



PreKindergarten Education Implementation Committee – System-Level Workgroup Meeting

March 8, 2024: 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Microsoft Teams Virtual
Meeting Call In: 802-552-8456
Conference ID: 558 242 839#
[Meeting Link](#)

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Present: Janet McLaughlin, co-Chair, AHS, DCF Deputy Commissioner; Renee Kelly, Head Start Collaboration Office; Rebecca Webb, Regional Prekindergarten Coordinator
AOE representatives: Suzanne Sprague
Others: Molly Loomis, Facilitator; Meg Baker
Absent: Jeff Francis, Vermont Superintendents Association; Colin Robinson, Vermont National Education Association

Facilitator Molly Loomis called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

Loomis asked if there were any changes to the agenda. The group proposed tabling the scheduled “overview of the current system” until a future meeting when the full workgroup could be present. Renee Kelly made a motion to amend the agenda and Rebecca Webb seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Loomis asked if there was any discussion about the draft meeting minutes from 2.9.24. A spelling suggestion was made. Renee Kelley made a motion to amend the meeting minutes to correct the error and Janet McLaughlin seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Each participant shared what is inspiring them about their prekindergarten work. They shared excitement about the people involved in the Prekindergarten Education Implementation Committee; the recent [federal support for the mixed delivery system model](#); the increase in early childhood educators receiving bachelor’s degrees or higher in Vermont; and how Vermont is progressing relative to other states working to implement universal prek systems. They also expressed some anxiety about the scope and process of the Prekindergarten Education Implementation Committee.

The group continued their discussion from the previous meeting about how to assess the

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needs of both the State and local education agencies. Loomis suggested that they consider what needs they could already make informed recommendations about versus what needs they should talk to stakeholders about.

The group discussed the tension between conducting consistent and thorough stakeholder outreach and moving through the scope of work on the timeline provided. Participants expressed the desire to be consistent about stakeholder questions and consider the bias they each bring to the process. They also recognized that the Prekindergarten Education Implementation Process does not include time or resources to create a perfect survey instrument or a robust stakeholder engagement process. Therefore, the group decided to create a general script of questions for stakeholder groups that they could each adjust based on the specific stakeholders and conversation. They will also use the Workgroup as a place to vet and discuss their respective stakeholder input before bringing it to the full Committee. They identified the importance of coordinating stakeholder outreach across other Workgroups and being thoughtful about the people and groups they engage for feedback.

Janet McLaughlin shared the [results of her discussions](#) with leaders from the Child Development Division and Agency of Education about the values, practical and legal needs of the State. The group discussed the depth of information McLaughlin received and her process of asking the questions. Based on McLaughlin's experience, the group updated the order and suggested rephrasing some of the questions. In particular, they suggested that the questions clarify that the system is evolving into prek4, rather than simply expanding universal prek. The rephrase felt important because, members noted, some stakeholders are not aware of the implications of this evolution, particularly the removal of three-year-olds from universal prek. They also suggested that stakeholder questions should capture both what will need to change and what will need to remain in order to evolve into a prek4 system.

The group acknowledged that Local Education Associations doesn't accurately capture all the school-affiliated stakeholders and suggested changing it to "school system-based stakeholders". They also noted that they don't need to limit the stakeholder groups they engage with; it's fine to ask any stakeholders the questions they developed.

The group made these commitments moving forward:

- Expand the stakeholder interview questions to also cover the other considerations they are charged with;
- Review and offer feedback on the revised questions and stakeholder groups;
- Set meetings with stakeholder groups before the Workgroup meets again on April 13; and
- Revisit the "overview of the current system" presentation at the next meeting.

Members of the public were present and invited to be heard. Meg Baker, a regional prekindergarten coordinator in Addison County, shared that prek stakeholders bring diverse perspectives and that, even among stakeholders in her region, their answers to the

questions we ask would vary widely. She added that people might not be able to answer some of the questions and that the information we gather will depend on who we ask.

The meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Meeting minutes recorded by: Molly Loomis.