

NOTES – CHILDREN’S CABINET ROUNDTABLE 2010

June 30, 2010

Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum—introduces Children’s Cabinet Roundtable, history and background

- Mentions wanting to focus more on state/federal connections going forward
- **Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum**, goes over the agenda for the rest of the day
- **Danielle Evennou, the Forum**, walks everyone through the packet

Introductions and understanding of Ready by 21

- **Lauren, ME**—See Ready by 21 in different ways, strategy by which leaders and communities come together around outcomes for children and youth
- **Jim, FL**— Ready by 21 sounds great, glad we’re all around the table and sharing ideas
- **Dale, MN**— Ready by 21 is putting together the best thinking on children and youth and enabling stakeholders to come together in a different way – because of the national partners it give dual value and resonance
- **Mee, MN**— Ready by 21 frame was the inspiration for the MN legislative Child and Youth Caucus, Ready by 21 forces legislatures to think about an integrated frame both vertically and horizontally
- **Judith, MN** – Ready by 21 is a framework – a way of allowing stakeholders to come together and focus on the big picture
- **Jody, NGA** – Ready by 21 is a framework to support children and youth
- **Angela, OH** – Ready by 21, technically don’t “have” Ready by 21 in Ohio, but I have used Ready by 21 tools and approaches in OH over the years to define what we want for children and youth, particularly as they transition to adulthood, and also look at how to better align our policies and resources
- **Ellen, PA** – PA hasn’t used Ready by 21 comprehensively, but has incorporated some elements of it over the years
- **Rosemary, MD** – Ready by 21 is the strategy for the MD Children’s Cabinet and the Governor’s Office for Children – helped with particular populations that face challenges, Ready by 21 is also used as an accountability measure
- **Jim, KS** – Haven’t used Ready by 21 piece, because we focus mostly on early education, but the thinking about across the age spectrum, the Cabinet may be able to move on beyond early childhood in the next few years
- **Iris, OR** – OR Commission on Children and Families focuses on Ready by 24 (because CC and workforce development is at the table) and we’ve created a comprehensive dashboard to track progress and promote accountability
- **Danielle, the Forum** – is a strategy – leaders from all levels coming together to share resources and strategies
- **Eric, DC** – Ready by 21 is a...
- **Jena, TN** – Ready by 21 as the span of the child’s life as they develop, new to Ready by 21, but very excited to be involved

- **Carol, IA** – Iowa has had a lot of exposure to READY BY 21, likes to think of it more as a “set of strategies” – like the big picture, system level approach, my favorite slide is the “gear slide” because when you are working at the state level you are so far removed from direct service that the visual of the gears helps me get my arms around the impact of the work
- **Sherri, TX** – New Children’s Cabinet in TX, like PA we have some local groups and non-profits using some of the tools, hoping that Ready by 21 can help us align policies with practice at the state and local level

Elizabeth, the Forum—Introduction to Ready by 21

- You may be utilizing Ready by 21 concepts and principles, without branding the work officially as "Ready by 21." It is not an all or nothing kind of concept. You may be working on one or more elements that are integral to the Ready by 21 strategies that can help you get you on track to change the odds for children and youth.
- Briefly outlines national partners because they are a great set of folks and organizations that can help you as you do this work:
 - NCSL
 - United Way Worldwide (signature partner)
 - Corporate Voices for Working Families
 - National Collaboration for Youth
 - American Association of School Administrators
 - Search Institute
 - America’s Promise Alliance
- Let us know if you have connected or want to connect to these partners
- Technical partners as well- you’ll hear more about them this afternoon from Karen Pittman
- The Governor's Children's Cabinet Network is a mobilization partner, and we bring your ideas and perspective to the Ready by 21 National Partnership
- **Mee, MN** – recently in Austin, TX, their strategic plan started with “Ready for College, Work and Life” and I felt an immediate affinity for the group
- Elizabeth, the Forum –Ready by 21is set of principles- not a brand. Use what works for you and call it whatever you want
- **Lauren, ME** – Ready by 21 and Results Based Accountability are perfect for a legislative group looking to ramp up accountability
- **Angela, OH** –Group of advocates recently told me at a casual breakfast that “they” are going to be doing Ready by 21– which surprised me because the Cabinet is doing a very similar thing
- **Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum**—Voices for America’s Children is not an official partner, but we there has been a lot of thought about how the advocates fit into this work at the local, state and national level
- **Mee, MN** – politics about who “owns” things is very real and can be very challenging
- Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum—a quick way to disarm some of that is to focus on how MUCH needs to be done, and that no single entity can “own” it
- **Lauren, ME** – our stakeholder groups developed a lot of the plan and then the cabinet tweaked it

