



**EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
SATURDAY, AUGUST 13, 2022**

The Early Childhood Council convened in a regular meeting on Saturday, August 13, 2022, at 1200 Montopolis Drive in Austin, Texas.

Chair McHorse called the Early Childhood Council Meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Chair McHorse, Vice Chair Worthington, and Members Alvarez, Bliss Lima, Gordon, Hedrick, Hosking Pulido, and Huston

Board Members in Attendance Remotely: Members McCollum, Paver, and Schennum

Staff in Attendance: Caitlin Oliver, Cindy Gamez, Michelle Rodriguez, and Donna Sundstrom

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve the minutes of the Early Childhood Council Regular Meeting on June 8, 2022. **The minutes from the meeting of 6/8/2022 were approved on Member Hedrick's motion, Member Huston's second on a 9-0 vote. Member Schennum off the dais. Member Paver absent.**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. Discussion of the purpose of the Early Childhood Council (ECC) and recent actions taken by the ECC

The presentation and discussion were led by Chair McHorse. The presentation included the following information

- **The purpose of the ECC;**
- **The ECC's alignment with the City of Austin's Strategic Direction 2023 early childhood metrics and the Austin-Travis County Success by 6 Strategic Plan;**
- **The ECC's membership on the City's Joint Inclusion Committee;**
- **A summary of the 2020-2021 ECC Annual Review; and**

- **An overview of the COVID-19 relief funding that the ECC supported.**
3. Updates from related groups (as needed), including Austin Chapter of the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children, Austin ISD, Child Care Regulation, Child Inc, E3 Alliance, Success By 6 Coalition, Workforce Solutions Capital Area, Any Baby Can, and other groups in attendance
Updates and announcements on programming and services were given by Workforce Solutions Capital Area, Child Care Regulation, and GoAustin/VamosAustin (GAVA). Workforce Solutions has been hosting parent and child care provider focus groups and plans to share findings at the next ECC meeting. GAVA shared updates on recent work with local family-based child care providers and the GAVA City of Austin Budget Recommendation: Fiscal Year 2023, which includes the following early childhood and family health equity recommendation: “ARPA Funds created or increased stability for many home-based family child care providers and parents, but those funds are coming to an end. A \$250,000 allocation, spread across Austin Public Health, Parks and Recreation, and Economic Development departments will ensure culturally response programming, compensated language-accessible workforce development opportunities, and child care scholarships.”
 4. Update from Raul Alvarez on City budget approval process and budget recommendations from the Joint Inclusion Committee (JIC)
Update given by Member Alvarez. City Council recently funded \$1.25 million to fund quality-of-life (QoL) studies for each Joint Inclusion Committee (JIC) member who has not yet received a QoL study. This specifically includes \$250,000 for the Early Childhood Council to conduct a QoL study in the upcoming 2022-23 Fiscal Year, beginning in October. Members noted that there may be questions on the QoL studies for other Commissions, such as the Commissions on Immigrant Affairs and on Women, that will overlap or intersect with an early childhood QoL study. Chair McHorse shared that the timeline for the JIC QoL studies aligns with the timeline for making updates to the 2024 Austin-Travis County Success by 6 Coalition strategic plan.
 5. Update on Austin-Travis County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) early childhood funding
The update given by Vice Chair Worthington included an overview of the original ARPA recommendations that the ECC supported and were approved by Austin City Council. The source of the information in the Vice Chair’s presentation was meeting notes with Travis County. City Council approved \$11 million of the ARPA funding over 3 years to support the Austin-Travis County Success by 6 Coalition’s early childhood recommendations, which were also supported by the ECC. Travis County also approved to allocate ARPA dollars some of the Success by 6 recommendations for the first 15 months of the 3-year ARPA funding period. The Travis County Commissioner’s Court will soon be voting on how to spend the remaining months of ARPA dollars, including whether to continue to fund the early

childhood programs funded during the first 15 months. The Vice Chair encouraged people to voice their opinion to their Travis County Commissioner about how they would like to see ARPA dollars spent.

