
New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) Steering Committee Meeting

Agenda for Children
8300 Earhart Blvd. Ste. 201
New Orleans, LA 70118
August 23, 2016
11:30am

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

Committee Members in Absence: Maria Blanco, Superintendent Henderson Lewis (Mary Garton attended as non-voting proxy), Keith Liederman (Yolanda Motley attended as non-voting proxy), and Kristi Givens

At 11:37am, the meeting was called to order by Dr. Recasner

- I. **2015-16 Review and 2016-17 Planning Presentation**
 - A. **Overview of 2015-16:** NOEEN is comprised of over 150 early childhood programs in Orleans parish. Network responsibilities include: coordinated CLASS observations, coordinated enrollment, and the coordinated funding request process. Key achievements in the 2015-2016 school year included:
 - **CLASS Observations:** NOEEN conducted over 1,000 CLASS observations during the fall and spring semesters. Most these observations were completed by NOEEN's corps of contracted CLASS observers, with additional observations being performed by program partners and Agenda for Children.
 - **Coordinated Enrollment:** For the first time, 5,000 early childhood seats were included in OneApp using an online application and standardized eligibility verification process.
 - **Coordinated Funding Request:** public schools, nonpublic schools, and early learning centers were able to apply for state-funded early childhood programs (LA4, NSECD and Preschool Expansion) via a single application through the coordinated funding request process.
 - B. **Priorities for 2016-17**
 - **Coordinated CLASS observations:** Complete 100% of CLASS observations and develop a plan to provide targeted resources to program partners to improve the quality of teacher-child interaction, and.
 - **Coordinated Enrollment and Information Campaign:** Continue to refine the coordinated enrollment process, ensuring increased access and information for families and program partners.
 - **Coordinated Funding:** If the Louisiana Department of Education implements Allocated CCAP this year, integrate those slots into the Coordinated Funding

Request and Coordinated Enrollment processes. In addition, advocate and develop a plan to secure additional funding for seats for children from birth to three years old.

- **Network Development:** Create a long-term strategic plan for the direction, structure, governance, and funding of NOEEN. The network will also create a plan of action for coordinating, improving, and expanding access to high-quality publicly-funded early care and education in New Orleans.

II. NOEEN Strategic Plan Discussion

- A. **Overview:** Dr. Recasner discussed the need for the Steering Committee to develop a consensus around NOEEN's role and strategic direction. He outlined two possibilities: 1) focus solely on the Network's three mandated activities (observations, enrollment, coordinated funding) or 2) use the data the Network has collected about what citywide needs and develop a plan to provide the resources and supports needed to meet those needs.
- B. **Funding:** Agenda for Children has been awarded a grant from Bloomberg (via the Baton Rouge Area Foundation) to fund a strategic planning process for the future of the NOEEN Steering Committee. These funds will allow NOEEN to hire a consultant with national experience to achieve our goals.
- C. **Clarifying Questions and Comments from Steering Committee Members:**
 - **How do we engage other organizations and move beyond conversation? Is our vision to ask other organizations to join us?** One coordinated enterprise is the goal. The consultant would work with other organizations that working to achieve similar objectives and identify what it would take to coordinate all of our efforts.
 - **If we recruit more groups into this work, would they all fall under the NOEEN umbrella?** That is the vision. It is possible that NOEEN will grow large enough to transfer all of this work into its own enterprise. NOEEN could also build relationships with other service and philanthropic programs on a national level.
 - **Do you have a consultant in mind for this work?** Agenda for Children has worked with a consultant in the past through Bellwether Education Partners. Bellwether worked with the Stranahan Foundation, which funds our CDA program. The consultant has experience with early childhood, charters, and K-12, and has worked in many different cities. She has also spent time in New Orleans. Dr. Recasner has asked her to put together a proposal for the Steering Committee to review.
 - **Are Steering Committee members required to give their support or disapproval of this proposal? Will the members see this proposal?** Dr. Recasner will email the proposal with an abstract to all steering committee members and ask if they are in support of the proposal. If the proposal is approved, we'll move forward and start to generate more money to fund it.
 - Superintendent Dobard stated his support of moving NOEEN forward into an entity focused exclusively on early care and education. Carole Elliot commended Dr. Recasner's vision, and agreed that a consultant is necessary to facilitate a strategic

planning process.

