

Missouri Panel on School Readiness: Focus on Pre-Kindergarten Education (Pre-K Panel)
May 30, 2008
Capitol Plaza Hotel
Jefferson City, MO

Key Decisions

- The Pre-K Panel approved Guiding Principles for working together.
- The Pre-K Panel approved a Work Plan for its three meetings.
- The Pre-K Panel decided that it would make a decision regarding the need for additional meetings at the conclusion of its second meeting in July.
- The Pre-K Panel approved a Purpose Statement for state funded pre-kindergarten education.

Meeting Notes

Welcome – Tom Watkins, Pre-K Panel Chair

Tom welcomed the group, expressed his enthusiasm for the work ahead, and stressed the importance of doing the “job right.” He stressed the importance of everyone’s active participation in the deliberations so the group would have the benefit of everyone’s best thinking.

- He reminded the group that the panel’s meetings are public and briefly addressed the Sunshine Law.
- Observers were invited to introduce themselves.

Review of the Charge – Karen Bartz, Chair, Coordinating Board for Early Childhood

Karen reviewed the Charge to the Pre-K Panel from the Missouri Coordinating Board for Early Childhood (Coordinating Board). While the panel’s recommendations will carry strong weight with the Coordinating Board, the Pre-K Panel was convened in an advisory capacity. Karen emphasized the Pre-K Panel’s focused purpose on pre-kindergarten education (pre-k) and the more expansive early childhood, birth to five, responsibilities of the Coordinating Board. The Pre-K Panel’s recommendations regarding the six questions outlined in its Charge will be considered by the Coordinating Board at its November meeting.

Following its decision making, the Coordinating Board intends to advance its recommendations with the new Governor, the legislature, and relevant state agencies. It is likely that some recommendations will be viewed as long term and others as short term. Once the outline of the recommendations emerge, it is possible that the Coordinating Board may decide to initiate other activities.

Introductions - Tom Watkins, Pre-K Panel Chair

Tom asked panel members to introduce themselves and respond to the following question: “As you think about your childhood or those of your children or grandchildren, what one memory will most inform and/or influence your service on the Pre-K Panel?”

Review of the Meeting Agenda – Stacie Goffin, Pre-K Panel Consultant and Facilitator

After introducing herself and Trinette Brewer, Meeting Recorder, Stacie reviewed the materials in the panel briefing book. She provided a brief overview of the agenda, highlighting the meeting’s four planned results:

- Identify guiding principles for working together.
- Approve the work plan.
- Identify an issue for focused investigation and deliberation.
- Identify central issues/questions that need to be addressed to create a pre-kindergarten system for Missouri.

Guiding Principles for Working Together

The Pre-K Panel reviewed a draft set of guiding principles for working together. These principles will provide a shared and agreed upon framework for the group's deliberations and decision making. Following discussion, the guiding principles were approved with the following changes:

- A 2/3 vote is needed for approval of the group's recommendations.
- The final vote on the recommendations will be noted.
- The distinction regarding organizational versus individual representation was eliminated.

Review and Approval of the Panel's Draft Work Plan

The Pre-K Panel reviewed and approved the draft working document outlining the Pre-K Panel's work over its three meetings.

The Chair raised concerns about whether the panel had sufficient time for its deliberations. He also expressed interest in the panel contributing in more significant ways to the development of the panel's final report.

Following discussion, the Pre-K Panel decided that a decision regarding the need for an additional meeting should be re-considered at the conclusion of the second meeting.

Self-Organizing for the Work

The six questions listed in the Charge to the Pre-K Panel were organized into three groups:

- Who should be served by Missouri's publicly funded pre-k programs?
- Should Missouri's publicly funded pre-k programs be held accountable in some way? If so, how and for what?
- How should Missouri's publicly funded pre-k programs be delivered?

After reviewing the questions and reminding members of the work process outlined in their approved Work Plan, members self-selected into the group of their choice, with no more than two work groups assigned to each group of questions. While each member ultimately is responsible for informing and deliberating each of the questions outlined in the Charge, this organizational structure permits members to assume responsibility for delving more deeply into individual questions.

Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return – Rob Grunewald, Associate Economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

Luncheon speaker Rob Grunewald presented an overview of the economic benefits of high quality pre-kindergarten programs, citing research evidence from longitudinal studies as evidence for this conclusion. Based on this evidence, the Federal Reserve has come to see investment in early education as a priority economic strategy for building the country's capacity to compete in a global economy.

What Should be the Purpose of the State's Publicly Funded Pre-K Programs?

The Pre-K Panel deliberated the purpose of publicly funded pre-k programs in Missouri. This statement will serve as filter for the panel's deliberations, ensuring that its decision making is always tied to "the end in mind." It is understood that as more information is gathered, this statement of purpose may evolve. The approved purpose statement reads:

- Missouri's publicly funded pre-kindergarten should ensure that all young children have access to high-quality early learning experiences that (1) are based on national standards that prepare them to succeed in school and life, (2) are delivered through a flexible model which is responsive to the needs of families and communities, and (3) maximize state resources, both human and capital.

Identifying Initial Information Needed to Study Focus Area

In their work groups, members explored the information they think is needed for their deliberations.

Pre-K Panel Next Steps – Stacie Goffin, Pre-K Panel Facilitator

- The next Pre-K Panel meeting is scheduled for July 22, from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City.
- Meeting Notes will be distributed via e-mail to panel members for review within the next two to three weeks.
- The May 30th meeting agenda and Meeting Notes, along with copies of the briefing materials will be placed on the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network (MOCCRRN) web page (<http://www.mocccrrn.org>). A link is being established with the Missouri AEYC website, and others are encouraged to link with the MOCCRRN site as well, thereby helping to make the panel's work as visible as possible. Individuals interested in linking with the MOCCRRN site should contact Robin Zellers (robin@mocccrrn.org).
- Stacie will connect with each work group facilitator regarding his/her group's desire to schedule a conference call prior to the July 22nd meeting to begin their work. Once informed of a work group's interest in this regard and the date and time of the meeting, Stacie will make arrangements for a toll free conference line. Work Group meetings also are subject to the Open Meeting law.
- Stacie will attempt to facilitate access to requested information.
- Members will be notified via e-mail of the dates and times for the Optional Orientation Calls that will be scheduled prior to the July meeting.
- Members are invited to send Stacie documents for possible inclusion in the July 22nd meeting briefing book.

Closing Remarks

Members shared their thoughts on the following:

- General impressions of the meeting and the work ahead.
- Thoughts on what about the May 30th meeting worked for them that they would like to see continued at future meetings.

Adjournment

The Pre-K Panel meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.