

Leadership to Integrate the Learning Continuum (LINC)  
Advisory Committee Meeting  
September 10, 2008  
Bloomington, Illinois

Those in attendance:

Bette	Bergeron	Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Matthew	Brue	Illinois Association of School Administrators
Karen	Craven	America's Edge
Norm	Durflinger	Illinois State University
Marina	Escamilla	CPS - Office of Early Childhood Education
Lori	Fanello	Boone/Winnebago Regional Office of Education
Elizabeth	Foste	Illinois State University
June	Grivetti	University of St. Francis
Ava	Harston	Illinois Federation of Teachers
Bert	Hendee	Large Unit District Association
Kay	Henderson	Illinois State Board of Education
Lisa	Hood	Illinois State University
Erika	Hunt	Illinois State University
Kristie	Kaurez	Office of Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien
Nancy	Latham	Illinois State University
Xochitl	Martirosyan	Illinois Department of Human Services
Janet	Maruna	Illinois Network for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
Lauri	Morrison-Frichtl	Illinois Head Start Association
Sessy	Nyman	Illinois Action for Children
Erica	Okezie-Phillips	McCormick Foundation
Sheena	Panoor	Voices for Illinois Children
Carol	Pfoff	Illinois State University
Aisha	Ray	Erikson Institute
Linda	Saterfield	Illinois Department of Human Services
Brian	Schwartz	Illinois Principals Association
Jodi	Scott	Henderson, Mercer, Warren
Nancy	Shier	Ounce of Prevention Fund
Teri	Talan	National-Louis University
Linda	Tomlinson	Illinois State Board of Education
Dennice	Ward-Epstein	Illinois Alliance of Administrators of Special Education
Diana	Weekes	Illinois State University

Those by conference phone:

Matthew	Clifford	Learning Points Associates
Brenda	Klostermann	Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Anthony	Raden	Chicago Department of Child and Youth Services

Welcome by Janet Maruna

The meeting began with a welcome by Jan Maruna, Executive Director of INCCRA, who welcomed the group to INCCRA's new building and discussed the purpose of INCCRA. Everyone then had a chance to introduce themselves to the group. Kristie Kauerz, the main speaker introduced herself as the early childhood/Birth-3 Director at the Office of the Lieutenant Governor in Colorado. She is currently finishing up her dissertation examining the learning continuum.

Kristie Kauerz's presentation

Kristie began her presentation by noting that when considering leadership we need to think not just about elementary leaders but early childhood leaders as well. P-20 is the idea of looking at education as a continuum; however 90% of current P-20 research/initiative have focused on high school to college transitions. An important place to concentrate in the continuum is from birth to grade three. She argues for third grade as the ending point of the concept but notes that the new style for teaching the whole child should not end at third grade.

Kristie noted that the P in P-3 does not refer only to PreK or early care and education, but to these ideas together and more. A true learning continuum takes education reform and child development seriously. This means simultaneous concern for standards-based accountability and the whole child approach (social, emotional, physical well-being). The learning continuum is a great way to address the fade-out phenomenon that can occur around grade 3 when gains made from pre-learning environments can begin to fade-out. There was discussion brought up regarding the lack of mental health services in Illinois elementary schools. These mental health services can be in the form of more helpful information for parents and for students.

Kristie also noted that transition is not just one step but a series of different steps that take place over time. We also need to consider transitions such as from public schools to private or public after school programs. K-3 and Pre-K classrooms are structured differently. Even the classrooms and resources are different and there should be some connection or linkage between these two areas. States might consider statewide common transition forms, transition teams, and child-based standards that follow a developmental continuum.

Kristie pointed out four different types of alignment that can occur along the learning continuum:

1. Horizontal alignment-everyone across a single grade level is aligned
2. Vertical alignment- building upon what students have already learned in previous grades
3. Temporal alignment-recognizing that children are in different settings at different times.
4. System alignment- is the system properly aligned

Having an effective learning continuum ensures continuity – continuity refers to how consistent a child's experiences are from one setting to another. P-3 must also take data seriously and use this data to improve the system. P-3 will require both 'push-down' and 'push-up' efforts. Push down refers to policies and practices in the K-12 system that the early learning community may learn and adopt, and push up includes policies and practices from the early learning community that the K-12 system may learn and adopt.

Push down includes:

1. A stronger dedication to systems of accountability that focus on the child
2. Dedication to universal approaches that benefit *all* children

Push Up includes:

1. Having a greater focus on the whole child
2. Expanding systems of accountability to include program quality

A learning continuum should be a ‘together effort’ that includes everyone without the burden falling on one particular area. Challenges to creating an effective learning continuum:

1. Not creating discontinuities
2. Words and their different definitions across environments and for individuals
3. Keeping a big picture vision
4. Building credible public-private partnerships
5. Using data effectively

The group then openly discussed various “push-ups” and “push-downs”

Early childhood believes that child development knowledge is the basis for their curriculum but is not necessarily part of the K-12 curriculum. We need to ‘push-out’ as well and make sure that we are addressing areas outside of pushing up and pushing down. Such issues might include English language learners. The group noted the need to work with families to form relationships so that families feel like partners in a child’s education. It is important to recognize how families impact child development. The group also noted the need to focus on teacher preparation courses and have pre-service teachers go out into the community to understand students’ culture and parents’ wants and needs. This knowledge is something that happens with vision, leadership and experience.

Kristie pointed out that terminology is important in how we think about the issue. An example is the word ‘day-care’ when a more appropriate word is ‘child-care’ or ‘early learning’. The word we use has an effect of how we view the topic. We need to use words that reflect our goals as a state.

