that was being discussed in the chat.
- John Giammona Wilber addressed that he will include that document with the meeting materials.
- Denise Tanata addressed Rachel Stepina's question by communicating that although some definitions or sectors within early childhood systems separate physical health and mental health into different sectors, she combined them following the BUILD Initiative's model, which she adapted.
- Denise Tanata noted that this combined approach was discussed and agreed upon with the CCS leadership team, which included representatives from various related fields.
- Denise Tanata emphasized the importance of everyone using the same language and having a shared understanding of what the system entails, which she claimed is crucial for effective communication and implementation.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet expressed appreciation of Denise Tanata's definition document by calling it thorough.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet suggested adding the 17 school districts of Nevada under Governance & Support Elements in the document.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet expressed agreement with Rachel Stepina in presenting this definition to the full ECAC.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet expressed agreement with Denise Tanata in moving forward with the language and concepts within the document in order to see progress.



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- Denise Tanata asked for clarification on where under Leadership & Governance (which falls under Governance & Support Elements) in the document should she add the school districts that Dr. Diane Nicolet suggested.
- Rachel Stepina advised adding a category under Leadership & Governance that states “Local Education Agencies”.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet agreed with Rachel Stepina’s suggestion but was concerned about the word “agencies”, but mentioned she’d rather not waste time thinking of better wording.
- Denise Tanata added that she could also add local health districts to that category.
- Rachel Stepina shared that it is difficult to include local ECACs in this section considering they do different community work.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet advised including local ECACs under the subsection “Advisory Bodies” under Leadership & Governance in the document.
- Denise Tanata added Dr. Diane Nicolet’s suggestion in the document.
- Denise Tanata wondered where Nevada AEYC could fit in the document.
- Denise Tanata sought additional input because she sees the document as a product of her own brainstorming.
- Denise Tanata suggested having Coordinated Intake & Referral Systems under Early Childhood Eligibility because it’s not an access.
- Rachel Stepina wondered if the term “Family Supports” accurately represents and emphasizes the leadership part of the vision.
- Denise Tanata explained that the top portion of the document is programmatic where as the bottom section is related to governance.
- Denise Tanata mentioned that there could be some programs that could fall into multiple categories.
- Denise Tanata addressed that she wanted to include early childhood workforce in the document but couldn’t fit it into either section, but she also recognizes that workforce is an integral component.
- Denise Tanata highlighted that the document is a work in progress but it serves to show how Nevada’s early childhood system is mapped out.
- Denise Tanata clarified that the intention behind the document is to have a working definition that the ECAC can agree on.
- Julie Houchins asked if a vote should be taken on the definition of Early Childhood Systems.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet supposed perhaps a vote is needed considering it is an action item.
- Rachel Stepina expressed that she would rather hear a discussion surrounding the section about health under section two.
- Denise Tanata answered that a discussion would be difficult without a strong representation from the health sector in the meeting, and expressed that she did not want to speak for others.
- Rachel Stepina clarified that she would like to hear a discussion regarding condensing the health, mental health, and nutrition into one category so that definition could be included in the vote as well.
- Denise Tanata advised presenting this recommendation to the full ECAC.
- Tiffany Olivas suggested tabling this agenda item for the next meeting because the document in question was not provided to members before the meeting for review.
- Tiffany Olivas expressed that she sees good detail in the document but would like to fully review it comprehensively.
- Julie Houchins agreed with Tiffany Olivas in postponing the vote to the next System Alignments meeting so the committee can review the document well.
- Anna Marie Binder agreed with tabling the agenda item as well.
- Anna Marie Binder asked for clarification on if this document included the subcommittee’s research on other states’ definitions.
- Denise Tanata answered that since her document is based on the BUILD Initiative, as so do many other states, then it is an extension of the research made on the best practices made by other states.
- Denise Tanata clarified that she wants the definition at the end of the day to make sense to families.
- Anna Marie Binder wondered if the next System Alignments meeting would be before the full ECAC meeting.
- Julie Houchins confirmed that the next System Alignments meeting is indeed before the next full ECAC meeting.
- Anna Marie Binder suggested sending the document to another subcommittee to review the document since the full ECAC already has its agenda out for the next meeting.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet reminded members of the subcommittee that the next full ECAC meeting will not include Julie Houchins or Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward, and that it is preferable for the System Alignments subcommittee to reorganize.
- Julie Houchins made it clear that she’s only stepping down from the subcommittee, but not as a member of the full



