

Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC)

Videoconference

Meeting Date

December 1, 2020

Approved Minutes

Members

Commissioner Adam Crum
Commissioner Michael Johnson
Abbe Hensley
Amber Frommherz
Bev Schoonover
Brian Holst
Bridget Weiss
Christie Reinhardt
Christina Hulquist
Deborah Riddle
Don Enoch
Karen Melin
Margaret Bauer
Matthew Hirschfeld
Maureen Harwood
Rebekah Morisse
Stephanie Berglund
Supanika Ackerman
Trevor Storrs

Guests

Alecia Berka
Alisha Rohrer
Betsy Smith
Cassie Keplinger
Chelsea Burke
Jimael Johnson
Kaerin Stephens
Kathy Berry
Mackenzie Wood
Meghan Johnson
Patience Frederiksen
Tamar Ben Yosef

Staff:

Emily Urlacher, DHSS
Kristen Spencer, DEED

Prepared by: Paula DiPaolo, Peninsula Reporting
CALL TO ORDER – 1:00 p.m.
Roll Call

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner Crum and Commissioner Johnson welcomed members to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Matthew Hirschfeld **MOVED** to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, **SECONDED** by Abbe Hensley. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the minutes were approved as presented.

EARLY CHILDHOOD COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMS (ECCS) UPDATE

Emily Urlacher reported to the Council that she is the ECCS grant program manager in the section of Women’s, Children’s, and Family Health within the Division of Public Health. She introduced the three place-based community leads for the grant, Cassie Keplinger from Kodiak, Alisha Rohrer from Nome, and Betsy Smith from the Mat-Su Valley, who will be presenting on each of their communities.

Emily Urlacher reviewed a graphic of the logic model for the grant provided by the National Institute for Children’s Health Quality (NICHQ). She stated that this model showcases the ECCS grant aim to improve population level developmental health outcomes in children ages 0 to 3, which is measured through the administration and data collection of the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), which is a developmental screening tool. Surrounding the primary aim of the grant are three core domains and 12 underlying goals, and these goals align under one of three domains that give them more clarity and direction in their work.

Emily Urlacher noted that the data from the ASQ demonstrates their efforts with developmental screening within the place-based communities starting in 2017. She commented that this year they have had a decrease in screening numbers due to COVID, but they have tried to combat this through COVID-safe family engagement efforts.

Emily shared the members of the ECCS team as follows:

Cassie Keplinger	Rebekah Morisse	Carol Prentice	Elizabeth Schultz
Alisha Rohrer	Christie Reinhardt	Alaska Center for	Carmen Wenger
Betsy Smith	Emily Urlacher	Pediatrics	Tamar Ben-Yosef
	Kaerin Stephens	Iris Matthews	

Mat-Su Community

Betsy Smith reported that the Mat-Su Valley is approximately the size of West Virginia with 108,000 residents and 1,500 babies born every year. Raising our Children with Kindness or R.O.C.K. Mat-Su serves as the backbone agency for the ECCS project in the Valley. R.O.C.K. Mat-Su was formed in 2016 and has the dual goals of reducing child abuse and strengthening families. R.O.C.K. Mat-Su is comprised of a partnership of 30 to 60 cross-sector partners coming together using the Collective Impact Framework to accomplish their goals.

Betsy Smith stated that within R.O.C.K. Mat-Su's larger partnership, they also have partnerships with Mat-Su Services for Children and Adults as well as 11 screening partners that are working specifically on ECCS work. The partners they have been able to recruit to contribute to the data for the ECCS reports has increased from 6 to 14 from 2017 to 2020.

Betsy Smith stated that their relationship with Help Me Grow has been key to accomplishing ECCS work over the last several years. They have helped with the launch of Help Me Grow in Mat-Su by providing resources for them as they launch:

- Shared resource database
- Provider outreach
- Parent and family outreach
- 18 percent increase in awareness after the first year of outreach.
- Early Childhood Network.

