

State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care

Second Convening Minutes

April 7, 2010 at 9:30 a.m.

Council Attendance: Berry, Michael; Brady, Denise; Brown, LaShonda; Capello, Mary; Cardenas Hagan, Elsa; Cody, Deborah; Day, Gina; De Hoyos O'Connor, Ana; Enriquez, Blanca; Gasko, John; Goodman, Dottie; Hobbs-Lopez, Angela; Ott, Bobby; Rasco, Sasha; Shiver, Elaine; Verver, Nicole (Phil Warner); Wedel, Kim; White, Quincy; Whitcamp, John

Facilitators and Staff: Bates, Jim; Gomez-Chennisi, Catherine; Kaplon, Amanda; Walters, Dan

1. Welcome and Opening – Dr. John Gasko
2. Introduction of Members – Mr. Dan Walters
3. Review Agenda and Expectations/Guiding Framework – Mr. Dan Walters
4. Texas' Early Childhood Landscape – Dr. John Gasko
 - a. Charting Our Early Childhood Course in Turbulent Times: The Urgent Need to Address the School Readiness Domain
 - b. Origin of Concepts
 - i. Domain: Defined meta-problem that concerns many different stakeholders
 - ii. Turbulence: Confluence of external pressures that individual organizations cannot control unilaterally
 - iii. Collaboration: A necessary response to turbulence in inter-organizational domains (Emery & Trist, 1965)
 1. Collaboration is a collective response by domain stakeholders that enables them to tackle the problem and stabilize the domain
 - c. Problem Domain: The School Readiness of Children
 - i. Problem domain is complex, volatile and critical.
 - ii. A pressing societal problem with social, ethical and economic implications: the precipitous increase in early achievement gaps
 - iii. What can we learn about the dynamics of such processes and how to manage them successfully?
 - d. A Historical Quest
 - i. Flashback to 1969: Jeannette Watson, Office of Early Childhood Development and Governor Preston Smith. Development of a taskforce

- ii. Combined effort: State Dept of Public Welfare, State Dept of Health, Texas Dept of Mental Health, Texas Education Agency, Texas Office of Economic Opportunity
 - iii. Recommendations:
 1. Establish a statewide mechanism for planning and coordination
 2. Development of an improved information base
 3. Development of a statewide plan
 4. Formulate a plan for early childhood centers
- e. The Recurring Cycle of Un-Readiness
 - i. When infants and toddlers don't have quality interactions with caring adults they enter preschool behind.
 - ii. When preschoolers don't have quality early learning experiences, they enter kindergarten behind.
 - iii. When children enter kindergarten behind, they are much more likely to be held back, need special education, fail mastery assessments, drop out of high school and become engaged with the welfare and corrections systems.
- f. Diagnosing School Readiness
 - i. What We Know
 1. According to recent grade failure data from TEA, 11,457 kindergarten students were retained as were 21,852 1st graders
 2. According to recent projections, 500 pre-k and kindergarten students have received DAEP referrals as have 3,000 1st graders
 3. Some estimates suggest that only 55% of entering kindergarten students are developed in literacy (across income levels)
 4. Up to 7 out of every 1000 4 year –olds are expelled from pre-k settings (highest of which are child care settings) in Texas = 2,800 children
 - ii. What We Don't Know
 - iii. The work of the SAC = Start with what we know + determine what we don't know
- g. The Developing Child
 - i. Chronosystem (outer most layer)
 - ii. Macrosystem
 - iii. Exosystem
 - iv. Mesosystem
 - v. Microsystem
 - vi. The Developing Child (in the middle)

- h. Guiding Principles for Turbulent Times
 - i. Conceptual Framework
 - ii. A Sense of Urgency
 - 1. Unlimited Demand, Limited Resources
 - 2. Parallel Structures, Rules and Priorities: The Challenge of Institutional Density
 - 3. Systems Versus Families and Children
 - 4. Mixed-Age Populations
 - 5. Need for Innovation & Results Driven Solutions
 - iii. A Homegrown Approach
 - 1. Rapidly expanding knowledge base from early childhood research provides guidance in times of competitive resource challenges: Invest in quality. Not all programs produce desired child outcomes. Focus on results for parents and children. **Take a Texas approach to what works best and not try to replicate what other states are doing simply on face value.**
 - 2. The work of building an “early childhood system” is sometimes confusing, always complicated but necessary if we are to improve results and cost efficiency
 - 3. The work of shared leadership and accountability requires the development of evolving state and local, public and private processes and partnerships
 - iv. Accountability Principles
 - 1. Anchor our work in research and best approaches for Texas parents and children
 - 2. Focus on core system components across sectors
 - 3. Build public/private state-community partnerships and co-investment
 - 4. Outcomes matter. Evaluate progress regularly
 - 5. Data matters. Focus on data development, interoperability and reporting
 - 6. Sharing knowledge matters. Focus on parents, practitioners , thought leaders and policy makers
- 5. Texas’ Changing Demography – Dr. Steve Murdock

Current and Future Patterns Affecting the Texas Population: Implications for the Size and Distribution of Persons in Early Childhood

 - a. Change in Rates and Sources of Population Growth
 - i. not all Texas growth is entirely tied to immigration

