

MICHIGAN CHILD CARE TASK FORCE MINUTES For November 2, 2005

Next meeting of the Task Force
Wednesday, December 7, 2005
9:30 a.m. To Noon
State of Michigan Library
717 West Allegan; Lansing, MI 48909-7507
Lake Ontario Room, 3rd floor
(517) 373-1580

GUEST SPEAKER: Michael Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Chairpersons Richard Lower and Jane Zhender-Merrell convened the meeting shortly after 9:30 a.m. People introduced themselves.

EARLY ANNOUNCEMENTS & BUSINESS OF THE TASK FORCE

* Steve Manchester announced MiAEYC's one-day seminars coming up in November and December; information is available at www.miaeyc.org.

* Beth Bennett, House Democratic Policy Staff, announced that three bills dealing with early education would soon be introduced to: (1) Expand significantly the number of Michigan School Readiness Program slots; (2) Expand the T.E.A.C.H.® program; (3) Establish a Quality Rating System using QRS proposals under development by the "Early Learning Michigan" project carried out through Joyce Foundation support. SEIU is organizing home day care providers, relative providers and child care aides - but not providers connected with child care centers.

GUEST SPEAKER:

Jeffrey Howard, Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Mr. Howard spoke about SEIU efforts to organize child care workers in Michigan to collectively bargain with the State of Michigan regarding levels of pay, working conditions and the quality of child care programs.

Jeffrey showed a short video that portrayed SEIU's child care projects in other states. It stressed: (1) SEIU wants child care staff to be seen as educators; (2) There is strength in organizing collectively to bargain; (3) They are organizing child care workers who receive payments directly from state government. The video showed organizing done in Illinois, Washington and California.

After the video, Mr. Howard discussed SEIU's work with child care providers in the USA and in Michigan. The union represents 200,000 child care providers across the country and some Head Start staff in Michigan. Its current organizing drive involves going to the doors of family day care home providers and discussing their experiences in caring for children whose care is supported by state funds. RELATIVES AND AIDES???? - HOW ARE THEY REACHED??? They have had conversations with 20,000 providers; about 8,000 of them have signed a card saying they want to collectively organize through SEIU. SEIU has been in about 20 counties and Michigan's major cities. It hopes to over 65 cities by the end of 2005.

This organizing work focuses on the providers who care for a large portion of children receiving state funds. Of the families receiving child care support, 66% use relative care and in-home aides, and 18% use home-based child care. The target population for this drive typically earns less than

\$11,000 from which business expenses are paid. Michigan has one of the worst reimbursement policies for providers in the USA.

Mr. Howard claimed that organizing child care providers in Illinois led to: * an expanded number of parents who qualify for child care support; * increased quality in child care settings that benefit children and providers; * some success in moderating proposed state budget cuts pertaining to child care; * effective political action that helped elect the Governor of Illinois; * organized child care providers joining with other partner organizations to promote their self interests in the political arena; * a provider/state bargained contract that improved the lot of child care providers.

Now, a coalition of Illinois organizations are pushing "Preschool for All" to bring universal child care to all families that want it.

Child care providers, when they join the union, remain independent and self-employed.

Mr. Howard said that organizing child care providers can strengthen the child care system by: * creating a stable workforce that doesn't turn-over so much; * promoting higher standards for educating/training providers; * increasing the ability of providers to effectively interact with state agencies; * increasing pay for providers; * offering some financial protection to providers during times of state budget cuts; * joining advocacy networks to make a stronger network.

Comments from Two Providers:

Two providers from Saginaw, members of SEIU, came forward to tell of their experiences. They were E. Yvonne Polk and Luella Hopkins.

They felt that their voices were heard for the first time, in part because they were part of a large collective voice. They appreciated becoming connected to other providers who face the same issues. They felt that they had found people who respected them as individuals and as care givers.

