

Leadership to Integrate the Early Learning Continuum (LINC)

Advisory Committee

Project Overview

Role and Purpose

The purpose of the LINC Committee is to work with a team of researchers from the Center for the Study of Education Policy to conduct a gap analysis to determine the current status of Illinois' early learning/K-12 transitions and the potential role of early childhood and K-12 leaders in bridging the early learning continuum. This work will entail a true P-20 approach that considers both public and private early learning opportunities as well as home-based centers, K-12 education, and higher education, in this endeavor.

Outcomes

The committee will develop policy recommendations for building a seamless early learning continuum in Illinois and the role of early childhood and school leaders in building this continuum. Recommendations of the LINC Committee should consider those made by the Illinois School Leader Task Force. The report of the LINC Committee is due on or before December 1, 2008.

Structure

- The LINC Committee will be staffed by Ms. Lisa Hood, Dr. Erika Hunt, Dr. Nancy Latham, Ms. Lynne Curry, and Ms. Diana Weekes.
- The LINC Committee will convene from August 2008 to December 2008 to:
 - Examine related research and reports and review state, national, and international policies and trends,
 - Provide input on research project to identify gaps in the early learning continuum in terms of misalignment and/or miscommunication between the needs of early learning and the knowledge and practices of primary and secondary school and district leadership and the resulting effects on the quality of education. *The following research questions (and others that may emerge) will guide the work of the advisory group and research team:*
 1. What are the most current issues and problems that are barriers to creating a seamless early learning continuum?
 2. What is the current policy structure, and does it create barriers between early learning needs and K-12 education systems?
 3. What is the current nature of the linkages and partnerships between early learning providers and leaders in K-12 schools? What do elementary school principals know about early childhood learning, and what do early learning educators know about the learning and teaching needs of the K-12 system?
 4. What do principals need to know and do in order to better support early learning providers, parents, students, and the community? What content and learning experiences should be incorporated into principal preparation and professional development programs to develop principals with this knowledge and skills?
 5. What policies could the state enact that would:

- a. Produce school leaders with deeper knowledge about early learning research and practices;
 - b. Promote the hiring of teachers with the specialized knowledge and skills in teaching early learners; and
 - c. Facilitate partnerships between early learning community (including programs and support organizations) and K-12 schools that result in high quality learning environments and a smooth transition between early learning and K-12 schools?
- Develop recommendations for policies and practices for Illinois,

Membership

The composition of the LINC Committee reflects shared accountability for forging a coordinated early learning system and helping Illinois to close the achievement gap by designing effective strategies in which early childhood and school leaders can effectively align the two systems. The composition includes a cross-section of public and private organizations, agencies, and special interest groups representing early childhood, K-12 schools, and higher education.

Advance Illinois	Illinois General Assembly
Chicago Department of Child & Youth Services	Illinois Head Start Association
Chicago Public Schools	Illinois Network of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
Education Counsel LLC	Illinois Principals Association
Erikson Institute	Illinois State Board of Education
Huffman Elementary School	Illinois State University
Illinois Action for Children	Large Unit District Association
Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education	Learning Points Associates
Illinois Association of School Administrators	McCormick Foundation
Illinois Association of School Boards	McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership
Illinois Board of Higher Education	Monroe and Randolph Counties ROE
Illinois Business Roundtable	McLean County Unit District No. 5
Illinois Community College Board	Office of Governor Rod Blagojevich
Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers	Ounce of Prevention Fund
Illinois Department of Human Services	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Illinois Education Association	University of Illinois at Chicago
Illinois Education Research Council	University of St. Francis
Illinois Federation of Teachers General Offices	Voices for Illinois Children