- ii. regions that have been the fastest growing parts in Texas for about a quarter of a century
 - 1. Dallas/Fort Worth are
 - 2. Houston/Galveston
 - 3. San Antonio to Austin corridor
 - 4. Area along the Texas and Mexico border
 - iii. Accounted for 89% for all the growth in Texas
 - iv. Problems
 - 1. Rapidly growing areas, building enough schools
 - 2. Decreasing population areas, keeping enough students to keep schools open
- b. Increase in Non Anglo Populations
- i. Diversity has been here for a long while, this is not a recent occurrence.
 - ii. Rule of 70: If you want to know how fast anything doubles, take the rate of growth, divide into 70, and you get the number of years it takes to double at that rate of growth.
 - iii. Would take 140 years to double the Anglo population at the rate of 0.5%; 14 years to double the population of Hispanics.
 - iv. 2003: Texas became a state that is less than half Anglo.
 - v. Fluctuation has occurred over time in increases and decreases both.
 - vi. This is due to higher birth rates per each death.
- c. Aging of the Population
- i. Aging of the Baby Boomers influence the aging population a great deal.
 - ii. Elderly person population is 25% of US population and 25% of Texas population.
 - iii. 1 in 5 Americans are at least 65 or older; we are an elderly society.
 - iv. Anglo population is declining and Hispanic population is increasing in elderly population as well.
- d. Implications for Early Childhood Populations
- i. Over half of children will be non Anglo by 2042.
 - ii. This change will alter the economy of Texas because Anglos are more highly educated than minorities, making the average household income higher. As Anglo population decreases, so will the level of household income that is circulated in the economy.
 - iii. Texas is generally a wealthy state; future projections foretell Texas will become a poor state.
 - iv. If the present education gaps could be closed in the non Anglo population, Texas could become an even wealthier state than it is now.

- e. Projections for the Future
 - i. Annual population to be 7.6 million in US.
 - ii. By 2042, expectation is that over half the children will not be Anglo.
 - iii. By 2040, 80% of the kids of focus in Texas will be Non Anglo.
 - iv. Most of the Anglo population will consist of elderly people rather than children.
 - v. On our current path, Texas will become a poverty stricken state.
 - f. Dr. Murdock Contact Information
 - i. Phone: 210-867-4385
 - ii. Email: shm3@rice.edu
 - g. Sources
 - i. U.S. Census Bureau: www.census.gov
 - ii. Texas State Data Center: txsdc.utsa.edu
6. Data and Quality Rating Systems
- a. Presentation – Mr. John Whitcamp
 - i. Members
 - 1. John A. Whitcamp, Host
 - 2. Gina Day
 - 3. Dr. Elsa Cardenas-Hagan
 - 4. Sasha Rasco
 - 5. Denise Brady
 - ii. Committee Assignment
 - iii. Data Collection System
 - iv. Texas Education Agency
 - v. Texas Workforce Commission
 - vi. Department of Family and Protective Services
 - vii. Head Start/Early Head Start
 - viii. Data is used independently by agencies with little or no sharing
 - ix. Desired Reality
 - x. Recommendations: Work with an Education Research Center or similar entity
 - xi. Education Research Centers
 - xii. Regional Education Lab-SW
 - xiii. Phased Approach Completion
 - b. Workgroup Discussion
 - c. Workgroup Feedback
 - i. Workforce and Professional Development – Ms. LaShonda Brown
 - 1. Strengths

- a. Looks at child outcomes/programs
 - b. Identifies the 4 existing data
 - c. Identified the security issues
 - d. Merges data (silos, everyone shares)
 - e. Texas driven but will look at all other systems around the nation that will help build our system.
 2. Suggested improvements
 - a. Incorporate data collection as it relates to the professional workforce development; also needs to consider the professionals who are working directly with the children.
 - b. Recognize the phase breakdown, but add a more specific timeline to the plan (i.e. Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 for consideration for the overall plan).
 3. Other:
 - a. Funding of the pilots in these 3 years and how that falls within the timeline.
- ii. Outreach and Communications – Dr. John Gasko
 1. Strengths
 - a. Addresses a truly significant universal need across groups.
 - b. Has great potential to bring entities together, promotes partnership.
 - c. Accelerates the identification of services by bringing in different sets of data, but need to think carefully on how we do this.
 2. Suggested Improvements
 - a. Clarification on Head Start data: Where would we get that from; What it would look like?
 - b. Put some more “meat” on the timeline and think critically about how we are going to roll this out.
 - c. Need to ensure mixed delivery to all schools (typically in QRIS systems, public school are left out because they are not required to be licensed for example).
 - d. There was a question about the regulatory realities that onsite child care and school districts are required to abide by versus child cares that may be away from the district. Making sense of the accountabilities that could be pretty diverse in these situations.
 3. Other:

