

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director, CCSSO  
Ayeola Fortune, Project Director, Extended Learning Opportunities, CCSSO  
Jana Martella, Coordinator, CCSSO-ECEA-SCASS

Gene Wilhoit began the meeting by providing remarks on how the Extended Learning Opportunities and Early Childhood Task Forces fit into the work of the Council. He introduced the Council's 'DNA model', the focal point for the organization's work. The core of the work converges on facilitating high quality learning for all students to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He stressed the complexity of this, requiring a complete transformation of the education system, involving an array of processes. He expressed the goals for the meeting:

- Building on the history – learning from state examples, such as, Kentucky's system of education that bought time for schools to find more learning for students and instituted family-resource centers in schools to serve parents and students
- Understanding what we have – synthesizing the research in both areas and recognizing the implications for chiefs and practitioners
- Moving forward – building on and utilizing the research in state education agencies (SEAs) to facilitate high quality learning for students to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Ayeola Fortune referenced the Council's joint 1999 publication with the Forum for Youth Investment, *Students Continually Learning: A Report of Presentation, Student Voices and State Actions*. The comprehensive definition explicitly connects early childhood care and development to extended learning opportunities. She also reviewed the day's agenda.

Jana Martella provided brief remarks about the day's sessions and speakers and highlighted the bullet points of the Council's Policy Statement on Early Childhood and Family Education supporting continuous learning and development: from birth into the early years of schooling, throughout the day; and beyond the traditional school year.

## **Session One – Research Connections: Continuity and Quality**

Rachel Cohen, Senior Research Scientist, ACF-HHS  
Priscilla Little, Associate Director, Harvard Family Research Project  
Facilitator: Jana Martella, Coordinator, CCSSO-ECEA-SCASS

Rachel Cohen began the session with a brief reference to the Administration for Children and Families (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation's (OPRE) fact sheet. The fact sheet provides a snapshot of the Head Start research and general information about OPRE. Cohen then provided an overview of the Early Head Start Program. Early Head Start is an intensive two-generation program that is monitored much like the Head Start Program. It serves families with infants and toddlers in the areas of child development, parent education,

and self-sufficiency. She presented Early Head Start, Head Start, and Pre-K evaluation findings regarding the cumulative effects of program participation from birth to five years old for children and families living in poverty. For Early Head Start, the evaluation study began in 1995 with 3,001 participating families and children. The participants were randomly selected into two groups: those who received services provided by the Early Head Start program, and the control group - those who did not receive Early Head Start services but were eligible to receive other services offered in the community. The Early Head Start program offered services that were home- and/or center-based.

At age three, participants in the Early Head Start program compared to the control group were more likely to be up-to-date on immunizations and had fewer emergency room visits and accidents. Children were less likely to exhibit aggressive behaviors. Parents were more engaged in their child's development, and more likely to participate in activities including play and daily reading. Overall, parents participated in more education and job training compared to the control group. Cohen summarized among program approaches: home-, center-based, or mixed. Differing patterns emerged for subgroups but impacts on children and families were positive. According to the research findings, the mixed approach, which emphasized a home-based approach for child development and a center-based approach for parent education, had the strongest impact.

The study also followed up with participants between ages three and five. Cohen noted a gap in participation of any type of formal care or education program between Early Head Start and Pre-K. Participation for children ages three and four was forty-eight percent and between ages four and five was seventy-seven percent. Findings indicated children in the control group participating in formal care after the age three demonstrated better early reading skills but also, showed an increase in aggressive behavior. Included in the findings were that children who participated in Early Head Start and also in a formal care program after age three exhibited early reading skills but did not show an increase in aggressive behavior. Unemployed teen mothers with no high school degree and receiving cash services who participated in Early Head Start showed the greatest impact at this phase of the study. They provided more home support for learning and experienced an increased monthly income. In all, the research found that outcomes for children and families participating in Early Head Start followed by a formal care or education program had the most positive impacts.

Cohen briefly mentioned that a follow-up to this study is currently in progress that will examine impacts for participants in currently in fifth grade. Researchers plan to get into schools to examine how the students are doing and what the parent connections are to the school. They will also collect data from the National Center for Education Statistics.