Some of the ECCS work accomplished since 2017 includes:

- Community education
- ACEs trainings
- Stewards of Children
- Movie screenings
- Annual Community Baby Shower
- Racial equity
- Social connections
- Strengthening Families
- Plans of Safe Care pilot.

Betsy Smith reported on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ASQ screenings reported by the early cohort of partners in Mat-Su. They experienced a significant dip in the number of screenings that were happening in 2020 compared to 2019, but since then they have been able to revert to relatively stable numbers. The data also shows the increase of screenings as a result of building additional relationships with key screening partners.

In terms of family engagement during COVID, Betsy Smith reported that R.O.C.K. Mat-Su rescheduled and shifted their events to be held virtually:

- Virtual Community Baby Shower and COVID-safe gift bag delivery
- Social Connection E-Newsletter
- Stewards of Children Trainings
- ACEs trainings
- Looking to hire a Community Engagement Coordinator to ensure that the parent and family voice is brought in to R.O.C.K. Mat-Su.

Betsy stated that they are excited to see more people participating in the virtual trainings, and they are reaching more parents and professionals than they had in the past.

Betsy Smith discussed R.O.C.K. Mat-Su's sustainability efforts by stating that they are fortunate to be housed under the Mat-Su Health Foundation, which allows them fiscal sustainability. She stated that they have developed two overarching goals, seven objectives, and 16 different strategies under those objectives.

Kodiak Community

Cassie Keplinger reported that Kodiak Island is located 253 air miles south of Anchorage and is home to six villages and 10 federally recognized tribes. The population is around 13,000 with the City of Kodiak having a population 6,000, and it's estimated that about 940 are 5 years old and younger. There are two main medical homes in Kodiak, Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) and Kodiak Community Health Center (KCHC).

Cassie Keplinger reported on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ASQ screenings by noting that it is similar to Mat-Su in that there was a low drop in screenings in April. As of October, those counts really haven't recovered since the initial drop. Data indicates that their screenings are about 33 percent lower in 2020 as compared to 2019.

Cassie Keplinger shared the following family engagement efforts during COVID:

- Mother Goose Curriculum to high-risk families
- Developed the Kodiak Early Childhood Coalition (KECC) Facebook page
- Conscious Discipline parenting class held virtually in partnership with the Kodiak Island Borough School District.

Cassie Keplinger stated that Help Me Grow in Kodiak has been a big partner of theirs, and some of the activities they partner together on include:

- Books, Blocks, and Balls developmental screening event
- Community Baby Shower that includes providing ASQ screenings
- Outreach to providers in the medical community to utilize the Help Me Grow resource.
- Help Me Grow has become a member of the KECC.
- Help Me Grow through the LEND Fellowship Program was able to adapt the CDC 2-Year Milestone checklist to make it culturally relevant for Kodiak Island's high Filipino population.

Cassie Keplinger shared the following key partners:

- Infant Learning Program (ILP)
- Parents as Teachers
- Kodiak Island Housing Authority
- U.S. Coast Guard
- Kodiak Island Borough School District
- KANA Medical.

These partners have joined together to host various screening events, parenting classes, play groups, and KANA Medical and ILP provide the majority of ASQ data. The growth of the KECC partnerships has grown between 2017 and 2020, and currently 31 percent of their partners contribute data for ECCS reports.

Cassie Keplinger reported that KECC's mission is to create better futures for young children and families by advocating for early childhood services and opportunity, educating families and professionals, and sharing resources. In addition to their key partners, the KECC membership includes:

- Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center Pediatric Therapies
- KANA Support Services
- Kodiak College Early Development Program
- Public Health
- Child Advocacy Center
- WIC
- Head Start
- Thread
- KINDNESS Project
- Help Me Grow
- Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)

History of KECC

- Began in 2009 through the Best Beginnings Partnership. The initial goal was to provide support to childcare providers on the Coast Guard base and within the Kodiak community.
- Annual Children's Fair was well received by the community.
- In 2012 it changed from the Best Beginnings Partnership to the KECC when the Best Beginnings grant went away. Meetings were held quarterly, but there wasn't a lot of collaborating.
- KANA was awarded the ECCS grant, and this gave purpose to the KECC again and has driven the work of the coalition. This led to KECC developing a five-year strategic plan to develop a system of sustainability at the conclusion of the ECCS grant.

