



**Spark NH Vision:** All New Hampshire children and their families are healthy, learning, and thriving now and in the future.

**Spark NH Mission:** Provide leadership that promotes a comprehensive, coordinated, sustainable early childhood system that achieves positive outcomes for young children and families, investing in a solid future for the Granite State.

## Spark NH Council Meeting Summary

August 24, 2017

2 Delta Drive, Concord, NH

**Council Members Present:** Debra Nelson, Erin Boylan, Ruth Littlefield, Rhonda Siegel, Mark Vallone, Kerry Wiley, Michelle Lewis, Betty Gilcris, Marianne Barter, Kristin Booth

**Staff Members Present:** Laura Milliken

**Others Present:** MaryEllen Schule, Conor Murphy, Shannon McCullough, Julie Day, Tessa McDonnell, Cellissa Hoyt, and Peter Antal

### Welcome and Introductions:

Debra welcomed members of the public and offered a brief overview of the meeting procedure. At Council meetings, we look forward to having members of the public introduce themselves and share their thoughts/suggestions/questions. Members of the public will be asked to introduce themselves (name, who representing) during Council member introductions and then to share information and/or ask questions during the “Public Comment” period on the agenda (last 10 minutes of our meeting). At any time, members of the public may contact Laura, Debra or other Council member to share their thoughts/get more information. They are also encouraged to look at the meeting materials to keep informed of our work; and of course, join a committee!

### Whip Share

- Debra Nelson shared that the national Office of Head Start (OHS) plans to release details of a new monitoring system that aligns with the revised Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) in September. Once we have details, Kristin, Melissa Clement (Child Care Licensing Unit) and Debra will work together to align monitoring systems. Major challenges for Head Start grantees in NH/nationally continue to be under-enrollment, staff recruitment and retention, implementation of the new HSPPS, challenging behavior and impacts of opioid crisis (serving families with ever more complex needs). New and improved resources: ECLKC website (<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>) and EarlyEdU Alliance PD Catalog. ECLKC LINK: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>.
- Erin Boylan informed the Council that Easter Seals has been announced as the second Family Resource Center of Quality in the state.
- Ruth Littlefield announced that the Dept. of Ed. applied for and received a large SPDG (State Personnel Development Grant) award that will allow for funding of the implementation of the Pyramid Model to benefit social emotional development of young children with disabilities, as well as other children
- Julie Day, the representative of our Family Engagement Task Force, handed out the Summer/Fall schedule for the New Hampshire Children’s Trust trainings. These include My Voice Matters and Strengthening Families events.
- Betty Gilcris informed the Council that recruiting and retaining qualified Head Start staff has been a challenge as of late.

## What's New from Dept. of Education and Dept. of Health & Human Services:

### DOE Report:

- This is a very busy time of year for the DOE as the beginning of the school year means that grants need to be approved in order for programs to start. We need to provide a lot of technical assistance to districts and schools who are working on their new programs, especially this year as this is the first year of ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) implementation. Below is an update on the status of NH Kindergartens and a few bits of other news.
- KENO for Kindergarten: Gov. Sununu signed a bill into law in July allowing money from the electronic bingo game to fund full day kindergarten programs statewide. Sununu left it up to the individual communities to decide whether to allow Keno in bars and restaurants. Communities will still receive \$1,100 per student if voters do not approve the game. So far, Franklin and Concord have approved similar ballot questions while Nashua and Keene still have Keno under consideration.
- Conversations on Culture and Diversity: Office of Student Wellness is hosting a 4-hour conversation on the changing demographics of New Hampshire, with a focus on open communication & creating a space for learning & growth opportunities for all. "It is up to each of us to learn from each other on how to promote equitable outcomes for all students and young adults in NH." The facilitated conversation & activities will explore concepts of culture & diversity that influence our practices in education & wellness. December 12<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., NH Department of Education. Contact: Michelle Myler, (603) 271-4018, [Michelle.Myler@doe.nh.gov](mailto:Michelle.Myler@doe.nh.gov)
- Reorganization of NHDOE Website: The NH Department of Education is beginning its preparation to design a new website and is asking for assistance to help assess the needs of staff, educators, students and family members, community members, and other visitors by completing a survey: [https://business.nh.gov/NCharge/Education/default.asp?form\\_name=Survey-DOE](https://business.nh.gov/NCharge/Education/default.asp?form_name=Survey-DOE)
- Education Funding: The growing tension between the cost of education in New Hampshire's K-12 system and the growing burden to taxpayers is reaching a critical point. New Hampshire Center for Public Policy released a report recently regarding state education funding. The release of this report detailed various aspects of education funding across New Hampshire. The Legislature created a committee this session to study education funding and the cost of an opportunity for an adequate education. The Department of Education is forming a committee, headed by Caitlin Davis, head of the Bureau of School Finance, and comprised of Business Administrators from school districts around the state to work on this. The committee will work to answer three primary questions: 1. Identify best practices across districts that effectively manage school finances; 2. Evaluate the current delivery models and consider alternatives that can improve delivery efficiency; and 3. Consider alternative school funding models. All of these findings will be delivered to the Legislative committee. [http://www.nhpolicy.org/UploadedFiles/Reports/Education\\_Funding\\_-\\_2017\\_For\\_Publication.pdf](http://www.nhpolicy.org/UploadedFiles/Reports/Education_Funding_-_2017_For_Publication.pdf)

