
New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) Steering Committee Meeting

Agenda for Children
8300 Earhart Blvd. Ste. 201
New Orleans, LA 70118
January 24, 2017
11:30 am

Committee Members in Attendance: Sonjia Joseph, Kate Mehok, Carole Elliot, Dr. Anthony Recasner, Superintendent Patrick Dobard, Thelma French, and Kristi Givens

Committee Members in Absence: Joyce Ridgeway, Maria Blanco, Mary Garton, and Dr. Keith Liederman (Yolanda Motley attended as non-voting proxy)

At 11:45 am the meeting was called to order by Dr. Recasner

I. NOEEN Strategic Plan Update

a. Overview: Dr. Recasner thanked the members of the strategic planning committee for their time and effort. The committee is comprised of: Dr. Keith Liederman, Thelma French, Superintendent Patrick Dobard, Kate Mehok, Mary Garton, and Sonjia Joseph. Bellwether Education Partners is finalizing the written plan, which will be sent to all members for their review before the next steering committee meeting.

b. Decisions from the second working session:

- i. NOEEN will serve as an intermediary organization. It will not be part of Agenda for Children; instead, it will incorporate as an independent non-profit.
- ii. NOEEN's mission statement does not specify the age groups to be served by NOEEN.
- iii. NOEEN will have seven primary focus areas with specific strategies for each focus area. Some of these strategies will be performed directly by NOEEN; NOEEN will cultivate or support organizational partners to engage in some of the other activities.

c. Governance and Staffing: NOEEN will launch with a small, nimble Board of Directors that will be tasked with ensuring that NOEEN is able to launch as an independent organization on July 1, 2017. This launch board will transition to a larger governing board by the end of the year. The Steering Committee will transition to an Advisory Board to provide oversight of key Lead Agency responsibilities.

i. The Founding Board will:

- Ensure the incorporation of NOEEN as a non-profit before July, 2017
- Hire the founding executive director
- Raise funds for NOEEN launch

ii. The Advisory Board will:

- Have a structure similar to the current Steering Committee structure, with members from the early childhood sector who have a wide range of experience in the local early childhood sector.
- Make recommendations and approve policies related to Act 3, including CLASS observations, coordinated funding and coordinated enrollment.

d. Finances:

- i. It is currently estimated that NOEEN will have an annual budget of \$1.3 million. NOEEN will have to cover these expenses primarily through grants and private fundraising. Currently, NOEEN receives \$246,000 from the LDE for its role as the Lead Agency in Orleans parish.
- ii. NOEEN will not raise the money locally in order to avoid competing with other organizations.
- iii. Dr. Recasner and Superintendent Dobard have committed to raising the necessary funds for NOEEN's launch and initial operational costs.

e. Clarifying Questions and Comments from Steering Committee Members:

- i. **In the role of Lead Agency, Agenda for Children receives funds from LDE to complete CLASS observations. Will employees from Agenda for Children transfer over to NOEEN once it is established as a separate organization?** No, NOEEN could contract with Agenda for Children to complete the CLASS observations.
- ii. Superintendent Dobard thanked his fellow steering committee members for their leadership and the time they have dedicated to the strategic planning process for NOEEN.

II. Coordinated Funding Request Update

- a. **Overview:** Currently, there are 188 Pre-K 4 seats that are unfilled or not being taken advantage of by parents. NOEEN recommended a very small increase of 51 seats to ensure serving that all eligible at-risk 4 year olds are served. EnrollNOLA and Agenda for Children are working with program partners to ensure seats for the 17-18 school year are filled.
- b. **Allocations for the 2017-18 School Year:** Because of state budget restraints, NOEEN received 53 fewer seats for the 2017-18 school year.
 - i. NSECD was hit hardest by these cuts because it is a state-funded program. All of the NSECD operators will remain the same, but some have been allocated less seats than they received for 2016-2017.
 - ii. LA4 was funded at the same level statewide, and NOEEN only lost three seats overall. There will be two new LA4 programs—Samuel J. Green Charter School and Akili Academy.
 - iii. There are two centers that currently participate in the Preschool Expansion

Grant (PEG) program that do not plan to be part of PEG in the 2017-2018 school year. Agenda for Children will work to reallocate these seats.

- c. **Clarifying Questions and Comments from Steering Committee Members:**
 - i. **Has Louisiana applied for the continuation and expansion of PEG?** We are unsure if Louisiana has applied.

