

Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council

Notes from the April 9th Audio Conference

Departmental updates on Alaska legislative budget process (EED, H&SS, & around the table)

Funding Status:

DEED

- Pre-K \$800K down from last year. Anticipate 18 lost positions and 135 children lost. The \$2million was moved from the base to one-time funds.
- \$362,000 cut from Parents As Teachers (\$119,500 of this is the position put in last year, the remaining \$242,000 in cuts comes from the grants)
- Head Start remains the same as in the Governor's budget
- Best Beginnings- \$37,500 cut in House (conference committee final budget out soon)
- The Moore Case settlement funds for serving 4 year olds start to flow next year.
- K-3 literacy screening tools fully funded

DHSS

- ECMHI \$400GF, \$200MHTAAR- cut in House, restored in Senate
- ILP 1.5\$million increase in both House and Senate
- One item that relates to OCS social worker. There was cost study done. Did not make either house for Senate. Hoping this has been a technical glitch.
- Unallocated cut in Behavioral Health in the House. WE anticipate this having a significant effect.
- Interim Committees- House Subcommittee on Health and Social Services want to meet each month after session. Use as an educational opportunity.

Discussion: Stephanie felt a shift of understanding about early childhood issues this year. Could we do a state-of-the-state report or organize cumulative information that might help with that. Ree mentioned this is a new configuration of leadership and committees. Mike was not ready to advocate for something yet, but wonder what dashboards could do- Louisiana, for example, has one with health care, education, and well-being? ECCS – has 60 indicators- at next AECCC face to face meeting we will look to boil it down.

Ree mentioned DHSS is also moving to Results Based Accountability. This may hold some good information for us in selecting our dashboard.

Effects of the federal sequester: what we know so far (EED, H&SS, & around the table)

- Head Start will experience \$1.6 million in cuts. 50% of AK programs are looking to shorten the length of the program year. 22-27 fewer staff member. 120-140 fewer children receiving services. In some communities it may be complete closure, no transportation, elimination of staff benefits, etc. at the same time we are trying to raise quality. Federal funding does not impact state funding necessarily.
- Other federal funding affecting the ECE programs, that comes to DEED is the HS Collaboration grant, which may see reductions from 5-25%. (At this time Child Nutrition and Special Ed 619 Pre-school funding cuts are not known).
- This year Office of Children's Services was down approximately \$7 million. The state may need to back fill this funding and the cumulative effect could be significant.
- The difference in the House and Senate budgets are significantly different. The way the sequestration is structured- there is not much flexibility- it is basically across the board.
- ECCS- 5% cut this year (ends May 31st). Two months unfunded- June & July. In the new fiscal year approximately 7% cuts.
- ILP- none this year. Next year approximately 5%.
- CCPO cuts will be buffered by TANF funding.

Presentation of the AECCC Strategic Report to the Governor (Comm. Hanley)

- Mike Lesmann and both Commissioners Hanley and Streur presented to the Governor. We weren't able to make a presentation to the Legislature. Presented the 8 Recommendations. The Governor asked about the 5,000 more children served- explained it was a target. How to increase worker pay- how do we get there? They did talk about some of the work around the QRIS. Talked about Race to the Top requirement for a QRIS- very expensive to gear up just to apply. He had a lot of interest in embedding the SF Protective Factors into our programs. Feels focus on building parent and family outreach including awareness of the Early Learning Guidelines is a better strategy than Pre-K. He is also, very interested in supporting the local partnerships. There was a real interest on the Governor's part. They spent more time than anticipated and had good comments and questions.

Discussion: Dee asked did he have any comments on trauma/child abuse and neglect/ACE Study. Mike H said we did not discuss that at that time; however we have had many other conversations related to DVSA and Choose Respect.

Mike L told us to rest assured that the Governor and First Lady have become very informed about ACES and know full well that kids coming into OCS, DJJ, not ready to learn are experiencing the impacts of these concerns.

QRIS update (Marcey Bish)

The Child Care Program Office (CCPO) was able to make a couple of steps forward. DHSS provided funding to thread to support a full-time position to move this effort forward. Thread worked with CCPO on developing a position description. Thread is actively recruiting for this position. Information can be found on the website. This position can be located anywhere in the state.

Requests for AECCC communications: proposed letters (Paul Sugar & Shirley Pittz)

- Thank you letter to the Governor regarding budget items that supported early childhood work.

Abbe moved to have the AECCC write and send the letter. She thanked him for paying attention to recommendations that the Council made and reflecting those in his budget, Commissioner Hanley seconded the motion. It passed by unanimous consent.

- Thank you to Sue Hull for her service and congratulations on her State Board appointment.

Jeff moved to have the AECCC write and send the letter. Abbe seconded the motion. It passed.

- ECCS support letter for a new 3-year grant focused on Mitigation of Toxic Stress and Trauma in Infancy and Early Childhood. This would also include the AECCC serving as a steering committee for the ECCS grant

Commissioner Hanley Moved that the AECCC serve as the ECCS Steering Committee and send their letter of support for the grant application contingent upon the governor's approval of submittal for this federal grant. Mike L seconded the motion with the contingency. The motion passed.

(A point of information: that contingency was met late Wednesday afternoon)

The next AECCC meeting will be in Anchorage on June 17th & 18th. If you need travel assistance please contact Paul Sugar at 465-4862 or via e-mail at paul.sugar@alaska.gov

Additional information will be sent out in the coming weeks.