

EOGOAC

May, 19 2020

9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting

Theme/Goal: COVID-19 Impacts on Foster Care and Early Learning

Members in Attendance:

Bill Kallappa, Governor's Office of Indian Affairs
Dr. James Smith, alternate for Dr. Wanda Billingsly
Frieda Takamura, Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs
Jamila Thomas, alternate for Chris Reykdal
Julieta Altamirano-Crosby Ph.D.
Representative Lillian Ortiz-Self, House of Representatives
Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos, House of Representatives
Senator Lisa Wellman, Senate
Yordanos Gebreamlak, Office of Education Ombudsman

Staff and Public Attendees:

Heather Rees, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Maria Flores, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Robin Howe, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Abigail Westbrook, WSSDA
Ailey Kato
Allison Krutsinger
Almai Malit
Charlene Abrahamson
Cina Littlebird
David Beard, SOWA
Dawn Rains, Tree House for Kids
Felisha Hillman
Frank Ordway, Department of Children, Youth, and Families
Jasmine McDonald
Jen Cole, PAVE
Juliette Knight
J. Lee Schultz, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Kurt Hatch, AWSA
Lorraine VanBrunt
Lorrell Noah
Lucinda Young

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Lydia M. Faitalia
Mark McKechnie, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Mary Colby
Megan Wargacki, Washington State Legislature Staff
Ms. Urmenita
Nicole Rose
Peggy Carlson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Randy Spaulding, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Robert Hugo
Sally McNair, Washington National Education Association
Sarah Albertson, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Shanna McBride
Simone Boe, Washington National Education Association
Susan Yang
Tim Haugen
Victoria Moreland, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Members Not in Attendance:

Carrie Basas, Office of Education Ombuds
Dr. Wanda Billingsly, Commission on African American Affairs
Fiasili Savusa, Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs
Julie Kang, alternate for Frieda Takamura
Mele Aho, alternate for Fiasili Savusa
Nicole Sutton, alternate for Bill Kallappa
Representative Bob McCaslin, House of Representatives
Superintendent Chris Reykdal, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Minutes

Agenda item: Introductions, agenda overview, and approval of meeting minutes

Facilitator: Maria Flores

Discussion:

- Meeting called to order at 9:34 am
- Overview of agenda
 - Framing around the pandemic for presentations to help build the guiding document to respond to equity concerns during the pandemic.

Action items:

- Another debrief call for members post the meeting to discuss aspects of the guiding document.
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Agenda item: Support for Students in Foster Care and the Child Welfare System

Presenters: *Frank Ordway, Chief of Staff, DCYF*

Discussion:

- Frank Ordway
 - Supports and concerns for re-opening school for next year and the impact on foster care children
 - Pre-teens and adolescence have the largest impact during the pandemic
 - Loss of opportunity during pandemic for children and families and will see it post-pandemic as well
 - Trying to keep case workers engaged with districts
 - School districts are trying to provide interaction, but barriers have come up financially, engagement with the school, and accessibility
 - Mental health- traditional recreation and opportunities, virtual meetings with family, and other services to support
 - Wrap around services going virtual
 - Planning with OSPI to engage youth, given same opportunity and access, and support foster families (some don't have knowledge or engagement around the education of their foster youth)
 - Developing further case by case approach to support youth
 - Transition work- extend ability beyond age limitations and aging out because jobs and housing are not waiting for them during this time
 - Infants and toddlers – working on safe available childcare (grant funds are going out to support smaller ratios in facilities)
- How are you working with communities or color in these processes? What equity lens are you using to do your work and what disaggregated data are you using for your base?
 - Frank – case by case effort with children, culturally responsive care, and translation. Not currently looking at disaggregated data for now. Statistics on placements and visits – less intake because students are not in schools creating better staff to youth ratio to focus more on details. This allows them to move more cases to completion. Expecting a wave of students when schools open again.
- What percentage of Latino foster youth are in the system? What percentage of foster parents are Latino?

