

## Minutes for Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development Commission

March 8, 2023

### Welcome and Introductions

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions of Commissioners, Alternates and Guests

Chair Karla Pleitéz Howell opened the Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development Commission (Policy Roundtable) meeting at 10:09 a.m. by welcoming Commissioners, alternates, and guests to the first in person Policy Roundtable meeting in three years.

#### 2. Comments by the Chair

Chair Pleitéz Howell highlighted President Biden's focus on investing in the care economy and the need to prioritize child care providers. Chair Pleitéz Howell also noted the importance of meeting minutes and balancing the length of the minutes with key points. She requested that Commissioners state "please reflect this in the minutes" if they want a specific point included in the minutes.

### General Business

#### 3. Approval of Minutes - February 8, 2023

*Chair Pleitéz Howell presented the minutes from the February 8, 2023 Policy Roundtable meeting and asked for a motion to approve these minutes. Commissioner Jennifer Hottenroth made the motion to approve the minutes; Commissioner Ellen Cervantes seconded the motion. The February 8, 2023 minutes passed with three abstentions: Commissioners Jessica Perea, Nurhan Pirim, and Paul Pulver.*

### Public Policy

#### 4. Response to the Governor's Budget

Commissioner Ofelia Medina provided background about the ECE Coalition which is a coalition comprised of 30+ organizations across the state. The ECE Coalition develops common state budget asks in support of California's early care education (ECE) system. The budget asks are typically presented in a letter from the ECE Coalition to the Governor. The ECE Coalition approved their 2023 Letter to the Governor in February 2023. The two budget asks in its *ECE's Priority Asks for the 2023-24 Budget (2023-24 Budget Asks)* are as follows:

- Provide a 25% increase to current rates for immediate relief and adopt an alternative methodology using a cost estimation model and include a timeline for implementation for the actual cost of care based on program enrollment without charging family fees
- Allocate all 20,000 child care spaces scheduled to be released in 2023-24

Commissioner Medina noted that the ECE Coalition is developing strategies to engage with elected leaders to promote the need to prioritize these budget items. Commissioner Medina opened the floor for questions.

Commissioner Pulver asked why the points in the ECE Coalition's 2023-24 Budget Asks were not captured in the proposed Policy Roundtable Pursuit of Position. Debra Colman, Director of the OAECE, clarified that the Policy Roundtable Commission would discuss the Pursuit of Position in the next agenda item.

Chair Pleitéz Howell introduced the next presenter, Lisa Wilkin, Child Development Consortium of Los Angeles Executive Director. Wilkin opened her presentation by highlighting significant challenges ECE has experienced during the last three years. Wilkin provided an overview of key changes in the Governor's Budget and the potential impacts ECE providers and families will experience if the Governor's Budget is approved. Her presentation covered the following changes included in the Governor's Budget: Cost of Living Adjustment, Reimbursement Rate Reform, Child Care Slots, California State Preschool Program, and Transitional Kindergarten (TK). Wilkin also addressed key issues not proposed in the Governor's Budget and other considerations. The PowerPoint presentation provides more detailed information. Wilkin opened the floor for questions.

Commissioner Hottenroth asked what are the main causes for decreased enrollment in child care. Commissioners and attendees shared the following:

- More parents are working from home and/or working a hybrid work schedule, thus, providing care at home or by a family, friend, or neighbor
- Parents are not returning to and/or leaving the workforce
- More 4-year-olds are being enrolled in TK
- The cost of care is not fully covered by subsidies and parents need to pay for the cost difference. Many parents have not had to pay this fee because it was waived during the pandemic.
- Parents are nervous about their child catching COVID-19 and/or Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)
- Declining birth rates
- Families are moving out of LA County

Another Commissioner asked what is the status of TK expansion in LA County. Commissioners provided a range of responses. Commissioner Dean Tagawa shared that LAUSD's TK enrollment is up and LAUSD is considering expanding its enrollment of infants and toddlers. Commissioners also shared that some school districts have been aggressive to expand TK but most have been slow and noted that TK enrollment is lower than expected and this is reflected in the Governor's Budget. A Commissioner also reflected that while TK is positive for families it is negatively affecting the overall ECE system.

## **5. Pursuit of Position**

Justin Blakely, Policy Roundtable Commissioner and Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Legislation, reviewed the purpose of a Pursuit of Position and the process for developing a Pursuit of Position. He provided a summary of the February 16, 2023 Joint Committee on Legislation meeting. He presented the policy issue recommendations the Joint Committee on Legislation identified to include in a Pursuit of Position. Commissioner Blakely reminded the Commission that the proposed Pursuit of Position is included in the Commission's March 8, 2023 meeting materials. Commissioner Blakely highlighted the importance of having a unified voice and promoting equity in a Pursuit of Position. The PowerPoint

presentation provides more detailed information. Chair Pleitéz Howell noted that amendments to the Pursuit of Position can be proposed once a motion has been made.

