

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

March 20, 2024

Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Present Members: Kameron Perez-Verdia (Assembly), Anna Brawley (Assembly), Allie Hartman (Assembly staff), Trevor Storrs (Alaska Children's Trust), Jen Griffis (Alaska Children's Trust), Kim Rash (Anchorage Health Department), Dawn Skeete (Anchorage Health Department), Melinda Myers (thread), 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), Katrina Ahlfield (Kids' Corps., Inc.), Eric Croft (volunteer; campaign team)

Absent Members: Kevin Cross (Assembly), Carl Jacobs (ASD – School Board), Jennifer Veneklasen (Assembly staff), Ivy Spohnholz (volunteer; campaign team), Ethan Petticrew (Cook Inlet Native Head Start); Kathleen McArdle (Anchorage Chamber)

Staff: Austin Quinn-Davidson

Guests: Antoinette Horn & Sun Smith (CITC), Iris Matthews (Stellar Group)

Notes:

1. Finalize Agenda
 - a. Introduced and welcomed Allie Hartman, filling in for Jenn Veneklasen. Allie is the Communications Director for the Anchorage Assembly
 - b. Trevor Storrs reminded us that it was a year ago that we were approaching the vote on Proposition 14. What a productive year it's been!
2. Updates
 - a. Legislative update: Jen Griffis
 - i. HB 89 passed the Alaska House and is now in Senate committee. Would increase assistance eligibility from 85% to 105% of state median income and would come with a corresponding \$6.1M fiscal note. It would also reduce the percentage of a family's income allowed for the assistance co-payment from 9% to 7%. And it would require a cost of care study. The bill is expected to pass in the Senate.
 - ii. Thread has a fly-in scheduled for next week in Juneau. It will be a big week for child care and early education advocacy.

- b. Governor's Task Force: Heather Weafer
 - i. Heard from Ambra at the State Health Department at their last meeting. Meeting again next week.
- c. Members share any other relevant updates
 - i. None
- 3. Communications & Engagement: Austin Quinn-Davidson
 - a. Report out re events and communications
 - i. Completed a number of public events. Lots of feedback received. Austin sent a summary to all IT members. Austin went through top themes of ideas received from the public.
 - b. Summary of survey responses
 - i. 425 respondents. Austin went through demographic information for respondents and main takeaways/feedback. The two most commonly recommended uses of ACCEE Funds from the survey were increasing provider pay and providing benefits to providers. Results are summarized in the survey summary shared with the IT.
- 4. Presentation by Iris Matthews (President, Stellar Group): Early Childhood Education Workforce in Anchorage
 - a. People who provide child care services love the work. They leave because they have to, not because they want to. Workers mostly leave because of low wages (65%), lack of benefits (36%), and challenging working conditions (33%). With respect to lack of benefits, 74% don't like the lack of paid holidays and 60% would prioritize PTO.
 - b. There has been a 45% decrease in child care workers. 5 new child care businesses opened in 2023 in Anchorage, but 20 closed. Many early educators feel their jobs have gotten harder post-COVID. Caregivers need consistent wellness supports, especially positive workplace cultures and a sense of belonging.
 - c. Top priorities for improving the sector
 - i. Increase wages
 - 1. Having a union-negotiated minimum wage would be great, but it would have to happen at the state level
 - 2. Increase subsidies
 - ii. Increase access to benefits
 - 1. Establish pooled/group benefits
 - 2. Require that subsidies be used for health care
 - iii. Increase retention (quality)
 - 1. Fund leadership development courses to enhance team management skills
 - 2. Awards and public recognition
 - 3. Professional development
 - 4. Increase access to coaching and mental health supports
 - iv. Add supports for in-home providers
 - 1. Substitute pools and other supports

5. Presentation by Antoinette Horn (Eligibility Manager, Cook Inlet Tribal Council) and Sun Smith (Child Care Assistance Quality Manager, Cook Inlet Tribal Council): CITC Child Care Program Funding
 - a. CITC using its ARPA funding over the next 10 years; \$2.4M per year will be awarded to the child care/early education sector.
 - b. Lots of room for overlap/working together to improve the sector.
6. Initial discussion of Accountability Board ordinance: Trevor Storrs and Anna Brawley
 - a. The IT's role is to brainstorm ideas and give the strategy group content to include in a draft ordinance. Between now and the next IT meeting, Assembly staff will draft the ordinance, and the IT will review and edit it in April.
 - b. Focused mostly on brainstorming what types of designated (or not) AB seats might be appropriate. Re number of seats, somewhere between 9-12 was acceptable to the IT.
 - c. At the next IT meeting, the IT will review the draft ordinance and also discuss roles and responsibilities.
7. Conflicts Form: Turn in to Jenn
8. Closing Comments: All
 - a. Ran out of time. Will endeavor to allow more time for next time!