- Frank- distinct disproportionality compared to general population, changing of contract for recruitment to address this. This is disproportional for race, sexual orientation, and siblings.
 - Bias in screening from the moment that child abuse is reported. Previously system was used as a weapon against different racial groups. So, this opportunity of a lower intake will be used to address this.
 - What is the information on African American students and placing foster youth with African American foster parents?
 - Frank – contracted with a group that was restricting recruitment and a state institution doing the same. Thus, impacting the ratios of parents and youth. Currently reaching out to new community organizations like Mockingbird Society to become more diverse and welcoming.
 - Do we know how many students have been in transitioning from one district to another or within the same district before the pandemic hit, or some time after and are currently not enrolled at any school?
 - Frank- there is no widespread unenrollment, but engagement is an issue that is arising. Ability to assess the engagement is complicated during COVID.
 - What is DCYF doing to change its practice? – bias, institutional racism. DCYF is born of these things. What are you doing to change your practice of working with communities of color, ensuring that you are collecting the disaggregated data, which is key for the delivery of services?
 - Frank- working intentionally with staff on expectations, new diversity, equity, and inclusion groups, and restructuring training programs. All include intentional work around diversity, equity, and inclusion of each group and sub-group.
 - Placement challenges for youth that have contracted COVID
 - Legislative asks in the future for more data disaggregation ability
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Agenda item: Panel: Community Support for Students in Foster Care

Panelists: Annie Blackledge, Executive Director, Mockingbird
 Angela Griffin, Chief Program Officer, Treehouse
 Dawn Rains, Chief Policy & Strategy Officer, Treehouse

Discussion:

- Dawn Rains
 - Serving 50% of school age foster care in the state through the Graduation Success Program which provide intensive ongoing support to and through high school graduation (serving 1,200 high school students in 40 districts) and in the Education Advocacy program short term educational advocacy on a problem

- centered emergency basis to improve education barriers that are specific to youth in foster care (serving 1,200 students state wide).
- Project Education Impact from HB 2711 – goal is to improve the education outcomes for students experiencing foster care and students experiencing homelessness from Pre-K to post-secondary by 2027.
 - Surveyed to see what need was during time of pandemic. Technology was the first need addressed, and large issues of internet access. Beginning to meet these needs via community or school help. 10-12% of students are still having issues around these.
 - If remote learning continues, then adaptive needs of students to learn from home, access to resources, and one on one support will need to be addressed. Students also don't have needed caregivers at home that have the capacity or willingness to provide this educational support. Most youth do not have long term relationships with their caregivers and these needs are added stress factors in the situation.
 - Isolation and lack of access to peers are impacts on the social emotional health of the youth, and the impact of stress and trauma.
- Annie Blackledge
 - Work with youth advocates across the state for foster care
 - 342 young people scheduled to age out in the next year – fall into categories of whether working in the hospitality industry and they are currently out of work or on the front lines at grocery stores
 - Hoping for a moratorium on aging out youth in Washington, there is no money at the federal level (two federal bills are currently being considered to address this)
 - COVID has caused 10% of youth to leave their post-secondary education
 - 10% have food insecurity and still need access to technology devices
 - Not hearing from about 25% of the youth
 - Do you disaggregate your data from the survey you send out or are they anonymous? How many students of color did you hear back from and were there any big takeaways from their replies?
 - Dawn – survey was done by the staff about the youth that they are serving and their needs. This was done for the whole body of youth supported and 65% are people of color but did not disaggregate this specific survey.
 - Are there caseworkers involved with the youth being spoken about? Are they doing any zoom meetings and connecting on the devices that were spoken about? Can fees be covered to provide internet services because this is a large issue for rural areas.
 - Dawn- majority of health and safety visits are still happening on the child welfare side either by phone or zoom. We are suggesting in the monthly conversation that educational engagement and progress is part of that conversation instead of the previously typical twice a year.

