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# State of New Mexico CHILDREN, YOUTH and FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

SUSANA MARTINEZ  
GOVERNOR

JOHN SANCHEZ  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



YOLANDA BERUMEN-DEINES  
CABINET SECRETARY

JENNIFER PADGETT  
DEPUTY CABINET SECRETARY

## New Mexico Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) Meeting Minutes January 8, 2013 United Way of Central New Mexico – Albuquerque NM

### Meeting was called to Order BY Mr. Larry Langley, Chair

Welcome and Introductions and Thanks United Way for the use of space.

Roll Call and Quorum Established.

Meeting Minutes from November 5th approved.  
(Public Comment Sign up Opens)

### Update: Race To The Top "Early Learning Challenge"

Ms. Leighann Lenti, Senior Policy Advisor, PED Mr. Dan Haggard, Deputy Director, Early Childhood Services, CYFD

The council heard a report about the \$25 million federal Early Learning Challenge Grant that New Mexico was awarded in December. The money will be distributed to the state over four years. Leighann Lenti, a member of the council who also was the Public Education Department's lead person in pursuing the grant, said the first talks with federal officials since the award will be tomorrow. Federal officials will expect the state to develop a time line and scope of work for each activity the state proposed. A small amount of planning money will be available for that work. Typically it takes three to six months to get those scope-of-work plans approved by the federal government, after which additional money will become available to the state.

Dan Haggard of the Children, Youth and Families Dept. (CYFD) said the grant basically proposed to reform the state's Quality Rating Improvement System -- which will now be called FOCUS -- for child care and also expand the QRIS to include home visiting, public school early childhood programs, etc. The grant also will be used to offer T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships to build human capital, to create an early childhood data system so that children can be followed from home visiting and child care through public schools and beyond to help document what works and what doesn't, and to develop a new kindergarten entry assessment. Andy Gomm, director of the Family-Infant-Toddler program for the Department of Health, suggested that the grant's plan be publicized. It was suggested that the state put the time-line, scope of work and activities on a web site. Lenti said a small group may be set up to coordinate communication with the public, too.

## **Home Visit Proposed Bills**

### **David Abbey, Director Legislative Finance Committee**

(Public Comment sign up closes)

The home visiting legislation is being sponsored by Rep. Larry Larrañaga and Sen. John Sapien, who attended the meeting along with members of the Legislative Finance Committee staff -- Director David Abbey, Mimi Aledo and Deputy Director Charles Sallee -- to talk about the proposal.

"Early childhood development and home visiting are of great importance," Larrañaga said. "We want to make sure we put some standards and accountability and provide a way to measure results." Larrañaga used to be on the board of St. Joseph Community Health, which is a major provider of home visiting in Central NM using private funds.

Aledo said the legislation defines what home visiting is in such respects as regular visits, having a curriculum and doing screenings. She said the state bill mirrors the requirement for federal home visiting funds that 75% of home visiting programs be "evidence-based" or "promising practices." The bill has a phase-in time, she said. The Legislative Finance Committee had concerns in Fiscal Year 2011 that CYFD reported that three home visiting programs reported an average of six visits per family per year. "That is not what is usually considered intensive home visiting," she said.

Erica Stubbs, a council member and director of children's services for PMS, said it is important "to keep in mind the families and children we are serving." Some programs may look very different because what works for teen parents may not work for pueblo parents or parents from other cultures. A variety of programs are needed. Gomm also noted that home visiting is an "emerging field," and as knowledge changes, it will be important not to have laws that are too restrictive.

Sen. Sapien said his bill in the Senate is very close to Larrañaga's except that it calls for including federal Medicaid funding for home visiting. "I think we would be remiss not to look at that opportunity," he said, noting that for every dollar the state contributes, the federal government would put in \$3. Sallee noted that 70% of the births in the state are Medicaid funded, and he noted the importance of bringing in the managed health care companies into home visiting because of the focus on prevention in recent federal health care reform.

Langley suggested drafts of home visiting legislation be sent to each council member to mark up and that he and Alejandra Rebolledo-Rea of CYFD would then put the suggestions together for the sponsors. Langley also suggested that CYFD mark up the bills and make its suggestions so that the legislation will set clear expectations without being too restrictive to cause trouble in the future.

## **10:00 – 10:30 CYFD Home Visiting System (State and Federal funding)**

### **Diana Martinez-Gonzalez, Division Director, CYFD Early Childhood Service**

Diana Martinez-Gonzalez, director of Early Childhood Services, and Dan Haggard, deputy director of Early Childhood Services, said CYFD had concerns about the proposed bills. "We have home visiting programs out there that are not "evidence-based" or "promising practices" (under the federal definitions) because of the needs of communities," Martinez-Gonzalez said.



She pointed out the importance of programs for young children being developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Haggard and Martinez-Gonzalez said the state had developed standards and performance measures that would apply to any kind of home visiting program that the state contracted with using federal or state money. "We consider home visiting as one program," he said. Home visiting programs may vary in their objectives and the state wanted to make sure all programs met standards the state set. The nine overarching standards are program participation; relationship-based practice; culturally competent practice; family and child goal setting; program management; staff qualifications; curriculum and service delivery; community engagement; and data management.

The problem with only using "evidence-based" or "promising practice" programs is that they often come at a high cost because most are from out of state and require licensing fees. A program like Parents As Teachers, for instance, which is "evidence-based," focuses on school readiness. In New Mexico, it may be just as important to focus on child and home safety and health. CYFD wants to make sure all programs address all the areas the state wants to cover.