WORK GROUP UPDATES

6. Update from Community Engagement Work Group about the ECC Community Partnerships Spreadsheet
Update given by Member Gordon. The Work Group is collecting in a spreadsheet the contact information and meeting details for early childhood-related meetings hosted by community partners. Work Group members plan to attend the community partner meetings to learn more about ways that the ECC can support the community.

WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Report of recommendations by Policy Work Group regarding Austin Public Health's presentation on City actions since the 2017 Child Care and Pre-K Resolution
Report of recommendations was given by Member Hedrick. At the May 11, 2022, ECC regular meeting, Austin Public Health (APH) staff presented progress made on the 14 recommendations that came from the task force formed from the City's 2017 Child Care and Pre-K Resolution. Additionally, the ECC has passed 10 recommendations to City Council in the past 2 years. The Work Group proposed that the ECC do the following:
 - **Ask APH staff what outstanding recommendations and items are next up for getting done at the City;**
 - **Gather new ideas at ECC meetings from the ECC members and members of the public about what issues the ECC should focus on; and**
 - **Establish the infrastructure to easily track the progress of these recommendations. For example, Chair McHorse started a spreadsheet for the Success by 6 Coalition to track progress. Member Hedrick has started to add to the tracking sheet the ECC recommendations that were included in the 2020 and 2021 ECC Annual Reviews.**

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

8. Discussion of and possible action on the ECC Policy Work Group recommendations for follow-up regarding APH's 2017 Child Care and Pre-K Resolution presentation
The ECC members took no action on the updates provided by the Policy Work Group.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

9. Staff briefing by Caitlin Oliver, Austin Public Health, regarding COVID-19
The updates on COVID-19 and monkeypox were given by Caitlin Oliver, Program Coordinator, Austin Public Health. For COVID-19 and monkeypox, it is important that people stay home if sick. The COVID-19 Community Level in Austin-Travis

County is medium. Free COVID-19 PCR testing is available at the old Metz Elementary APH testing site, Tuesday – Saturday, 11a.m.-7p.m. Free rapid at-home tests are also available for pickup at the testing site. Everyone ages 6 months and older is now eligible for vaccination. Vaccination rates for children 6 months through 4 years and for 5–11-year-olds remain low. The vaccine clinic at Sims Elementary closed at the end of July. APH’s mobile vaccination program (MVP) is still operating and doing outreach in underserved or vaccine-hesitant communities. People can go to vaccines.gov to find a vaccine location near them. On August 11th, the CDC updated their COVID-19 guidance for people who are sick, people exposed to COVID, and for schools and child care programs. Austin Public Health is reviewing this new guidance and working on updating the APH COVID-19 guidance for schools and child care. The monkeypox virus outbreak has been declared an emergency nationally and locally. It is important for people in the community to know the signs and symptoms of the virus and how it spreads. Visit austintexas.gov/monkeypox for monkeypox information and resources.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ECC members listed the following future agenda items:

- Presentation about Project Connect from the Housing & Planning Department
- Updates from Economic Development Department on progress made on recommendations from the task force formed by the 2017 Child Care and Pre-K Resolution
- Presentation on policy priorities for the upcoming Texas Legislative Session from the Prenatal-to-Three (PN-3) Collaborative, led by TexProtects, Texans Care for Children, and Children at Risk
- Presentation on the 2022 Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap
- Discussion of mental health supports for families and young children
- Discussion about safety and emergency preparedness of child care programs, considering the recent school shootings
- Discussion about Child Find

Chair McHorse adjourned the meeting to order at 11:58 a.m. without objection.

The minutes were approved at the September 14, 2022, meeting on Member Tom Hedrick’s motion, Member Johanna Hosking-Pulido second on an 8-0 vote.