

Texas Early Learning Council Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2021 11:00am – 1:00pm

Teleconference via Webex

Attendance

- Katherine Abba, Ph.D. (Faculty and Program Coordinator, Child Development Program for Houston Community College)
- Sarah Abrahams (Deputy Associate Commissioner for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services)
- Travis Armstrong, Ed.D. (Director of Early Learning for Wichita Falls Independent School District)
- Terri Breedon (Section 619 Lead Coordinator for the Texas Education Agency)
- April Crawford Ph.D. (Dir. of Strategic Initiatives and Program Implementation for The UT Health Science Center at Houston CLI)
- Alferma Giles, Ph.D. (Dir. of the Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office at The UT Health Science Center at Houston CLI)
- Becky Huss-Keeler Ph.D. (Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Houston-Clear Lake)
- Kim Kofron (Executive Director for the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children)
- Jerletha McDonald (Licensed home child care center provider and the owner and director of Kiddie Corner Learning Center)
- Dana McGrath (Director of Early Childhood Intervention Program for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission)
- Reagan Miller (Director of the Child Care and Early Learning Division at the Texas Workforce Commission)
- Julie Richards (Director of Field Operations for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission)
- Teresa Robledo (Early childhood teacher at San Antonio College Early Childhood Center)
- Stephanie Rubin (CEO of the non-profit organization Texans Care for Children)
- Amber Scanlan (Senior Vice President and Director of Client and Community Relations for PNC)
- Kiersten Schwab (Executive Director of the Texas Public Broadcasting Association)
- June Yeatman (Lead teacher for the Austin Community College Children's Lab School)

- Audrey Young (Child and Adolescent Health Branch Manager and the Title V Children with Special Health Care Needs Director in the Maternal and Child Unit at the Texas Department of State Health Services)

TELC Chair Appointment

Shay Everitt announced that Governor Abbott has appointed Reagan Miller as the new Chair.

1. Call to Order

Reagan Miller called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM.

2. Welcome Remarks

3. January 2021 Minutes Approval

Katherine Abba moved to approve January 2021 meeting minutes and Kim Kofron seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken and minutes were approved with the revision of Katherine Abba's title. A quorum was met during roll call.

4. Public Comment

Five individuals registered for public comment as listed below.

1. Regen Horchow, Board Chair for Early Matters Dallas Advisory Board advocated for integrated early childhood data systems, and to form a workgroup to consider an interagency data governance structure, and to engage our federal partners to assist with this. Ms Horchow suggested the top priority should be enrollment data, in order to reduce the need for duplicate information to be collected across agencies.
2. Chuck Cohn, Owner of Angel's Care and Learning Center, advocated for Pre-k Partnerships and value of Pre-k partnership hub; recommends directing CCDBG funds to Pre-k partnership hubs.
3. Kaeleigh Hernandez, Assistant Director of Early Education Policy with Children at Risk, advocated for CRRSAA policy recommendations:
 - Provide Weighted Grants to Support Financially Vulnerable Child Care Programs
 - Provide Business Supports to Stabilize Child Care Businesses
 - Wage Supplementation for Early Childhood Educator Retention
4. Jessica Trudeau, Director of Strategic Initiatives with TexProtects (also represents Texas PN-3 Collaborative), advocated for increasing support for Family Connects program, which provides nurse home visits to families with newborns.
5. Davida Clary, Owner of Wonder Years, advocated for Texas Rising Star and pre-k partnership and hubs.

6. COVID-19 Updates

Reagan Miller presented on approved plans for the new \$1.1 billion in COVID Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) stimulus funding for child care.

7. Cross-Agency Early Childhood Consumer Education Website

Reagan Miller shared plans and timeline. Requested feedback from TELC members about how we structure and communicate this new resource.

The cross-agency website will integrate information from:

- TWC
- TEA
- DSHS
- DFPS
- HHSC

TWC will provide funding to launch the website, along with intensive technical assistance from federal capacity building organization.

8. Upcoming Early Childhood Events

Shay Everitt (TWC) shared about the Pre-K Partnerships Summit.

Allison Wilson (TWC) shared information about TWC's virtual training for early childhood educators, which is being offered in lieu of the Early Childhood Learning Summit.

Sarah Abrahams (DFPS) shared information about [Fatherhood Summit June 17-18](http://www.fatherhoodresourcehub.org) (www.fatherhoodresourcehub.org) and inter-agency community convenings.

Kim Kofron (TXAEYC) shared information about the upcoming NAEYC [Developmentally Appropriate Practice Summit](#) on June 9-10.

Alferma Giles (THSCO) shared information about various Head Start events.

April Crawford (CLI) shared information about various workshops and trainings hosted by Children's Learning Institute.

9. Updates from TELC members

David Feigen (Texans Care for Children) presented their [Early Childhood English Learner Roadmap](#). Highlights include:

- Texas has the highest number of English learner students in the country
- Dual language immersion is the best way to serve these students

Monica Martinez (TEA) provided an update on the status of the inter-agency coordinator position. Megan Schneider will begin in the role on March 15, 2021. TEA is in the process of hiring for the TEA Early Childhood Director position.

Reagan Miller (TWC) provided an update on CCDBG Funding under the American Rescue Plan approved by the U.S. House of Representatives and the impact of Winter Storms on Subsidy Child Care Providers:

- American Rescue Plan – Texas estimated to receive \$2.7 billion for stabilization grants, with some additional requirements; \$1.7 billion for CCDBG allowable expenses. Funds will be expended by FY2023.
- Winter storm – 37 providers had to close, 9 do not plan to reopen.

10. Adjourn

Reagan Miller adjourned the meeting at 1:00 PM.