

Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee

February 16, 2023

4 – 6:00 pm

AGENDA

Charge of the Committee:

Make recommendations to the City Council on the potential design and implementation of a locally governed program to ensure universal and equitable access to early care and education for all Saint Paul children

1. Greeting (5 minutes)
 2. Housekeeping (5 minutes)
 - a. Reminders:
 - For clarification, our responsibility within this committee is to make recommendations to the City Council. Recommendations can be actionable even if they do not include everything that should happen. We begin with steps in the right direction. We are not charged with creating or implementing an early learning program. We are charged with recommending a program to be designed that meets the needs of children and families of Saint Paul.
 - The design and implementation follows this committee's recommendations. The City Council will take your opinions and thoughts into consideration as it determines next steps to improve equitable early care and education for Saint Paul's young children. You are empowered to make recommendations. The answers won't always be outside this group - the answers need to come from you and your expertise.
 - b. Reminder of Norms
 3. Voting Method and Remaining Timeline
Discussion- 15min
 4. Small Group Discussion (60 minutes)
See Discussion Questions 1-5
Write down areas of agreement and disagreement
 5. Whole Group Share Out (30 minutes)
- Closing (5 minutes)

Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee
Group Norms

- Dedicate time to check in on norms at each meeting.
- Start on time/End on Time.
- “Step Up” & “Step Back”.
- We use “thumbs up” for group acknowledgment/to move on as a group.
- Have the conversation/ask questions inside this space.
- Be willing to ask questions.
- Respectfully disagree.
- Avoid acronyms or other uncommon terms - be willing to explain what those things are to the group.
- Gain acknowledgment before speaking - take turns when speaking or asking questions.
- Hold questions for guest speakers/panelists until they are finished speaking or presenting - write your questions down.

Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee

February 16, 2023

4 – 6:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Lynne Bolton, Rachel Boettcher, Eric Haugee, Halla Henderson, Mitra Jalali, Megan Jekot, Hwa Jeong Kim, LaVon Lee, Nicolee Mensing, Kristenza Nelson, Rebecca Noecker, Khalid Omar, Kera Peterson, Tracy Roscoe, Maria Scot, Brittany Trinidad Sprung, Sai Thao, Stephanie Thomas, Quentin Wathum-Ocama, Barb Yates

1. Greeting

- a. Co-Chair acknowledged the tragedy at Harding High School, and that it's the children of Saint Paul who will benefit from their work.

2. Voting Method and Remaining Timeline

A model for voting was presented to the group. Recommendations based on previous groups processes. Recommending – an exit survey, end of process. Answer a series a questions that represent the talking. Will present the results back to committee on 16th.

It was agreed to by a majority.

3. Discussion – Funding the child or funding the spot (the Pathway I and II models) – Barb Yates

Pathway I:

Parents fill out application and have to show that they qualify. If they receive an award, it stays with them until they get into kindergarten. Can attend any Parent Aware rated program. Younger siblings can receive a scholarship if an older sibling does.

This model didn't work well for school-based programs or Head Start.

Pathway II:

Providers complete an application process and write application for a group of children they could serve if the funding was received. Submit for reimbursement monthly.

In both ways, scholarship is tied to specific children. With Pathway II, if child leaves, they do not have a scholarship anymore. Programs say how they're going to use the funds: space, salaries, etc., even though it's attached to a specific child.

Pathway II can only be used in 4 star programs. Would have to hold that seat for a child who meets those criteria.

- LaVon – families with great need but don't meet those four criteria.
- Barb – 90% of families are those priority groups.
- What are the things that don't work with P I and PII don't work -- . Pro in the pathway II model.

- Barb – what are the things you're trying to solve. Want something that allows us to serve the highest need families.
- Rachel – do families have to resubmit. NO. If you qualify once, you keep it.
- Targeted 3 and 4, Pathway II is only for preschoolers. There are proposals at Legislature to open to 0-5.
- Nicolee – we could be supplemental to the when the scholarship runs out.
- 31000 kids under 5 needing survey – governors proposal would impact 2/3rd of those kids.
- What things are important for families and providers to work?

