Regular Meeting
Early Childhood Development and Early Learning Task Force
Wednesday, May 18, 2022
5:00 P.M.

Task Force Members Present: Chair Vera Vignes, Toni Boucher, Lila Guirguis, Dianne Philibosian, Marie Poulsen, Tony Santilena, Blanca Siebels, Melani Smith-Hill, Susan Wood, Carla Hegwood (Ex-Officio)

Task Force Members Absent: Geoff Albert (Excused), Efrain Aguilar, Ree Harris-Hudson

Staff Present: Michelle Garrett, Danica Borja, Pat Bowie (Consultant), Dion O'Connell, Vannia de la Cuba

1. **Call To Order/Roll Call**
   Chair Vignes called the meeting to order at 5:03 P.M.

2. **Approval of Minutes – May 4, 2022**
   A correction was made to the minutes of the May 4th meeting to change Lake Avenue Church Preschool to Lake Avenue Preschool.

   It was moved (Philibosian) to approve the amended meeting minutes for May 4, 2022 and seconded (Poulsen). (Motion carried)

   In Favor: Chair Vera Vignes, Toni Boucher, Lila Guirguis, Dianne Philibosian, Marie Poulsen, Tony Santilena, Melani Smith-Hill, Susan Wood
   Opposed:
   Abstain:

3. **Public Comment**
   No public comment.

4. **Review Meeting Objectives & Essential Questions – Vera Vignes, Task Force Chair**
   Chair Vignes provided a review of what was discussed and presented during the previous meeting. Chair Vignes asked the task force to consider whether the policy framework that was adopted for the Early Childhood Development Policy was still relevant.

   Susan Wood commented that EDI tests public school children and not private and that EDI efforts should include private schools.

   No Public Comment

5. **Early Child Development Policy Framework & Elements Review – Dianne Philibosian, Lila Guirgus, & Marie Poulsen**

Pat Bowie asked the question of whether the existing policy captured the right elements, were the building blocks defined sufficiently, and does the policy need to change (at all) based on what the conditions are now.

Dr. Philibosian began the dialogue with envisioning a system where all the programs and collaboratives work together to create an early learning city by 2025. Dr. Philibosian expressed that the creation of touchpoints within the system will enhance interactions amongst programs and collaboratives leading to shared data and networks which can benefit children and their families. Susan Wood supported Dr. Philibosian's comments about the creation of a network and touchpoints. A question posed by Dr. Philibosian was how can independent networks come together and create touchpoints to learn from one another to help children and families. Pat Bowie commented that programs and organizations can move together toward a shared vision, however when there is a breakdown in communication, silos form.

Proceeding to discuss the need of a systematic approach, Lila Guirgus suggested building collaborations and bridges amongst organizations and community agencies to connect with families and children. Building the networks and finding mechanisms to collaborate and link partnerships can better prepare organizations and programs for the next crisis. Toni Boucher noted that it is important to reexamine which groups are operating in the early childhood space and make sure that they are part of the conversation. Given that the pandemic forced agencies to adopt virtual and online presences, Melani Smith-Hill suggested that there be a central location of all information or website that contains all the relevant information and resources when there is a crisis. In reply, Lila Guirgus expressed the importance of parents and peer-to-peer relationships as a network for easily accessible information and resources. Neighborhood hubs are relevant and important to provide reach, accessibility, and support for families that need it.

Dr. Poulsen opened the final portion of the discussion with the mains goals of agencies serving children 0-5 years of age should be to (1) to look at the whole child and (2) the notion of no wrong door for families that need resources and information. Dr. Poulsen noted that coordinated care and a care plan between family and all clinicians should be a focus when looking at quality of care for children. Dr. Poulsen discussed the items on the Governor's budget regarding family navigators to help children and families with warm referrals. The policy has not yet been signed by the Governor. In response, Pat Bowie mentioned that wording and terminology used can help in obtaining the resources needed to help children and families with grants and funding from the state and federal level. An update on what Los Angeles County is doing within the Department of Mental Health, provided by Dr. Poulsen, is that children no longer need to have a medical necessity to receive specialty services.

Pat Bowie asked the task force whether the policy framework is still relevant. Lila Girguis suggest that parts of the policy framework should be condensed and some building blocks should be merged or simplified. In response to framework relevancy, Susan Wood felt that

it would be important to identify and expand upon building blocks if necessary. Toni Boucher agreed with the general framework and that there needs to be accountability for agencies involved.

No public comment

6. **Policy Discussion & Preliminary Evaluation of Policy Building Block 3 – Dianne Philibosian, Lila Guirgus, & Marie Poulsen**

The group discussed policy building block 3 which is Data Collection – Measure of Success. Dr. Philibosian discussed that it is important to look at the data to start building an information system. Data collection should come directly from the community, through focus groups, door-knocking efforts, and key informants to create a community-owned commitment to data. Susan Wood reminded the task force that the EDI should be expanded to include private schools as to address any discrepancies between the two which could help inform public policy. In response to data collection efforts, Lila Guirgius commented that data needs to be easily digestible and benchmarks be incorporated to measure success. Dr. Philibosian provided an example of a potential benchmark to measure success (evaluation every 2-5 years or through focus groups and surveys). Multiple strategies can be utilized to measure success and drive decision making at higher levels of leadership. Chair Vignes asked the task force whether the building block 3 is important enough to keep within the framework. Pat Bowie responded that the group consensus is that the measure of success isn't a sufficient name for building block 3. According to Pat Bowie, the data needs to be more accessible and used as a tool for decision-making rather than a measure of success.

In discussion of the midterm report, Pat Bowie suggested that the goal of the task force is to review the core elements of the existing policy and policy recommendations should it need to be revised. To progress the discussion for the next meeting, Pat asked the task force to review the remaining building blocks and forward to her answers to the following guiding questions: (1) does the task force agree with the particular elements of each building block, (2) is this the correct policy element description, (3) is the task force in agreement on the policy statement for the core element, and (4) what additional information is needed to make a determination?

No public comment

7. **Adjournment**

It was moved by (Dr. Dianne Philibosian) to adjourn the meeting and seconded (Lila Guirgius) to adjourn the special meeting. (Motion carried)

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 P.M.

X

Michelle Garrett
Assistant to the City Manager

X

Danica Borja
Recording Secretary