Strategic Plan

Cassie Keplinger stated that KECC plans to complete an early childhood needs assessment with an approach of looking at strengthening families' protective factors and Office of Children's Services on the island. The coalition is noticing that there is a large amount of early childhood trauma on Kodiak Island, and there is only one OCS case worker. Strategic plan goals include:

- Kodiak families are knowledgeable about their children's development.

- All Kodiak families know how to access services in the community and feel comfortable doing so.
- Kodiak’s early childhood system meets the needs of all children.
- Kodiak has a highly qualified early childhood workforce.
- The KECC is sustainable.
- The KECC is a trusted resource for information about early childhood.

Nome – Bering Strait Region

Alisha Rohrer reported that Norton Sound Health Corporation’s (NSHC) regional hospital is located in Nome with clinics in each village. The Bering Strait Region is 44,000 square miles with 15 villages and 9,500 residents, 74.6 percent of whom are Alaska Native. Village populations range in size from 150 to 900 residents. Prior to COVID, Alisha has had the opportunity to travel to some of the key villages in the area, and during those trips she has been partnering with the local Head Starts or with WIC and other NSHC programs to host family fun nights or provider outreach opportunities.

Alisha Rohrer shared their activities in partnership with Help Me Grow as follows:

- CDC Learn the Signs. Act Early. One-year developmental milestone checklist adaptation.
- Provider and community outreach.
- Norton Sound Early Childhood Coalition (NSECC) – Help Me Grow is a member.

Alisha Rohrer stated that the NSECC promotes access to early care and learning opportunities, shares information and resources with families and providers about child development, and encourages collaboration among providers so that all young children and families in Norton Sound thrive. Over the years the coalition has shifted their focus from children aged birth to 3 to children age birth to 5 in response to an identified need for services and supports for families with children aged 3 to 5 within their communities. This year the NSECC focused on developing infrastructure and strengthening collaboration and leadership for the purpose of sustainability. They worked with Iris Matthews from Stellar Group to create a three-year strategic plan and a set of operating principles. They also formed an executive team for the coalition, created four workgroups, and established a more consistent meeting schedule. The number of partners the NSECC has developed has increased between 2017 and 2020, and approximately one-third of their partners contribute data to the ECCS reports. Partnerships include:

- DHSS
- NSHC Wellness Department, WIC, Infant Learning Program, Primary Care, Behavioral Health Services
- Help Me Grow Alaska
- Kawerak Head Start, Child Care Services, Children and Family Services

- Parent representative
- Nome Public Schools
- RurAL CAP Head Start
- Nome Children’s Home.

Alisha Rohrer reported that their ASQ screenings for children under four years old are mostly completed with the pediatric team during Well Child visits. They also receive a few ASQs from the Infant Learning Program. With the transition of Well Child visits and ILP home visits going virtual because of COVID, they have seen a 38 percent decrease in their ASQ screenings from 2019 to 2020.

Family engagement during COVID-19 has included:

- Developmental resource bags
- World Breastfeeding Week event
- The Lactation Club
- Family Movie Night.

Alisha Rohrer discussed the sustainability of the program by showcasing goal 4 of their strategic plan: Promote continued leadership and develop infrastructure to sustain the coalition. The activities are to:

- Develop operating principles – accomplished
- Recruit members for workgroups:
- Family and Community Engagement and Education
- Early Care and Learning
- Provider Resources and Collaboration
- Parent Advisory Group.
- Establish consistent meeting schedule – accomplished
- Shared membership list – accomplished
- Update work plan annually.

Alisha Rohrer stated that one of their concerns about sustainability is the loss of staff support at the end of the ECCS grant, but with a lot of the activities set forth in goal 4 being completed, she feels that the coalition is in a pretty good position for sustainability once this grant has ended.

