

Final
STAFF SUMMARY OF MEETING

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL READINESS

Date: 08/31/2015

ATTENDANCE

Time: **01:04 PM to 03:12 PM**

Marble *
Merrifield X

Place: SCR 356

Singer E
Wilson E

This Meeting was called to order by
Senator Martinez Humenik

Pettersen X
Martinez Humenik X

This Report was prepared by
Rachel Kurtz-Phelan

X = Present, E = Excused, A = Absent, * = Present after roll call

Bills Addressed:	Action Taken:
Welcome and introduction Discussion	Witness Testimony and/or Committee Discussion Only Committee Discussion Only

01:04 PM -- Welcome and introduction

Senator Martinez Humenik, chair, called the meeting to order. She invited Cheryl Caldwell, Director of Early Education for Denver Public Schools (DPS), to come to the table to speak about what DPS is doing to transition students from preschool to kindergarten. Ms. Caldwell told the committee about a DPS pilot program focusing on the transition, and about possible funding for a similar pilot program in a variety of different school districts. Ms. Caldwell explained that research shows that a successful transition from preschool to kindergarten provides for success later in life. She provided further details about the pilot program, which pairs preschool teachers with kindergarten teachers in order to share information about students' daily rituals and routines so that kindergarten teachers can mirror the preschool activities to help kids feel more comfortable in a new situation. She also talked about the importance of helping to align district kindergarten curriculum with community preschool programs.

01:09 PM

Senator Martinez Humenik explained that the group would split into five different breakout groups for one hour, and then come back together to talk about what each group discussed. Copies of a document outlining the breakout group topics were distributed (Attachment A). Senator Martinez Humenik recessed the committee in order for the breakout groups to meet.

02:19 PM -- Discussion

The committee came back to order. Senator Martinez Humenik asked that a representative from each group to come to the table to present what each group discussed. Lauren Heintz, representing Clayton Early Learning, came to the table to present what was discussed by breakout group #1, which focused on child welfare, engaging in home visitation, and transitioning to kindergarten. She discussed the importance of examining smaller programs and organizations that are addressing these issues and gathering more information before recommending legislation. She stated that the group discussed the need to look at home visitation programs that currently exist and where they intersect and possible funding streams, and explained that there are several successful programs already in existence that are looking at these issues. Senator Marble stressed the importance of local control. Senator Martinez Humenik talked about the importance of outreach within communities.

02:27 PM

Representing breakout group #2 which focused on teachers, were Kathryn Harris, representing Qualistar, and Janiece Walter, representing Red Rocks Community College and the Colorado Community College System. Ms. Walter explained that the group discussed the high cost of education for child care workers, which is especially challenging due to the low wages these workers are paid. She said the group discussed the lack of diversity among staff in early childhood centers, and talked about concurrent enrollment programs for early childhood entry certificates. Ms. Harris talked about the need to address pay equity since the average hourly wage for childcare workers in Colorado is \$11.74 per hour. She said that the group discussed several ways to address pay equity, including: closing the gap in the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) to make sure that providers get paid in full in a timely matter and the child care professional tax credit, which Qualistar is currently studying. She explained that the group also talked about the possibility of fundraising in the business community by encouraging it to be part of a quality-improvement system. She said that group talked about the need for communication across the 64 counties in the state in order to share the good work already being done, as well as the need for scholarship programs that will allow teachers to work while also working towards their degree.

02:36 PM

Bill Jaeger, representing the Colorado Children's Campaign, presented on behalf of breakout group #3 which focused on child care licensing; demographics; and family, friend, and neighbor care. He stated that the group mostly discussed the availability of child care, focusing on the need for partnerships between businesses and community child care providers and the issues associated with a decrease in available child care slots for infants and toddlers. He explained that there is an insufficient supply of child care, and discussed the need for better data on child care availability and the need to award more community-based providers with Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) slots. He said that the group also discussed the need for quality and consistent staff and continuity of care.

02:42 PM

The next group to present was breakout group #4, focusing on equalizing access to care, funding, and resources across districts, the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit, the Early Learning Challenge Grant, and Senate Bill 10-191. Senator Merrifield explained that the group recommends that the commission put forth two bills, the first pertaining to exempting licensed preschool and kindergarten through second grade teachers from the effectiveness provisions of SB 10-191 and Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act accountability requirements, and the second to increase the number of CPP slots. He discussed the difference between CPP slots and Early Childhood At-risk Enhancements (ECARE) slots, and encouraged more use of community-based providers. He stated that the group talked about how to market the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit, and the possibility of expanding the tax credit to allow providers to use the money to apply for a quality rating through Colorado Shines. He said the group also discussed how the Early Learning Challenge Grant funds can be used. A document containing a more detailed write-up of the group's discussed can be found as attachment B.