- a. We have got to ensure that data drops are regular, not a onetime thing that is updated once a year; has to be agreed upon ways in updating the data.
 - b. Need to make critical decisions about who regulates those data drops; different agencies have different interpretations about data and confidentiality, we have got to be able to honor that.
 - c. Talk about who will have access to that data and how.
 - iii. Collaborations and Standards – Mrs. Mary Capello
 - 1. Strengths
 - a. Really like the identifying of state and federal regulations for the purpose of improvement.
 - 2. Suggested Improvements
 - a. In the area of data base: Looking at TSR! and TRS as being the groups where most of this system will be used for data, we recommend that we also look at what other systems are out there that are doing data collection that could be beneficial in building our data gathering.
 - b. In the area of quality rating: Include Head Start and Early Head Start programs into the collection of data.
 - iv. Public Input
 - 1. Strengths
 - a. Definitely a need in terms of a center such as date that provides services to children and families through multiple services rendered.
 - b. Want to keep longitudinal data on our participants.
 - c. The data base that shares information across agencies is wonderful.
 - 2. Suggested Improvements
 - a. Include Even Start data in the mix.
 - 3. Other
 - a. Are you addressing:
 - i. Required data system versus available IF agencies want to utilize?
 - ii. Development of guidelines in sharing of data among agencies to make the system more user friendly?
 - d. Reflections – Mr. John Whitcamp

- i. Have been struggling with a “Which should come first” issue. Reason for this system is not just to have a bunch of data that is easy to get to, but to build a quality data and rating system, identify quality, and to bring up the level of quality in all of the various settings. Have to build the data first in order to get to build the quality of collection.
- ii. No timeline because we know the work of the other groups will impact their work, difficult to move forward with QRIS without the details of other group work timelines.
- iii. Do want to be sure that QRIS is built around all performance standards, other rules, regulations, and laws that drive the various federally or state funded programs that are in existence.
- iv. Access is one of the reasons that we had talked about the possibility of who has access to the data. This is one of the reasons so much thought was put into the regional educational laboratory and to the education research service centers because of the way the de-identify data and control who has access after the fact. That will be built into the RFP regardless of who the winner of the data development piece of it is.
- v. QRIS is what this is about and maybe that was not emphasized enough. QRIS is the “apple on the tree.” This is what this has to be about so that we can ensure not only our funders, but also the parents that we are doing the best of all we can do for their kids when they put them in our trust and we prepare them to be ready for school.

7. Workforce and Professional Development

a. Presentation – Mrs. LaShonda Brown

i. Members

- 1. LaShonda Brown, Host
- 2. Ana de Hoyos O’Connor
- 3. Blanca Enriquez
- 4. Dottie Goodman
- 5. Deborah Cody

ii. Identify Goals

iii. Discuss objectives and activities planned to achieve goals

b. Workgroup Discussion

c. Workgroup Feedback

i. Data and QRIS – Mr. John Whitcamp

- 1. Strengths

- a. Very strong presentation: Group did very good identifying their goals and went beyond that and identified their objectives and strategies that they wanted to implement.
- b. Presentation was processed heavily and well thought out.
- c. Some of the individual comments had a comprehensive and inclusive vision.
- d. Self assessment tool is very much needed.
- e. Very important that the core competencies were segregated by age group; not just assuming one set of competencies for all folks working with children regardless of age.
- f. Identified a variety of professional and practitioner roles that included mentoring and coaching models to add to the quality and access.

2. Suggested improvements

- a. Student associates, while studying, they need a possible compensation plan, pay for performance, something to incentivize the process: tuition assistance, salary increase, etc.
- b. Need core competencies for each one of the positions; professional development assessment tool that assessing back against the skills sets of the employee that is based on core competencies by position in age groups (i.e. 2 year old teachers versus 5 year old teachers).
- c. Thought that core competencies and professional development assessment tool could help drive some succession planning at the local program level or could help the local program determine who has developed the broadest set of skills. Whom may be the next set of leaders that could come into the organization and help continue to move along this quality that we are all seeking for.
- d. We talk about articulation agreements, but what is that articulation agreement going to address? Is it going to address just excepting coursework from one university to the next or is it also going to address access? Are we going to assure that as partner organizations for community colleges or universities across the state of Texas agree to

be a part of the process or are they going to agree to take the service to the provider and not require the provider to come to them? Articulation could address both of those...

ii. Collaborations and Standards – Mrs. Mary Capello

1. Strengths

- a. Agree that presentation was very well put together and thought out.
- b. Like the career lattice, thought that it will provide a lot of advantages.
- c. Looked at the possibility of having a strength in expertise and lot of opportunities for cross training and having staff that can be put in different positions because sometimes that is needed.
- d. The self assessment is great because that is what we really need, to be able to prove to the legislature and the funding sources that this is working.

2. Suggested Improvements

- a. Struggled the most in the compensation piece because how can we afford this when you have got stake holders that have requirements to pay comfortable wages past the minimum wages, not just locally or statewide, but nationally.
- b. Funding assistance to programs faced with the issues of wage requirements.
- c. Collaboration is key, want to collaborate as much as possible with programs that have computers and TV and such. If these programs can share equipment, budgets can be saved and used into other things such as salaries.
- d. Wrap around dollars, how we can be most effective. Work on keeping the quality teachers instead of forcing them elsewhere; want to use saved funds to improve quality of salaries.

iii. Outreach and Communications – Dr. John Gasko

1. Thoughts proposed rather than strengths and weaknesses

- a. The vision is very comprehensive; it connects dots that here before have been connected in theory but not collected into a plan.