The session then transitioned to Priscilla Little, who began her remarks by stating that afterschool programming grew out of childcare programs. Little then summarized evaluation findings from numerous research studies on out-of-school time (OST) she stressed that the terms, out-of-school time and afterschool can be used interchangeably. In her remarks, Little stressed the idea of complementary learning, wherein out-of-school time programs are part of a holistic system of learning supports that are available for

children and youth across ages and settings, and include early learning opportunities (e.g. Pre-K programs). According to Little, emerging research suggests that strong linkage among families, community institutions, and higher education matter. She also noted that the positive student outcomes for participants in OST programs included in her presentation mirror those discussed in the Council's *Policy Statement on Extended Learning Opportunities*. Outcome areas that OST programs have been found to positively impact include: student academic achievement, safety, health/obesity, social/emotional, civic engagement and participation, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills. Factors which affect the degree to which these outcomes are in evidence include: access, participation, program quality, and connections to school. The research shows that access and availability to quality OST programs are limited and finding quality programs is particularly difficult in low-income communities. Ultimately, parents would chose self-care over having their child participate in under-resourced afterschool programs.

- Participation involves getting students to enroll in and regularly attend programs, and engaging students by making available a variety of activities. To encourage and facilitate participation policymakers and program directors need to understand the family and neighborhood context.
- Program quality includes structural and process features. Structural features are informed by in-school classroom practices, such as, child-to-staff ratios, group sizes, staff qualifications, etc. Process features concern staff-youth relationships and interactions, availability of activities, etc.
- OST programs exercising a strong relationship with schools achieve high levels of participation. Strategies for OST programs to foster strong connections with schools include: sharing space and staff, aligning curriculum, sharing vision and messages with a supportive leadership.

#### Discussion/Comments:

Participants discussed the difficulties related to public entities determining what is needed to foster student and family engagement. Examples discussed include:

- In Michigan the SEA used High Scope to compare the different types of programs. Findings suggest that embedding both tutoring and non-academic activities fostered student engagement.
- In Providence, Rhode Island, “Afterzones” were built around neighborhood hub centers so there is a constellation of services and programs available.
- A school principal in Kentucky considered reorienting the weekly schedule in different ways. He was able to have a longer school day, four days a week.

From this conversation, participants explored ways in which both Extended Learning Opportunities and Early Childhood initiatives can be successful. Sharon Deich from the Finance Project referenced the publication from the Afterschool Investments Project housed in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, [\*Linking and Learning: Lessons for Afterschool from Early Childhood System-Building Efforts\*](#). The publication discusses the similarities in the

infrastructure for both types of programs/initiatives and might be helpful for systems building for both fields.

**Session Two – Policy and Practice Connections: Lessons and Challenges from the States**

Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director, CCSSO

Facilitator: Ayeola Fortune, Project Director, Extended Learning Opportunities, CCSSO

Gene Wilhoit provided an overview of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). According to Wilhoit, the education reform movement in Kentucky began with educators just wanting more money for schools suffering from inequalities. They presented compelling student data supporting their notion of the existing inequalities among the schools in the state to the legislature. KERA was passed by the Kentucky state general assembly in 1990. From there, need areas identified included: pre-K programs and streamlining the instruction between early learning developmental programs to primary programs. The central element emerging from these areas was a need for more time for schools and districts to develop programs that would provide opportunities where all children can learn. Through KERA, funding was made available for the Extended School Services (ESS) program and instituting family resource and youth service centers to build and develop strong support for students. ESS bought the extra time needed for schools to provide more learning for students. The family resource and youth service centers were positioned in school buildings to serve the needs of parents and students.

Wilhoit pointed to implementation challenges which arose from policymakers operating under the false assumption that early childhood and pre-K educators were knowledgeable and ready to develop pedagogy the would seamlessly align early learning systems to the expectations in the primary grades. In his remarks, he explained Kentucky's remedial efforts included

- defining early childhood in the K-12 program (i.e. positioning early childhood within the K-12 education framework)
- developing a voluntary credentialing rating component of high quality programs-known as STARS for Kids Now
- increasing the pay scale for early childhood and pre-K educators

In his remarks, lessons still to learn are to examine the quality of the person providing instruction to ensure the curriculum is articulated clearly. Wilhoit noted he was not sure if the best teachers are in the areas in the most need. He pointed to the ESS evaluation report that explores ways for schools to buy more time for students by blending opportunities. Wilhoit stated that the success of KERA is that the legislation has withstood state transitions in leadership, it emphasizes the importance of coordinating services, and generates innovated ways of implementation.