### DHHS Report:

- DOE Educators' Summer Summit: About 100 early childhood professionals attended the Early Childhood Strand keynote address with Walter Gilliam on suspension/expulsion and teacher bias. The Summit EC Leadership Team identified 3 areas of focus for our Innovations Plan: Messaging/Communication, Professional Development (social emotional/teacher bias; Universal Design) and infrastructure to support the Pyramid Model. A draft of the plan will be available soon.
- DHHS has been invited to participate in the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families, Healthy Marriage and Relationships Education Integration Initiative, which offers training modules and technical assistance/support to states. A core team of DHHS representatives will explore whether or not to go forward with this initiative. Key questions: Are the initiative, materials and

practices truly inclusive of all families/relationships? What added value is there from the training materials?

- DHHS is close to hiring a new DCYF director. The finalists are two highly qualified candidates with significant experience.
- West Nile Virus – two batches of mosquitoes in Manchester tested positive.

**Minutes Acceptance:** Consensus postponed to the next meeting.

**Member Presentation:** Child Development Bureau – Kristin Booth presented an overview of DHHS/DCYF/Child Development Bureau. Handouts were made available for Council members. The Child Development Bureau sits in the Division for Children, Youth, and Families and is funded by Federal Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF), which includes a required state match. The Office of Child Care supports low-income working families by providing access to affordable, high quality early care and afterschool programs. CCDF also improves the quality of care to children’s healthy development.

**Director’s Report:** Laura Milliken informed the Council that the Data Committee’s new data exploration tool is available on Spark NH’s website and encouraged all to explore.

Granite State Poll Results: Endowment for Health provided funding for questions in the July Granite Poll. Laura shared high level results. The Evaluation Committee and Spark NH’s communications staff will dive into the results to discover what our findings may mean and how to use them. The information will likely be quite helpful in guiding our public relations and awareness goals.

**Family Engagement Discussion:** Michelle Lewis and Julie Day

Spark NH hosted a meeting in May where we were able to discuss the family engagement goals for future strategy recommendations. The focus is currently trying to balance what we have funding and capacity for. Four action steps have been identified.

1. Invite the members of the Family Engagement Task Force to join one of the four Spark NH Committees.
2. Create a process for hearing from Council and Committee members on family issues related to Spark NH’s work.
3. Schedule a Chairs meeting to ensure all committees are ready for family engagement.
4. Develop an evaluation strategy to measure effectiveness of these recommendations.

**Levels of Collaboration:** Peter Antal

Council members completed a Levels of Collaboration Scale, which examines the extent to which organizations are working together, as well as members’ desired level of collaboration with other organizations. As a Project LAUNCH grantee, Spark is required to use this tool. The tool provides an opportunity to compare results to those from last year and think about how we can improve and increase our current partnerships.

**Public Comment Period:**

Cellissa Hoyt and MaryEllen Schule gave an update on the State Early Learning Alliance. Shared services are currently under way in 27 states. Massachusetts begins piloting our NH model on October 1<sup>st</sup>. New Mexico is looking at adapting our model as well. SELA was recognized in Washington at a recent conference.

**The council adjourned.**

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, October 26, 2017 at 2 Delta Drive 9:00-11:00am