State-Level ECCS Updates

Emily Urlacher reported on the state-level ECCS work by stating that they partner a lot with Help Me Grow, and she and the Help Me Grow outreach coordinator Elizabeth Schultz established the Early Childhood Network (ECN). The purpose of the ECS is to grow the scale and spread of the ECCS efforts by including leaders of other community early childhood coalitions and focus groups for the purpose of networking, resource sharing, and didactic

training. She and Elizabeth offer monthly meetings virtually to foster deeper connection and communication amongst those groups working in the field. There are 12 communities participating including: Copper Center, Dillingham, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau, Kenai, Soldotna, Kodiak, Mat-Su, Norton Sound, Seward, Sitka, and Valdez. A community leader in Yakutat may also be joining the ECN. If any members of the AECCC know of any other community with an early childhood leadership group or coalition, please reach out to Emily Urlacher so they can be invited to participate.

Emily Urlacher reported that to date, the ECN has launched with an orientation, has discussed COVID-safe family engagement, has discussed building and sustaining a successful coalition, and has created a virtual bulletin board space to share ideas, resources, and comments. Future topics include:

- Best practices for ACEs screening
- Developmental screening
- Coordination of local partners
- Advocating for early childhood
- Health equity.

Emily Urlacher reported that another partnership they have with Help Me Grow is through the CDC Act Early COVID Response Grant. Carmen Wenger developed a state team with members from Help Me Grow Alaska, MIECHV, ECCS, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, All Alaska Pediatric Partnership, Part C/ILP, and UAA Center for Human Development. The grant projects include:

1. Update the CDC milestone booklet to be culturally functional for Alaska families.
2. Update the CDC milestone checklists and create an ASQ companion document that is culturally functional for Alaska families.
3. Revise the CDC *Amazing Me!* children's books to include illustrations and wording that better reflects Alaska culture, by Alaska illustrators.

Emily Urlacher reported that in partnership with Help Me Grow and Prentice Consulting, she has recently established the Universal Developmental Screening Advisory Committee (UDSAC) with the support of her leadership through WCFH. Aims of the UDSAC include:

- Streamline efforts to maximize efficiency
- Coordinate data sharing
- Ensure access to training on developmental screening and screening tools
- Provide stakeholder input on the statewide ASQ Online system
- Increase family-focused education on developmental screening.

Emily Urlacher stated that the coalition has been involved in strategic planning, COVID-safe family engagement, virtual learning sessions, meeting facilitation training for community leaders, and development of the UDSAC and the ECN. Coming up, they plan to apply for the new iteration of the ECCS project grant when it is released. They will also continue to concentrate on developmental screening efforts. Their place-based communities will continue to provide COVID-safe family engagement, and they will continue their work with the CDC Act Early COVID Response Grant. She also noted that Alaska has been invited to do some national-level presentations on their findings from the current grant.

MATERNAL INFANT EARLY CHILDHOOD HOME VISITING (MIECHV) PROGRAM UPDATES

Christie Reinhardt stated that the home visiting models in Alaska include the Nurse Family Partnership, Head Start/Early Head Start, and Parents as Teachers. She explained that the program has been in place in Alaska since 2013. MIECHV is 100 percent federally funded, and no state funds support the Alaska MIECHV program. Almost all of the money goes out to the work, but a little bit of funding stays at the state level to pay for a program manager and data analyst. The program director donates her time to the program.

Christie Reinhardt explained that MIECHV requires that they use an evidence-based model, Nurse Family Partnership. Women who are first-time mothers enroll in the program while they are pregnant, and they can remain in the program until the children are up to the age of 2. The requirement is for the families to be low income or WIC eligible. The registered nurses each have a caseload of about 25 clients per nurse. To advise the Nurse Family Partnership work, they have a joint community advisory board, and reflective supervision is part of the practice. They currently serve Anchorage and Mat-Su with eight nurse home visitors, one nurse supervisor, and an administrative assistant. In addition to the one-on-one work with families, a variety of other activities are offered such as a Mom Meet-Up Group, Facebook Group, graduation event, and Santa party.