**Discussion/Comments:**

Chief Lyonel Tracy expressed the importance of tracking data not just for the legislature but for good practice. In New Hampshire, the “Follow the Child Initiative” fosters tracking data for each child in the state.

Gene Wilhoit, in agreement, added that districts and schools must be charged to collect data. There is a need for a robust data collection system to not only focus on at-risk students but for all.

Question:

To consider all children, which should be accomplished first? Who gets what and when? How do you decide? What is the policy path for states?

Response:

Kentucky was lucky and is not the norm. Usually, there is an acute problem and then policy is created to fix it. In Kentucky, the group of educators just wanted to get more money for schools. They did not think that it would materialize into the State Supreme Court ruling that the education system was unconstitutional and a call for new legislation. It requires a constant reminder that there is a continuum of learning and the acceptance/commitment to pay for it. In order to fund KERA, the state imposed a large tax increase.

Question:

Where did the money end up being housed?

Response:

The early childhood funds are outside the state funding formula.

Question:

How are the funds allocated?

Response:

It is on a per student basis. It started with the greatest need and now is universal.

Question:

In terms of continuity and alignment, what was needed most?

Response:

Professional development is the weakest. There is a need to monitor program delivery, see who is teaching and what the results are. It is crucial to have that data and reports on which children are being served. Program delivery needs to be diverse to reflect the student population.

Question:

Could you clarify the process of credentialing that occurred?

Response:

Working from the starting point of what should students know and be able to do, we identified the skills the professional should know and be able to do.

Question:

Is ESS tutoring programs?

Response:

Different types of programs are utilizing the ESS funds.

Question:

How is higher education connected to this?

Response:

Higher education is more connected to the early childhood communities compared to the K-12 program. The disconnect between higher education and the K-12 program is a big issue and there needs to be some kind of mechanism in place. Community education directors were assigned to counties/districts to be the voice for the K-12 program to possibly bridge communication with higher education. The state education agency (SEA) tends to perpetuate a narrow agenda being charged to deliver mandates from the federal government. The challenge is to encourage the SEA to look across lines and redefine systems of accountability. That is a very big job—a big deputy job.

From this conversation, several key components emerged for consideration when implementing supports for extended learning opportunities and early childhood

- reorganize states to align and coordinate funding streams
- build in components right from the start as an essential for all children
- infrastructure – build out space for it
- funding – should it be a stand alone item or should it be embedded in the finance formula?
- the need to document and track data is crucial

Lunch

Participants shared state policy efforts related to extended learning opportunities and early childhood.

Massachusetts

The Extended Learning Time (ELT) initiative provides funding for schools to increase instruction by 30 percent, translated to an additional two hours per day or 300 hours per year. In 2005, the state awarded planning grants to ten schools. In the following year, eight schools were then awarded grants to implement programs.

The new early care and education state commission houses both afterschool and early childhood education.

Louisiana

The pre-K is a ten-hour full year program. Six hours are devoted to instruction and four hours are designated for before and afterschool programming. The program is offered to any child who qualifies for free and reduced meals (FARMS).

A significant amount of TANF funds are used for extended learning opportunities. Twenty million from TANF is used for the early childhood program.

#### Georgia

The kindergarten before and afterschool program is funded through the lottery revenue, as is Georgia's prekindergarten program.

#### Michigan

The compulsory education has transitioned from ages 6-16 to 5-18. Ninety-eight percent of Michigan students go to kindergarten. Statewide funding pays for half-day kindergarten.

For extended learning opportunities, TANF funds are no longer available; however, there are a lot of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) funds, thirty-one million. Currently, the SEA is working to align afterschool nutrition and supplemental educational services (SES) programs. The statewide afterschool network has been a reliable component in helping foster collaboration for more efficient use of funding.

