



**Friday, May 21, 2021
ZOOM Meeting Platform**

Public Meeting 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

A regular public meeting of the New Jersey State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) was held on Friday, May 21, 2021. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held via ZOOM meeting platform. The meeting was called to order at 9:37a.m. by Joyce Salzberg, Acting Chair. A quorum was declared.

Attendance – Maintained by the Department of Health

Welcome – Joyce Salzberg welcomed attendees. The public meeting was held via ZOOM conference call. Joyce read the Welcome Statement and announced the resignation of the SICC Administrative Assistant.

Introductions – A roll call of SICC members, REIC Directors, DOH representatives. Public members signed in through the chat box.

Approval of Minutes – Motion from Joyce Salzberg to approve March 26, 2021 meeting minutes; minutes approved.

SICC Member Updates:

- Joyce Salzberg announced that Sunny Days now provides services in Oklahoma.

SICC Standing & Ad Hoc Committees:

1. **Administrative/Policy** – Chanell McDevitt, Chair, shared that a few policies were reviewed during the retreat in April, but needs to be discussed during the public session, then voted on. SICC Policy 01 – Attendance, no new information had been added to the policy. Chanell asked for comment.

Joyce Salzberg stated that what was missing in the policy that anyone who was appointed by the Governor to serve the SICC, may not designate a representative in their stead.

Chanell McDevitt stated she will add the verbiage to the policy.

Joyce Salzberg motioned to accept the policy with the revision.

Thomas Lind responded that it is sometimes difficult to attend on a regular basis and it would be helpful to have a designee. He asked where it stated governor's appointments cannot have a designee.

Joseph Holahan responded that legislators have a designee, and a designee can attend but not vote. He supports having a designee.

Channel McDevitt did not _____

Kate Colucci stated that all [SICC] members have a commitment and suggested that only those that can attend be a member.

Thomas Lind stated that he did not always receive an invite and that it had been a challenge. However, he will try to attend on a regular basis.

Sandra Howell stated that she would send the issue (appoint a designee to attend meetings on behalf of the members). To the ethic's officer. She believes there is an actual form that individuals need to complete when they have a designee.

Joyce Salzberg moved to vote on the policy. Joseph Holahan seconded the motion for discussion.

Joyce Salzberg suggested that something should be written in the policy about a designee, however, the first step is to get more information from the Ethics office. She suggested the policy be tabled at this time and vote on it in September.

Channel McDevitt reviewed the other policies (NEED POLICIES NAMES/#'s HERE).

Kim Peto moved to accept to review the said policies.

Virginia Lynn asked about how Council Chairs select group members.

Joyce Salzberg stated that Committee Chairs could choose their own members.

Sandra Howell stated that the Chair may have the final say on who serves their committee. The Council Chair in consultation with the committee workgroup chair decides together the composition of the group.

Joyce Salzberg asked if anyone had had questions or comments and motioned to vote. Response was all ayes.

Channel McDevitt moved to discuss the SICC Budget. She asked for discussion.

Joyce Salzberg noted that there were no monies allocated to travel (which in the past was for the OSEP conference). She also noticed the decrease from \$30,000 to \$20,000.

Susan Evans stated the budget had been reduced due to the Council not utilizing funds for years. At this time, there is no travel, meetings are virtual (no need to order lunch). The Department covers the Zoom costs.

Joyce Salzberg asked about postage.

Susan Evans stated that if monies are needed, there will be a way to secure it. The Department will support the work of the SICC. At this time, the cost to run the Council is low.

Joyce Salzberg asked if anyone else had a question or comment.

2. **Service Delivery Committee** – Virginia (Ginny) Lynn, Chair reported. The group met on 5/4 through Zoom. Members are David Holmes (Fiscal), Audrey Searles (DOH) and others. Ginny asked if there were any other individuals that would like to join. The group will be reviewing TET standards and provide recommendations as appropriate.

3. **Fiscal Infrastructure** - Joyce Salzberg stated that a new committee, Fiscal Infrastructure, was developed during the retreat in April. Channel McDevitt expressed an interest to serve on that committee and they are looking for additional members; someone from the REIC and a family member. Anyone interested in serving the committee should contact Joyce.

Susan Evans explained that the Fiscal Infrastructure committee will look at the use of Part C funds, where expenses are allocated, etc.

Joyce Salzberg stated the group will also investigate to see if there are any additional funding sources.

4. **Higher Education** –Kate Colucci, former Chair introduced Corinne Catalano who will now be the Chair. During the retreat, it was determined that the committee's name will now be called, Personnel Prep.

Corinne Catalano the committee will identify tasks including personnel prep and think about inviting others to join the group.

5. **Family Support Committee** – Nicole Edwards, Chair, is looking forward to serving this committee.

Joseph Holahan stated that he had worked on the Family Support Committee years ago when it was active. The group worked on Child Find efforts, collaboration with pediatricians and parent participation. There was some work on social/emotional.

Nicole stated the current members, Carmela Balacco (FLREIC), Joseph Holahan (St. Joseph's/SICC), Michele Christopoulos (Progressive Steps/SICC) and asked if anyone else was interested to contact her. Nicole shared some of her thoughts on some of the

ideas the committee could work on including, but not limited to, technology, transition, social-emotional. Finding ways to collect family voices and help families advocate.

Patty Green, Thomas Lind both expressed an interest to serve on the Family Support Committee (chat box responses).

6. **Transition Committee** - Alexis Ziegler, Chair, is also looking to recruit members, including family members, reps from the REICs. Corinne Catalano will also serve on the committee.

Joyce Salzberg suggested that a Service Coordinator (SC) serve on the committee.