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- ECAC.
- Rachel Stepina agreed with Dr. Diane Nicolet and suggested taking action and a vote on the definition of Early Childhood Systems in this meeting.
  - Rachel Stepina added that the document is a culmination of all the past work of the subcommittee and mentioned that the document could be updated down the road should it need to be.
  - Anna Marie Binder asked John Giammona Wilber for clarification as to what it will look like for the System Alignment Subcommittee reconvening in the next meeting without Julie Houchins and Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward.
  - John Giammona Wilber clarified that the biggest concern would be finding a co-chair.
  - Anna Marie Binder expressed a desire to motion the approval of the definition of Early Childhood Systems.
  - Dr. Diane Nicolet pointed out that this item would go to the Leadership Subcommittee who would then put the definition on the agenda for the full ECAC.
  - Anna Marie Binder asked if the agenda for the next Leadership Subcommittee and full ECAC meetings are already agendized.
  - John Giammona Wilber confirmed that the following meetings are already agendized.
  - Julie Houchins wondered if they could bring this item in to those upcoming meeting as public comment.
  - Anna Marie Bidner answered that they could potentially bring it up as public comment to circulate the document to members to review and provide feedback at a later due date.
  - Julie Houchins expressed interest in bringing up the definition of Early Childhood Systems as a public comment in the next full ECAC meeting.
  - Anna Marie Binder supposed a deadline for full ECAC members to review and provide feedback for the definitions so that way it is taken care of before the next System Alignments meeting.
  - Denise Tanata offered an idea to present the document under the “Updates from the Subcommittees” agenda item.
  - John Giammona Wilber mentioned that the “Updates from the Subcommittees” agenda item is not present in the next full ECAC agenda.
  - Julie Houchins offered to bring up the document as public comment.
  - Denise Tanata expressed that the Leadership Subcommittee’s agenda may be full considering that the previous two meetings of theirs were.
  - Denise Tanata recommended presenting the parts of the document that are new as public comment in the next Leadership Subcommittee meeting.
  - Julie Houchins asked John Giammona Wilber if there is a Leadership Subcommittee meeting in January.
  - John Giammona Wilber confirmed that the next Leadership Subcommittee meeting will be held on January 5th.
  - John Giammona Wlber mentioned that he’ll know more about the 2024 schedule for the Leadership subcommittee in the following week.
  - Denise Tanata advised that they recommend to the Leadership Subcommittee that this agenda item gets added to the agenda for the January full ECAC meeting so they could discuss it fully and present it.
  - Anna Marie Binder motioned to present the document of the definition of Early Childhood Systems to the Leadership Subcommittee with the intention of having it presented to the full ECAC.
  - Dr. Diane Nicolet seconded the motion.
  - The motion passed, none opposed.
  - Julie Houhins thanked Denise for her work on the document.

### 6. Subcommittee Work Plan Review

*(Discussion/possible action)*

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

- Julie Houchins asked John Giammona Wilber to pull up the Subcommittee Work Plan Review.
- Rachel Stepina suggested reviewing the Subcommittee Work Plan from the bottom of Objective 2 up since the subcommittee tends to take most of their time talking about Objecting 2.1 and leaving no time for any other parts of Objective 2.
- John Giammona Wilber presented Objective 2.4 and Objective 2.3.
- Rachel Stepina asked for clarification that Year 2, as mentioned in Objective 2.4, means 2023.
- Rachel Stepina recommended discussing developing key activities that were supposed to be created in Year 2 but haven’t been done yet, and setting them as a priority for the upcoming January System Alignments meeting.
- Rachel Stepina noted that it is difficult to analyze the work plan and come up with suggestions within 60 minutes.