NETWORK QUESTIONS:

- **Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum** – Should we expand to P-20 councils? Early learning?
- **Jim, KS** – I think it would be great to interact with P-20 councils, ours is much broader than just the traditional education pipeline, they also tend to be very influential people
- **Lauren, ME** – How does your P-20 group interact with the Cabinet?
- **Jim, KS** – They tend to think of us as experts in the early childhood space, and they took it and ran with it. They don't have control of funds, but they have been fairly successful at getting things passed through the legislature
- **Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum**—How many folks have an active P-20 Council?
 - GROUP: approx. 5 P-20s, 8 Early Learning Groups
- **Lauren, ME** – I think it would be great. I sit on Maine's P-20 Council – but it is ONLY in the Dept. of Education.
- **Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum**— work on a state by state basis – and judge independently based on the focus, makeup, etc. of each group
- **Ellen, PA** – trying to figure out how to look broadly without stepping on toes (early learning, P-20 etc.) So bringing people together and finding examples of successful collaboration to model after is very helpful. Opportunity with elections to bring these things together. Collaborative efforts are now siloed – ironically.
- **Angela, OH** – I would support a way to tie the work together, because there can be a lot of unproductive overlap
- **Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum**—at the Forum we call these things “moving trains” and we have a self-guided way to align moving trains or we can facilitate gatherings to help align them
- **Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum**—“expanded membership” the policy team will commit to doing research about P-20/Early learning groups have collaborated, etc.
- **Sherri, TX** – we did a landscape map of “collaborative groups,” there is also a matrix that tells exactly whose on what and what their charge is– which has been a great tool for the Cabinet to build on existing work and take advantage of existing expertise. It is a moving target to we have a lot of Velcro on the back to help us as stuff moves around *laughter*
 - *** SHARE TEXAS VISUAL WITH GROUP***

FORMAT OF ROUNDTABLES:

- Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum –moving toward more targeted gatherings and challenges
 - Describes Ready by 21, Credentialed by 26 mini-challenge
 - Describes “deep policy alignment” challenge
- Governor's Children's Cabinet Network services:
 - Available to facilitate retreats and gatherings
 - Possible awards to elevate visibility
 - More writing
 - Updating the Directory

STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORTS (featuring OH and MD)

- **Rosemary, MD**
 - MD results for Child Wellbeing
 - 8 results and 24 indicators that guide the work of the Children’s Cabinet
 - 100 stakeholders came together to create the plan
 - Aligned with the results and funding for Local Management Boards
 - First plan focused on transition age youth
 - Second plan focused on early learning
 - MD is the first state that has all childcare under the same roof
 - Brought together 100 of our closest friends (some who didn’t like us)
 - If I do one more vision and mission statement I’ll go crazy
 - I think we should just have a standard national vision and mission that states can just swap out the proper nouns
 - Final plan was the Ready by 21 plan – done in conjunction with the Local Management Board (LMB) work through Casey Foundation
 - Adopted by the Cabinet
 - Constantly called to the legislature to report on outcomes and indicators
 - Keeps state leaders focused on the foundation of the work
 - Been working on amending/modifying the 8 outcomes and 24 indicators to reflect changes in demographics and needs
 - No alignment with P-20, very much the Governor’s baby
 - Constant need to be firm about the plans and goals, in four administrations no one has ever said to get rid of the results, indicators, and plan – because it’s so powerful and has been so consistent
- **Angela, OH**
 - In 2008, the legislature put into statute that the Cabinet Council and the local coordinating bodies to assess and report progress
 - Spent a lot of time helping the local coordinating bodies
 - We have p-16s in Ohio, but they aren’t being supported at the state level currently
 - The Cabinet wasn’t a focus of the current administration, so the First Lady led the charge on a detailed scan of all the localities to find out what challenges they were facing to providing services and supports to young people
 - Started the plan last Spring
 - Created a logic model
 - Lots of initiatives going on that we are connected to or that we are responsible for
 - When we started to talk about strategies we pulled a lot from our research about the local bodies
 - A lot of focus on Family engagement and youth in transition
 - Strategic plan for both

