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## New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) Steering Committee Meeting

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Agenda for Children  
8300 Earhart Blvd. Ste. 201  
New Orleans, LA 70118  
September 27, 2016  
11:30\_am

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**Committee Members in Attendance:** Sonjia Joseph, Kate Mehok, Dr. Anthony Recasner, Joyce Ridgeway, Maria Blanco, Kristi Givens, Dr. Keith Liederman, Mary Garton, Thelma French, and Superintendent Patrick Dobard

**Committee Members in Absence:** Carole Elliot

**At 11:37 am the meeting was called to order by Dr. Recasner.**

**I. NOEEN Strategic Plan Update**

**A. Overview: Dr. Recasner provided an update on the strategic planning process.**

Bellwether Education Partners conducted over 25 interviews with stakeholders in New Orleans' early childhood community and held a focus group with early learning center directors in mid-October. Bellwether will continue to work with NOEEN for sixteen weeks and will conclude their work at the end of January. Bellwether facilitates monthly strategic planning committee sessions and has a standing weekly call with Dr. Recasner. The committee is comprised of: Dr. Keith Liederman, Patrick Dobard, Thelma French, Sonjia Joseph, Kate Mehok, and Mary Garton.

- **Key questions the process will answer include:**

- What role will NOEEN play?** Will NOEEN be an intermediary organization or will it be a service organization?
- What would be the appropriate governance structure for NOEEN?**
- NOEEN will need to develop an action plan and a fundraising plan**
- How is "early childhood" defined for the citywide vision for the early childhood sector? Will it include children from birth to eight years olds, birth to five years old, or birth to six years old?**

**B. Discussion from Steering Committee Members included:**

- **Defining "Early Childhood":** Some members of the Steering Committee advocated for the citywide vision to include children birth to eight years old. They felt that a 0-8 approach would bring in more partners, follow national norms and give more children the opportunity to learn in developmentally appropriate settings. Others advocated for keeping a strong focus on children ages 0-4 and eventually incorporating children up to eight years old. Reasons for this position included a desire to keep the momentum on parents' understanding the importance of brain development and focus NOEEN's efforts

on the youngest children, where there are the most unmet needs in terms of access.

## II. **Coordinated Funding Request Recommendations Presentation**

**A. Process Overview:** The goal of the coordinated funding request is to unify the application for funding from state-funded early childhood streams. Funding streams included in the CFR process include LA4, NSECD, and Pre-K Expansion (PEG). Members were provided with an overview of the Evaluation Committee’s recommendations.

- **Scoring Rubric:** Each application was scored based on rubrics included in the application materials. For LA4 and NSECD, quality and parent demand were weighed equally. Programs were also awarded bonus points for “Meeting Families’ Needs” (such as transportation and service to children with disabilities).
  - i. **Demand:** This is the first year we’re able to use demand data from EnrollNOLA. We do not have demand data for early childhood programs that did not have LA4 or NSECD last year. For applicants without demand data, information based on a site visit was considered instead.
  - ii. **Quality:** A program’s quality was determined by Star Rating (early learning centers), Scholarship Cohort Index, and School Performance Scores.
  - iii. **Meeting Families’ Needs:** Examples of programs meeting families’ needs would be providing transportation, before and after care, plans for ELL students, plans for students with special needs, etc.
- **PEG:** NOEEN is keeping all current PEG partnerships and not requesting any additional seats from the State because those seats were difficult to fill this school year.

**B. Review of Citywide Demand Data:** There are currently an estimated 100 to 600 eligible four year olds who not being served in a publicly funded seat. Of an estimated 3,000-3,400 four year olds in New Orleans eligible for a free Pre-K seat, only 2,800 are enrolled. Yet, there are still some free seats for four year-olds available in the city. Possible reasons for why these seats are not filled include:

- **Awareness:** Eligible families may not be aware of free pre-k.
- **Hidden Costs of Free Care:** The additional costs of transportation and before and after care costs may be too high for eligible families.
- **Family Preferences for Specific Programs:** If families are unable to get into the program of their choice, they may have chosen to not have child care or paid tuition instead of a free seat at a program they did not want.
- **Verification Obstacles:** Some families are unable to get verified to prove their eligibility. Obstacles may include transportation, the fact that most verification opportunities occur during normal work hours or difficulties in obtaining the required paperwork.