Christie Reinhardt explained that at Providence Nurse Family Partnership, in order to keep the nurses who are doing some very difficult work with complicated families, reflective supervision is part of the model. Reflective supervision is received by the nurse home visitors and by the supervisor, and the team gets a tremendous amount of training. Nurse home visitors are also involved in a variety of other partnerships including the Preschool Development Grant, Plans of Safe Care, FIT Court, and Perinatal Quality Collaborative to offer system level input.

Providence Nurse Family Partnership Changes:

- Moved from In-Home Services to The Children's Hospital at Providence (TCHAP)
- New nurse supervisor
- Telehealth
- Virtual onboarding

- New webpage.

Christie Reinhardt reported that since COVID-19, the program has shifted to 100 percent virtual. COVID-19 has had an impact on enrollment, but the impact has been on referrals from referral agencies. They continue to retain the same number of clients, and their toddler retention levels are up.

Christie Reinhardt stated that the team has really committed to continuous quality improvement (CQI), and they will be participating in a federal protocol group working on CQI in the upcoming year. Some of their innovative CQI activities include safe sleep, depression/mood disorders, and oral health.

MIECHV Updates:

- 2020 Needs Assessment:
- Agnew::Beck was the contractor
- Supplement on substance use disorder
- Supplement on maternal depression
- Revisions were recently submitted, and they are awaiting approval.
- HRSA Site Visit:
- Virtual four-day visit
- Met with state and LIA staff
- Program and fiscal review.

Christie Reinhardt stated that with the help of some COVID funding, they will host their first ever Home Visiting Institute. The institute will have a COVID focus and will include Early Head Start, Parents as Teachers, the Nurse Family Partnership, and Infant Learning Program. The topics include home visiting guidelines as well as a presentation from Futures Without Violence on intimate partner violence.

Mack Wood joined the meeting to share data from the MIECHV program summarized as follows:

- From 2019 to 2020 there was a 12 percent decrease in enrolled families.
- From 2019 to 2020 there was only a three percent decrease in children enrolled.
- There was a decrease in the total number of home visits slightly, but there was a slight increase in visits per family.
- They saw a significant increase in those clients that have completed the program.
- The top reasons for leaving the program:
- Graduated
- Unable to contact or locate
- Moved out of the service area
- Client returned to work

- Client received what she needed from the program.
- Referrals are down significantly from 2019; enrollment is also down.

HRSA Demonstration of Improvement – 6 Benchmark Areas

Mack Wood explained that they must demonstrate improvement to HRSA that they are continually improving on their benchmark areas in order to continue receiving funds. Benchmark area improvement is meeting the measure-level improvement criteria in at least one-third of the measures in an area. Measure-level improvement is measured by comparing FY’20 data to both Alaska’s baseline data and the national threshold. Improvement is meeting one or both of the following criteria: Any changes in the intended direction as compared to baseline, or meeting or exceeding the national threshold while simultaneously not decreasing performance from baseline by more than 10 percent.

The benchmarks and results are as follows:

1. Maternal and newborn health (3 out of 6 saw improvement) ✓
2. Child injuries, abuse, maltreatment, emergency dept. visits (3 of 3 saw improvement) ✓
3. School readiness and achievement (2 of 4 saw improvement) ✓
4. Crime or domestic violence (0 of 1 saw improvement) X
5. Family economic self-sufficiency (2 of 2 saw improvement) ✓
6. Coordination and referrals (1 of 3 saw improvement) ✓

Mack Wood stated that five out of the six benchmark areas satisfy benchmark-level improvement and therefore satisfy the statutory requirements for demonstrating improvement in benchmark areas.