- b. Some connections thought of was that we need to ensure a great linkage between the approaches and to the QRIS to make sure that we are speaking to each other, when we are talking about professional development. This instead of having technical assistance approach that we will be providing to programs based upon what we find when we start looking at the quality.
- c. Need to have a linkage to ensure that in the professional development we have got to connect to the demography that we saw quite visibly today in terms of meeting specialized needs of language learners in cultural responsiveness to the degree that that is possible.
- d. Also in the whole spectrum of development in autism spectrum disorder now being accounted for in 1 out of every 100 children; really thinking about how we specialize it, but at the same time as we have a practitioner registry and trainer registry that we really think strongly about the research evidence that supports the approaches that we validate and offer to people.
- e. Have to make sure that we meet the needs of mixed delivery providers: public school teachers, aides, etc. They have different expectations and different accountabilities. There is a real struggle that occurs with a real smart approach in the public school system to help teachers understand a vision for their own professional development.
- f. There have been some changes, the further out we expand the certification, we are concerned that attention that higher education institutions and professional development being offered in districts is not going to be specialized enough to account for the development needs of young children.
- g. While we think about career lattice and providing people with a vision and a pathway, we have to make sure simultaneously that every day they are responsible for a lot of fingers and toes and so the quality that occurs as they are advancing has to be informed and reciprocal so

the practices that they are being taught have to be linked to practices that we know on the ground matter.

- h. In terms of targeted recruitment, we have got to be able to professionalize and really help create a good vision of quality at the early grades as well as all the other grades.
- i. Need to have the significant targeted recruitment to the potential workforce early, to talking to high school students and getting them excited about this opportunity, and talking to other programs.
- j. Marketing and communication strategy for this is going to be very important to really get the vision out there that can speak to all the sectors with a real focus on quality in schools.

d. Reflections – Mrs. LaShonda Brown

- i. This was validating for us because we only showed the short version of our vision.
- ii. We want to emphasize that we are committed to access and articulation. We are committed to understanding more about where college bearing courses can be held and how participants or students are able to move from one program to another in order to complete those.
- iii. Core competencies with professional development and driving succession plans, we really looked at that in full blown out plan and so we will be gathering more information about that. We think that will really help to support the infrastructure and building sustainability of the overall plan.
- iv. Agree with the comments on compensation, intent of compensation study is to gather information based on the analysis of that information, then recommendations will be made.
- v. Thoughts about linking to QRIS: One of the things neglected to start out with is really understanding, just like the foundations of a house, early childhood and child development is very important. If children do not have those skills or have those interactions that they need then everything tried on top of that will be shaky. We want to ensure that those working with very young children are very solid in child development.
- vi. In our professional development, or in our university, we also outlined integrating in the coursework identifying special needs.
- vii. We are including tech prep, which is the high school prep course for childhood development in our plan, but that is again in the 20 page plan.

- viii. We do have a team that actually will be going and participating in being a part of the professional development work team; includes ECI, Head Start, child care, child care licensing, TWC...

8. Collaborations and Standards

a. Presentation – Mrs. Mary Capello

i. Members

1. Mary Capello, Host
2. Michael Berry
3. Kim Wedel
4. Angela Hobbs-Lopez

ii. Identify Goals

iii. Discuss objectives and activities planned to achieve goals

b. Workgroup Discussion

c. Workgroup Feedback

i. Outreach and Communications – Dr. John Gasko

1. Suggested Improvements

- a. Need a real alignment between program standards.
- b. Need to create a strong awareness not only in terms of the mainstream standards, but also standards that are specialized for different need populations; need to develop it and educate people significantly.
- c. More feedback for Workforce and Professional Development: get leaders trained and institutions of higher education and Head Start programs, and child care programs to understand how to collaborate and reach out to others; there is human skill sets, soft skill sets, and harder skill sets on how to do that. Need to take a critical look at leadership and what that means for collaborations and professional development. We need to make it easy and understandable and link it to QRIS.
- d. Home based care is really important regardless of approach and 50% of the children under the age of 5 are being served in some sort of home based or unknown environment, whether it is regulated or unregulated. Imagine the school readiness trajectory we could achieve if we actually could go out more from traditional settings to home settings.

ii. Data and QRIS – Mr. John Whitcamp

1. Strengths
 - a. Comprehensive review is a strong strategy.
 - b. There is a good need for a needs assessment in this area that includes regulations, guidelines, and barriers for practitioners.
 - c. Home based inclusion is a strength; the readiness pilot will move the ball forward.
 - d. Understanding the need to reach out to at home situations throughout reaches outside of the box.
2. Suggested improvements
 - a. Ensure that the ongoing changes to regulations and guidelines will be routinely included or incorporated into the process. There is a critical element of keeping them updated, as well as communicating those updates. Developing a system to drive the update of those cross walks, to ensure that the most strenuous standard of the best practices known, is going to be a great difficult part of that.
 - b. Think the presentation is a little weak on standards; we did not really get to a good analysis of standards. Do not have the information that we need in regards to what standards are best practices that we need to be considering in the QRIS system.
 - c. It was a good discussion on collaborations and we have many examples of that in the state of Texas, but would like to see a real dig into this piece on standards. The charge on the act is to make recommendations for improvements in state early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop quality comprehensive early learning standards.
 - d. Collaboration is a path we have taken to see where those standards connect and collide, but now need to do a little more work in this area in regards to what are those standards. Which are the ones we want to retain and which ones do we need to remove from our books?
- iii. Workforce and Professional Development – Mrs. LaShonda Brown
 1. Strengths
 - a. Ensuring that all domains were included was a good strength.

b. Looking at building upon what we have already worked on in our state like the Pre-K Early Learning Standards.