- They have been providing hotspots but for some rural area's internet service does not exist at all. Some districts are parking school buses in areas to fix this.
- Annie – for those over 18 there is usually no longer a caseworker involved so in that case only through some federal programs are they able to get similar support. This is leading to more intense isolation than younger foster youth.
- Does your work and effort extend statewide and if so, with the increase of foster youth in rural areas are supports being equally distributed between areas?
 - Dawn – yes, it is statewide with 100 districts represented. Educational advocates are cross state to resolve educational barriers and all youth are eligible for those services.
 - For the graduation program starts in population centers and then goes out from there.
- When talking about the need for more one on one educational interaction between the youth that you support and their caregiver it was spoken that it would be an unfair burden to monitor and assist with their education. So can you clarify this statement?
 - We have virtually all kids missing that one on one interaction and many kids don't have that attention.
 - Dawn – It's speaking to the capacity of the caregiver to give the level of one on one attention that the youth would normally see in a normal school setting with routine and anchoring to meet their needs around trauma.
- Respond to equity document guidelines – speak to gaps that are becoming present for students of color during and will continue past the pandemic.
 - Annie – students of color are overrepresented in the foster care system and focusing on this group needs to be direct action not an afterthought. Work also needs to be done to address preventative options to stop youth from ever becoming a part of the system. Schools are ground zero for prevention efforts.
 - Dawn- Even though students of foster care and experiencing homelessness only represents 4-5% of the overall population that we hope they will use some of the stimulus dollars to disproportionately fund the students that are furthest from opportunity. Really focus on the students that are most at risk at this time such as summer school, remedial education and credit retrieval, support for families, one on one academic support, not exiting young people from foster care, and access to resources and direction during and after the pandemic.
- EOGOAC
 - It is vital that the information that is provided to this committee be disaggregated by race and ethnicity. We do see that there are issues that you are dealing with that we can help advocate for, but we cannot be advocates for you if we don't have the data that meets our legislative mandate, which is to focus on the disproportionately of students of color in terms of academic performance,

in terms of entry into the juvenile justice system and to the foster care systems, where not only are there traumas from not being with their family but also being placed with a family that has no clue about cultural competency.

- Asking for follow up data that can support the work
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Agenda item: Panel: Indian Child Welfare Systems of Support

Panelists: Angel Van Brunt, Foster Home Program Coordinator, South Puget Intertribal Planning (SPIPA)
Charlene Abrahamson, Family Services Director, Squaxin Island Tribe
Jasmine McDonald, Case Manager, Nisqually Tribe
Lorraine Van Brunt, Children and Family Services Manager, Nisqually Tribe

Discussion:

- COVID specific challenges that native students are facing right now in regard to child welfare.
 - Jasmine McDonald
 - Miscommunication at the district level. Getting responses that their students are not turning in their assignments, but they actually are or how the grading system is going to be handled. Also, the ability to assist students with their subjects particularly math with how it has changed.
 - Parents getting time with teacher on how to teach the new math style would be useful.
 - Stress level of having to balance work and schooling and transitioning back to work but still having students at home.
 - Not a good learning environment at home and how the relationship with teachers is different than with parents, different levels of respect.
 - Finding time to pick up weekly assignment packets as well as finding daycare for younger children.
 - Nervous about being liable for the chrome books that the placements are receiving and lack of internet accessibility.
 - Charlene Abrahamson
 - Ancestral stories being dismissed in curriculum
 - Take home work there is bias built in on how the situation is handled between a native child and other children
 - Cultural context and accuracy are important to have within teaching
 - Understanding the struggle of being a foster child in school and what may be going on behind the scenes for the child when they act out.

- Transferring, are you in the school district, and suggesting an alternative and really all the actions being a way to try and push them out of that school district.
 - The behavior expectation is more magnified for a student of color than not.
- Angel Van Brunt
 - Similar challenges of being able to connect children with families that they are currently placed with and having to place the native children in non-native homes.
 - The challenge of packets being sent home and not knowing how to teach the lessons. Taking COVID as a time to teach history in the way they would like. Using zoom to hear stories from elders instead of worksheets.
 - Each tribe is different and so there is no one way to help all tribes it has to be specified to needs of each tribe. Taking into consideration geographic limitations.
- Lorraine Van Brunt
 - Stressing the safety of staff as well as students and families
- For those that are licensed to place native children in foster homes that they do a check list of do you have some place for the child to study, do you have access to internet, do you have a technological device, and do you have time to spend with the child? Is that the way that the tribal licensing and placement work?
 - There seems to be a layer of culturally responsive inquiry that our tribal organizations are applying in the hopes to support native students in their education. What can DCYF learn from that, so it is not wholly on these organizations?
 - Angel- Providing non-native families with other families to support cultural needs. Not placing a foster child in a foster home. When our non-native family is licensed with our agency, we look at it as that family is being taken in by the native community.
 - Charlene- gaps in recognizing tribal sovereignty and don't always understand about looking at things in a bigger picture. For example, in behavioral health you have to use evidence-based practices only in order to get coverage and patient care. The constraints from this built the Declaration of Cultural Wisdom which breaks this down and now allows the ability to use cultural services that are considered legitimate since time immemorial.
 - Jasmine – having tribal liaisons within each grade and having a location set aside for native students to do cultural activities and setting some big event during the year. Working on truancy codes because there is a discrepancy between the codes and difficulty of communicating actions and process. Also, being questioned each

time to talk to a tribal youth which is not expected by a DCYF worker.