#### District of Columbia

There are many changes with the city's newly elected mayor. There is tremendous support to provide comprehensive services for early childhood, and the mayor has launched an afterschool initiative as well. DC is in the process of looking at the continuum to align instruction and services among early childhood, pre-K and kindergarten.

#### South Carolina

Early childhood and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and SES programs are located within the same division of the SEA but are housed in different offices. The general assembly is exploring funding for a three-year old program and has approved funding for a four-year old program.

#### New Hampshire

The compulsory education in the state is 6-16 years old. The legislature is crafting a narrative definition for public education in the state. Currently, kindergarten is not required and the debate contemplates whether kindergarten should be incorporated in that definition. The deadline is June 30, 2007, otherwise, the state Supreme Court will assume the authority to create that definition.

#### Pennsylvania

The early childhood education office will be moving to the same building that houses the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and SES. After ten years, an afterschool program is now fully operational. They are currently using this program to model best practices and translate research.

## Maryland

As a means to decrease the high school drop out rate, they are considering changing the compulsory education from ages 5-16 to 5-18. The state offers services for qualifying children, from birth to age two. For at-risk four-year old children, who qualify for free and reduced meals, have many siblings, and/or need language development, the state requires their participation in out/in-school programs. It also provides full day kindergarten for that subgroup of students.

The SEA has forced a 'marriage' between Title I and Head Start and the child care program. All staff are now located within the state education agency and meet regularly. There are funds available, and the SEA continues to work on infrastructure.

### **Session Three –Task Force Meetings**

Extended Learning Opportunities Task Force  
Facilitator: Janelle Cousino, Fowler Hoffman, LLC

In this session participants considered ways in which they could leverage the Council's *Policy Statement on Extended Learning Opportunities* at the state level. In her role as facilitator, Janelle Cousino prompted participants to identify the audience that needs to be informed of the policy statement. Participants brainstormed a list

- principals
- higher education
- parent-teacher associations
- providers
- technical assistance groups
- the early childhood community
- SEA staff
- chiefs
- LEA superintendents
- mayors
- city councils
- state legislators
- education policy advocates
- governor education policy advisors
- juvenile justice
- health and human services
- governors
- state boards of education
- grassroots association
- school board presidents

Participants then brainstormed methods in informing one type of audience, SEA staff, from their list. Those methods included

- provide a self-assessment checklist on ELOs
- develop and disseminate case studies
- present information on leveraging these funds: TANF, CCDF, NCLB
- continuously communicate the vision/mission framed for every type of audience
- consider parent fees
- create a template for relevance

Early Childhood Task Force

Facilitator: Jana Martella, Coordinator, CCSSO-ECEA-SCASS

The state early childhood specialists met briefly – going over the history of the CCSSO Policy Statement on Early Childhood and Family Education. They confirmed that the five bullet – call to action, though almost ten years old, was still a sound blueprint for setting comprehensive priorities and relevant state education activities and action planning.

The five key areas supported by the 1999 Policy Statement include a commitment to:

- Promote parent and family education and join in coordinated health, child care and education services which enable families to provide creative development for their infants and toddlers;
- Ensure that every child has the opportunity for high quality, universal early care and education at age 3 and 4 through either public or private schools and agencies with funding through public and/or private sources, depending on need;
- Assure the continuity of education experiences as children move through early childhood programs and into elementary school, particularly in terms of pre-literacy preparation;
- Strengthen early childhood program standards and accountability and improve assessment of child development and readiness; and
- Expand and disseminate new knowledge about how to improve early childhood education.

Participants discussed the work in each of their states over the last five years and resolved to annotate the call to action with references and brief summary paragraphs describing the research that has emerged in each bulleted area. In addition, a summary of both CCSSO project work and activities—and state progress and model programs associated with each bullet will be developed. Following consideration of these annotations, a renewal statement will be developed for consideration by the Summer Institute.

### **Closing Session: Reflections and Next Steps**

Members from both task forces reconvened to share reflections of the day's meeting. The Early Childhood Task Force will be updating its policy statement. The Extended

Learning Opportunities Task Force will meet again at Summer Institute. Both task forces may also follow up with a webinar.