- Started with the state departments only, because we didn't want to get overly focused on particular segments of the population
 - Wanted to focus on all families and all systems
 - Created a flexible funding workgroup
 - Not strategic plan for this group per say, but are moving forward to propose next month the plans for expanding flexible funding in OH
 - Shared Accountability:
 - Child wellbeing indicators (started to define them in 2002)
 - 72 indicators (we can currently measure 50-55 with state data)
 - In the process of launching a website that will provide real time data for these indicators to local coordinating bodies, and they can compare their county to other counties as well
 - Data:
 - Integrated data is a goal of every "council, commission, etc."
 - So we are simply supporting this work right now
 - Building Capacity:
 - Working specifically to help the local coordinating bodies, technical assistance, flexible funding, rule waiving
- **Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum**—any other states that are going through a strategic planning process?
- **QUESTIONS:**
 - **Dale, MN** – how do you finance the process, stakeholder gatherings, etc.
 - Ohio has free facilitation for state departments
 - Implementation is proving to be more of a funding challenge
 - MD, NGA grant (\$10,000) last year, and just received another one, we also just submitted a federal grant to help that work
 - The Forum and the Casey Foundation subsidized much of the planning process
 - No state dollars because there aren't any
 - MA, plan funded by a private funder
 - **Sherri, TX** – Is there an evaluation effort in conjunction with the planning process?
 - MD, evaluations are a part of every plan, we have a standing contract with University of Maryland
 - **Lauren, ME** – Can Ohio share their flexible funding plan?
 - ***** SHARE OH FLEXIBLE FUNDING PLAN WITH GROUP*****
 - **Angela, OH** – we survey the local boards to find out what specific funding streams needed to be flexible and why
 - The highest priority for flexible funding was for prevention services

- Asked all the departments to identify what funds they had available for prevention – millions of dollars that were there but that locals were unaware of
- The Proposal is that the coordinating bodies can put much of their state funds into a “pooled fund” and once the money is in the pooled fund there are no more strings, can be used as match money, and the can carry-over from year to year
 - **Iris, OR**– our local coordinating boards get three flexible funding streams as well
 - **Elizabeth Gaines, The Forum**–This is a topic that we’ve brought up over the years and we can bring it up again on a future call
 - **Jim, FL** –With the feds we may want to bring up funding streams where we get fewer dollars but have complete flexibility – this has worked well for FL

FEDERAL BARRIERS:

- **Ellen, PA** - Mandates for new coordinating bodies/collaborations, rather than using existing bodies
- **Lauren, ME** – lack of research and understanding what is already happening at the state level, and help for states to truly understand the funding and opportunities at the federal level
 - Comprehensive youth survey – six years to create a single survey to cover all state and federal data requirements
 - Federal mandate for “active consent” – which strips the data of all representative power
- **Ellen, PA** – Lack of federal understanding of best practices and youth development research – and resultant lack of alignment of the policies and money
 - Too narrow and not taking into account what we know to be true about youth development
- **Iris, OR** –The federal money is fueling the direction and the narrower foci of the federal government
- **Lauren, ME** –I worry more about the formula money getting so specific and cookie-cutter that it is impossible to navigate at the state level
- **Ellen, PA** – and it feels like it doesn’t take into account what we now know about children and youth, we know so much more than we did ten and twenty years ago, and our knowledge is not being turned into policy and practice
- **Rosemary, MD** – the nutrition bill is so outdated, but without doing what they want you can’t get the money. We are stuck with many of our federal agencies that cannot effectively incorporate research into policy
- **Elizabeth, the Forum** –I am hearing two things, 1) the need for flexibility and 2) the need for specificity, how do we reconcile the two?
- **Rosemary, MD** – they need to be specific about what the options are, but leave the choice of which option up to the state based on individual needs assessment