2. Suggested Improvements

a. Encourage the group to really go back and look at the legislation; part of it talks about developing comprehensive early learning cross sector systems, we need to be thinking about all of those sectors.

b. Data and Quality Rating: Understanding that the early learning standards really are going to help to facilitate these collaborations. Without that common ground to work on, there is no room and leverage.

c. Ensuring that when we are talking about school readiness just really having a strong background in early childhood and child development.

d. Building upon our existing Collaboration Manual, this is a great document to work on, at least as a starting point, and utilize this document as a resource

d. Reflections – Mrs. Mary Capello

i. Agree that we need to be thinking outside of the box.

ii. We definitely need to do needs assessment, which is why we patterned it the way we did because we need to see what is out there. We do not want to reinvent the wheel, we know that the standards are all different and we need to analyze them.

iii. We wanted to approach it from this perspective and assess it and see where they align and where they do not. We agree that we need to keep the ones that are working uniformly and clear out the ones that are not.

iv. We are going to build upon what is there. There is some good work out there in collaborations and different efforts that have been done in not just Texas, but other states and countries that we can learn from that we intend to look at.

v. We strongly believe and know that leadership will be the key to collaborations because leadership is where these collaborations have been successful. Where leadership is weak are where the challenges come from. Leadership at times comes with experience; collaborations have been created through trial and error. This may have to require training and the development of what kind of leaders it will take to be successful. They need to establish, have the personality, the knowledge and know what to say in the marketing it will take to get people to buy

into this in collaboration. This all begins with a good leader and training them to be successful.

- vi. We need to be looking at whether it is addressing children who have learning disorders, what their development needs are and not just in terms of low income but to connect that.
- vii. Need to be merging, TRS program options and the TSR! child outcomes need to be merged, we need to come up with a formula for quality programs. Improved standards are going to be very important in rating. There needs to be continuity otherwise the program will not be strong because we have not looked at everything and the program will fall.

9. Outreach and Communications

a. Presentation – Dr. John Gasko

i. Members

1. Dr. John Gasko, Host
2. Dr. Bobby Ott
3. Elaine Shiver
4. Quincy White

ii. Identify Goals

iii. Discuss objectives and activities planned to achieve goals

b. Workgroup Discussion

c. Workgroup Feedback

i. Workforce and Professional Development – Mrs. LaShonda Brown

1. Strengths

- a. Parent outreach recognized parents well and their voice was heard through the whole presentation.
- b. Making sure to include children with special needs was given good focus.
- c. It really was a need to collaborate with all parents regardless of socioeconomic status; recognizing that all parents are at risk.
- d. The online early childhood link was a strength.

2. Suggested Improvements

- a. When considering the needs assessment, perhaps there can be some professional development or staff related questions included. Throughout the presentation, parents were mentioned as not knowing what to look for as being school ready, but also one of the key indicators for parents

is to understand what staff needs and qualifications are very important.

- b. A suggestion for the early childhood link would be including that if this is set up in a regional setting, that there is a help desk for support so there is someone that they can contact.

3. Other

- a. Perhaps bringing in the University of North Texas Ropers Center and allowing them to be a part of this process; they are responsible for parent educators.

ii. Data and QRIS – Mr. John Whitcamp

1. Strengths

- a. Interest in underrepresented populations, this is also something that we need to look at. Something to be concerned about are your nontraditional working parents when you think about underrepresented populations. What about that group of folks that would like to have access to high quality child care settings, but they need 24 hour a day care. Most high quality settings lock the door at 6pm, so that group needs to be kept in mind as well.
- b. Regional models are a good idea.
- c. Online training house is a good solution and a good idea to put that out there.
- d. Like that fact that when you are talking about your needs assessment that you are including low income and other populations.
- e. Partnering with a variety of external entities is good. Might also need to include them in the needs assessment and the data that they collect.

2. Suggested improvements

- a. Consider nontraditional working parents that want high quality child care, but need it available to them 24 hours a day; keep them in mind.
- b. Concerned that regionalizing models will become so regionalized that it does indeed become another layer and we do not want that to happen. If you are going to regionalize based upon differences in culture and differences in parental needs by region; that is very

appropriate. To regionalize some of the more systematic approaches may not be of a good service to the program as a whole.