4. Small Group Discussion (60 minutes)

See Discussion Questions 1-5

5. Whole Group Share Out (30 minutes)

Question 1:

Hybrid model – pick the bright spots of both options. Simplified application process process.

Hybrid – how to keep dollars in Saint Paul, although there may be considerations.

Hybridge – easy for providers if there is a Pathway II

Question 2:

Yes, programs in Saint Paul. Wanted to allow programs for waiver mechanism.

Keep dollars in Saint Paul, but there may be situations where families. Element of choices

Saint Paul dollars/Saint Paul Kids/Saint Paul providers

Question 3:

Yes, minimum standards for health and safety. May be incentive for providers to seek out training.

Supports to ensure they are doing the most positive good that they can do. Non licensed and family providers. Barriers to training --

Yes, basic safety standards. Licensed and nonlicensed. (Quentin) Want standards – but not all done for licensure. Had some questions (Mitra) whether licensed or not, yes, basic safety. How should city enforce?

Some discomfort without licensure. Want to (Rebecca)

Question 4:

Yes, we want this. But this might be something up the ladder a bit. Don't know how to get to this level.

How do we measure this? There are industry standards.. How jump from licensure to NAEYC.

Multipath model. Is there some system we can set up that allow for a grandmother show that cultural competency. Wrapping

Program standards – liked idea of taking various standards. Clear about what we want to achieve, even if there is a standard that is already existing. Support providers.

Question 5:

Within the City – not strong

Not a strong opinion – but if a non profit, wanted to

Within the City – public dollars should go to a city . Small providers – don't want them to get lost within the bureaucracy.

Early Learning Legislative Advisory Committee
Group Norms

- Dedicate time to check in on norms at each meeting.
- Start on time/End on Time.
- “Step Up” & “Step Back”.
- We use “thumbs up” for group acknowledgment/to move on as a group.
- Have the conversation/ask questions inside this space.
- Be willing to ask questions.
- Respectfully disagree.
- Avoid acronyms or other uncommon terms - be willing to explain what those things are to the group.
- Gain acknowledgment before speaking - take turns when speaking or asking questions.
- Hold questions for guest speakers/panelists until they are finished speaking or presenting - write your questions down.

Committee Voting Proposal – Exit Survey Results

February 12, 2023

You were presented today with a proposal for voting. Do you agree on the recommended method for voting? If not, what method are you proposing?

Yes (13 Votes)

Comments:

- *I would recommend including discussion time in the meeting prior to voting for opportunities to discuss any sticking points or ask any clarifying questions (separate from our small group questions/discussions).*
- *A written survey allows for clarity in topics and answers. I am grateful for the guiding questions and surveys thus far and trust this process. I also agree more full discussion would be beneficial on today's question 5. I also want to say that as someone coming from a non-political/non-governmental background, I appreciate the guidance in working through these processes and I think it has been well-organized and thoughtfully laid out.*
- *There should maybe be an option for no program.*
- *Thank you to the facilitators and councilmembers for explaining (again) the different options for voting. It was helpful.*
- *I welcome the opportunity to further share my perspective in a thoughtful and well thought-out manner.*
- *And for your consideration, revisiting the matrix of rating impact for kiddos, families, workers – not being prescriptive will be best.*
- *It seems well thought out and will get us to the goal. Also, it has been used successfully on other issues. I do not have clarity on those that are expressing concern, about what the concerns are or how we could resolve them.*

Qualified Yes (1 vote)

- *I think this survey is an ok idea as long as we have the opportunity to make comments. I do feel like we haven't had time to have larger group discussions. I do worry about attendance and people who missed several meetings are making informed choices.*

No (1 vote)

- *No, I don't agree that this should be the method that we should vote as. I think we should have discourse on the different structural items that we want to recommend to City Council and have a live vote of this items.*

Other (1 vote)

- *My preference would be to vote issue by issue but I recognize that we don't have enough time left to do that. If the City were to undertake a process like this again, it may be useful to have more meetings.*

Discussion Questions for February 2, 2023

1. Should funding follow the child (like the Early Learning Scholarship Pathway 1) or fund “seats” at each provider (Early Learning Scholarship Pathway 2) or some hybrid?