- **Carol, IA** – It tends to be a pendulum swing back and forth between being very proscriptive, to not be specific enough. Flexibility and accountability often come into conflict rather than reinforcing one another.
- **Mee, MN** – Accountability costs money, and at the state level we rarely account for that. When talking about outcomes there is an assumption that the outcomes will magically appear if you spend the money right – which is a terrible fallacy. Due to a lack of resources, our local bodies aren't even collecting the data needed to report to both the state and the feds. Before we even get to the outcomes required we much build the capacity to actually track them. Federal and state money needs to recognize that there is not an implementation and evaluation machine in place that will simply absorb the money and spit out positive outcomes. It's not sexy to spend money on implementation and evaluation – but we can't get where we need to be without it.
- **Carol, IA**– It's about the infrastructure, you can't just drop a proven evidence-based program into nothing.
- **Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum**–Let's switch over to solution oriented thinking, what needs to be done to improve things on the federal level.
- **Rosemary, MD** –What costs money is not the gathering of the data per se, but the analysis and the “so what” element. We've all have piles and piles of data.
- **GROUP** –We would like the federal government to support state-level cross-system data collaborative
- **Lauren, ME**– make goals outcomes based, not service-delivery/specific programs based. Give guidelines to states and let them create their own plans for reaching the outcomes.
- **Rosemary, MD** –It makes you wonder if they even talk to states about their policies
- **Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum**–Involve state-level coordinating body leaders in policy process. Use technology to solicit input from states that are farther away from DC. Look at children's cabinets as the neutral component for cross-systems funding/approach.
- **Mee, MN** – for Broader partnerships, is there a way to institute broader vision specific to communities that are under-represented in the decision making process. Partnerships need to be intentional about inclusion.
- **Dale, MN** – as the feds put policies into play they should outline exactly how the policy will play out based on the taxonomy of the state (county-driven v. state drive, states with a coordinating body v. without, etc. etc.)

LUNCH PREP

- **Thad, the Forum** – We are queued up a series of introduction for you all to meet the folks that are doing coordination work at the federal level
 - Both legislative and the executive efforts
 - Introduces lunch panelists

LISTENING SESSION

*for the Federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs,
facilitated by American Institutes for Research (AIR)*

Introductions:

Elana, NY –Interested in sharing what NY is doing and what other states are doing

Sherri, TX –Our cabinet is still in a honeymoon phase and I think we need some strategic planning.

David, AIR – What could be done at the federal level to support you?

Angela, OH – Touch base with us prior to releasing new policies or new opportunities and stipulate that federal policies mandate that they use existing coordinating bodies.

Carol, IA– It's critical that the federal government to think about what their role is and focus on what they do well (i.e. not narrow, proscriptive, policies)

David, AIR — Please also give some examples on how the federal government is doing it right

Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum – We had a similar meeting two years ago, Larke Huang from SAMHSA was there, and she made sure to write in it that existing coordinating bodies can be used

Dale, MN –Two things come to mind, the focus on broad outcomes, supporting a system that provides reliable useful data on a regular basis. Develop and use a specific typology for implementation for different states.

Mee, MN – The feds often make assumptions about the capacity of states and localities to actually implement federal mandates.

Jena, TN – Federal legislation needs to have clear definitions and clear guidance.

David, AIR – You are asking for Federal government to be flexible and to think about the variance in different states – but also to be very clear about harder guidelines.

Jody, NGA –Peer to peer learning, taking state's perspectives into account

David, AIR –Please think about the ways in which we can bring state expertise into the federal decision making with more regularity.

Ellen, PA – Connect common goals, best practice, etc. all in a big picture plan – no specific little silos and program. This may keep everyone jumping from hot topic to hot topic.

David, AIR –Devil's advocate, block grants – people use it for anything, bad things as well as good things.