Questions & Answers:

* You say 8,000 providers have been "organized." What does "organized" mean? - 8,000 people have signed a card that indicates they want to be organized and represented by SEIU. The legal requirements for calling an election of workers to see if they want to form a union is 30% of the targeted work force. Holding an election of child care providers will require about 13,000 signed cards; SEIU hopes to get 25,000 signed cards.

* A question to Ms. Polk and Ms. Hopkins: Some people in this room and lots of others dislike unions, see them as exploitive and would say you are unwise to join any union. What do you say to such people? - We get a voice, lots of support and backing and, especially, support that doesn't go away. We get to sit at tables where decisions about us are made; doors now open up for us. We feel we can do more for kids and more to make child care conditions safe for providers and children.

* Why can't we just rely on advocates to improve conditions for children and providers? - The state has no one with whom to bargain in the current situation. Advocacy organizations have no standing to bargain for the working conditions of others. This union drive will lead to organized child care providers bargaining for themselves with the state, which wants to purchase provider services. SEIU wants workers to become a bit agitated as they learn to organize themselves; advocacy organizations are usually uncomfortable with agitation. A union will bring providers face-to-face with the state.

* Last month, AFSCME and the UAW made a similar presentation on their team effort at unionizing child care providers. Will the two union drives cooperate to form a single voice for providers? – The two efforts will each go its own way. History indicates that at some point only one of the union efforts might survive, probably based on a vote by the providers.

* How much are union dues? – Dues have not been set, in part because pay is so low that workers cannot afford dues. Eventually, rather small regular dues will be set. Organizing the child care profession is so new and so different than traditional labor organizing of 50- to 70-years ago that we do not know how this effort will work out. In Illinois, some child care providers pay voluntary dues of about \$15 month.

* What are you doing to increase "quality" child care; how can you assure "quality." – As provider pay increases, more people with early childhood training will enter the field. We can push for legislation and rules that will improve workplace conditions and good child development. We support higher pay for providers who meet higher standards through accreditation and quality rating systems - incentives can increase quality. In reality, we cannot guarantee quality simply by saying we need it. Quality comes from many forces within the child care system pushing for it - we will be one of those voices.

***** Jeffrey Howard, SEIU - howardj@SEIU.ORG; 866-734-8466 or 313-434-6932

GUEST SPEAKERS:

K. P. Pelleran, State Director, Fight Crime Invest in Kids, Michigan; Steve Manchester, Public Policy Specialist, Michigan AEYC – Comments on HB 5110, before and after-school programs for school-age children.

NOTE: HB 5110, approved by the Governor, is now Public Act 202 of 2005.

* Ms. Pelleran - The new act does the following:

- Allows these programs to seek exemptions from Department of Human Services inspections and on-site visits once they operate as licensed child care centers for at least two years.

- Defines "school age" child to be younger than 13 years of age (currently 17).

- All programs remain licensed by DHS (including previously licensed or approved programs).

- Exempts single-purpose programs like clubs, scouts, and youth organizations where children come and go at will.

- Provides a process whereby these programs lose their DHS exemptions if they fail to follow the statutory requirements and rules of operation as a child care center.

- Opens the door to state and federal funding; expands the likelihood these programs will grow in number and be available during the "prime time for juvenile crime."

* Mr. Manchester - He discussed specific statutory language in the new act to show exactly how the points presented by Ms. Pelleran were spelled out in the new statute.

He raised some issues that could arise as PA 202 is implemented in its early years. With the loss of inspections and on-site visits, a poorly performing program comes under DHS oversight only if somebody alleges a violation of the statute and rules under the statute. Some issues:

- Who would/could make such an allegation? Will a school employee do so and risk being seen as a "whistle blower" by the school district?; Can any citizen make such an allegation and force DHS to inspect exempted programs;

do only certain "persons" such as parents and professional organizations like Michigan 4C or Michigan AEYC have legal standing to make such allegations? Does this provide an avenue for advocacy groups to arise with the purpose of watching these programs?

- Programs with the DHS exemptions are required to submit documentation each year that demonstrates compliance with PA 202 and its rules. What constitutes such documentation? Should we really expect DHS to look at all the reports that come in each year to determine whether the documentation demonstrates compliance? How can DHS determine anything from such documentation?