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- Rachel Stepina emphasized that reading through Objective 2.3 should be a priority in the next System Alignments Subcommittee meeting.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet added that once the subcommittee gains direction after the full ECAC meeting, the System Alignments Subcommittee should be able to “get some wind on our sails”.
- Rachel Stepina also emphasized the need on having the new System Alignments Co-Chairs look at the initiatives to the Nevada ECAC Work Plan.
- Rachel Stepina questioned what is the objective behind the Nevada ECAC Work Plan, and wondered if its existence is grounds for it being considered integrated.
- Rachel Stepina asked Denise Tanata if there is flexibility to change the wording from the original work plan and the objectives themselves.
- Denise Tanata explained that the intention behind the strategic plan was so it could be updated in the future.
- Denise Tanata mentioned that during the planning phase, they lacked clarity on the priorities within various sectors like maternal child health, nutrition, and mental health.
- Denise Tanata continued in explaining that the of the System Alignments Subcommittee is to identify these priorities across different systems and determine how they can align and connect at a systems level.
- Denise Tanata added that the goal is to identify cross-sector priorities and goals, figure out where alignment exists, and integrate necessary activities into their work plan or strategic plan, aiming to facilitate better coordination across sectors and promote system integration.
- Rachel Stepina thanked Denise Tanata for the explanation and reclaimed her recommendation of rephrasing the Work Plan to say something along the lines of “integrate cross-sector priorities, goals, and initiatives into the Nevada ECAC strategic plan to better coordinate and align services and improve.”
- Rachel Stepina advised removing the word “work plan” since the work plan is already a component of the strategic plan.
- Rachel Stepina added that there is an opportunity to look at aligned services for other age ranges to identify some key activities once the Prenatal-3 Strategic Plan is finalized.
- Rachel Stepina mentioned that there does not need to be any action taken on this yet.
- Julie Houchins shared appreciation of Rachel Stepina’s input and expressed hope in progress with the subcommittee moving forward even with the co-chairs stepping down.
- Julie Houchins suggested adding Denise Tanata as a lead under Develop a Clear Definition of Early Childhood Systems due to her input.
- Julie Houchins suggested adding some updates for next steps that they will be presenting to the full ECAC.
- Julie Houchins asked if the subcommittee would like to add the full narrative to the plan, suggesting even adding the January 17th date on the document.
- Rachel Stepina asked if the document being shared on the screen is the most updated version as she recalled there being more details written under Objective 2.2.
- Denise Tanata confirmed that the key informant interviews and surveys should be on the document as it was previously discussed in a prior meeting.
- Denise Tanata mentioned that a lot of the ideas are being integrated into the Prenatal-3 Strategic Plan.
- Denise Tanata mentioned that she should have those revisions done to present to the group by the next System Alignments Subcommittee meeting.
- Rachel Stepina agreed with Denise Tanata and suggested adding the updates in the next agenda.
- Denise Tanata suggested documenting the item under the document as “started”.
- Rachel Stepina asked Denise Tanata if the item should actually be classified as “complete”.
- Denise Tanata agreed with Rachel Stepina’s suggestion of marking the item on the document as “complete”.
- Denise Tanata offered to provide information to members regarding the number of informant interviews and focus groups.
- Sabrina Jones expressed that she would need some time to review the Work Plan with Denise Tanata to cross-check what is complete and what is not.
- Denise Tanata agreed with Sabrina Jones to cross-check and review the Work Plan.
- Anna Marie Binder suggested that they should look at the ECCS data sources from the Data and Evaluation Subcommittee because there was a lot of work put into it and it intersects with a lot of the other subcommittee’s initiatives.
- Rachel Stepina suggested adding Anna Marie Binder as the lead in the document under “Review Comprehensive List



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of ECCS Data Sources” considering she is a cross-communicator between subcommittees.

- Anna Marie Bidner suggested having the chair or Denise Tanata reach out to Marty Elquist to make sure it is ok for her to share the data sources.
- Anna Marie Binder wondered if the ECCS data sources would be revealed by the Data and Evaluation Subcommittee for Christmas.
- Anna Marie Binder agreed with being put down as a lead for ECCS data sources so long as someone else checks in with Marty Elquist ahead of time.
- Denise Tanata agreed to check in with Marty Elquist during the next meeting.

### 7. Discuss agenda items for next meeting

*(Discussion)*

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

- Julie Houchins stated that reviewing the work plan is a major agenda item for the next meeting.
- Julie Houchins asked for input regarding agenda items.
- Julie Houchins determined she would work with Sabrina Jones, John Giammona Wilber, and Tiffany Olivas to discuss next steps for the subcommittee co-chairs and the scheduling of the next date.

### 8. Public comment #2

*Public comment will be taken during this agenda item on any matter within the Council's jurisdiction, control, or advisory power. No action may be taken on a matter raised under this item until the matter is included on an agenda as an item on which action may be taken. The Council Chair will impose a time limit of three minutes.*

- Patrice Gardner expressed gratitude to Julie Houchins for her service as System Alignments chair and expressed relief that she will be staying as a full ECAC member even while stepping down as a subcommittee chair.
- Patrice Gardner encouraged members to step up to become co-chairs in the new vacancies, and mentioned that Dr. Diane Nicolet has expressed interest in filling in the vacancy.
- Julie Houchins appreciated Patrice Gardner's comments.
- Dr. Diane Nicolet expressed that her work as Vice President of the Washoe County School District Board of Education has doubled since the superintendent resigned, but she would still be willing to be a co-chair.
- Julie Houchins expressed gratitude over the support from the subcommittee over the years.
- Julie Houchins mentioned they were awarded an additional 435 seats with Nevada Ready so her workload has greatly increased as well.
- Anna Marie Binder extended her appreciation to the ECAC as a whole for allowing her to help.
- Anna Marie Binder congratulated Julie Houchins on her new path.

### 9. Adjournment

*(Discussion/possible action)*

- Julie Houchins adjourned the meeting at 2:09 PM.

### Action Items:

- The subcommittee is to present and recommend the definition of Early Childhood Systems to the Leadership Subcommittee so it gets added to the agenda for the January full ECAC meeting.
- Denise Tanata will check in with Marty Elquist to see if it's acceptable for Anna Marie Binder to pull the ECCS data.
- Anna Marie Binder will review the comprehensive list of ECCS data sources.
- The subcommittee will look to fill in the co-chair vacancies within the System Alignments subcommittee.

### One Sentence Summary:

The System Alignments Subcommittee said farewell to now former Co-Chairs Julie Houchins and Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward as they voted to present the definition of Early Childhood Systems to the Leadership Subcommittee in hopes of having it presented at the full ECAC meeting.