THOUGHTS ON PREVIOUS PRESENTATIONS

Commissioner Johnson remarked that the information contained in the previous presentations are relevant to not only early childhood but also to what is happening within the K-12 system and having to work with families in ways they haven’t had to before because of COVID. He stated that he believes there is a lot the K-12 system could learn from some of the information that has been shared, particularly the family partnerships and various data points that have been collected. He suggested they brainstorm on ways they can get this information in front of superintendents and people that would benefit from the concept of family partnerships. He also noted that in terms of the data presented from the MIECHV report on school readiness, it strikes him that sometimes there isn’t enough cross conversation there. He thanked everyone for the reports they provided.

ALASKA EARLY CHILDHOOD STRATEGIC PLAN

Commissioner Johnson asked for a discussion about the Alaska Early Childhood Strategic Plan. Abbe Hensley reminded Council members that this plan was presented at the previous meeting as a document that the AECCC would consider endorsing or approving.

Abbe Hensley **MOVED** that the AECCC approve the strategic plan as presented in order to open it up for discussion. Commissioner Johnson didn't believe the motion was necessary in order to have a discussion on it.

Christina Hulquist stated that she presented on the strategic plan during the September Council meeting as a representative of the Joint Task Force that put this work together. She noted that the Joint Task Force recommended this plan for adoption by this Council to update the AECCC's priorities and adopt that they work together as partners and stakeholders to align all of the work going on with early childhood.

Stephanie Berglund supports the idea of moving forward with this body adopting the plan to replace their past existing goals. It was a tremendous effort that engaged many different stakeholders, including families and people served in the field, and it was helpful to have that collective community input.

Tamar Ben-Yosef agreed with Stephanie Berglund and commented that she thinks the strategic plan aligns well with the information and takeaways from the Early Childhood Environmental Scan, and some of the work is already happening.

Rebekah Morisse stated that one way that the strategic plan could be used would be to revisit some of the workgroups this Council has had in the past that have been inactive for a while. It could serve to reform those groups and provide some direction to the membership on what their role is and how they can help. A next step of adopting this plan is to look at how that would operationalize into workgroups and action steps.

Trevor Storrs recognized the number of people and the energy that has gone into creating this plan, and to not adopt it would not make sense. It would ignore a huge swath of expertise in the state that could help guide them. He believed they should put it to a vote, as Abbe Hensley was doing, to adopt it and use as their guiding document as a Council.

Brian Holst noted that the plan talks about developing a fiscal policy. What does that mean for the commissioners that are responsible for putting together budgets? If they say they endorse a plan and will develop a fiscal policy, what does that mean? What could they reasonably hope for? Commissioner Johnson stated that is something he is also thinking about, and he doesn't know what it means for the AECCC to adopt it. He agrees with Trevor Storrs in that to not accept and use this plan makes no sense, but to say that the AECC adopts it, he would like to understand what that means so that when they explain it to the broader public, they understand what that means.

Abbe Hensley noted that there are disparate funding sources and opportunities, and she thinks the notion of developing a policy that moves the system sectors towards the delivery of services in a whole-child approach really means figuring out how these various funding sources can provide for services that work together so they aren't siloed. The notion is to bring things together so that there is greater opportunity for not having duplicated services and for reaching as many children as possible.

Maureen Harwood commented that having this strategic plan in place would make Alaska better poised at the federal level in terms of applying for the Preschool Development Grant. It was a huge lift for the Child Care Office and SDS when they wrote the second grant, and having this strategic plan in place would have made that process a little bit easier. Commissioner Crum thought that was an interesting perspective, because he has a little bit of reticence on adopting any more work for the department that is outside of statutory or constitutional obligations. To hear that it could help with other things is an interesting aspect. Whether or not this is something for advocating for other funding aspects is a different question. He believes that is something they will have to bring forward to the legislature, because pushing towards that level of investment for this is really the only way they can action most of these items.

Jimael Johnson noted that part of the process of developing the State Plan was to, as closely as possible, align it with the Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Plan, which is a statutory requirement and something that Commissioner Crum and this administration have been very supportive of. She believes that there is really good alignment between the goals and objectives that actually made it into the Early Childhood State Plan and are also reflected in the Comp Plan.

