

KANSAS CHILDREN’S CABINET AND TRUST FUND RETREAT MINUTES

The **October 6, 2023, Retreat** commenced at 12:15 p.m. and was held at the Kansas Association of School Boards, 1420 SW Arrowhead Road in Topeka, Kansas with Chairman Don Hineman presiding.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Don Hineman, Chair, Senator Renee Erickson, LeEtta Felter, DiAnne Graham, Monica Murnan, John Wilson, Dr. Jackie Counts, Lindsay Orion, Sara Gardner, Dr. Owen Cox, Chris Chambers, KU CPPR, and Cabinet Staff: Melissa Rooker, Amy Meek, and Dyogga Adegbore

Guest: Elliott Regenstein, Partner with Foresight Law + Policy, Watershed Advisors

WELCOME

Chairman Don Hineman welcomed everyone to the Kansas Children’s Cabinet Retreat.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Melissa Rooker asked board members to share and discuss their connections to early childhood work in Kansas. Responses came in many forms - all shared a strong connection to the early childhood work of the Children’s Cabinet.

EARLY CHILDHOOD GOVERNANCE MODELS AND APPROACHES

Elliott Regenstein, an attorney in Illinois with Watershed Advisors and the Foresight Law+ Policy, facilitated the discussion on Early Childhood Governance Models and approaches.

The board spent the afternoon discussing the reasons states unify early childhood governance, current events in Kansas, and thinking about next steps.

Kansas along with other states deliver early childhood services through a mixed delivery system. The system involves a compilation of providers, programs, and venues such as licensed family and center-based childcare programs, public schools, Head Start, and others. The board discussed how the system probably appears to families trying to find accessible and affordable settings where their child can fit in while encountering challenges with being able to find transportation and afford costs of those services. Families also find themselves interacting with more than two or three oversight agencies. The board discussed Core functions such as setting expectations, overseeing various funding streams, confirming workforce flow and professional development expectations, collaborating with stakeholders to educate themselves on systems and continuous improvement, and establishing eligibility for services and programs, and at the same time minimizing the burden on families that seek access for various series.

Mr. Regenstein remarked that in asking the question where states unify, many states that unify governance have established a new agency targeting early childhood. Other states consolidated

governance under an established department. Existing challenges that Kansas stakeholders have expressed are overlapping mandates for programs that provide duplicate services to the same target population. There were problems in coordinating service providers, always seemed to be lack of clear lines of authority present, lack of coherent data across service programs, no alignment in workforce policy and lack of support to the providers, meeting federal reporting requirements, no real shared common goals, and the system was hard for families to navigate.

The board discussed unifying oversight of early education and care and how it will impact the Children's Cabinet and its interactions with other states agencies.

Chairman Hineman thanked Mr. Regenstein for engaging the board with his research and findings.

No action was taken at this meeting.

After no further business for discussion, Chairman Hineman adjourned the meeting at 2:55 p.m.