Carol, IA—didn't have evidence and best practices that we have now since last conversation about block grants. A little more flexible funding, a little more broad base.

David, AIR—goal is not just to be a scribe.

Jim, FL—Fairly new Children's Cabinet, want to build value with policy & budget office. Create value with those entities. FERPA, example barrier. HIPPA requirements. A lot of the barriers with FERPA are more perceived than real.

Rosemary, MD—Using existing organizational structures, Head Start requirement, most governor's would chose for it to go to their cabinets, e.g. home visiting, Children's Cabinet applying, with Health Department, collaborating. On data collection, people are consistently reporting the same stuff to different agencies using the same form. Send data to a central agency (federal), so much of the federal requests are redundant.

David, AIR—Separate, if people are concerned with data collection & redundancy, send an email on how the right data can be collected more officially; leadership in the interagency workgroup – data burden issues that interfere with people's ability to use data well...Picture of the working group, very important interdepartmental effort. Aspects of a department, people who come from ED are Safe and Drug Free Schools. Right now the data people are not at the table.

Iris, OR—Dollars that flow through to our governors, becomes partisan and political, to have a cabinet or commission that doesn't have a dog in the fight most of the time, to have the governor direct it to send to nonpartisan for implementation and allocation, fight for state agencies to get out of silos.

David, AIR—How do we reconcile using existing coordinating bodies and the immediate politicization of funds/policies.

Jim, KS – Research to practice – getting best practices and what we know INTO federal policies. A more fruitful way of doing it would be to have a dialogue BEFORE the RFP goes out, or the law is enrolled, etc. What is the role of the regional offices of the federal govt. Most of our relationships are with people in DC, but sometimes we'll get slapped a little because we haven't gone through the regional office.

Rosemary, MD –The regional offices aren't always consistent with one another OR with Washington.

Judith, MN – Research to practice, "What is it? So what? Now what?" - We don't see a lot of research being incorporated at the federal level. TANF's negative effect on adolescent health

Lauren, ME—Other unintended consequence of TANF is the poor quality of programs for the children of the working poor v. the better quality of programs for children whose families are on TANF. What might be a brilliant policy for one state might be disastrous for another and the feds need to understand and deal with that.

Elizabeth Gaines, the Forum—Introduces Fayise and Joe from American's Youth Councils Network

Joe Hill, Philadelphia Youth Commission – Background on Philadelphia Youth Commission, youth forum(s), business collaboration, etc. One of the things I would look to the feds for, is a clearinghouse of information about best practices and innovations in youth policy.

David, AIR –Interagency Working Group is interested in having a website that provides the information as is also a place that young people will frequent

Fayise, MN Alliance With Youth –Federal youth council under the executive office to incorporate youth voice at the national level. Young people need a way to take part in these conversations—to help the federal government help young people.

Sherri, TX – “PIE” as a structure for stakeholder engagement (Planning, Implementation, Evaluation). States with families, Feds with States, etc.

Mee, MN – A caucus and a coordinating body working together would be extremely powerful. At the federal, state, and local level, what kind of a role does the federal government want to play in service delivery at the state and local level? Carrots or sticks? They should be willing to give up the minutia to the creative laboratory of state and local government. Foundations make NPs account for their deliverables, but Fed and state governments are not clear and coherent about that in the same way.

David, AIR –Common messages to the feds: respond to nuances in states, be clear about what you want, be in dialogue with us, use existing coordinating structures, include youth voice

Dale, MN –Growing the next generation of people who are going to be collaborative would be a smart investment at all levels of government. Accountability can be differentiated by different level – holding everyone accountable for the same outcome is expensive and often not successful. Feds hold states accountable for the indicators, states hold programs accountable for using the chosen strategies, programs hold service deliverers accountable for quality....And so on.

David, AIR –Please be thinking about what the federal government should be taking on? The next level of interaction will be more focused on the content, on the “what.”

Elizabeth, the Forum –It would be very helpful to know more about AIRs process

David, AIR –The Interagency Working Group has come up with a common definition of “youth development” to be used on RFPs throughout departments.