People in the audience shared information about current plans to implement the new statute. It was suggested that the task force invite somebody from DHS in a year or two to describe how school-age, before- and after-school programs are operating under PA 202.

K.P. Pelleran, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, Michigan,
kppelleran@fightcrime.org
Steve Manchester, Michigan AEYC, smanchester@miaeyc.org

FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE TASK FORCE:

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES - Kathi Pioszak

* Child Development & Care Policy Changes – Effective November 1, two CDC± policy changes took effect for purposes of reducing DHS work load.

1) Elimination of the requirement for an in-person interview for CDC at the time of application. Old policy: in-person interviews were required at application unless the CDC applicant or any program member had an active case for a DHS program.

2) Allowing minimum verifications at application is eliminated. ALL required verifications must now be received and must show the client is eligible BEFORE the CDC case can be opened. Verifications include: proof of identity, social security number, alien status, need documentation, and income. Old policy – CDC could open a case when information on the application and MINIMUM verifications showed the client to be eligible. All other verifications were required within 30 days of case opening.

* FY '06 Requests for Proposal – The ECIC Executive Committee, at its October 21, 2005 meeting, approved the child care quality RFP process. The RFP for resource and referral, provider support, outreach, and on-site coordination services has been finalized. It will probably be released TODAY.

It will be sent electronically to those who indicated an interest from the Dear Prospective Bidder letter sent July 12, 2005. It will also be posted on the DMB website: www.michigan.gov/doingbusiness ® bids and proposals ® commodities and services ® ITBs.

Copies can also be obtained by e-mailing Cheryl Thompson at thompsonc2@michigan.gov or Kathi Pioszak or pioszakk@michigan.gov or calling Kathi at 517-335-6186.

The pre-proposal conference for this RFP will be on November 16th & 17th in the Lansing area. at the DHS Training Center, Conference Room 2D, 7109 W. Saginaw Highway, Lansing. Proposals are due November 28th.

* The child care provider training RFP should be released soon after November 16th. A Dear Prospective Bidder letter will be sent today to

prospective contractors. Notice will be posted at the DHS public website www.michigan.gov/dhs _Doing Business with DHS_Contractor Resources_Bids and Proposals_Current Invitations to Bid (scroll down). Cheryl Thompson's contact information is given. Potential contractors must indicate by November 16th if they are interested in receiving this RFP.

The child care provider training RFP will follow the same process as the R & R RFP. Neither RFP will be posted electronically on the website. It is anticipated that contracts will be awarded for services beginning January 1, 2006 for both RFPs.

* Great Start Collaboratives RFP – The ECIC released (October 27th) the Request for Proposals for Great Start Collaboratives— year one (fiscal year 2005/2006) and the Great Start Performance Measures for Great Start Collaborative Community Assessment and Planning. The RFP is available on the Great Start for Kids website (www.greatstartforkids.org).

Intermediate School Districts are the only entities eligible to apply to convene a Great Start Collaborative on behalf of their communities. Up to seven communities will be chosen and designated and funded as Great Start Collaboratives. (\$150,000 base funding) Up to three communities will be funded and designated as Capacity Building based on selection criteria outlined. (\$50,000 minimum grant award). Proposals are due December 9th to the ECIC. Joan Blough is the contact for this process. She can be reached at: 269-345-5968 or via e-mail at jblough@ownmail.net.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION &

FAMILY SERVICES - Judy Levine

* School Aid Act funded Michigan School Readiness Programs - Twelve "Fall Kickoffs" were held on writing meaningful goals and objectives based on program assessments. They were very well received. The same training will occur as a pre-conference session at the Michigan Early Childhood Consortium Conference on January 25. Another round of trainings will occur during the spring and will look at child outcomes and appropriate assessment tools.

Programs will receive a letter from Jeremy Hughes providing direction requiring programs to submit information on the SRSD. Every Local Education Agency has a designated person identified to help programs gather the required information.