*Chair Pleitéz Howell presented the Pursuit of Position and asked for a motion to approve the Pursuit of Position. Commissioner Jennifer Cowan made the motion to approve the Pursuit of Position; Commissioner Paul Pulver seconded the motion. Chair Pleitéz Howell opened the floor for comment.*

Chair Pleitéz Howell proposed the following two amendments to the Pursuit of Position: 1) Include in the Pursuit of Position's Introduction paragraph a statement reflecting the Commission's commitment to equity; and 2) include stronger language in the Pursuit of Position's second policy area that is similar to the ECE Coalition's Budget Ask that emphasizes the 25% increase and the alternative methodology using a cost estimation model.

Commissioner Pulver supported these amendments and recommended to also include reimbursement based on program enrollment without charging family fees. Commissioner Ofelia Medina stated that the ECE Coalition believes these issues are tied together and if you ask for one you must ask for the other. Commissioner Cowan asked if the Pursuit of Position should propose waiving family fees indefinitely. Commissioner Blakely shared that in this budget climate proposing elimination of family fees is less likely to be favorable with legislators than requesting to suspend family fees on a yearly basis. Commissioner Tagawa agreed that this year the Pursuit of Position should focus on waiving the family fees for a year and going forward the Commission should move toward advocating for elimination of family fees.

Commissioner Tagawa also suggested that the Commission consider recommending an extension of Hold Harmless provisions through 2026-27 because the full impact of TK is still unknown and programs need time to adjust. Commissioner Perea added that Community Colleges are also looking at requesting an extension of the Hold Harmless provisions for two more years because of low enrollment.

Commissioner Cervantes noted that the State needs to ask the federal government to allow family fee waivers and from an equity perspective the Commission needs to push for family fee waivers.

Commissioner Rivas requested the meeting minutes to reflect that the ECE field should look at how reimbursement rate reform has been addressed by other fields such as behavioral and mental health. Chair Pleitéz Howell added that the foster youth community has also successfully addressed rate reform.

Chair Pleitéz Howell summarized the discussion and proposed the following modifications to the Pursuit of Position:

1. Include in the Pursuit of Position's Introduction paragraph language from the Policy Roundtable's Equity Statement and include the following the proposed updated language:  
"The Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development firmly believes that all young children in LA County have an undeniable right to develop and thrive without explicit and implicit biases. Due to structural inequity, all legislation and policies should be examined through an equity lens to build a system where all children have access to high quality, affordable early care and education."

2. The Pursuit of Position's second policy area uses the ECE Coalition's Budget Ask language:  
"Increase current reimbursement rates for state subsidized early care and education programs by 25% and adopt an alternative methodology using a cost estimation model and include a timeline for implementation for the actual cost of care based on program enrollment without charging families fees."

*Chair Pleitéz Howell asked for a motion to approve the Pursuit of Position with the proposed modifications she listed to the Introduction paragraph and second policy area. Commissioner Amber Rivas made the motion to approve the Pursuit of Position with the following modifications:*

1. Modify in the Pursuit of Position's Introduction paragraph language to be the following:  
"The Policy Roundtable for Child Care and Development firmly believes that all young children in LA County have an undeniable right to develop and thrive without explicit and implicit biases. Due to structural inequity, all legislation and policies should be examined through an equity lens to build a system where all children have access to high quality, affordable early care and education."
2. The Pursuit of Position's second policy area language uses the ECE Coalition's Budget Ask language:  
"Increase current reimbursement rates for state subsidized early care and education programs by 25% and adopt an alternative methodology using a cost estimation model and include a timeline for implementation for the actual cost of care based on program enrollment without charging families fees."

*Commissioner Perea seconded the motion. The amended Pursuit of Position passed with no abstentions.*

OAECE Director Colman shared that the Pursuit of Position will be submitted to Department of Public Health Government Affairs Division for review and then submitted to CEO Legislative and Government Affairs Division for approval and adoption.