Martinez-Gonzalez said the CYFD program managers visit programs and ensure that contract obligations are being met and standards followed.

#### **Land Grant Fund Proposal, Background**

Larry Langley, CEO, New Mexico Business Roundtable

The council also discussed a proposal going to the Legislature this month again that 1.5% of the Land Grant Permanent Fund's value go toward early childhood education each year if approved by voters in the general election. That would provide about \$165 million a year for early childhood education.

Langley gave a detailed history of the permanent fund, which primarily provides money for public schools -- about \$450 million a year. At one time, he hoped getting money from the fund could help early childhood, he said, because he has great passion for the work of early childhood. He said the fund has about \$11.8 billion in it now. The fund started in 1910, and was established by Congress, which gave certain lands to the state whose proceeds would primarily support "common schools" and also help 20 other beneficiaries, such as the New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell.

Langley said he opposes taking money from the permanent fund for early childhood for several reasons:

Early learning programs are almost all private, and the congressional authority for the fund said money needed to go to "common schools," which are publicly funded. The money can't go to private programs without congressional action, he said, which is unlikely to happen because it would open the floodgates for public funding of parochial schools.

Taking more money out of the fund will hurt its future growth for the benefit of public schools and the 20 other beneficiaries, and maybe even deplete the fund.

Using money from the permanent fund for 10 years sets up a "fiscal cliff" where the state might have to find other sources of funding in 10 years to keep programs going.

Langley said he thought the best course was to redirect more general fund money to early childhood or to see if one or more of the other 20 beneficiaries' shares could be redirected to early childhood.

Barbara Tedrow, owner of Gold Star Academy early learning program in Farmington and a council member, said she has asked St. Joseph Community Health officials -- who are spearheading the Land Grant Permanent Fund amendment -- how she could be sure that she, as a private program, would be able to use money from the permanent fund. She indicated she remains unsure.

A recommendation was made by Dan Haggard to create a workgroup that can look at the fiscal funding for early childhood programs.

### **Public Comment**

Eileen Marchant, owner of three early childhood programs in Albuquerque, challenged Langley to come up with alternative plan to the Land Grant Permanent Fund. "A lot of families are falling through the cracks," she said. "When children are falling through the cracks, we are losing a lot of resources for New Mexico."

Gloria Orona, YDI invited everyone to join in a committee of collaboration between the APS, the City of Albuquerque, YDI and by attending a premier at the Wool Warehouse on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

Joan Baker, who owns My Happy Place Children's Center in Edgewood and is with Early Educators United, said state reimbursements for child care are "woefully inadequate." Forty percent of the early childhood programs in her community closed in the last year, putting 16 people out of work. "I'm asking you to invest the Land Grant Permanent Fund in the most precious resource -- our children."

Susan Herrera of the Los Alamos National Laboratory Foundation talked about how it became involved in funding First Born, a home visiting program, for which the Rand Corp. is close to completing a longitudinal study to show its worth. She said 40% of births in New Mexico are first-borns. If the state's voluntary home visiting reached 80% of the children at a cost of \$3,000 a year, the cost would be \$24 million a year. "That is very affordable," she said. A banking official told her the 1.5% can be taken from the Land Grant Permanent Fund without jeopardizing it.

Allen Sanchez, president and CEO of St. Joseph Community Health, pointed out that he texted Terri Cole while Langley was talking and she told him the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce has not taken a stand yet on the permanent fund issue. Many businessmen do support the proposal to use money from the fund for early childhood, he said. What was done in 2003 for teacher salaries is a different issue, he said. Money has never been used from the fund for early childhood. He said that private providers get money from the state now for providing certain services, and the situation would be the same with money from the Land Grant Permanent Fund.

A public debate is needed on the issue, Sanchez said, and that is all that the Legislature is being asked to do -- put the measure on the ballot.



Veronica Garcia, executive director of Voices for Children and former NM Secretary of Education, said that she is proud of what was done for public schools with the money from the 2003 constitutional amendment. It went to fund three-tiered licensure. Many teachers were not certified before and now 99.9% of teachers are certified. The money paid for NM PreK, for high school redesign for IDEAL New Mexico (on-line classes) and other things. "We know investments in early childhood are going to make a huge difference and savings in terms of drop-outs, incarceration, etc.," she said. "Let New Mexicans decide."

Jessa Bunker, of Partnership for Community Action which is active in the South Valley, said it is "critical we open this up to public debate." She noted that the definition of "common schools" has changed many times over the years since 1910 when it only meant a few years of primary school. Kindergarten is included now, middle school, high school. Early childhood education is next.

"Parents are unable to afford quality or any child care," said Tara Gore of New Mexico Parents United. "The constitutional amendment is the best and only option on the table. We don't have time to wait any longer and have children pass through the system without being prepared."

Myra Segal of Voices for Children said supporters of the amendment have made very conservative assumptions in projecting the future of the land grant fund and the projections show the fund will continue to grow even with money taken out for early childhood. "We are talking about a human capital investment," she said, in supporting early childhood programs.

Molly Grady of Teaching Solutions said, "What is important to me is that we have the second largest Land Grant Permanent Fund in the country, and we are second from the bottom (among states) in child well-being."

12:00 Meeting adjourned.