Funding this year for state aid MSRP has caused confusion because there are optional uses for the funds: Parent Involvement and Education (PIE), Full Day programs and 1/2-day programs, or combinations of full- and 1/2-day.

* Even Start- We are waiting for further legislative decisions regarding future funding of the program.

* 21st Century Community Learning Centers-YPQA training will occur this winter.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TO CHILDREN & FAMILIES - No report was given.

Child Care Rules Revisions - Richard Lower

The child care center rules hearings have been completed. The ad-hoc committee on center rules will review the testimony and make any edits it deems necessary. The family and group day care home rules are through the process and will take effect on January 1, 2006.

TANF Reauthorization - Jane Zhender-Merrell

TANF and the child care and development fund have been folded into the Budget Reconciliation Bill now coming to the House floor. Work requirements have been expanded to 40 hours per week, but child care funding will not even maintain the current number of child care slots for low-income families.

Head Start Reauthorization - Richard Lower

* No movement on reauthorization since last month. The Senate may take up its version of the bill by Thanksgiving, but it is not a certainty. Do not expect Head Start reauthorization to finish before early next year at the earliest.

* Same issues are still relevant: increased teacher degrees required with no additional compensation; limiting of parents voice and rights in Head Start programs through changing the role of parents from decision-makers to advisory with regard to parent policy councils; and clearly defining re-competition for programs.

* More pressing issue is proposed across the board cuts to social safety net programs. It is proposed that a 2 percent cut to social programs, including Head Start be enacted to help offset the costs of Katrina relief. Nationally, a 2 percent cut would amount to 35,000 Head Start and Early Head Start slots being lost equating to roughly \$82 million. Michigan would be one of several states hardest hit with a potential cut of over 1,300 slots equating to roughly \$9 million of federal funds being lost.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

* A Conference: PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM BULLYING, HARRASSMENT, AND EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE with James Garbarino, keynote speaker.

Friday, December 2, 8:00 a.m. — 3:30 p.m.

Kellogg Center, MSU

For Information: Department of Family & Child Ecology - MSU

517-432-7093; fceotrch@msu.edu

The meeting adjourned shortly after noon.

Meeting notes taken by Steve Manchester (Michigan AEYC)

The NEXT MEETING of the Task Force (BACK TO THE LIBRARY):

Wednesday, December 7

9:30 a.m. To Noon

State of Michigan Library

Lake Ontario Room, 3rd floor

717 West Allegan; Lansing, MI 48909-7507

(517) 373-1580

GUEST SPEAKER: Michael Flanagan, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Mr. Flanagan is the chairperson of the State Board of Education and principle executive officer of the Michigan Department of Education, duties established in the Michigan Constitution. Mike has been a long-time champion of early childhood education and care during a career that includes Superintendent of Wayne RESA (the ISD), Director of the Michigan Association of School Administrators (and Intermediate School Administrators), Executive

Council member of the Ready to Succeed Partnership, driving force behind the "Hero from Zero" media campaign, and Governing Board Member of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation. He will discuss challenges facing public education in Michigan with appropriate emphasis on early childhood education.

SUBSCRIBE/UNSUBSCRIBE

* Send comments and suggestions regarding this email network, or requests to be added or removed from it, to mcctforce@miaeyc.org

* Please FORWARD THIS EMAIL TO OTHERS, we invite people to join this email network.

MCCTF Co-Chair Contact Information:

Richard Lower, Executive Director
Michigan Head Start Association
517-374-MHSA; Richard@mhsa.ws

Jane Zehnder-Merrell, Senior Planning & Research Associate
Michigan League for Human Services
517-487-5436, Ext. 221; janez@mhan.net

MCCTF's Sponsoring Organizations:

Association for Child Development; Michigan 4C Association (Community Coordinated Child Care); Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children; Michigan Head Start Association; Michigan League for Human Services; Michigan's Children

Legislative Sponsors:

Senator Patricia Birkholz (Dist. 24)
Representative Michael Murphy (Dist 68)