

BIRTH-3RD GRADE INTERAGENCY COUNCIL

PROGRESS REPORT

Submitted to:

Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee,
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human
Services,
Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations

Prepared by

Department of Public Instruction Early Education
and the
Department of Health and Human Services

Date: May 1, 2018

BACKGROUND

Session Law 2017-57, Section 7.231.(d) requires the B-3 Interagency Council to submit a report by April 15, 2018 to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services, and the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations.

Section 7.231.(a) established the B-3 Interagency Council as a joint council between the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Public Instruction consisting of 12 voting members and four nonvoting advisory members as follows:

- (1) The Superintendent of Public Instruction or the Superintendent's designee shall serve ex officio, with the same rights and privileges, including voting rights, as other members.
- (2) The Associate Superintendent of Early Education at the Department of Public Instruction shall serve ex officio, with the same rights and privileges, including voting rights, as other members.
- (3) The Secretary of Health and Human Services or the Secretary's designee shall serve ex officio, with the same rights and privileges, including voting rights, as other members.
- (4) The Deputy Secretary of Human Services at the Department of Health and Human Services shall serve ex officio, with the same rights and privileges, including voting rights, as other members.
- (5) Four public members appointed by the Speaker of House of Representatives who represent organizations that focus on early childhood education and development, one of whom shall be a representative of Smart Start.
- (6) Four public members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate who represent organizations that focus on early childhood education and development, one of whom shall be a representative of the North Carolina Partnership for Children.
- (7) Two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives to serve as nonvoting advisory members.
- (8) Two members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate to serve as nonvoting advisory members.

Section 7.231.(a) further designates The Deputy Secretary of Human Services and the Associate Superintendent of Early Education as co-chairs of the Council.

A copy of the B-3 Council legislation is included as Appendix A and a list of currently appointed members is included as Appendix B.

The Council was created to establish a vision and accountability for the birth through third grade system of early education that addresses the following seven focus areas:

- standards and assessment
- data driven improvement and outcomes, including shared accountability measures
- teacher and administrator preparation and effectiveness
- instruction and environment
- transitions and continuity

- family engagement
- governance and funding

B-3 INTERAGENCY COUNCIL OVERVIEW

Charge:

To establish a vision and accountability for the birth through grade three system of early education.

Powers/Duties:

- (1) Facilitating the development and implementation of an interagency plan for a coordinated system of early care, education, and child development services with a focus on program outcomes in satisfying the developmental and educational needs of all children from birth to eight years of age that includes at least the following:
 - a. Any recommendations to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Superintendent of Public Instruction on necessary organizational changes needed within the Departments of Health and Human Services and Public Instruction to be more responsive to and supportive of the birth to grade three continuums of early learning and development in an effort to optimize learning gains realized in the prekindergarten years.
 - b. An early childhood information system that facilitates and encourages the sharing of data between and among early childhood service providers and State agencies.
 - c. An early childhood accountability plan that includes identification of appropriate population indicators and program and system performance measures of early success of children such as the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading.
- (2) Implementing a statewide longitudinal evaluation of the educational progress of children from prekindergarten programs through grade 12.
- (3) Collaborating with the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Health and Human Services, the North Carolina Partnership for Children, and other relevant early childhood stakeholders, including members of the North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council, to achieve the goal of a coordinated system of early care, education, and child development services for children from birth to eight years of age.

B-3 INTERAGENCY COUNCIL PROGRESS-TO-DATE

B-3 Interagency Council members were appointed in November 2017, and the Department of Public Instruction filled the newly established Associate Superintendent of Early Education position in December 2017. The first meeting of the B-3 Council was convened on January 31, 2018. Prior to the meeting co-chairs Associate Superintendent for Early Education at the Department of Public Instruction and Deputy Secretary for Human Services at the Department of Health and Human Services thoroughly reviewed the B-3rd Grade Interagency Council Legislation and planned the agenda.

The initial meeting on January 31, 2018 included: introduction of council members, communication of the Council's charge, presentations (Appendices C, D, and E) on early brain development and research on what improves birth through 3rd grade children's educational success, and co-chairs presented on the strengths and challenges of the seven focus areas of the B-3rd grade education system from their respected departments. Council members engaged in a group discussion on work prioritization.

Overall discussion themes were:

- Children's development is most influenced by their families – we must consider this in our work.
- Education is just one factor in children's healthy development: children's physical, cognitive and social-emotional development are inter-related.
- The Birth-5 and K-3 systems are very different in terms of standards, expectations for children, funding, governance and structure.
- Children and families experience challenges in navigating within and between both systems
- It is important to consider the balance of public and private and the role of government as we prioritize our work.
- We should be willing to think outside of the box and not assume that current programs, standards and structures need to drive our future goals and recommendations.
- We need to connect to other Councils and state level efforts around B-8 so we don't duplicate efforts.
- The workforce is key to successful outcomes for children.

The second meeting of the B-3 Interagency Council was held on March 15, 2018. This meeting began with a review of the Council's charge and a summary of the seven focus areas:

- standards and assessment
- data driven improvement and outcomes, including shared accountability measures
- teacher and administrator preparation and effectiveness
- instruction and environment
- transitions and continuity
- family engagement
- governance and funding

Council members prioritized their top three focus areas which were: 1) data driven improvement and outcomes, 2) teacher and administrator preparation and effectiveness, and 3) transitions and continuity.

Overall discussion themes were:

- Families need a “navigator” to help them and their children make good transitions and access appropriate services.
- An ideal birth to age 8 system would be its own system outside of the current birth to age five and K-12 systems we have now.

Before the meeting adjourned Council members identified and requested information to be presented at the next meeting which would be helpful in developing vision, goals and strategies. The requested information included: funding streams for early education, roles of the groups that work in early education, existing early childhood data, and the current pre-k to Kindergarten transition work.

Future Meetings

The next meetings of the B-3 Interagency Council will be held in May and August. Topics will include an overview of the current early childhood system in North Carolina, an overview of the NC Pathways to Grade Level Reading data indicators, and discussions about the vision, goals and strategies for the Council.

A [website](#) has been created for the B-3 Interagency Council which will house agendas, meeting minutes, legislation, handouts, reports and other documents related to the B-3rd Grade Interagency Council.