- c. When we talk about other populations, we thought it might be a good idea to look at all parents in all settings. If we are going to develop a QRIS, why does it just need to focus on QRIS for low income? Let us have a QRIS for kids in Texas and it can address any setting that that child may be placed in regardless of income and location. Look broadly at how we gather data around the needs assessment for that purpose.
 - d. Another issue needing to be addressed in your needs assessment is not only parent choice, but also availability. It is one thing to drive parents toward quality and when they get there to stop there. Not every community has quality settings, so how can we help them get to those high quality settings whilst we impress on them through our outreach efforts the fact that that is a critical piece of it. Expectation drives market, if parents expect high quality and they would not settle for less. Then you are going to increase the level of quality as a result. We need to be sure we are looking at that accessibility and availability as well.
 - e. Need more specificity about how parents interact with a system that informs choice. How are parents actually going to link into that? Is that going to be through work force centers, through the local library, through what environment will that be available through?
 - f. Survey needs to include parent's definitions of quality, not just the practitioner or professional definition, but what do parents perceive quality to be.
 - g. The approach in parent outreach we thought should be reasonable, responsive and realistic.
- iii. Collaborations and Standards – Mrs. Mary Capello's group
- 1. Strengths
 - a. Needs assessment for parents was a great thing to do, we felt that was a worthy endeavor.
 - b. Really liked what John said about educating parents on parent choice. When parents are in a school that is

academically unacceptable, they have every right to move their child. Parents do not seem to be well informed enough about this that they actually move their children.

- c. "What is quality?" was a great question. Quality means so many different things to so many different people, it is a loaded question.

2. Suggested Improvements

- a. The concern was raised about the messaging to parents. When you are educating parents, sometimes you look like you might be alright to them or that you know better and you need to help them. We do not want to appear as if "we know better than them".
- b. Concerns with regional centers: how large will those regions be? If they are too big would this be a pilot program?
- c. Parent outreach is greatly needed, but there is a strong concern that it is done right. Reaching the parents on a positive level is very important and doing so affectively means it must be done right.

d. Reflections – Dr. John Gasko

- i. We have a great opportunity to really work together as a council and continue to get help from people around the state that we might not have considered today. We want to create a truly collaborative approach to this needs assessment and at the same time have the best people do it so we get the right kind of information that we need and is important.
- ii. There is a great point on the regional centers and we too have struggled with that, but we can help to manage that scope in terms of what they are required to do to build on that.
- iii. Educating for parent choice and exactly what does that mean...Personal example: I paid a lot of money for my son to attend a private child care and I was not satisfied with the quality. I was not sure what exactly to do because it took me a long time to get him into the right setting. I knew if I pulled him out of there that it would be back to square one again. As a parent, this is needful in helping parents to decide what to do and where they can go. We really need to do a good job of talking to parents about helping them to identify alternative strategies that meet their real needs.
- iv. Talking to parents about what they think quality should mean is exactly what we need to do in figuring out how to reach out to parents right.

- v. I am really excited about this parent piece will be essential to all of our core components and will be the primary focus in terms of looking at parents and children.

10. Public Testimony – Mr. Dan Walters and Public Attendees

a. Kara Johnson, President and CEO of Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition (TECEC)

- i. We represent 350 organizations and thousands of members across the state of Texas.
- ii. Mission is to build a high quality early education system in the state.
- iii. Included a copy of my testimony as well as a copy of the Texas plan.
- iv. This is an incredible opportunity that we have here before us. Since 2003, we have all worked together and we get along well. As a result, we have passed dozens of policies at the state level and we have infused over \$125 million. As we head into the next legislative session, we are looking to a \$10 to 20 billion short fall. We have a great opportunity we have to have a State Advisory Council that can continue to do incredible work and lay the framework for what we want to do down the road.
- v. Thank you all for your hard work and your planning and negotiations.

b. Kris Curtis, President of Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC)

- i. TAEYC is membership organization that represents over 2000 early childhood practitioners in the state of Texas; including teachers, program administrators, early childhood specialists, and higher education faculty.
- ii. Mission is to provide opportunities for professional growth and to broaden public awareness on ECE issues affecting the lives of children and families.
- iii. Have heard so much incredible, good work today. I am so very encouraged and honored to be here this afternoon to listen and reflect on this very important work that you have done.
- iv. I would like to express the intent of TAEYC to be a positive and collaborating partner. To work toward interagency support so that we may lay framework in the state of Texas with initiatives that will benefit our youngest citizens.
- v. The time has come in Texas for us to work together and to work though differences so that we may to do what is right for the very important field of early childhood education and care. TAEYC would like to extend our support to your efforts and to work with you to achieve the development

of a comprehensive, high quality early childhood education and care system in Texas.

