

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

January 16, 2024, Rm 155, City Hall

Present Members: Kameron Perez-Verdia (Assembly), Anna Brawley (Assembly), Kevin Cross (Assembly), Jennifer Veneklasen (Assembly staff), Trevor Storrs (Alaska Children’s Trust), Jen Griffis (Alaska Children’s Trust), Dawn Skeete (Anchorage Health Department), Melinda Myers (thread), Eric Croft (volunteer; campaign team); Katrina Ahlfield (Kids’ Corps., Inc.), Jade Hayden (Hmoob Cultural Center of Alaska), Branwen Collier (Early Learning for Everyone), Nora Matell (parent), Jessica Simonsen (parent), Heather Weafer (Child and Youth Programs, U.S. Air Force), Kathleen McArdle (Anchorage Chamber)

Absent Members: Carl Jacobs (ASD – School Board), Ivy Spohnholz (volunteer; campaign team), Kim Rash (Anchorage Health Department), Ethan Petticrew (Cook Inlet Native Head Start)

Staff: Austin Quinn-Davidson

Guests: none

Notes:

- I. Finalize Agenda
- II. Member Background and Introductions
 - a. Members discussed their backgrounds and reasons for their interest in this work. Some members are foster parents, many are parents, some are providers who know all too well the pressures on the sector, and many highlighted the impacts of lack of child care and early education supports on our community. Topics brought up included: need to support military spouses in finding work while stationed in Anchorage, which depends on available child care; the tie between available child care/education with the economy and outmigration from Alaska; the high cost of care, when it is available, and how unsustainable that is for so many families; the low pay for providers, and how that is damaging the broader economy; the importance of dedicated funding to solve existing systemic challenges; and pride in Anchorage voters for supporting this critical proposition.
- III. Updates
 - a. Governor’s Task Force
 - i. H. Weafer reported that the first report is now available to the public
 - b. Legislative Update
 - i. J. Griffis will keep everyone informed on what happens during this legislative session
- IV. White Paper
 - a. A. Quinn-Davidson presented on the white paper she shared with the IT last week
 - b. The white paper includes three primary sections: current challenges in the child care and early education system; what other jurisdictions are doing to solve these challenges; and what we might consider doing in the Municipality of Anchorage using the ACCEE funds. All ideas

presented were initial and merely meant to begin the conversation; any next steps will be informed and shaped by engagement with the public, discussions with experts, and evaluation by the IT of the most effective and strategic use of the ACCEE funds. Initial ideas presented by staff included raising wages or other compensation for providers, including pursuing a pooled benefits program; providing free care for providers' children to increase available child care spots in the community; partnering with new on-site programs to increase available spots; providing technical assistance for business development, licensing, or other processes; providing incentives and awards to providers; funding paid time off or time spent in trainings, and training itself; and funding mental health supports for providers and children, among others.

- c. IT members asked questions and gave feedback. Members were clear that we need to be strategic in however we make funding recommendations to the Accountability Board. Members shared additional thoughts on what information we might want to collect from providers and the community.
- d. A small group of IT members will work with staff to explore and develop a suggested strategy to determine potential recommendations for the funds.

V. Engagement Plan and Schedule

- a. A. Quinn-Davidson went over the schedule of upcoming events (Make it Monday, community conversations, Zoom meetings, etc.). There is an online survey also available. She will circulate a list of which IT members are attending which events. IT members were asked to reach out to Austin with dates of meetings they plan to attend.

VI. Communications Leading Up to Events

- a. Staff reviewed upcoming communications and outreach materials and asked IT members to please share on their social media platforms, websites, etc. Staff asked IT members to direct folks to the online survey.
- b. ACT staff has done a great job of producing these materials and are also working on outreach to entities IT members have identified, among others.
- c. Op-ed
 - i. Staff asked if IT members N. Matell and J. Simonsen might be willing to submit an op-ed on the ACCEE Fund and upcoming events. They agreed to submit. Austin will work with them to draft and submit in the next week.

VII. Update on Panels at IT Meetings

- a. Staff reviewed the schedule for upcoming IT meetings
 - i. February
 - 1. Initial report on events and engagement
 - 2. Economic impact of child care - Nolan Klouda and Katie Berry
 - 3. Juneau program
 - ii. March
 - 1. Follow-up report on events and engagement
 - 2. Early Childhood Education Workforce in Alaska – Stellar Group
 - 3. CITC program
 - 4. Heather Weafer - JBERR incentives for caregivers and associated costs

VIII. Conflicts Form

- a. Still need from some members. Please turn in to A. Quinn-Davidson

IX. Closing Comments by Members