**C. Clarifying Questions and Comments from Steering Committee Members:**

- **Why weren't CLASS scores used in the Coordinated Funding Request process?** 2015-2016 was the learning year. As such, LDE specifically prohibited Lead Agencies from using CLASS scores to inform coordinated funding decisions.
- **Can newly opened centers apply for funding?** No, because programs have to have star ratings in order to be eligible for NSECD (3 stars). LDE is no longer awarding stars, so new programs are temporarily unable to qualify for NSECD until the new rating system is fully implemented. PEG center partners need to have at least two stars.
- **What is the replacement for the star ratings?** The performance profile ratings (Excellent, Proficient, Approaching Proficient or Unsatisfactory).
- **Have we considered collecting data in kindergarten from families and asking them about their past child care? This could give us more information about eligible four year olds who are not enrolled in publicly funded programs (e.g. if they are being cared for by relatives, in private centers, etc.)?** We do not have that in place, but we may be able to conduct a survey through EnrollNOLA.
- **Would NOEEN consider putting PEG seats in a school instead of an early learning center?** Agenda for Children administers PEG, so that would be a decision for the PEG staff.
- **Is there a way for parents to give feedback to the OneApp process?** There is not yet a formal feedback process for Main Round, but there is currently one for late enrollment.
- **Is there a surplus of seats statewide, or is this something only Orleans parish is experiencing?** Yes, other parishes are currently experiencing this as well. The new verification requirements have likely caused some of the reduction in the number of children enrolling in four year-old seats.
- **What is the likelihood of Orleans parish getting more seats?** It is a fixed total statewide, so in order for Orleans to get new seats, other parishes would need to receive fewer seats (either through LDE decisions or because programs opted not to renew their seats or closed).

**III. Re-establish the Program Committee to focus on Network supports.**

- a. **Overview:** NOEEN would like to re-establish the program committee. This committee would be comprised of staff who oversee academics or professional development. The committee would be charged with identifying ways to support teachers in improving their practice.

**IV. Coordinated Enrollment Process Update**

- a. **Overview:** Consistent with last year's data, the total number of applications and the percentage of applicants who successfully verify their eligibility increases for each age group as children get older, with infants have the lowest number of applications and the lowest verification rates an four year olds having the largest number of applications and the highest verification rate.

- b. **Important Changes:** Continuing students do not have to complete an application if they want to remain at their current program. Additionally, there will only be one round for early childhood this year.
- c. **Outreach and verification:** There are 4 events EnrollNOLA is tabling at to get the word out about applications and verification. There will be the opportunity verify at the Schools Expo on Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup>. Kristen Illarmo will provide additional details in her weekly newsletter.
- d. **Clarifying Questions and Comments from Steering Committee Members:**
  - **Is CCAP included in OneApp?** No private pay or CCAP students are including in OneApp, as they do not go through the EnrollNOLA process.
  - **Do NSECD students use CCAP?** They can use CCAP for wraparound services (such as before and/or after-care).

**V. Other Updates**

- a. **Change in Personnel:** Dr. Recasner announced that Elizabeth “Luz” Kief, who has served in the role of both NOEEN Manager and the Director of Child Care Resource and Referral for Agenda for Children’s 14-parish service delivery area, will be stepping out of her role as the NOEEN Manager so that she can focus her attention more fully on CCR&R. Agenda for Children has hired Kathy Namba to serve as Director of the Early Childhood Institute. In that capacity, she will manage NOEEN and oversee the Preschool Expansion Grant work. He thanked Ms. Kief for her tireless dedication to NOEEN and welcomed Ms. Namba to the team.

**Action Item(s)**

- **Action Item No. 1:** On the motion of Maria Blanco, and seconded by Kristi Givens, the Committee adopted the Agenda.
- **Action Item No. 2:** On the motion of Sonjia Joseph, and seconded by Dr. Keith Liederman, the Committee adopted the minutes from the September 27, 2016 Steering Committee Meeting.
- **Action Item No. 3:** On the motion of Maria Blanco, and seconded by Kristi Givens, the Committee approved the Coordinated Funding Request Recommendations for LA4 seats.
- **Action Item No. 4:** On the motion of Kristi Givens, seconded by Joyce Ridgeway, the Committee approved the Coordinated Funding Request Recommendations for NSECD seats.
- **Action Item No. 5:** On the motion of Maria Blanco, seconded by Sonjia Joseph, the Committee approved the Coordinated Funding Request Recommendations for Pre-K Expansion Grant seats.
- **Action Item No. 6:** On the motion of Maria Blanco, and seconded by Joyce Ridgeway, the Committee approved re-establishing the program committee.
- **Action Item No. 7:** On the motion of Joyce Ridgeway, and seconded by Dr. Keith Liederman, the Committee adjourned at 1:27 pm.