K-12 and pre-K funding are very different and any of this discussion on accountability or professional development needs consider this and whether there will be funding for something on either sides, let alone similar funding for similar projects. With money for professional development continually shrinking, it is an effective idea to bring people together for development together. Focus groups and research with schools has found that most people think K-12 really starts with first grade and that kindergarten is more a part of the early childhood field.

Kristie’s recommendation to the group was that there needs to be a mutual effort along the continuum. This involves communication practices and collaboration. We need to find the ‘needy problems’ and come together to discuss them. Rather than just discussing what each person/area is doing in a vacuum, we need to use each other as resources and work together to make effective group decisions.

Some highlighted ideas from the discussion brought forth by committee members:

Push Down (promising policies and practices from K-12)

- Leadership makes time to discuss important issues during faculty and staff meetings and incorporates strategies for general better use of time to address these issues.
- We need to address accountability that focuses on the child at *all* levels of the continuum. A problem with this is that there are not measures in place to deal with this-especially non-native English speaking students.
- The K-12 system recognizes that leadership matters to the quality of the school and improving student learning, and as such has adopted leadership standards to guide the preparation, professional development, and performance of school leaders.

Push Up (promising policies and practices from early learning)

- Early learning providers operate under staff: child ratio regulations
- Early learning operates under the philosophy that child development knowledge is the foundational piece for how individuals learn
- Early learning focuses on evaluating facilities and learning environments as important components in promoting student learning
- Early learning provides multiple choices and flexibility in early care and education programs (home-, center-, school-based, flex hours, interventions and service)

Kristie asked the group to think about policies and practices that need to be worked on as a mutual effort

- Definitions and policies related to the work of creating and sustaining a learning continuum must match
- Work together to push for funding that reflects the learning and development of the whole child
- Build a set of communication and collaboration practices
  - How do we define it?
  - What structures need to be in place to facilitate collaboration among the stakeholders?
  - Set parameters and define a strategy for consensus-building and decision-making

Lisa pointed out to the group that Mimi Howard, while she couldn't be there for the meeting, sent an article on the Spark Initiative. She asked members to take a look at the article to see what some of the local collaborative work around the country looks like.

Delphi Survey

Lisa Hood presented some findings from the Delphi Survey. According to her, the majority of respondents thought that the definition of early learning continuum was adequate. The few that did not think it was adequate said that the definition needed to include public schools, learning environments in formal and other education settings. Other suggested terms for early learning continuum include: birth to grade 3 and early care and education.

Model collaborations in which early learning and K-12, along with other community partners are working together to align the systems into a learning continuum are Springfield/Sangamon

County and Evanston Early Childhood Community Collaboration. The group suggested Rockford, Cicero, and Decatur as good communities in which to look at for model examples.

Other results of the Delphi Survey were displayed in a companion power point presentation. Lisa indicated that the next round of the Delphi survey will be distributed within the next week.

### Other Information

A press release will be going out on Monday to major newspapers and national organizations to inform others about what we are doing. Lisa will also put the press release up on the website. Lisa is hoping to get the gap analysis surveys out to elementary principals, professional development providers and early childhood program directors this week. The surveys will be available on the LINC web site and members will be notified before the surveys go out so that they can contact their respective members and encourage them to complete the survey.

### School Leader Task Force Redesign Committees

Linda Tomlinson presented on the School Leader Task Force Redesign Committees, which consist of five groups (see below). Information about the School Leader Task Force and the Illinois Mentoring and Distinguished Principal Leadership Institute were presented at the August LINC meeting. Based on recommendations from the Illinois School Leaders Task Force (February 2008), by 2013, all principal preparation programs will be required to resubmit for approval under new program approval criteria aligned to new outcomes based school leader standards. The redesign teams are being convened to develop draft material according to the different criteria for program approval. The five redesign committees are as follows:

1. **School Leadership Standards Committee** with the charge to draft a set of outcomes-based standards as a guide for mapping out what skills and behaviors should guide principals from aspiring through distinguished.
2. **New Structure for Leadership Certification and Endorsements Committee** with the charge to conceptualize a draft leadership continuum structure in Illinois that will provide career ladders for teachers, other administrative positions and principals.
3. **School/University Partnerships and Selection Process Committee** with the charge to develop draft criteria for school/university partnerships as part of the new statewide approval criteria for principal preparation programs. Recommended criteria should include the inclusion of districts to co-design, co-implement, and co-assess new principal preparation programs.
4. **Residencies/Internships Committee** with the charge to develop draft criteria for the internship as part of the new approval criteria for principal preparation programs.
5. **Assessments of Candidates and Graduates Committee** with the charge to develop draft criteria for rigorous, systemic formative and summative assessments of candidates and graduates as part of the new approval criteria for principal preparation programs.

The committees will begin meeting this fall and it is encouraged for members of LINC to volunteer for a committee to help to create an aligned vision for leadership development around the learning continuum (birth and beyond). One thing the pre-K field can learn from K-12 is that leadership matters and K-12 has spent considerable time and resources to investing in highly effective school leaders. Anyone who has more questions or is interested in becoming a part of these efforts should contact Lisa Hood ([lhood@ilstu.edu](mailto:lhood@ilstu.edu)). If you are interested in serving on a

particular committee please note this in your message. She will forward the information on to Linda Tomlinson.

#### Concluding Remarks

Lisa thanked members of the advisory committee for their input in the day's meeting and stated that minutes of the meeting would be sent out in the near future, as would another round of the Delphi survey. Jan Maruna also asked for an updated calendar of meetings to be sent out. Lisa asked members to get in touch with her via e-mail ([lhood@ilstu.edu](mailto:lhood@ilstu.edu)) if they have any topics or issues that should be discussed at the next meeting

Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 24, 2008 from 10-3 p.m. hosted by Representative Roger Eddy in the Hutsonville School District at the Community Center, 116 S. Main Street, Hutsonville, IL 62433