III. Performance Profile Update

- a. **Overview:** The Learning Year Performance Profiles are now available on the Louisiana Department of Education website. These profiles are based on data from the 15-16 school year. Each program receives a profile, and NOEEN also receives a profile as a network. In Orleans parish, every “unsatisfactory” program was a Type III early learning centers. No programs in New Orleans were rated as “excellent.” All five of the programs with an “excellent” rating in the seven-parish Greater New Orleans area are Jefferson Parish public schools. No program serving infants and toddlers was rated “excellent” in the region.
- b. **Replacement Rates:** A high percentage of local observations statewide were replaced by the third party observations. The projections for NOEEN’s replacement rate shows that NOEEN Pre-K observations are more likely to be replaced than the statewide average while toddler scores were less likely to be replaced. Instructional Support scores were replaced at a rate of nearly 50%. Therefore, NOEEN will be focusing heavily on ensuring that local scores meet reliability standards. NOEEN will be performing a deeper analysis of the replacement score data to determine how many replacements resulted from differences in observer protocol or major changes in classroom characteristics (e.g. staff turnover).
- c. **Parent and Teacher surveys:** Parents and teachers were surveyed in every parish, and this data was reported on each network’s profile. In Orleans Parish, families are very satisfied with their program they are attending, and somewhat satisfied with the application process. Overall, teachers feel somewhat supported to improve, but in early learning centers the teachers feel mostly supported.
- d. **Curriculum:** Only 47% of programs in Orleans parish report having a Tier I curriculum. LDE has launched a curriculum initiative to help Type III early learning centers purchase a Tier I curriculum. The LDE will reimburse 80% of a center’s purchase of Tier I curriculum, up to \$4,000. NOEEN will use money from the Bright Spots grant to cover some of the remaining costs.
- e. **Clarifying Questions and Comments from the Steering Committee Members:**
 - i. **Do other parishes utilize contracted observers?** No, many other lead agencies chose to train program leaders in CLASS so they could conduct their own observations.
 - ii. **Are participants in the CLASS training told to score lower in Instructional Support?** No, the training does not instruct participants to score lower in Instructional Support. The trainer may point out that this is the area that

nationally receives the lowest scores.

- iii. **For the Excellent programs, do we know if their leaders conducted the CLASS observation?** We are unsure who conducted the observations in those programs.
- iv. **Do you know who receives replacement scores on the performance profiles?**
No, replacement scores are not indicated on the performance profiles.
- v. **Does the Picard Center observe differently than our contracted observers?** The observers from the Picard Center do follow a different protocol from what Teachstone recommends, and NOEEN follows Teachstone's protocol. In addition, the Picard observers have to achieve a higher score on their calibration than NOEEN observers, and they calibrate more often.

IV. **Coordinated Enrollment Update**

- a. **Overview:** The verification rate for applications submitted is 60%. EnrollNOLA has done two Saturday verification events, and will also be attending two more Saturday events including the Schools Expo. EnrollNOLA emails families weekly if they haven't verified, and sends text messages the Thursday before a verification event. Families can also submit an application at these events as well. The application deadline is February 24th and the match will happen during the week of April 10th.
- b. **Changes to the Process for the 2017-2018 School Year:**
 - i. The EPC score process has been automated for Head Start programs
 - ii. Verification documents can now be scanned into Schoolforce. After a child has been matched to a program and registers, programs can log into Schoolforce and print out those documents to file.

V. **ECE News and Events Discussion**

- a. **Super Saturday**—in conjunction with Schools Expo, there will also be free income tax assistance for households that are earning less than \$50,000 annually to help families maximize tax credits and tax returns. Families will also have access to a box of food from Second Harvest Food Bank.

Action Item(s)

- **Action Item No. 1:** On the motion of Superintendent Dobard, and seconded by Kate Mehok, the Committee adopted the Agenda
- **Action Item No. 2:** On the motion of Sonjia Joseph, and seconded by Carole Elliot, the Committee adopted the minutes from the November 29, 2016 Steering Committee Meeting.
- **Action Item No. 3:** On the motion of Kate Mehok, and seconded by Carole Elliot, the Committee approved the 2017-18 Coordinated Enrollment Plan
- **Action Item No. 4:** On the motion of Sonjia Joseph, and seconded by Kate Mehok, the Committee adjourned at 1:26 pm.