## [Our Unified Strategic Plan](#)

### **6. Board of Supervisors Engagement Teams**

Leanne Drogin, OAECE Deputy Director, provided an overview of the purpose of Board of Supervisors (BOS) Joint ECE Delegation Teams and reviewed the FY 2022-23 Teams. Drogin shared that the Commission developed a BOS engagement process in FY 2021-22 to elevate priority policy issues to the BOS Offices and strengthen the Commission's collaboration with the BOS Offices. BOS Delegation Teams include: 1) Policy Roundtable Commissioners, and 2) Child Care Planning Committee BOS appointees. Team assignments were determined based on several factors such as BOS appointments, content knowledge, geography, and Team diversity. The engagement process is designed to support Teams in using a consistent approach with the BOS Offices, such as providing information about priority policy issues identified by the Policy Roundtable and who participates in the meetings. Drogin informed the Commission that the OAECE will provide Teams with a toolkit to help prepare for the BOS meetings. With the Commission's approval of the Pursuit of the Position, BOS Delegation Teams are being asked to meet with their respective BOS Offices during the next month. Chair Pleitéz Howell highlighted the importance of the Delegation Teams having a unified voice and noted personnel changes at Supervisorial District Offices 1 and 3.

## **7. LA County Department of Parks and Recreation**

Dr. Mercedes Santoro, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) East County Deputy Director Community Services Agency/Interim Communications Manager, provided an overview of DPR Children, Youth and Family Programs/Services. Due to time constraints Dr. Santoro needed to shorten her presentation and briefly provided information about their direct services and partnership opportunities. She also highlighted a timely and critical issue DPR is addressing. LA County's Elena Matya's Children's Safety Ordinance recently went into effect and while Dr. Santoro applauds the importance and purpose of this Ordinance she also spotlighted significant challenges resulting from the Ordinance. Specifically, DPR does not have funding to comply with some of the Ordinance's requirements; thus, DPR 2023 summer youth camps will be severely limited in scope and in many cases will not be offered. Dr. Santoro emphasized the impact of only providing drop-in camp services and requested support in finding ways to bridge the gap between the ability to offer youth services and meeting Ordinance requirements. The PowerPoint presentation provides more detailed information. Dr. Santoro was invited to provide the full presentation at a future Policy Roundtable meeting.

## **Universal Pre-Kindergarten Update**

### **8. Planning a Universal Pre-Kindergarten Mixed-Delivery System**

OAECE Director Colman shared that the Child Care Planning Committee (CCPC) is leading the process for developing a grant application to fund the development of an implementation plan for universal pre-kindergarten (UPK) options that are inclusive of a mixed delivery system. The CCPC will vote on the grant application recommendations at its April 5, 2023 meeting. Director Colman recommended that Commissioners contact Ariana Olivia or Zenaida Meza, OAECE Staff Analyst, for more information.

## **Wrap Up**

### **9. Announcements and Public Comment**

Chair Pleitéz Howell opened the floor for announcements and public comment.

- Commissioner Pirim questioned what involvement does the Policy Roundtable have with the local child care union to engage them in discussions before recommendations go to the State. Director Colman stated that SEIU is a member of the CCPC and they are part of the UPK planning process.
- Commissioner Oliva informed the group that the March 1, 2023 CCPC meeting was not held because quorum was not met.

### **10. Meeting in Review and Call to Adjourn**

Chair Howell adjourned the meeting at 12:04 PM.

## **Attendance**

### **Commissioners Attendance**

1. Karla Pleitéz Howell, *First Supervisorial District*
2. Jessica Perea, *First Supervisorial District*
3. Justin Blakely, *Second Supervisorial District*
4. Jennifer Cowan, *Third Supervisorial District*

5. Amber Rivas, *Third Supervisorial District*
6. Ricardo Mota, *Fourth Supervisorial District*
7. Ellen Cervantes, *Fifth Supervisorial District*
8. Nurhan Pirim, *Department of Public Social Services*
9. Jennifer Hottenroth, *Department of Children and Family Services*
10. Kanchana Tate, *Department of Mental Health*
11. Ariana Oliva, *Child Care Planning Committee*
12. Luis Bautista, *Los Angeles County Office of Education*
13. Dean Tagawa, *LA Unified School District*

#### **Alternate Commissioners Attendance**

1. Paul Pulver, *Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles*
2. Debi Anderson, *Los Angeles County Office of Education*
3. Jaime Kalenik, *First 5 LA*

#### **Guests Attendance**

1. Jeanette Aguirre
2. Cristina Alvarado
3. Rachel Klein
4. Marcy Manker
5. Esther Nguyen
6. Kelly Reynolds
7. Steve Sturm
8. Lisa Wilkin
9. Margaret Wong

#### **Staff Attendance**

1. Debra Colman, *Director*
2. Leanne Drogin, *Deputy Director*
3. Charli Lewis, *Administrative Aid*
4. Betsy Jacoby, *Staff Analyst*
5. Zenaida Meza, *Staff Analyst*
6. Julia Bruton, *MSW Intern*