2. Assuming the early learning funding is raised only by St. Paul taxpayers, should funding solely go to providers who are based in St. Paul?

- *Providers receiving funding must be located in St. Paul. (53.3% agree)*

Previous Comments:

- *How should we account for families who choose care outside of the city because it is more convenient for them?*
- *Again, I think yes but am not sure what voters will support.*
- *I think the child must a Saint Paul resident but should be able to attend care that meets families needs*
- *I think we have to determine how funding will follow the child - that may require any provider getting funding*
- *We already said parents could choose the program that best meets their needs. Having a Saint Paul based provider may not work for families.*
- *Would voters support their tax dollars going to places outside the city? Are we funding a child or are resources allocated to a program that funds staff?*
- *Preference to programs in Saint Paul. Programs outside Saint Paul can apply through some kind of waiver mechanism.*
- *If it's a special levy, would want kids to stay in Saint Paul. If another funding scenario, might have a different answer.*
- *If the dollars go to the program, should be in Saint Paul. With Early Learning Scholarships:*
 - *Pathway 1 – awarded to a child; can decide where to use scholarships;*
 - *Pathway 2 – some providers get a pot of money to run their business. Pathway 2 helps to create stability. Pathway 1 is valuable because parents can choose.*

3. How can the program assure that children are in safe and healthy environments? Are there minimum standards that should be set for programs to receive city funding?

- *Providers receiving Saint Paul early learning funding must be licensed or meet basic safety standards. (73% agree)*

Previous comments:

- *I want to know if "meeting basic safety standards" would include LNL providers.*
- *What standards?*
- *Other funds, such as CCAP, are linked to Parent Aware ratings*
- *Parent Aware goes through continuous quality improvement. In 2016, went through an engagement process around the state, made revisions. Last year, began review for racial equity. A consultant is doing engagement with families, providers, coaches, to get feedback on how could be more racially inclusive. DHS has hired people to address some very clear concise recommendations. It's aligned with Head Start, NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) standards.*
- *What kind of support would they get? Work with coaches throughout the process.*

4. How can the program ensure that children are in environments that foster learning through play and offer a wide range of artistic, cultural, cognitive, social and physical activities? How can the program ensure there an adequate number of trained staff who are sensitive and responsive to children and communicate well with parents?

- *Over time, providers should be expected to meet a quality standard in order to continue receiving St. Paul early learning funding. Providers should be given a choice of which CCAP-accepted standard to meet. (60% agree)*

Previous comments:

- *Want to make sure we factor in the proper supports - and associated funding - to help providers get to this point*
- *Providers should be given a choice of quality standard that assures children are ready for kindergarten*
- *What changes are being made to these standards? Are these the right standards?*
- *There are concerns about Parent Aware. What other standards could we consider?*
- *Where is the perspective of the parent that is working with a provider? It's a squishy word. It's not enough to say we're going to use PA.*
- *Should consider surveys to parents. E.g., do you talk to your child's teacher at least once a week?*
- *Fear about the word quality among providers. Tend to use quality as a shorthand for money.*
- *Concern about workers taking on one more thing.*
- *Can we come up with a definition to use as a guiding post?*

- *Quality and guidelines cannot all be tied to dollars. Must be cultural pieces and parent led pieces as well.*
- *We should work toward developing guideposts that include but are not limited to...*
- *Parent Aware rated programs have a 2.5 times great chance of staying open.*
- *Encourage the group to think about what standards need to be true on day 1 and how those might change in the following years.*

5. What is the right model for housing the future program? Within a City Department? An independent nonprofit with a contract with the City? Or something else?