III. **2015-16 CLASS Results & 2016-17 CLASS Observation Plan Presentation**

- A. Plan Overview:** NOEEN plans to complete all CLASS assessments with 16 contracted observers and partner agencies interested in conducting their own observations. NOEEN's CLASS coordinator oversees the score entry into the Early Childhood Web Portal and myTeachstone. LDE mandates that scores must be entered into the Early Childhood Web Portal within a ten days time period after an observation is conducted. According to LDE's policy, if fifty percent of a local observer's domain-level results differ by more than one point from the third party observers, local observers cannot be hired for the next observation period. To ensure the accuracy of local CLASS observations, LDE policy requires that:
- a. All observers must be certified in the observation instrument being used in a classroom (either Pre-K CLASS or Toddler CLASS);
 - b. all observers must calibrate in the fall and spring to minimize drift; and,
 - c. all observers must be double coded (or shadow scored) at least once during the fall and spring semesters.
- B. 2015-16 CLASS Results:** CLASS observations were conducted by contracted observers, partner agencies, and the Picard Center as the third party observer. NOEEN's analysis shows that the three groups of observers on average were not further than a point apart in their scoring.

IV. **Coordinated Enrollment and Information Campaign Update**

- A. Overview:** For the first time, over 5,000 early childhood seats were included in the coordinated enrollment process for the 2015-16 school year. More than 10,000 applications were processed and thousands of families were verified for program eligibility. Because of this process, NOEEN can now better understand parent demand and plan to meet that demand. The number of verified applicants was higher than the number of available seats for all ages except four year olds. Currently there is an excess of available four year old seats in Orleans parish. LDE reports that other communities in the state are experiencing a similar difficulty in filling 4 year-old seats.
- B. Late Enrollment:** Kristen Illarmo thanked Total Community Action (TCA) and Kingsley House for donating staff time to help EnrollNola verify families during Late Enrollment at Dillard. Many parents seeking early childhood seats came to late enrollment to add themselves to additional waitlists after not receiving a placement. The demand for three year old seats is the greatest of any age group.
- C. Filling PreK Seats:** EnrollNola and Agenda for Children have created flyers and given programs yard signs to help programs recruit families. In addition, waitlist calls are being made to families offering them a four year old seat, and they've tabled at community events.
- D. Clarifying Questions and Comments from Steering Committee Members:**
- **Why are four year old seats going unfilled this year?** This is the first year that we've verified eligibility on the front end, so many families that applied did not

actually qualify for the seat when going through the verification process. Parents have mentioned transportation as an issue as well. Most non-school-based programs don't offer free transportation, which can be difficult for families without a reliable vehicle.

- **What are we doing to prevent having unfilled four year old seats next year?** Currently, we've asked Head Start to reconfigure their age groupings to offer fewer four year-old seats and more three year-old seats, which is a temporary solution. Next year, we need to consider the possible implications of giving up LA4 or PEG seats. Once the seats are given back to the state, it is very possible that New Orleans will not be able to get those seats back, even if demand increases.
- **What options are available for children who don't qualify for the free seat, but cannot afford a tuition based seat?** We can run a data analysis on families that were verified, but did not qualify for a seat.
- **Do families get priority for seats that are closest to where they live if transportation is an issue?** Parents rank their preferences of which programs they would like their child to attend. We have to improve parents' understanding of their options and the process, as many applied to programs that they can't actually get to. We also need to make sure that parents do not accept a seat they can't get to.
- **Do you think we'll see families displaced from the flooding around Baton Rouge try to find seats in New Orleans?** There have been some displaced families at the Family Resource Centers, but the total number of families is hard to predict at this point. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most displaced families have settled to other areas of the state.

V. Preliminary System-wide Needs Data Presentation

- A.** As NOEEN, we need to be aware of the needs of families. We want to dissect data by neighborhood, transportation, new programs, parent education need, income level of applicants, etc. to make sure that NOEEN is aware of families' needs and can plan appropriately to better address gaps in offerings. If there are additional data analyses that NOEEN should perform and report on, please send suggestions to Holly Reid.

Action Item(s)

- **Action Item No. 1:** On the motion of Sonjia Joseph and seconded by Joyce Ridgeway, the Committee adopted the Agenda.
- **Action Item No. 2:** On the motion of Kate Mehok and seconded by Thelma French, the Committee adopted the minutes from the April 5, 2016 Steering Committee Meeting.
- **Action Item No. 3:** On the motion of Carole Elliot and seconded by Thelma French, the committee approved 2016-17 NOEEN Steering Committee Members.
- **Action Item No. 4:** On the motion of Thelma French and seconded by Sonjia Joseph, the Committee approved and adopted the 2016-17 NOEEN Steering Committee Handbook & Meeting Calendar .
- **Action Item No. 5:** On the motion of Superintendent Dobard and seconded by Kate Mehok, the Committee approved the Coordinated Self-Assessment document.
- **Action Item No. 6:** On the motion of Sonjia Joseph and seconded by Kate Mehok, the Committee approved signing onto a letter to Congress in support of federal early childhood education funds.
- **Action Item No. 7:** On the motion of Sonjia Joseph and seconded by Kate Mehok, the Committee adjourned at 1:30 pm.