



Parent Advisory Committee Meeting Summary: September 10, 2020

Attendees: Mary Ignatius, Cherie Schroeder, Patricia Lozano, Lissete Frausto, Patrick MacFarlane, Deborah Corley, Naima Facih

Number of virtual participants: 149

1. Welcome and Introductions (Mary Ignatius)

- In her opening remarks, Chair Ignatius presented an overview of the meeting structure, explaining that the primary focus for the committee's second meeting is on the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care. Chair Ignatius explained that she will postpone appointing two members of the committee to the full council until all Parent Committee seats are filled. The committee is waiting for the final seat to be filled before moving forward with full council appointments.
- Chair Ignatius also provided a brief report to the committee and members of the public on themes discussed during the first meeting that included: 1) considerations for additional vulnerable families, 2) prioritizing support for vulnerable families, and 3) coordinating comprehensive services. She described that feedback gathered from the first meeting helped inform actions the state needs to undertake to support long-term system redesign efforts. The discussion the committee will undertake during their second meeting will focus on some of the immediate, recovery-focused actions the state needs to take as we rebuild the system based on California's long-term vision for early learning and care.
- Chair Ignatius also reminded the committee and members of the public about the September 30, 2020 Census deadline and encouraged everyone to spread the word to their communities and families.

2. Master Plan for Early Learning and Care

- Master Plan for Early Learning and Care team member Lupita Alcala presented an update on the plan development process and priorities identified by stakeholders that are being incorporated into the plan including addressing equity and poverty, using a whole child and whole family approach, supporting a mixed-delivery system, equitable rate reform, equitable compensation, and encouraging parents as partners.
- To support progress to the above mentioned priorities, the Master Plan team engaged the committee and members of the public in a discussion around strategies to support COVID recovery, specifically on how to mitigate challenges related to learning loss. To support development of actionable recommendations to enhance families' experiences, Alcala was joined by members of the California Department of Education Early Learning and Care Division (ELCD). Committee discussion and public comments were woven throughout the Master Plan segment of the meeting. A full summary of themes discussed is presented in the following pages.

A high-level, thematic summary of committee discussion and public comments received during the meeting can be found in the following pages.



Parent Advisory Committee

Summary of Themes and Comments from the Workforce Advisory Committee Meeting

This Summary provides themes from participants in the Parent Advisory Meeting on September 10, 2020.

During the meeting representatives from the California Department of Education (CDE) presented information about several topics related to early childhood education in California. These topics and the specific themes discussed are summarized below, as are any questions asked and answered during the meeting.

Topics discussed during the CDE's presentations:

- Maintaining requirements regardless of educational setting (i.e. in person or vis distance learning)
- The Inclusive Early Education Program (IEEP)
- Headstart childcare program
- Providing special education and related services during COVID-19
- Question and answer session topics

CDE Presentation Themes

Maintaining requirements regardless of educational setting (i.e. in person or vis distance learning) – *Facilitated by Erica Otiono, Associate Director, Early Learning and Care Division (ELCD); Guadalupe Romo-Zendejas, Early Learning and Care Division Administrator*

Erica noted that program quality requirements focused on outcomes apply whether in person or distance learning. TA and trainings are being provided and CDE is working closely with those providing these resources. She also noted that guidance will be available soon, and programs have been asked to provide a distance learning plan. Finally she mentioned working with WestEd to develop and refine a tool called the “Desired Result Development Profile.”

In addition, Guadalupe noted that the requirement to provide information/instruction to parents and children in their primary language is in effect whether in person or distance learning. To ensure the needs of children with disabilities are addressed early learning and care programs are expected to provide accommodations whether in person or distance learning.

The Inclusive Early Education Program (IEEP) – *facilitated by Kim Hough, Child Development Consultant*

Kim described the IEEP, which was established with an allocation of \$176 million, as an award to LEAs for the purposes of increasing access to inclusive early learning and care programs for children with disabilities, including severe disabilities. She described three main uses:

1. Facilities: including repairs and renovations, as well as new construction for LEAs only (not for counterparts).



Parent Advisory Committee

2. Adaptive Equipment: to improve accessibility for indoor and outdoor environments.
3. Professional Development: to ensure early learning and care staff are prepared to serve children with a broad range of disabilities including severe disabilities.

The grant requires CDE to convene a stakeholder group titled the Impact Inclusion State Leadership Team, and includes representatives from various state departments including CDE, Department of Developmental Services, Department of Social Services, local education agency representatives, county agency representatives, regional center representatives, resource and referral agency representatives and a parent representative. The goal of this group is to provide continuous improvement

Headstart childcare program – facilitated by Donna Elmo, Early Headstart Administrator

Donna noted that this, which she directs, partners with 12 programs in high needs communities to reach those most at risk of school failure and support families in poverty. The program emphasizes children's social and emotional well-being. This includes during staff development and annual parent conferences which focus on trauma informed care and the well-being of children. This has also included providing consultants to work with parents who have concerns about behavior or mental health, alongside agencies, specialists, teachers, and family service workers. This includes a developmental and behavioral screening, and if concerns are identified as a result a meeting with a disabilities coordinator to discuss individualized supports, follow up, and recommendations. More generally the mental health consultant has shared resources on how to reopen with a strong and nurturing, supportive environment.

The program serves children from birth through age three in center-based settings and birth through age four in family childcare homes. They have about 50 homes and 17 center-based classrooms. At least 10% of enrollment must be families with an individual service plan or an individual development plan (for those who have turned 3). The program has MOUs with many agencies to facilitate full inclusion and referrals of eligible families, working in seven counties.

Providing special education and related services during COVID-19– facilitated by Stacey Wedin, Education Programs Consultant, Special Education Division

Stacey provided a series of updates on the provision of special education and related services, while acknowledging that in the midst of COVID-19 it may look very different.

