



Early Childhood Coordinating Council
Wednesday, February 17, 2021
Virtual Meeting-Approved
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Barbara Andrews, Jennifer Arnaiz, Jody Burghardt, Robin Chernoff, Cindy Chichester-Ollivierre, Richard Crump, Mary Manning-Falzarano, Lauren Martino, Charlene Muhammad, Taniesha Woods Myles, Bernadine Occhiuzzo, Jade-Ann Rennie, Paula Sayag, Charisse Scott, Rebecca Smith, Vivian Yao

Members Absent: JoAnn Barnes, Stephanie Brant, Amy Cropp, Joan Glick, Liran Laor, Carrie Meyer, Kimberly Rusnak, Louise Tolin, Lynnette Weaver

Guests: Leah Bradley, Franca Brilliant, Sharon Friedman, Michelle Gallipoli, Alice Gear, Amy Turner-Thole, Sarah Wilch-Spamer

Support Staff: Taryn Billand

Jody Burghardt called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

Convene Meeting: Jody Burghardt welcomed members and guests. Roll call was taken, 16 members were present, including one non-voting member. 14 voting members were required for quorum. The meeting minutes from January 27, 2021 were approved unanimously. Motion: Bernadine Occhiuzzo, Second: Becky Smith.

MCPS In-Person Learning – Charlene Muhammad: On March 1, 2021, MCPS will begin phasing in some Special Education programs and Tech Ed for return to in-person learning. On March 15, 2021, students in Pre-K through 3rd grade will begin returning. On April 6, 2021, all remaining grades begin returning. MCPS has a plan in place to ensure families understand the different models for learning and the choices available to them. Once families have selected either the in-person or virtual learning model, individual letters will go out to families to confirm choice, dates and provide any other important information. Teachers applying for and qualifying under the American with Disabilities Act will remain offsite with children onsite connecting virtually while a substitute teacher or classroom monitor is present. MCPS is partnering with Johns Hopkins medicine to provide vaccines to staff. Staff will be vaccinated in 3 groups of 9000.

COVID Vaccine Update – Jennifer Arnaiz: Montgomery County has roughly 1.05 million residents and continues its vaccination plan using a tiered system to prioritize residents. The county is currently vaccinating Groups 1A-B: [Montgomery County COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Groups](#). Child Care providers fall in Phase 1B Tier 2, and 100 vaccines were reserved by the state for child care. The Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center (MCCCRRC) prioritized and reached out to programs who are serving children receiving services through the Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers Program (MCITP) or Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Preschool Education Program (PEP), as well as child care programs within public space (CCIPS). There have been 3 clinics vaccinating child care providers and 2 more scheduled for March, however these clinics are dependent on the number of vaccines received from the state. Other child care providers not in this priority group are asked to register on the [Montgomery County COVID-19 Portal](#) for their vaccine, and must check the box for “Licensed Child Care Worker” under step 2 of the registration form. Members were asked to share with their contacts in the child care provider community that the process will take time, if providers are offered a vaccine through another source they should take those appointments, and if they receive a vaccine through another source, they should notify the county to cancel their appointment, as this

will give another provider the opportunity to receive a vaccine. Going forward, non-priority providers will be prioritized by zip code, so those most affected are able to get the vaccine. Several groups have written a letter to Council President Tom Hucker, asking that child care providers be made a priority in the vaccine queue.

Priority Committee Report Out:

- **Priority 1: Supporting the Mental Health and Social Emotional Well-Being of Children, Families, and the Early Childhood Workforce**
 - Public Service Announcements that prioritize children and families using outreach like the Head Start (HS) Basics Campaign, which is a public awareness campaign, focused on the first principle around social and emotional wellness.
 - Another possibility is a different project within HS which brings the Pyramid SEFEL Model to families, using these strategies in a classroom to train family services workers. Coaches are identified within the groups who then implement the strategies they've learned in supporting other families.
 - Lunch and Learn: Creating a family space where families can come together to support one another and share resources. It may be that different times would be better than lunch, possibly after work or dinner.
- **Priority 2: Child Care Sustainability and Systems:** discussed which priority should be the focus for the remaining 4 meetings of the year, and what would be the role of the ECCC. All agreed that the most important was the mental health and social emotional health of children, families, and providers. There are many adjustments that will happen as children go back to in-person learning and child care programs. Another important area of focus is anything pandemic-related.
- **Priority 3: Advocacy:** discussed the sustainability of child care and advocacy for programs and teachers. The state has allocated \$10B in support to child care programs, but emergency funding is essential if child care programs are to remain open and viable. It is stressful for all involved when there is uncertainty in knowing whether programs will remain open, teachers and staff will continue to have employment and also for parents who aren't sure if there will be quality child care available as everything begins to open up. It is also essential that groups are advocating on behalf of the child care community to ensure that early care educators are included in the priority groups for vaccine distribution. Last, the metrics for reopening child care programs need to be transparent and communication with the child care community on what it means to be open is critical.

MMF Entity Report – Sharon Friedman and Franca Brilliant: The guests shared the [Recommendations for a Public-Private ECE Coordinating Entity](#) with the group.

LECAC QI Grant Update – Jody Burghardt & Taniesha Woods Myles: In process. The committee will reach out when help is needed to assemble kits.

Legislative Update – Barbara Andrews:

- House Bill 608 is a \$25M child care fund, focused on the zip codes with the highest closure rates or highest levels of poverty, is currently in the state legislature and the hope is that this will remain in the budget to help sustain child care providers until 2024. The maximum award is \$60K, which may only sustain larger centers for a month.
- Governor Hogan has released a one-time \$60M Child Care Pandemic Relief Fund and MSDE has the application process up on their website.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.