- vi. The focus of my remaining comments is to provide preliminary recommendations that are generally accepted on a national level as components of a quality rating and improvement system.
 - vii. I would like to suggest that we have incredible strengths here in Texas and that we can build upon these strengths as we work toward a linked comprehensive QRIS system.
 - viii. Today, I heard all components of my recommendations already mentioned, already being deliberated, and I am quite delighted to hear that.
 - ix. We really want to focus on common standards, coordinating the line system accountability, program practitioner outreach, financing and financial rewards, consumer, provider and practitioner outreach.
 - x. TAEYC is particularly focused on professional development. We would like to see the development of scholarship programs on the state level.
 - xi. We would like to mention that we have the opportunity to not only build a system that supports structural quality, but that we can take it a step further with the inclusion of child assessment outcomes in the QRIS system. When this assessment is conducted in a developmentally appropriate manner, with a multi assessment approach, we may give programs the opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of not only the program structurally, but also to illustrate that children actually fared better as a result of the structural party improvements.
- c. Dr. Terese Finitzo, CEO of OZ Systems, Pediatric Audiologist
- i. I am currently a member of integrating the health care enterprise where I serve as a consultant for the CDC on protocols and system interoperability in early child health initiatives.
 - ii. We have implemented systems for both child health and education in the United States and internationally.
 - iii. Would like to speak to what a next generation QRIS should accomplish. We know that a dynamic and interactive systems has the power to inform parents on the quality of their child care, as well as compliment professional development that help kids reach school ready.
 - iv. From the technology stand point, there are four key areas that are necessary to make implementation successful:
 - 1. Interoperability

- a. QRIS needs to facilitate data exchange that is secure and confidential between child care and state agency partners; such as ECI, The Workforce Commission, The Department of State Health Services, and The Department of Protective and Regulatory Services.
 - b. Those involved in the development of standards for health information technology, need to understand that interoperability between information systems not designed to work together is complex, but achievable. This is why health IT experts would advise that whoever is involved in developing a QRIS should have experience in working with multiple vendors and multiple systems in health and education. They should be particularly already experienced in implementing interoperability protocols.
2. Use of information and the alignment systems
 - a. What better way to ensure ready to learn and to ascertain that the state's prior screening efforts have not been wasted.
3. Health
 - a. We know that undetected hearing loss is a major cause of speech language and learning delays. With proper confidentiality restrictions, the result of the new born hearing screening or other early health screenings could be available to child care from public health. This is a win-win for both education and health.
 - b. Trust; I've used the words "secure" and "confidential" purposefully and repeatedly. It is time that HIPAA and FERPA are real for parents. The QRIS needs a web of trust and the capability for a parent's preferences to be recorded electronically along with their signature. Parent power and partnership are how QRIS needs to begin.
4. Addressing the question the user will ask: What is in it for me?
 - a. No user wants to enter data and not get something back. The QRIS must enable the workforce to use data for decision making, accountability, and program improvement in their daily efforts to prepare kids for success.

- b. This functionality makes critical information readily available to the early childhood teacher to enhance the overall professional confidence, and that is of course a win for all. This will provide a reason for the early childhood educators to embrace these efforts.
 - v. These four approaches offer Texas the opportunity to reach the infinite toddler group in a manner that is premised on the parent as the child's first and most important teacher while supporting the overall mission of the State Advisory Committee.
- d. Nilofer Siddiqui: Spellwell Montessori Private School
 - i. We as private school educators would like to be under the umbrella for support and guidance, and in some areas of funding as well. We are affiliated and certified with the American Montessori Society, we are a Montessori and elementary, but we also offer early childhood. Today, listening to you all was very educational and is right in line with where we are going.
 - ii. One way we do give back to the community is that we do accept children who have or are getting government funding through workforce, and so we have allotted at least two slots for classrooms so families can benefit from the education that we give them. For professional standards, especially for early childhood, being finances as the limitations, many childcare centers hire workers for early childhood who really do not have the qualifications or education. Many of them are paid minimum wage; I really feel that you should look into it. Scholarships for teachers to get trained so they can better educate young children.
 - iii. We would really like a bridge between us private schools and public schools sector because the children are moving on to public schools.
 - iv. What we are aiming for is to be able to come under the umbrella. We would encourage representing some other Montessori schools and other private schools that would like to be in partnership with this so that we can really help the child.
 - v. Over the years we have accepted children with special needs, who are autistic or developmentally delayed in some areas. It has been very difficult for us. For example, we have a child now that has literally been pushed out from school to school, and finally ended up at our school. He is starting to read now and his self esteem was extremely low. I am sure we have all experienced this situation at one time or another and we

have to stop that. We want to be able to support special needs children and be better equipped in how to help them.

- vi. A database that we really need is one for early childhood educators who have really hurt children mentally, emotionally, and physically. They come, take the job, the school lets them go, and they end up getting a job somewhere else. There has to be a database across our state where we can punch in who should not be hired. These people hurt these children, but a database pointing out who should never be allowed to work with young children. This is my request to you all.
- e. Meena Chintapalli: Pediatrician at the SAI Institute
 - i. Why is a pediatrician involved with education? I come across children from lots of places and they have problems. It all goes back to how the child is connecting to the world. In my passion in the quest for how can I help the children, I came across the brain biology practice.
 - ii. I have a passion for giving back to the community and as a grassroots and as a community initiative, I started the Society for Students International. The group word for the education is bringing about different strengths of the individual. Every baby has a strength, a hundred billion cells coming to you dynamically 250 thousand cells per minute, creating practice.
 - iii. It is the mother, father, or primary caregiver that is the first teacher, and how do we make them better teachers. How sensitive is the topic to let them know if you raise your voice, you are going to inhibit their connections in their brain. This is a really hard and sensitive topic, and it is true that the children experience trouble if not fully supported in this area, that is my experience.
 - iv. There is a skill that the provider can develop and this is not the common knowledge of pediatricians that come across it or agree to teach this to parents. I think that networking through the WIC system, public health system, and licensed care workers that come across all these populations should connect these parenting classes into how to become an effective parent.
 - v. There should be full knowledge on how the brain connects to the world, how the left and right brain works, and creating a less technical practice to deliver to the family. We should create a system and lesson plan to create better citizens. Character education should be core knowledge.
- f. Stephen Minick, Texas Association of Business
 - i. Speaking for Bill Hammond, the President of the Texas Association of Business.

