



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

December 14th

PSU, Pillsbury Street, Concord, NH

Attendees: Debra Nelson, Chair, Erin Boylan, Vice-chair, Rhonda Siegel, Mark Vallone, Michelle Lewis, Jane Waterhouse, Jackie Cowell, Lara Quiroga, Christina Lachance, Dr. Ardis Olson, Laura Milliken, Katie Brissette, MaryEllen Schule, Chris Tappan, and Joseph Ribsam

Welcome and Introductions

Council members as well as members of the public introduced themselves. Erin Boylan informed the Council it is expected that they will have 3 to 4 new Family Resource Centers of Quality in the state.

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

Jane Waterhouse reported updates from the DOE

- New Deputy Commissioner: Christine Brennan, who was the past principal of the Beech Street Elementary School in Manchester.
- New Director of Higher Education: Michael Seidel, spent years working with businesses to improve quality, process, and results. He hopes to utilize those same skills within the Division of Higher Education. "I'm looking forward to working with stakeholders to support continual improvement and innovation within the higher education ecosystem" Michael said.
- Reorganization plans have been submitted as a senate bill.
- Collective Vision for New Hampshire Early Education.
- Towns that have approved Keno - In municipal elections, seven of the 13 cities voting on Keno approved it: Berlin, Claremont, Laconia, Manchester, Nashua, Somersworth, and Rochester –passed by a single vote. It was pointed out that although Manchester voted to approve keno, the final approval will need to come from the Alderman. Concord, Dover and Keene voters rejected Keno. Portsmouth decided earlier not to put it to a vote. Franklin approved it in October. Lebanon will vote in March. March will also be the first opportunity for hundreds of towns to decide during their annual town meetings.

Debra Nelson introduced and welcomed Christine Tappan, DHHS Associate Commissioner, and Joseph Ribsam, Director of the Division for Children, Youth and Families who did the DHHS report.

- Chris and Joe shared information on their backgrounds as well as the vision for transforming NH's child welfare systems. They shared a handout which outlined how DCYF is committed to responding to the challenges facing DCYF, strengthening their team and bonds with child welfare stakeholders, innovating practice to meet the needs of today's children and constructing a safer tomorrow. They are looking at it as a public health approach. Data integration is important and they are willing to work with the Data Committee.
- This may involve the merging of bureaus and programs. Their focus is to look towards integrations that put children and families in the center of everything.
- They would like Laura and Jackie to attend their Leadership team meeting in January.

- The merging of bureaus created new roles for Debra Nelson and Kristin Booth and has brought new energies together.

Children: the Bedrock of the Granite State Presentation

- As members who were present at the Council meeting had already attended a presentation it was decided to reschedule the Bedrock presentation to a future meeting.

Minutes Acceptance

- The Council came to consensus to approve the meeting minutes from August and October.
- The Executive Committee will advise on the process for approving minutes in the future.

Director's Report

- Laura Milliken reviewed her director's report and informed the Council about the Collective Vision for Early Childhood Education meeting, which is being held this Friday, December 15.

2018 Budget Review

- The 2018 budget is not yet final. As an exception to common practice, the Executive Committee will approve the budget at their January meeting. The draft budget will be shared with the Council for feedback prior to this meeting.
- There will be a small gap in the budget in 2018. There will be a much larger gap in 2019 due to the loss of Project LAUNCH. A fund development plan is in place. Rhonda is interested in discussing how to bring ECCS dollars to the state.
- It was recommended that we ask partners who name Spark NH as their early childhood council to set aside some funds for this service.

Approval of State Officers

- There were not enough Council members present who were not also on the officers ballot to make a quorum so the approval of officers will be postponed until the February meeting.

Approval of Family Engagement Strategies

- Katie Brissette presented the Family Engagement Strategies. The Council came to consensus to approve the strategies. There is a chairs meeting scheduled for early January.

Committee Reports

- Executive Committee – There was an update on the Preschool Development Grant opportunity. The amount of money is not yet known but it will fund a one-year planning grant, followed by an opportunity for implementation money.

Other

- There was a brief discussion about Council membership. There are some upcoming changes to existing positions and potentially members we would like to add in the future.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

The council adjourned.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 22, 2018 from 9 – 11 am at 2 Delta Drive, Concord