

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

November 20, 2020 11:00am-1:00pm

Teleconference via Webex

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

Stephanie Rubin called the meeting to order. Quorum present. All members present.

### **2. Welcome Remarks**

Stephanie Rubin announced that Lauren Zybynski, former Inter-Agency Deputy Director for Early Childhood Support, moved to North Carolina for a new position. Shay Everitt, Senior Advisor with Texas Workforce Commission, has stepped in to host and facilitate TELC meetings.

New members Amber Scanlan and Kimberly Kofron were introduced.

### **3. July 2020 Minutes**

The minutes were approved.

### **4. Public Comment**

One registration for a written public comment from Jessica Trudeau, Director of Strategic Initiatives with TexProtects and read by Shay Everitt. Description of Family Connects program advocating for the expansion of the program.

### **5. TELC Chair Appointment Update**

Stephanie Rubin announced that the process for the Governor to appoint a new TELC Chair is underway.

### **6. Transition in Inter-Agency Early Childhood Director Role**

Stephanie Rubin announced that the Inter-Agency Deputy Director for Early Childhood Support position is open and Shay Everitt has stepped into the role for the purposes of TELC meetings.

Monica Martinez, Associate Commissioner for Standards and Programs of Texas Education Agency discussed the transition and has posted the position. TEA hopes to have someone in place as of January 2021.

### **7. Preschool Development Grant (PDG)**

Shay Everitt provided an update on the PDG on behalf of Scott Bodnar of TEA. The grant

period for PDG was extended.

Kiersten Schwab asked about additional opportunities to apply for PDG funding. Scott Bodner stated that Texas did not receive the follow-up grant and has not heard of additional funding.

Ms. Schwab requests that TELC researches the opportunity to apply again. (UPDATE: The new opportunity to apply for PDG was available only to states who were awarded in the most recent round of funding, which Texas was not.)

## **8. Texas Early Learning Council Website**

Scott Bodnar provided update on the TELC website: <https://earlylearningtexas.org/>.

The Council discussed suggestions to enhance the website. The Council agreed that updating the website would be a good project for the incoming Inter-Agency Deputy Director for Early Childhood Support.

The Council also discussed using Twitter or social media channel to direct to the website. Many providers receive information through social media. Some concern was expressed that a clear process would be needed regarding who could post or approve content on official TELC. Some members prefer the use of a hashtag instead of an official channel. April Crawford confirmed that University of Texas (Children's Learning Institute) closed the TELC Twitter account created during the previous iteration of the TELC. CLI could reopen the account then transfer to TELC.

## **9. Statewide Early Learning Strategic Plan**

The Council reviewed the results of a survey of Council members on which action items should be prioritized statewide. Reagan Miller discussed the results, shown in the chart below.

1. Encourage all child care providers with a child care subsidy agreement to participate in Texas Rising Star.
2. Come together as a community of early childhood programs, including early care and learning programs, family support, home visiting, health, mental health, and nutrition services and share what high-quality means in each of the different types of programs.
3. Develop and disseminate information about the standards of quality in all early childhood programs to raise community awareness.
4. Expand the reach of programs and services available in your communities to serve more children.
8. Coordinate waitlists across local programs and services to maximize the number of children and families served.
9. Support relationship building across early learning programs.
17. Work with regional programs and other initiatives to stay connected to other work going on in the state.

The Council discussed these and posed various questions on the topics below.

- Related to these action items, what is the current status of each?
- Are there local examples of success that we could highlight, and what evaluation tools are they using?
- What are barriers to each?
- How would we measure success?
- What data is being collected across agencies for these?
- What is the role of the Council in addressing these action items?
- How has COVID impacted early learning programs?
- How is technology access (computers, internet, etc.) a barrier for early learning programs?
- What consideration do we give for the needs of English Language Learners?

## **10. Adjourn**

In closing the Council discussed the upcoming meeting schedule. The December meeting was canceled and tentative 2021 dates were reviewed.

Stephanie Rubin thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting (no call for a motion).