

MEETING NOTES

Early Childhood Strategic Plan Webinar

May 19, 2020 (9AM-10AM)

Held over ZOOM

In attendance: Supanika Ackerman (Dept. of Education and Early Development), Debi Baldwin (Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council), Sara Battiest (Kenaitze Indian Tribe), Margaret Bauer (Chenega Future, Inc.), Kathy Berry (Dept. of Health and Social Services), Betsy Brenneman (Association of Alaska School Boards), Tina Carpenter (RurAL CAP Head Start), Staci Collier (Alaska Child Care Program Office), Heather Foxworthy (Kodiak Parents as Teachers), Lori Grassgreen (AASB), Rayna Hartz (Eek School), Kristin Henke (Lower Kuskokwim School District), Antoinette Horn (Cook Inlet Tribal Council), Christina Hulquist (DHSS), Annie Huntington-Kriska (Southcentral Foundation), Meghan Johnson (Learn & Grow- thread), Mark Lackey (CCS Early Learning), Kara McCoy (Craig Public Health Center), Karen Melin (DEED), Anne Shade (Bristol Bay Native Association), Sarah Newton (thrive Alaska), Ira Slomski-Pritz (Municipality of Anchorage), Teresa Smith (Kenaitze Indian Tribe), Deb Trowbridge (Kawerak, Inc), Emily Urlacher (DHSS), Carmen Wenger (Help Me Grow Alaska)

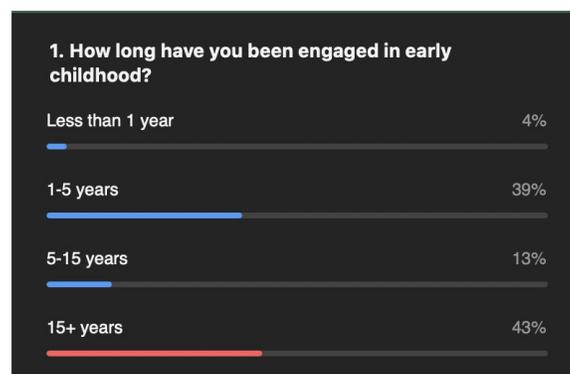
Facilitation Team: Denali Daniels (Denali Daniels and Associates), Britta Hamre (DDA), Elizabeth Shea (DDA), Erin Willahan (DDA)

INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKER

Participants were invited to introduce themselves and the community they were calling in from in the chat, and participate in a virtual icebreaker poll.

Communities represented: Anchorage, Bethel, Dillingham, Eagle River, Eek, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai, Kodiak, Nome, Prince of Wales Island, Wasilla

Icebreaker poll results:



STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS OVERVIEW

The Alaska Dept. of Health and Social Services (DHSS) provided an overview of the Joint Task Force (JTF) and leadership team, and its formation in 2019 under the PDG-5 to develop a unified strategic plan and needs assessment. DHSS discussed how the over 40-member JTF set the stage for partnership toward common goals.

DHSS also discussed some of the next steps for the strategic plan: Once finalized, the strategic plan is being recommended to Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC) alongside the Needs Assessment. Concurrently, a governance workgroup is forming to strengthen governance structures, inform ownership and guide implementation of the strategic plan. While the AECCC will house the strategic plan at first, that may change with a new governance approach. Implementation is set to begin in January 2021.

Denali Daniels and Associates (DDA) provided an overview of the strategic plan timeline, framework, and processes of stakeholder engagement. Via stakeholder sessions, 500-600 Alaskans engaged in the process through meetings and gatherings, both in-person and virtually. Meanwhile, over 300 responses to the Online Stakeholder Survey corroborated many of the themes expressed in stakeholder sessions. Areas of alignment with existing State plans is also included in the draft plan, with an eye toward supporting efforts already underway that correspond to elements of the strategic plan during implementation.

DDA also delved into the strategic plan framework, draft planning process report, and the process through which participants could review and provide feedback on the strategic plan documents. PDF versions of all of the documents and a link to a short survey were provided to participants via email for completion by Friday, 5/22.

The Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) provided a brief overview of the PDG-5 process, plans for dissemination of the needs assessment, and AASB's timelines, which includes a review by federal funders and DEED in June and the completion of AASB's coordination contract by June 30th. Further, it was highlighted that an infographic summary and prototype for a data dashboard are forthcoming.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

The conversation was opened up to all participants on the call. Participants asked questions over audio as well as through the ZOOM chat function. Questions regarding the plan feedback and survey process and implementation components were answered and segued into a discussion on the strategic plan as aspirational, actionable, and grounded in grassroots needs. Other comments included thoughts on measurement indicators, reflections on the work that has been accomplished, and it was expressed that the strategic plan documents reflect that Tribes and rural Alaska Native communities were included and heard.

Mark Lackey: Is the survey something we can do in stages?

Denali Daniels: Yes. The survey can be opened up and closed and saved. As long as it's done before Friday

Mark Lackey: Is there any sort of prioritization or timeline for the various strategies? Is that designed into the plan?

Christina Hulquist: If you have suggestions about prioritizations for the strategies, we would love to hear them. Identifying priority action and strategy items will be a part of implementation and priorities are not identified prior to the plan being done. But that input will be helpful when we get to implementation and AECCC phase, so please submit if that comes up for you.

Mark Lackey: For example, implementing or implemented right in the midst of budget, there is a lot of opportunity to capitalize on that.

Denali Daniels: Input on what should be done first is helpful. Part of implementation will include decision-making about what comes first. We have heard that our strategic plan is aspirational. It's true, we have a lot in there. We recognize that we are shooting for the moon. But we also feel it is actionable. A lot of time devoted to what the steps might be: aspirational but with identified actions.

Betsy Brenneman: Yes, we did hear from a lot of people that it was aspirational. But we approached it based on what we heard all along from the beginning: from communities, experienced system people; great desire to unify behind some of these. That aspirational goal really was because of what people told us all along about how important it all is. Aspirational nature bubbled up from the grassroots.

Christine Hulquist: Huge thank you to leadership team, contractors, all who have taken time to engage in process

Meghan Johnson (in chat): Perhaps we can use measurement indicators that demonstrate progress and allow for reasons for movement and/or barriers/ challenges to no movement. I believe the plan is achievable, but there are always things that come up that make progress a bit slower :) WE CAN DO IT!!!! 😊

Annie Huntington-Kriska: This has been an absolutely wonderful year for our children. Headed into pre-tirement. Remembering our first meetings, sitting there and talking to so many of you and hearing the voices of particularly parents asking "where are we in this equation, "where can I find help with x,y,z" "who do I call on?"; you hear this over and over. Gut wrenching to hear all of that. And then this whole effort just blossomed overnight. To see these docs and the work you all put in, to know you heard our voices- especially when it comes to children in rural Alaska and their parents. To make sure their littles are ready for school at the rights age, are getting the attention they need in terms of health/behavioral health. The documents alone thrill me to no end, but to know that we were heard and our notes were taken down and documented and that this is going to go places. I am beyond myself in terms of being thrilled and enthused. I am taking my knowledge and your process with me everywhere I go.

Annie Huntington-Kriska (private chat): I had a chance to review and comment on the documents. I am happy with the outcome and inclusion of tribes and rural Alaska to provide the cultural content necessary to our work with Alaska Native children. Thank you.

Meghan Johnson (group chat): Koodos to everyone involved in this process. Longtime coming and so appreciate Denali's team and JTF leadership for their leadership.