"

02:52 PM

Finally, Representative Pettersen explained what was discussed by breakout group #5 which focused on what bills have been brought by the commission in previous years and what bills should be brought by the current commission. She said that the group discussed the need to remove the ten-county limit from the CCAP pilot program, and make CCAP benefits more transportable from county to county in order to make the transition more smooth for people that move from one county to another. She explained that the group talked about the need to make child care available for parents who are pursuing higher education. Melissa Beck, representing the Civic Canopy, reiterated the need to pay for child care while a parent is pursuing opportunities in skill development and streamline the paperwork for CCAP and other programs in order to remove existing barriers and inefficiencies. Chaer Robert, representing the Colorado Center on Law and Policy, talked about the need to coordinate workforce development and child care assistance efforts between the departments of labor, human services, education, and higher education, in order to ensure that they are working together effectively.

03:02 PM

Senator Martinez Humenik talked about the importance of making sure that any legislation put forward by the committee is workable and effective.

The following person testified:

03:03 PM -- Evie Hudak, representing herself, came to the table to talk about early childhood councils in Colorado. She expressed the importance of hearing from early childhood councils because it is their job to implement programs, address issues, and funnel grants.

03:12 PM

The committee adjourned.

Breakout Groups for Early Childhood & School Readiness Legislative Commission

- 1) **Child welfare, engaging in home visitation, and transitioning to kindergarten- *Senator Marble***
 - food insecurity
 - parent, family member, or guardian mental health issues
 - abuse & neglect
 - two generation approach
 - for new parents
 - kids and school readiness
 - pilot transition program in every district based on models being used in DPS and APS

- 2) **Teachers- *Senator Martinez Humenik***
 - programs available to early childhood education teachers in higher Ed
 - professional development opportunities / credentialing
 - scholarship establishment – partners, state, federal grants
 - need for adequate pay
 - lack of diversity
 - recruitment and retention issues

- 3) **Childcare licensing, demographics, and family, friend and neighbor care- *Representative Wilson***
 - where are child care deserts and a need for licensed child care?
 - initiate opportunities to allow undocumented folks to obtain childcare licenses (similar to NM, CA & AZ)
 - determine the demographics of kids 0-6 in Colorado
 - how to address early childhood needs in these populations
 - family, friend, and neighbor child care and preschools

- 4) **Equalizing access to care, funding and resources across districts & Childcare Contribution Tax Credit, Early Learning Challenge Grant, & SB 191- *Senator Merrifield***
 - lack of consistency
 - continuity of care when moving across county lines
 - capacity issues
 - increasing Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) slots - fiscal impact?
 - tax credit not being utilized by families - is information not being shared? Improvements need to be made?
 - determine if grant funds being applied for, received, and used effectively
 - discuss SB 191 in greater detail

- 5) **Bills by the Commission- *Representative Pettersen***
 - statutes that are flawed - what needs to be fixed so the bill intent can be realized?
 - bills that have been brought forward since the commission was enacted that didn't pass
 - what bill or bills does the commission want to bring forward in 2016?



7649 Harlan Way, Westminster, CO 80003
Evie.Hudak@gmail.com 303-887-9388

Notes from ECSRLC Group #4 Meeting, Aug. 31, 2015

Goals:

- Propose a bill to remove requirement that licensed preschool teachers are subject to effectiveness evaluations based on SB 10-191; also, remove K-2 teachers from this requirement (in same or separate bill). Neither the School Readiness Assessment nor the READ Act assessments are appropriate to evaluate teachers.
- Propose a bill like HB 15-1024, adding more slots to the Colorado Preschool Program, or put it in the School Finance Act, if possible. If the stakeholders strongly prefer the slots to go into ECARE (Early Childhood At-Risk Enhancement) in order to be flexible (to be available for full-day kindergarten as well), expand eligible providers to include community-based child care including family child care.
- Expand the Child Care Contribution Tax Credit to allow providers to use the money to apply for a quality rating through Colorado Shines.
- Create a trigger in the Child Tax Credit for Colorado like the one proposed in the federal Marketplace Fairness Act to allow a \$200 credit for each child under 5 if a tax on Internet sales is approved.

Also discussed:

- Make eligibility for CCCAP (Colorado Child Care Assistance Program) portable across county lines. The problem with this is that different counties have different percentages of FPL (Federal Poverty Level) in their eligibility requirements, and they may have waiting lists already. Ask Charlotte Brantley or Noel Nelson from the 1317 Implementation Task Force for input on this.
- Find a way to make more families aware of the Child Care Tax Credit. The Piton Foundation has been successful in doing this in Denver. Ask Steffanie Clothier about what they did.
- Provide state funding for the projects currently funded through the Early Learning Challenge Grant, so that funds are available for new licensed child care providers to receive a quality rating and new teachers/providers in child care can access the trainings through the PDIS (Professional Development Information System).