



**EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2022**

The Early Childhood Council convened in a regular meeting on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at City Hall, Board and Commission Room #1101, 301 West Second Street in Austin, Texas.

Chair McHorse called the Early Childhood Council Meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Chair McHorse and Members Hedrick, Hosking Pulido, Huston, McCollum, and Paver

Board Members in Attendance Remotely: Members Alvarez, Gordon, and Schennum

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

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

The first five speakers to register prior to the meeting being called to order will each be allowed a three-minute allotment to address their concerns regarding items not posted on the agenda.

Jelina Tunstill, Program Coordinator for the Community Advancement Network (CAN), provided public comment about the tools and resources CAN produces. CAN is a partnership of 26 governmental, private, non-profit, and faith-based organizations which leverage resources to improve social, economic, educational, and health opportunities in the community. The CAN dashboard is updated annually and tracks 18 health and well-being indicators, including kindergarten readiness. In 2021, CAN published the Race Equity Action Framework, and in 2022 began hosting race equity trainings. CAN launched the We CAN! Austin website to help people access opportunities for community engagement and has a weekly podcast about local community engagement events. They recently held a regional summit about equitable economic recovery in Austin and have planned a follow up forum on apprenticeships for November 3rd, 2022.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve the minutes of the Early Childhood Council Regular Meeting on August 13, 2022

The minutes from the meeting of 8/13/2022 were approved on Member Hedrick's motion, Member Hosking-Pulido's second, on a unanimous 8-0 vote. Member Paver absent at time of vote.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. 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, and other groups in attendance

Updates from Workforce Solutions Capital Area (WFS) were given by Nicole Robinson. The Jeanette Walston Award wage supplements for child care staff and teachers were expanded through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding this year. In August, WFS hosted a symposium for 85 directors, 234 teachers, and 319 early learning staff. Attendees received over 1,000 hours of training hours. WFS held a training for 95 parents, in partnership with Austin Child Guidance, at the end of August. Two parent trainings are planned for September. The Community Engagement Supervisor position at WFS Capital Area has been filled by Christina Conrad, who attended the ECC meeting. The Start Early group hired by WFS has concluded focus groups in Spanish and English for parents and providers and completed interviews with community members and staff. Robinson said WFS intends to share the final report at an upcoming ECC meeting.

An update about Austin ISD was given by Chair McHorse. John Green-Otero has been hired as Early Learning Director at AISD.

3. Presentation by Jeremy Garza, Equity Office, regarding City quality-of-life study for some boards & commissions, including the Early Childhood Council
- Presentation on the quality-of-life studies (QoL) studies for five boards & commissions was given by Jeremy Garza. Commissions have through October 2023 to spend the \$1.25 million allocated by City Council. The City does not have a definition of quality-of-life. The Equity Office has examples of five studies that have been done in the past. The Equity Office envisions this process being in four phases: 1) Visioning; 2) Working with a consultant to craft the study; 2) Conducting the study; and 4) Submitting final recommendations to City Council.**

The presentation included a 6-month timeline:

- October and November 2022- Visioning, planning, and the ECC establishing a work group**
- December 2022 and January 2023- Community engagement, town halls, establishing a scope of work for consultant, drafting request for proposal (RFP)**
- Spring 2023- Initiate RFP and finalize consultants**

Chair McHorse shared that the QoL study timeline aligns with the timeline for the development of the Austin-Travis County Early Childhood Strategic Plan. Other

commissions are interested in collaborating on townhalls and may also want to do a coordinated survey. The Equity Office and Joint Inclusion Committee may plan to bring the commissions together at a retreat to decide how they want to collaborate.

The role of the City of Austin Equity Office and Jeremy Garza is to assist and coordinate collaboration across the five commissions and to attend ECC QoL Work Group meetings. If there is an early childhood organization that the ECC would like to have an exemption to an RFP, the Equity Office can advocate for that. The role of the staff liaison is to coordinate with the Equity Office and other commissions and to provide support on work group and special called meetings about the study. The role of the work group may be to help a consultant know who to engage with in the community and where to do outreach.

4. Updates from Raul Alvarez regarding the Joint Inclusion Committee (JIC), including an overview of the process for proceeding with a quality-of-life study
Update was given by Member Alvarez about discussions at the JIC meetings regarding the quality-of life (QoL) studies. Member Alvarez proposed at the JIC meeting that the commissions doing a QOL study coordinate on survey development and have a retreat for commission members. The next regular meeting of the JIC is September 28th, 2022.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

5. Approve the creation of and appointment of members to a working group with authorization to make decisions about the quality-of-life study on behalf of the Early Childhood Council
Members discussed concern with authorizing a work group to make decisions on behalf of the ECC and concern with not holding up the work group from moving forward on decisions about selecting a consultant, community engagement, and final recommendations, by needing to get approval for every decision at ECC meetings. Members discussed that some roles of the work group would be to help engage families to be a part of the study and to review other similar early childhood studies and reports.

Chair McHorse moved to authorize a Quality-of-Life Study Work Group to begin the planning process for the quality-of-life study and to give the work group authority to speak to and collaborate with other JIC commissions about the study. The Quality-of-Life Study Work Group will meet as needed through the end of 2022 and report back to the ECC members at all future Early Childhood Council meetings in 2022. Member McCollum seconded, and the motion to create a work group was approved on a unanimous vote of 9-0.

Members Alvarez, Hedrick, Hosking-Pulido, and McCollum volunteered to be on the work group, at least for 3 months or until their City Council members' terms ends. Chair McHorse and Member Huston volunteered to also be on the work group and to remain on the work group as a community member after their City Council members' terms ends.

For other ECC members to join in the QoL study planning, the staff liaison would need to post a special called meeting for a retreat or extend the meeting time of an upcoming regular meeting. Members agreed to extend the time of the ECC regular meeting on October 12th, 2022, until 11:30 a.m. At the October regular meeting, the ECC plans to discuss the vision for the QoL study.

6. Approve a recommendation from the ECC Policy Work Group regarding City of Austin fee waivers for child care programs
The resolution to implement certain City fee waivers for child care programs was approved on Member Hedrick's motion, Member Huston's second, on a unanimous vote of 9-0.

WORK GROUP UPDATES

7. Updates from Policy Work Group, including considerations about new City Council members in 2023
Update given by Member Hedrick. The Policy Work Group asked that ECC members update new City Council members on the work of the ECC and educate them on the importance of early childhood issues. Members of the public and ECC members can also ask candidates questions about early childhood issues at upcoming City Council district forums.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

8. Staff briefing by Caitlin Oliver, Austin Public Health, regarding COVID-19
The new bivalent COVID-19 booster designed to protect against the new COVID omicron subvariants is available in the community, for people 12 years old and older, if it has been at least 2 months since they received their last COVID-19 vaccine. The new booster is already available in our area. People can go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find out where to get the booster. APH is also encouraging families to prioritize getting the flu vaccine this fall.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ECC members listed the following future agenda items:

- **Presentation at the November regular ECC meeting by Workforce Solutions Capital Area about the Start Early report**

Chair McHorse adjourned the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m. without objection.

The minutes were approved at the October 12, 2022, meeting on Member Aletha Huston's motion, Member Tom Hedrick's second, on an 8-0 vote.