Christina Hulquist also remarked that there are requirements to this that are in statute, and there is also a lot of this work already happening, whether it's a requirement or not. She noted that this is really to leverage all of that and support the work that's in statute but also to align and coordinate the activities that are happening outside of that.

Commissioner Johnson stated that supporting the plan is not a problem at all, but what does adoption mean for the departments? Is that official policy going forward, or is it just more supportive of what is in the plan? He believes this is what needs to be answered, although he is fully supportive of and grateful for the creation of the plan. He noted that the plan itself prompts them to be asking these questions and figuring out the answers.

Trevor Storrs added that they as a group have struggled with what their authority is and how that plays in with Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Crum's roles as commissioners. One of the things in the plan is the exploration of what that authority looks like. He also asked if written into the plan was a description of where the plan will live and who will be responsible for it.

Christina Hulquist stated that one of the requirements of the Preschool Development Grant was to ask where this plan was going to live. Through all of their stakeholder engagement and Council involvement in the process of developing the plan, the goal was always that it would be

a plan that was adopted by the AECCC; however, this Council wasn't ready to support that and say that. She stated that they are looking for more than just approval or endorsement of this plan. They are looking for this plan to be implemented. Goals have been developed, and there are strategies to get to those goals. She stated that if she could wave a magic wand, the Council would adopt this plan and change workgroups and put efforts into reaching some of those goals. Through those conversations they may come up with developing a policy, they may change their approach to governance, and they may complete some of those goals exactly as written, but they may also land somewhere else that works for Alaska. This is really a way to finally be all speaking from one unified voice and have a guide to the work they are already doing.

Commissioner Crum directed the Council to page 25 under conclusions and next steps that says: A workgroup has been formed to write a proposal for a new approach to governing the early childhood system that will be considerations for establishing accountability for implementing the plan. Once adopted, the governance body will establish these progress measures to guide implementation. He asked if there is a workgroup and if that document has been created. Christina Hulquist stated that the workgroup has been formed, and an update was provided at the last AECCC meeting. COVID has slowed the process down, but they have been receiving consultation at the national level to design a new approach to governance. The workgroup is on its way and going well, but they are recognizing that they won't have a solution for at least six months to a year. Tamar Ben-Yosef added that the governance workgroup had a panel presentation from representatives from six different states that had done similar early childhood work in their states where they learned it takes years to get to the point where they would like to be. She stated that the strategic plan is a great first step for getting everyone on the same page around some statewide priorities and goals as they move forward towards that long-term goal of several years down the line. This will help keep that momentum up.

Abbe Hensley suggested they say that the AECCC endorses the plan, in particular the goals, and come up with a statement that says that as time goes by, the strategies may change. Commissioner Crum noted that he is not opposed to that approach. Commissioner Johnson again noted that he is not opposed to supporting this plan, he just wants to make sure that when he communicates that they endorse the plan, that everyone is clear on what that means.

Christina Hulquist asked if Commissioner Johnson would like a workgroup formed to propose a definition of what endorsing this plan means. Stephanie Berglund was in support of this idea.

Supanika Ackerman provided some history of the AECCC in that in 2012 they created a document with eight statewide recommendations. The way that she would look at this current strategic plan is saying that the strategic plan will be replacing those priorities that were written in 2012. If the workgroups reconvene, they can take the different goals of the strategic plan and work on them through the workgroups in a collaborative and coordinated way.

Alicia Berka stated that the definition of endorse is the giving of one's approval or support to something. She believes they have heard overwhelming support for the strategic plan during

today's meeting, and she also thinks it would be a feather in the caps of the commissioners as this is a progressive and amazing effort and would set Alaska up for being a leader in early childhood.

Christina Hulquist will work with Emily Urlacher and Kristen Spencer to put together an endorsement document. Other members of the workgroup will include Karen Melin and Tamar Ben-Yosef. That document can be presented to the group, and an e-mail vote can take place should they decide to vote on adoption of the strategic plan.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Crum and Commissioner Johnson thanked members for attending and adjourned the meeting at 3:13 p.m.