

## ***Texas Early Learning Council Meeting Minutes***

April 21, 2023 from 11:00am – 1:00pm

Teleconference via Zoom

### **Attendance**

- Katherine Abba, Ph.D. (Faculty, Child Development Program for Houston Community College)
- Terri Breeden (Section 619 Lead Coordinator for the Texas Education Agency)
- Alferma Giles (Director of the Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office at the Children's Learning Institute, UT Health Science Center at Houston)
- Melissa Hoisington (Franchise owner with Primrose Schools and former President of the Texas Licensed Child Care Association)
- Becky Huss-Keeler (Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake)
- Kim Kofron (Director of Early Childhood Education for Children at Risk)
- Jerletha McDonald (Licensed home child care center provider and the owner and director of Kiddie Corner Learning Center)
- Reagan Miller (Director of the Child Care and Early Learning Division at the Texas Workforce Commission)
- Marisela Nava (Director of Texas Southmost College Early Childhood Center)
- Stephanie Rubin (CEO of Texans Care for Children)
- Amber Scanlan (Senior Vice President and Director of Client and Community Relations for PNC)
- Kierstan Schwab (Executive Director of the Texas Public Broadcasting Association)
- June Yeatman (Lead teacher at the Austin Community College Children's Lab School)

### **1. Call to Order**

Reagan Miller called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

### **2. January 2023 Minutes Approval**

Katherine Abba moved to approve the January 2023 meeting minutes and Kierstan Schwab seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken, and minutes were approved. A quorum was met during roll call.

### **3. Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five**

Dr. Dorothy Mandell (University of Texas) gave an overview of the phased approach of the needs assessment and program evaluation.

Reagan Miller shared information about upcoming needs assessment and strategic planning sessions. She also shared that grant updates will be shared through the TWC's Early Childhood Care and Education distribution list. Sign up for the list is available on TWC's webpage: [www.twc.texas.gov](http://www.twc.texas.gov).

### **4. Public Comment**

Mia Pritts, Vice President of Strategic Partnerships at Wonderschool, shared resources available to help support home-based child care providers in an effort to bring greater access to high-quality child care programs to communities.

## 5. Early Childhood Data Roadmap Work Group

Reagan Miller shared that TELC members received a copy of the Data Roadmap that will be published on the TELC website.

## 6. Legislative Update

Texas Early Learning Council members provided updates:

- Meghan Young (Health and Human Services Commission – Early Childhood Intervention) shared that HHSC’s exceptional item request for additional ECI funding has been funded in the base bills in both the House and Senate.
- Stephanie Rubin shared that HB12, which would extend Medicaid coverage for mothers to a full year, was passed by the House and has bi-partisan support. HB1599 would support families qualifying for an income eligible program to automatically qualify for other income eligible programs. Staycoveredtexas.org was launched and gives families and providers information about the end of continuous Medicaid coverage. SB24 would shift Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI), currently housed at Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to HHSC. There are concerns about cost as PEI could serve an additional 12,000 families with the \$20 million it will take to move the division. There is a new bill with a goal to improve inclusiveness and ensure families have full day care access for children with special needs.
- Kim Kofron noted various bills of note. HB1614 focuses on prek partnerships. HB1979 centers on strengthening local workforce boards. HB1834 would allow the reimbursement rate to be based on quality rate instead of the market rate. Tax bills HB3621 and SB1145 would support property tax relief to child care owners.

## 7. Federal Stimulus Funding Update

Cathi Arwood (Texas Workforce Commission) provided an update on the approval and contents of the [10<sup>th</sup> tranche of federal stimulus funding](#).

## 8. Updates from TELC Members

Megan Schneider (Texas Education Agency) highlighted the Texas Reading Initiative: Books Beginning at Birth [www.b3tx.org](http://www.b3tx.org).

Kim Kofron shared about Children at Risk’s Spring Listening Tour.

Meghan Young (HHSC ECI) shared that ECI is working to distribute additional funding to providers to support service delivery, including Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five funds. ECI has launched a new training, Planning and Creating Inclusive Early Childhood Classrooms, created in collaboration with Texas Workforce Commission. In the first month of offering the training, 80 sessions were held with a combined audience of over 1,000 early childhood professionals.

Reagan Miller shared that TWC is using stimulus funding for three entities to develop new registered apprenticeship programs that will be rolling out in August 2023. TWC also funded a cost of quality calculator, with a tentative launch date of June 2023. TWC has made several updates to data on the [Child Care by the Numbers](#) website. The next Texas Rising Star four-year review is coming up and a workgroup will be formed to help review the program in the summer of 2023.

## 9. Upcoming Early Childhood Events

Brooke King (DFPS PEI):

- Pediatric Brain Health Summit, May 1-2 (Austin)
- Fatherhood Summit, June 1-2 (Austin)

- Partners in Prevention Conference, November 14-16 (Austin)
- Child Abuse Prevention Month event at the Capitol, April 25

Claire Niday (Department of State Health Services):

- Help Me Grow National Forum, October 11-13 (Ft. Worth)

Alferma Giles:

- Region 6 Head Start Association, July 17-21 (New Orleans)
- Texas Head Start Association Institute, June 7-9 (Houston)
- Texas School Ready Conference, June 14-16 (Houston)

Jerletha McDonald:

- ADFW Family Child Care Network 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Gala, May 6 (Arlington)
- A Day Without Child Care, May 8
- National Child Care Appreciation Day, May 12
- National Association for Family Child Care Annual Conference, July 12-15 (Atlanta)

#### **10. Adjourn**

Reagan Miller adjourned the meeting at 12:33 PM.