- *The early care and learning program should be operated by a new nonprofit organization that will contract with the City of St. Paul. (56.3% agree)*

Previous comments:

- *Would a new nonprofit make things more challenging for other existing nonprofits? I'm concerned about that piece. I think the new entity could be a government/city office, perhaps a new team working within the city office.*
- *These are publicly raised dollars, it should be a public entity that oversees this. I think that it can create distrust among taxpayers if this is privately funded. It feels like this is going to be similar to a charter school.*
- *I generally agree but am still feeling curious/ unsure about how money that is raised via local funding options (like a special levy) could then be given to this non-profit. I'm sure it's easy and I just don't know the process but wanted to note it.*
- *I lean toward city with an RFP for the work*
- *Truly I am unsure on this - standing up a new non-profit may bring unknown complications (with existing city ordinance or policy for example). The broader question on accountability and oversight also create a linger – I am curious how this could be administered from the city.*
- *I think the “new” and wondering about it being a city dept? Or city staff?*
- *Generally agreed, the caveat would be that we need accountability. We could borrow language from other groups.*
- *Not sure what alternative would be.*
- *A nonprofit would ensure more neutrality than the city or school district*
- *Nonprofits can solicit other donations*
- *Should establish a new nonprofit – not one already spread thin. It should be exclusively focused on this mission.*
- *How long does it take to establish a nonprofit? One committee member said it took them about six months.*

Committee Voting Proposal – Exit Survey

You were presented today with a proposal for voting. Do you agree on the recommended method for voting? If not, what method are you proposing instead?

Committee Voting Proposal – Exit Survey

You were presented today with a proposal for voting. Do you agree on the recommended method for voting? If not, what method are you proposing instead?

Program Comparison

City	Program Location	Governance	Requirements for providers
San Francisco	City Department (Department of Early Education) and through public grant-making, they fund a mixed delivery system of early care and education settings	Two oversight bodies – The First 5 Children and Families First Commission and the Early Childhood Community Oversight and Advisory Committee	To participate as a city-funded site, must meet 10 quality standards: child assessment, curriculum, developmental screening, family partnership, interestions, environment, ratio & group size, professional development, qualifications and continuous quality improvement.
Seattle	City Department (Department of Education and Early Learning)		Floor is aligned to state quality rating system; minimum is a 3; minimum is a 3 on a 5 point scale. Use two curriculums. Want children to meet Kindergarten Readiness goals of state. Require lead teachers to have a Bachelor's in ECE or have Bachelor's + 30 ECE credits. Provide scholarships.
San Antonio	Both a city department and a separate 501(c)3. Employees are city employees and they can take part in city resources like finance deaprtment and human resources.	Have a c3 board can authorize them to enter into contracts and approve day to day operations. Dual reporting relationship to city administrator and board of directors.	They grant \$4.2M to other ECE organizations to improve their programs. Their four centers are NAEYC accredited; all teachers have bachelors degrees in early education. Assistant teachers have at least a Child Development associate credential and receive ongoing training.
Denver	Stand alone 501c3, contract with City and County of Denver. Subprogram of the city, open to city audits and a direct relationship with the Mayor. Only operates in the City and County of Denver.	Governed by a board of directors (11-17 members)	Must be rated 1-5 on the state quality rating system.

Small Groups – February 16th

Group 1

Kristenza Nelson
Nelsie Yang
Tracy Roscoe
Megan Jekot
Eric Haugee
Camila Mercado Michelli
Maria Scot

Group 2

Quentin Wathum-Ocama
Mitra Jalali
Maggie Barnes
Barb Yates
Hwa Jeong Kim
Lynne Bolton
Sai Thao
Brianna Trinidad Sprung

Group 3

Rebecca Noecker
LaVon Lee
Nicolee Mensing
Stephanie Thomas
Halla Henderson
Rachel Boettcher
Khalid Omar
Kera Peterson

Khalid Omar