- EOGOAC
 - DCYF has a lack of cultural competency and responsiveness to tribal sovereignty.
 - Barriers created by moving youth from multiple homes throughout the year. Additional training is necessary so they can better relate to the students that are being placed in their foster homes.
 - The question of relationships and of how well a tribe has one with its local school district and community. This shapes the assistance given to students.
 - Jasmine McDonald
 - Tribal leadership/members are making efforts with schools to get tribal history taught properly in schools. These connections bring awareness and cultural competency and how native students may face things that other students may not as they go through their education.
 - What can districts do to support this work so that it is not all on the tribe?
 - Bill- Education system has systemically been disengaged from tribes and this has created pockets of engagement or lack of engagement all across the state. So, legislation is a core step to move actions forward to require districts to build relations with tribes.
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Agenda item: Public Comment

Discussion:

- The history for foster care for the African American community and advocating with DCYF to make a formalized history and relation between slavery and foster care. The history you receive to be licensed for foster care is very brief and the dates studied during training start talking about the foster care system while slavery was still happening. There needs to be conversation around the history to start fixing the bias, racism, and barrier within the foster care system. Connecting community with the child to learn cultural background. Create a formalized process to establish this community process and get buy in from the African American community.
 - Concern around re-entry and having children supported during the process. Being intentional in the structure because children are not in a routine right now. This creates a lack of supports and creating a moratorium on disciplining youth right now.
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Agenda item: Lunch: Offline

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Agenda item: Support for Early Learning and Childcare

Panelists: Nicole Rose, Director of Eligibility and Provider Supports, DCYF

Discussion:

- Nicole Rose
 - Stabilize childcare industry, ensure low-income families have access to care, and support COVID-19 public health and economic recovery response.
- Are you providing assistance with language accessibility?
 - Nicole – Translate all materials in Spanish and Somali or download it in their native language and fill it out and submit the application.
 - Juliette – There are contracts throughout the state that assist with translation services. The COVID inbox is translated into the top 5 languages in Washington state besides English and if someone calls, they can be connected with a translator for conversations.
- In your planning to come back after COVID work to include those that have been historically excluded or marginalized in order to bring together a diverse group.
- The needs of language learners should not be added on it should be integrally incorporated in the planning.
 - To what extent is DCYF partnering with the actual education workforce, counseling workforce, and the school administrators?
 - Nicole – There are varying levels of relationships that providers have with school districts and a question of what is the role of the schools and what is the role of the childcare provider? Are we expecting the childcare provider to be in charge of all the wrap around services and education? These questions have yet to be answered.
- What percentage are Latino? How are you assisting and what challenges do you face?
 - Nicole- track more data on which families receive subsidies rather than the entire populous served. Childcare providers are the ones that handle the technology side of aspects, and/or use the portal. The problem is the translation only works in the download version. The issue that is really coming up is the internet band width and the ability to track some of their records.
- How do we provide training to non-English speaking childcare providers? How are they getting information appropriate for them during COVID?
 - Nicole – Childcare aware has coaches that reach out to providers and assisting with information that is being put out, and use translation services for all processes. (will share demographic information of coaches) Family childcare providers are the most diverse providers.
 - Disaggregated data is not a required field for the application process.

Agenda item: Panel: Community Support for Early Learning and Childcare

Panelists: David Beard, Policy & Advocacy Director, School's Out Washington
Karma Hugo, Director of Early Learning, Learning and Teaching, OSPI
Susan Yang, Executive Director, Denise Louie Education Center

Discussion:

- Susan Yang
 - Predominately refugee and immigrant languages so getting sufficiently translated materials is a challenge.
 - Stress among Chinese families during COVID due to racism and stereotyping
 - Affordability challenge in the long-term post COVID
- Karma Hugo
 - District lens of childcare and partnerships with community buy-in during and after the pandemic. Trying to understand what the demands will be on the system after return to work begins.
 - Concern that the care being provided by schools meet the standards of care and terms of access to it in relation to risk.
- David Beard
 - Big providers that are currently open during COVID are burning through their cash reserves just to keep up with the demand even though there is less than prior. This is due to fewer parents and kids coming in but having to try and maintain the same amount of staff.
 - Small providers may face having to reduce certain services or going out of business.
- As a childcare provider in the community itself what do you think is the most important resource or assistance that you can get from the systems? (state systems and EOGOAC)
 - Susan – coordinated approach to the translation of materials and share with other programs on how each is opening back up because requirements are steep.
- In this time of COVID there has been the absolute blurring of lines of what's happening in our schools, what's happening in our home, and what's happening in out of home environments. So, what recommendations would you have from the standpoint of being early learning childcare providers, remembering that EOGOAC focuses on the gap that kids of color constantly fall into. What recommendations would you have for the coordination of approaches so that when we come back so that we can have less children of color fall into the gaps?
 - Karma - WAKids is being utilized to create outreach to families and expectations
 - Thinking about how to create connection between childcare and the school

- What are family priorities and re-orientate their needs at the beginning of the year
 - David - what does your student body need and how does the community wrap around that?
 - WISSP and MTSS with community supports wrapped in before you start planning
 - Districts are making decisions of cuts without getting input on the decisions
 - Susan – more information and how it is communicated from the state to providers will impact capacity and implementation to support students and families
 - Do you have knowledge on the potential loss of providers and that you may be able to bring back so that you don't exacerbate the gap that already exists?
 - David – DCYF supply and demand committee working on what it may look like in the fall but without information on who is open or closed and when people are going to work, it is hard to determine. It also depends on what funds you will be able to get and if funds are based on fees but restricted by how many children you can have; this will impact sustainability.
 - Concern around having childcare providers or after school programs operate out of the school. The funding of a cleaning crew for this and having enough individuals because if there were to be shifts between groups, they would have to clean between each, and the standards are much higher. Has there been any brainstorming around this issue?
 - Susan – all facilities will be challenged to meet distancing standard.
 - David – if providers are put in charge of the spaces, they are being given by the schools it can be managed.
 - I think when we all move and there are these individual pieces, and everyone can be doing everything that they possibly can but if there are not those crucial connection points it feels like we are not moving as fast or as deep as we mean to be.
 - Where are these supportive roles and what are the easy or rough portions?
 - Susan - it is hard to know who to talk at the district or school level. Providers do better one on one with schools because of built relationships. It has been hard to advocate that technology is needed in certain situations or multiple needed. Overall being the voice for families. This though does give a systemic issue of a level of access for all families across the system.
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Agenda item: Public Comment

Discussion:

- No public comment requested.

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Agenda item: Final Announcements, and Conclude Meeting

Discussion:

- Frustration around the largest district in the state. If the superintendent's office cannot compel the largest district in the state to work with some of our providers to address the needs of our families who are our most, as they like to say, furthest away from education justice then I think we seriously have a problem.
- Connective tissue or meaningful connections between families/ communities and the education institutions.
- Washington Integrated Student Support Protocol (WISSP) can aid our school districts as well as our education agency for planning for the fall.
- If we don't involve diverse perspectives in the planning at the beginning, then we will relegate all of these marginalized communities back to the margins because we will be dealing with them as add-ons.
- When you engage in authentic relationships it works to elevate the entire system.
- The same group of kids are going to be hurt coming out of this if we are not being proactive in protecting them.
- Concern around the mental health of the kids coming out of this. Would like to see some sort of assessment to see where students are academically and more importantly behaviorally, and social emotional.
- Put kids first not the system first.
- Not many of the groups mentioned resources for looking at commission sites around language issues and the COVID crisis.
- There has been a mental and emotional impact on teachers, and we are going to have to be very careful about transition from the current environment back to the natural environment again.
- EOGOAC participation needed in: WaKids proviso working on the assessment process, family engagement framework group, and Institutional Ed. Task Force
 - Bill said maybe to institutional ed. Task Force EOGOAC representative position

Action items:

- Follow up debrief meeting to work on guidance document with members
- Family Panel that consists of folk closer to ground
 - Include ethnic commissions

Meeting concluded at 2:35pm

Minutes Taken By: Robin Howe, Admin Assistant, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

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