



TO: Early Learning Council
FROM: Miriam Calderon, Early Learning System Director
Sue Miller, Early Learning Council Chair
RE: Process for Developing Early Learning Council Strategic Plan
DATE: October 23, 2017

Reflections from Early Learning Council Retreat and what that means for strategic planning process

At the September retreat, we re-affirmed our shared commitment to achieving the high-level goals of the Early Learning Council:

- ❖ Children arrive at school ready to succeed
- ❖ Children live in healthy, stable & attached families
- ❖ The early learning system is aligned, coordinated & family-centered

There was also strong agreement that the achievement of these three goals requires the Council to focus on the entirety of the early learning system. The Early Learning Council was created to build an integrated early learning system that connects early learning programs, health, human services and K-12. The Legislature gave the ELC this mission because no one else is tasked to look after the system as a whole. Fulfilling this mission requires us to be engaged with and engaging the sectors beyond early learning and development programs – health, human services and K-12.

At the same time, the oval representing early learning and development programs is the most under-developed and under-financed of all of the parts of the system. It is also the area in which the Early Learning System Director and the Early Learning Council have the most direct influence. So while, the Early Learning Council committed to re-focusing on the system as a whole, there was also an acknowledgment that there will continue to be a need for a special emphasis on the early learning and development oval and the work led by the Early Learning Division. The Early Learning Council expressed the importance of the Council being a voice and leader for the early learning system and being prepared to be that voice for the 2019 legislative session.

Based on these discussions from the retreat, we are proposing an Early Learning Council strategic planning process that (a) identifies strategic priorities for the early learning and development sector, including for the 2019 legislative session; (b) engages with other sectors in order to develop a strategic plan reflective of the work in those sectors and the levers that the Early Learning Council has in supporting that work; (c) identifies the opportunities and strategies for greater cross-sector integration and (d) acknowledges shared accountability of the three system goals listed above and identifies a shared set of outcome measures for the early learning system (i.e., the early learning system



dashboard). The Council's committees will need to take ownership of this identified work moving forward.

Developing strategic priorities for the early learning and development sector

During the retreat, ELC members identified a number of potential strategic priorities for the early learning and development sector. These ideas that surfaced during the retreat will be brought back to the ELC at the November meeting for further discussion, refinement and prioritization, with the goal of finalizing agreement on them at the January meeting. The Early Learning System Director and Council Chair will continue to engage with the Governor throughout this process as appropriate as part of the discussion of priorities for the 2019 legislative session. These discussions will also inform the development of agency Legislative Concepts that the Early Learning Division will need to submit in the spring of 2018.

Engaging other sectors in developing a strategic plan for the early learning system

Over the course of the spring, the ELC will devote 2-3 hours of each meeting to engage with all of the sectors. Each engagement session will include: (1) representation from the lead agency (e.g., OHA for health); (2) key community partners (e.g., CCOs as a health community-partner); and (3) representation from Early Learning Hubs. A sample timeline and breakdown of these sessions is attached for reference.

The purpose of these engagement sessions will be to:

1. Deepen the ELC's understanding of these sectors, particularly the status of programs serving children birth-five and their families.
2. Identify key goals and outcome measures of the sector
3. Identify key priorities of the sector
4. Identify key initiative within the sector
5. Identify barriers to achieving the priorities
6. Identify what each sector needs from the other sectors in order to achieve the priorities
7. Identify what levers the ELC has to support the achievement of these goals, the removal of barriers and stronger cross-sector integration of the work

An hour will be set aside following each meeting for ELC members to discuss what they heard and what that means for the ELC strategic plan. Every effort will be made to ensure agency leaders are engaged in these debriefing sessions.

In order to make these engagement sessions as productive as possible, the ELC will devote part of its November meeting to developing a set of standard questions to provide in advance to the cross-sector session participants. The Measuring Success Committee will be simultaneously engaging with the appropriate sector partners in order to develop an Early Learning System Dashboard that is truly reflective of the system as a whole, and has shared ownership across the sectors.