



IOWA COUNCIL FOR EARLY ACCESS

September 29, 2023

9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Iowa Department of Education

Grimes State Office Building, B100 (basement)

400 E. 14th Street

Des Moines, IA 50319

[Agenda](#)

Iowa Council for Early ACCESS Call to Order: Annette Hyde called the Iowa Council for Early ACCESS (ICEA) to order at 9:31 a.m., September 29th, 2023.

Council Members Present: Michael Bergan, Sue Wittmack, Annette Hyde, Sarah Haberl, Eric Locke, Julie Jones, Marguerite (Peg) Macek, Aaron Cronk, Stephen Mandler, McKaylee Heuton.

Council Members Absent: Tonya Weber, Rozanne Warder

Guests: Mike Hagensick, Jess Burger, Micki Beard

Early ACCESS Staff Present: Kate Small, Melissa Schnurr, Tonya Krueger, Kimberly Villotti

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Michael Bergan to approve the minutes from the January and May 2023 minutes, and seconded by Eric Locke. Motion passed unanimously.

Vote: 2023-2024 ICEA [Slate](#): A motion was made by Kimberly Villotti and seconded by Peg Macek to elect Annette Hyde as chair, vice-chaired by Eric Locke with McKaylee Heuton as parent representative.

Differentiated Monitoring and Supports 2.0: Kate Small shared that we are receiving an OSEP visit this year and shared a powerpoint reviewing the DMS. OSEP will be visiting and looking over different elements, programs and website pages to review. Members of this council may be asked some questions and participate in interviews. 180 days after the visit OSEP will send a letter with fines and recommendations of the things to fix. She then showcased some of the data and tools that are upcoming in this space.

Kimberly Villotti then shared that the council has been working on removing duplicative or unnecessary rules, per the governor's executive order. Thomas Mayes shared an update on Ch. 120. The department will be reviewing all rules by the end of the year. The State Board is meeting in December to finalize all changes. He pointed out that one of the council's roles is to approve any rule change.

Kate Small asked Thomas Mayes if council time was necessary for the next meeting and it was decided it would be touched on in the December meeting. Dr. Stephen Mandler asked what kind of questions or interview process would be expected from an OSEP interview. Other States have reported they are generally on different topics we have spoken about and council procedures.

Kimberly Villotti reminded the council that the intent of the process is just to ensure children and families are properly served and all feedback would be to ensure proper corrections were made in that goal.



Family Survey and Child Find Data [slides](#): Kate Small shared data on Child Find. Regional Grantees for the state of Iowa are the Area Education Agencies. She shared the map of the agencies and the number associated with them. She then discussed the Family Outcome indicator data; including families knowing their rights, effectively communicating their child's needs, and helping their child learn. She shared the data that was reported via survey. She also discussed the new scoring system and the 4-point scale. The percentages increased greatly with the implementation of the new survey. We exceeded the targets set by the council beforehand. Annette Hyde shared that this emphasizes that how you create the questions and score the answers can create such a difference.

Tonya Krueger pointed out that the survey could potentially include a link to the handout that explains the process so that those are together. It would help increase responses with the survey while also keeping families informed on the process.

All changes are noted on the annual report and reports sent out to families.

Kate Small shared data on Referrals from July 1st- June 30th of the previous year showcasing 9,220 referrals from last year. This number is unique referrals and not necessarily unique children. Kate shared where the data on where the referrals are coming from; and pointed out that a large portion come from Health Care, Parent/Family, and DHHS.

Council discussed ways to support families and avoid misdiagnosis or overlooking symptoms of children with Autism who did not quite reach the metrics/screeners.

Discussion on:

[Committee Assignments](#)

[Public Awareness Committee Agenda & Notes](#)

[Continuous Improvement Committee Agenda & Notes](#)

[Membership Committee Agenda & Notes](#)

Family Story: Michael Hagensick, parent, shared his family story about his twin boys and their experience with Early ACCESS. He credits the focus on routines, family-centered approach to improving the quality of life for his boys and their family. He also saw a connection to the broader community. He noted that Early ACCESS also helped his family be "future ready" to provide what families need and help them continue to advocate for their children from a strengths-based perspective.

ACHIEVE family portal update:

Department of Health and Human Services Update: Shannon Grundmeier works to continue supporting ACHIEVE at the Department of Education. ACHIEVE is the system that holds and stores IEPS and IFSPs. The department is in the process of creating a family portal on ACHIEVE so that families can watch progress and access information relating to their children. It is still in the development process. There were test sessions with family stakeholders over the past summer. Some of the family feedback included; appreciation of direct access program monitoring data, appreciation of real time updates, and user-friendly application. Concerns included; training needs for family members and assurance those will be met, different levels of understanding about IFSP/IEP requirements, and technical difficulties issues.

Some of the concerns/ongoing issues is the location of the accept button on terms and conditions, ensuring there are no acronyms in the educational language, and making sure it is browser compatible. The next steps are developing a Family Portal Training Development Task Team



composed of family/guardians, AEA FEPS, Service Coordinators, LEA Staff and signatory agencies providers. This item will be tasked with identifying where the information will go and the framework for how they will navigate the portal.

Signatory Agency Updates:

Department of Education (DOE): Kimberly Villotti shared an update about the state alignment effective on July 1. The IDOE gained Iowa College Aide, Bureau of Educational Examiners, Governor's STEM, Iowa School for the Deaf and Iowa services for the visually impaired. We also had a change in Directors. In June, Director Chad Aldis stepped down. Our new director McKenzie Snow came from the Virginia Department of Education. Rule revision was a huge undertaking for the department, and by December we will be nearly done.

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS): Shelley Horak discussed the programs under the business unit and some current concerns. She discussed childhood adversity and how the federal commission discussed these three elements about how to combat it; strong leadership, decisions grounded in better reasoning and research, and multidisciplinary support for families. She discussed some of the things she wanted to tackle including; window of opportunity, limited understanding of the purpose of screening and services, rate of acceptance by parents and caregivers, connecting CAPTA referrals with other school age children in the family, no closed referral loops, children over 2.75 and need for services, followup within child welfare system, challenges associated with billing for services, etc.

Child Health Specialty Clinics (CHSC): Peg Macek shared that CHSC has hired two new family navigators serving Early Access. The current Director, Thomas Schulz is leaving. Dr. Vanessa Curtis will be replacing him. They have a Pilot Family Navigation Team in Keystone AEA to go beyond the usual services; and so far they have had two excellent referrals. Tonya Krueger shared that the CHSC annual report is linked in the agenda and gave a brief overview of the Data it contains.

Adjourn: Annette Hyde adjourned the ICEA meeting at 2:06 pm. The next meeting will be December 8th.