- Her first update was that CDE has established a website specific to special education and the pandemic. This includes a lot of FAQs and current state and federal guidance. It also includes FAQs specifically geared to parents to support the broader goal of regular communication with parents.
- The website also summarizes provisions in the 2020 budget act specific to distance learning and special education. This includes explicitly saying distance learning includes special education and related services. It also created a new IEP requirement that going forward every IEP include an "emergency condition" description which outlines what going to happen if a student is unable to receive in person instruction or services for more than 10 days.
- Also covered were updates related to part C and part B transitions. First of all, she shared that they are working closely with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to



Parent Advisory Committee

make sure everything possible is being done by regional centers and school districts to continue services. Also, DDS issued a directive that waives the requirement that early intervention services begin at age three for students turning three since March. This directive was extended. Finally, as a result of a 2019 bill, they have convened an interagency workgroup to think through the part B and part C transition, which contributes to sorting out these issues.

Question and answer session

Parent fee waivers

Unfortunately, CDE doesn't have a lot of authority, but did institute a waiver for a couple of months. Additional action is also being taken on this legislatively (see Senate Bill 820).

Outreach to family daycare providers

Family daycare providers tend to channel questions and issues through the union, which CDE meets with every Monday evening. Erica mentioned that the question about surveying family daycare providers is something she will bring back to their division. She also mentioned that there are webinars every Friday at 10:00.

Rule regarding disenrollment letters

Erica asked that more information be provided about which specific agencies are sending out disenrollment letters.

Parent representation on the IEEP stakeholder group

A committee member commented that one slot for a parent in this group may be insufficient representation for parents of children with disabilities. Another member of the committee also echoed this sentiment.

More details on IEEP funds

Questions were asked about details on the IEEP grant such as: If funds are going to offices of education, how many are they going to? How are they then dispersed? How are you defining disability? While no answer was given to this question, Erica indicated a response was forthcoming and suggested that if possible committee members attend the Friday webinar to get more information.

Health and safety guidance

With respect to guidance on health and safety, Erica indicated that CDE is working closely with the California Department of Social Services and following the guidance from the California Department of Public Health. She mentioned they are also working on a matrix which will illustrate all relevant state and local guidance and where they diverge, if at all. Also, guidance specifically for parents is available, and will be provided as a follow up.

Headstart program questions related to serving homeless children, supporting transitions to Kindergarten, and improving outreach to prospective participating providers

With respect to serving the homeless population, Headstart gives first priority to this population, which is meant to increase their access. A participant in the chat noted that each Office of



Parent Advisory Committee

Education has a Foster and Homeless Director that can assist with ensuring priority for these students.

With respect to the transition to Kindergarten, Headstart has something called “transition services” which includes an opportunity for parents to consult on next steps for their child six months before she is to age out of the program. Part of the goal of this is to ensure parents understand the full range of their options.

Finally, with respect to outreach to prospective participating providers, the most important step is to reach out to the family childcare home education networks to find out how to participate with a local Early Headstart partnership.

Rights for non-English speakers regarding IEP documentation

Parent rights under IDEA have not changed and currently no right has been waived. There are procedural documents that are translated into many different languages and parent training information centers and family empowerment centers have some parent specific resources that might also be helpful here.

Organizations other than regional centers offering special education services

Stacey mentioned she would take this back to her colleagues who might be better able to answer the question.

Any updates on 504 plans for children under 5

Stacey mentioned not being aware of any 504-related provision changes, and will take the question back to her colleagues for a more complete answer.

Resources for parents for support to children with disabilities

Stacey will also check on this question and see if she can share some resources. She mentioned that some districts are supporting parents to take roles like speech services by providing resources but that this depends on the district.

Open Committee Discussion

Experiences of foster parents as caregivers

A committee member shared some experiences of foster parent caregivers. Including a foster mom who has four children, one with severe special needs, and is just unable to provide care for all of them and work her full time job. Another story was about a foster parent who did not have WiFi and so could not get her kids linked up with distance learning. Similarly, a third foster parent indicated an inability to access or use the technology required especially being in a rural setting. These are particularly significant challenges for families without the means to pay for child care.

Improving access for dual language learners

Another committee member raised the issue of access to dual language learner families, and the need for better incentives for them to connect and join resource opportunities. And thinking of creative ways to engage families and empower them to speak the home language at home for now to make sure learning is still taking place.



Parent Advisory Committee

Socialization and screen time

Another committee member expressed concern about the impact of screen time on socialization and interactions with peers. He wondered if guidance was available on appropriate amounts of screen time and solutions for addressing the impact of social isolation.

Lack of information access for family daycare providers

One committee member raised concerns about whether or not information was reaching family daycare providers effectively, noting the unique challenges facing these providers. Though she noted that the pandemic has also given these providers more of a voice and recognition of their needs. Several people echoed this sentiment in the meeting chat.

Waivers for requirements to sign attendance records

One committee member expressed the importance of extending the waiver of the requirement for parents to sign attendance records, particularly that the signature not need to be original (i.e. wet) which might lead to unnecessary contact.

Food security during the pandemic

Concerns about food security during the pandemic were discussed including the possibility of increasing direct payments for food to parents through food stamps, etc. since they may not be able to safely travel to schools to get regular meals purchased by providers. One member noted that providers may still need funds for this since in some cases they are still providing meals to families and children while they are with them.

Statewide coordination of COVID-related supports

One member raised a question about whether a statewide effort is underway to coordinate whole family needs services that are a result of the challenges presented by COVID-19.

Working with employers of all sizes

One member raised the issue of whether the master plan will address how to work with employers of all sizes. This question was identified as a good topic for a future discussion and that it be explicit in the discussion agenda.