- ii. Here to provide support to the council as you attempt to enhance Texas' ability to prepare children for school.
- iii. We support education measures that promise excellence over mediocrity, so that those that eventually enter the work place are prepared to succeed.
- iv. To that end, TAB strongly recommends that Texas improve the productivity of this existing early childhood education investments that currently serve at risk four year olds before contemplating any further tax payer supported expansions such as full day Pre-K or universal Pre-K.
- v. We spend about 3 ½ billion dollars a year on state and federally supported programs, yet we continue to fail an alarming number of kindergartners and first graders. Given that the council's first and foremost charge is to ensure school readiness, I encourage you to assist Texans in more fully understanding whether we are spending these several resources in ways that truly get children ready for school.
- vi. The initiatives that we support should provide the foundation for a statewide accountable and transferent system of delivery of early childhood education. These are the Texas Early Education Model and the Texas School Ready! Certification system. These initiatives are evidence based, they prove good accountability, and they help ensure that we realize the return on many long standing early childhood investments.
- vii. We encourage the council to ensure that these initiatives and the base evidence in which they rest help drive our thinking about how we should hold all programs across the state accountable for the results. Too often accountability for results and child well being centers on what is good only for the adults. We need to support teachers and programs, but we must also expect them to constantly ask the question: "Is my program and my approach working?"
- viii. Texas is one of few states that have developed a Pre-K accountability system that ensures not only quality from the Pre-K level, but also ensures that measures of quality actually result in a child learning when they get to Kindergarten. Let us expand this system and focus on real measures of accountability.
- ix. Let us ensure that we take the smarter approach to accountability so that our dollars is translating into something besides seats in classrooms. We need to know which programs prepare children the best for school and we need to improve those that do not do that job adequately.
- x. We do support you in your mission to improve school readiness.

- g. David Fincher, President of the National Child Care Coalition
 - i. My wife and I are large “Mom and Pop” child care operators, we have about 150 children.
 - ii. We try to keep things simple, do not reinvent the wheel.
 - iii. The Texas School Ready! model that has been developed and improved since 2003 will serve us very well if we could try to figure out a way to use that to provide as a tool for folks to improve the quality of our private schools. We do need to develop a system for measuring where we are and how we are improving and making progress, but we need the tools to allow us to make that progress.
 - iv. State Center for Early Childhood Development has developed that process and we think it is an excellent process and we would like to see that put into the form of perhaps a How To Booklet that is made available to all the private centers in Texas.
 - v. The collaboration that was discussed, it was suggested to try to collaborate between the different forms of providers. I would suggest that we look at collaborating between agencies, to try to help providers to do a better job and perhaps have money to improve quality. Perhaps we would combine the subsidized childcare process administered by TWC and the federal food program administered by the Texas Agriculture Department. We could see if we can figure out a way to get those two groups working together and save some money on economies that scale and help some of the providers that only do subsidized child care. Maybe we could get some extra funds through the food program to help them with improving quality.
 - vi. A word of caution: As a private provider whose total income is parent paid tuition, I will tell you that mandates are put in place that cause us to have to spend more money to deliver the service that we do. Parents are then most likely going to have to pay a higher tuition. We have to somehow find a right match there because if the kids leave me due to raised tuition, I am going to tell you from my ego that they will never find a better place than my care. We do not want children leaving and ending up in an unlicensed or underground care or somebody that would not take care of them as well as I do.

11. Council Wrap-Up – Dr. John Gasko

- a. Conclusion – Dr. John Gasko
 - i. Have a very tight timeline, must meet the deadline for submission to the federal government for 11.4 million dollars is August 1st.

- ii. What is great about this grant is it really is grant that is seed money to build on what we as Texans want to do for our youngest learners and not have to be obligated to do things that we do not feel are necessary.
- iii. My goal is to get the application developed, bedded, get some further input, and submit it. We will be presenting it to the Governor's office for his review and other pertinent leadership. We will need some time to accommodate the federal requirements in terms of what the application looks like. They are expecting a 6 to 8 week turn around for approval so our goal is to get the funding started for the federal rollup and new fiscal year of October 1st.
- iv. A lot of what we will be thinking about with your help is setting up the three year schedule for these four core areas in terms of how we can think about what we talked about today and how they all link to each other.
- v. If you build it, then people will get interested and they will support it. I think that there have been a lot of you in this room that have felt significant things within your own organizations and in your own agencies, and we have got a great opportunity to build on it and build it better. What I would like to suggest as a final point is to build it, but then communicate it. Really get people to understand it and buy into it.
- vi. Thank you's.