Kim Peto agreed that a SC should be on the Transition Committee. She will ask her unit if anyone is interested to serve the committee.

Lead Agency Report – Susan Evans, Part-C Coordinator

1. Part C Administration – State

A. **EI WEEK 2021** - Family Support would have coordinated activities this month during EI Week. Due to Covid-19, the decision was made to forgo activities. However, First Lady, Tammy Murphy will provide an activity in June. DOH is very excited and are currently working on the details.

The Southern NJ REIC (SNJREIC) created a video that discusses telehealth.

B. **Child Find count** – due to Covid-19, there was a drop in December 1 Count.

C. **Part C Application** – DOH submitted the Part C application and received one public comment.

2. Part C Administration – Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

A. **OSEP** will be using a different matrix to assess the State Systemic Improvement Plan. The information and data that OSEP will be reviewing the determination will not include Covid-19. Reporting ends June 30th, only 3 months of non-Covid. Next year, DOH will most likely see the impact of Covid (July 2020-July 2021) in reports.

B. DOH will need to create a new plan. Formation will be key, and it needs to be in alignment with the SICC work in relation to the State Systemic Performance Plan, determining compliance and results.

B. The American Rescue Plan allocated to Part C programs for additional funding. What States know is that the funds will be subjected to the same “use of funds” requirement as all Federal Part C funds, including rules about not supplanting funds. States will have two years to use the one-time funding. Stakeholders input on the use of these funds is required. States will have additional reporting requirements to document

the use of funds. What states do not know at this time is what the final approved amount will be, when the funds will be made available and what additional limits of use [for funds] that may be imposed by OSEP. An example of a limitation is if NJDOE were also given additional funds, they can take such monies for infrastructure and the rest can go to the districts.

C. Federal budget – President Biden released highlights of the budget request for FFY2022. The budget includes a significant increase for IDEA overall and Part C, in particular. According to the budget, “To ensure that children with disabilities have the opportunity to thrive, the discretionary request includes \$15.5 billion, a \$2.6 billion increase for IDEA grant that would support special education and related services for more than 7.5 million for students in pre-K through 12th grade. The \$250M increase would support reforms to expand access to these services.

D. OSEP Conference – The OSEP conference will be held virtually, July 19-22, 2021. Members of the SICC are encouraged to attend. Registration is not yet posted, but DOH will provide all SICC members with the information when it is open. There should be no cost to attend the virtual conference.

3. Other State Updates

A. COVID-19 – NJEIS has moved from telehealth (virtual services) to in-person (currently 60% in-person, 40% by telehealth). Updates on the health guidelines have been disseminated to NJEIS. The system will continue to update personnel as the Governor modifies the State guidelines about indoor masks, travelling, etc. The Governor’s office has announced that schools will be in-person in September. NJEIS will continue to offer telehealth as part of service delivery options for families.

B. Centralized Background Checks – centralized background checks are under consideration. After review, there will be additional rule making and statutory requirements that must be in place prior to DOH devising a centralized processing system.

C. Language Line (interpreters) – a change in Language Line provider is under consideration as of July 1. NJEIS will obtain the information by June 1.

D. Rate Study – DOH has one vendor who responded to the request for a mini-bid and is reviewing the bid. DOH is finalizing the process to engage the vendor and start the rate study.

E. Looking Ahead – NJEIS is looking ahead for the first time since 2018, whereby NJEIS was not in an active crises mode. There was the transitioned operational crises (EIMS), the COVID-19. The vision for NJEIS is that it is a modern, efficient and sustainable system that collectively works to achieve quality outcomes for children and families. How do we modernize and move from where it was forward. NJEIS is looking at the families’ total experience, i.e., Referral, Family Cost, EOB, SCU, EIP, etc.

F. SICC retreat – The SICC retreat has been scheduled for April 16th. At the retreat, plan to refresh committees and set new agendas.

Joyce Salzberg asked about the one bidder (rate study); she feels concern that there are no other contenders.

Sandra Howell responded that the State has contracted vendors in different categories. DOH sends that office what they need and a vendor list is provided. DOH does not search for rate study group, they must go through the State. If DOH reposts or sends it out for a RFP, it is a much longer, and different process. They need to follow the rules.

Joyce Salzberg asked if the rules and regulations had changed. It was her understanding that the vendor used (years ago) came from Maine and not within the system.

Sandra Howell stated vendors are registered through the Treasury Department and vendors not need be within the State of New Jersey. Should DOH go out for bid, they would need to post the opportunity through procurement.

Susan Evans stated should they go through the RFP route it is possible to end up with the same vendor that already submitted; in that process, additional years would have been added.

Joseph Holahan asked about the NJEIS video on telehealth. He noted that many families are reluctant about in-home services and are skeptical about telehealth. The video is a benefit and asked if families had access to it.

Jennifer Buzby stated that yes, the video is accessible for families; it is posted on social media and website.

Susan Evans stated that a Central Directory (the Family Matters Website) is in the works. It has lots of resources, events and much more for families. It would be a good idea to share that information with families. A link to the video will be made available.

Nicole Edwards stated that a liaison from the DOH could serve on the Family Support Committee to ensure the committee is in alignment with DOH goals.

Susan Evans stated that Audrey Searles would be on the committee.

Nichole Edwards mentioned that every article that is written, academia looks at implications.

Susan Evans suggested that the committee look at their agenda from the theory of action perspective, improved outcomes for children and families. The committee could always circle back to examine its purpose. It might be useful to look at families and their total experience within the system, including the use of E signatures.

Kate Colucci asked whether or not feedback to vision statement.

Susan Evans responded not at this time.

Joyce Salzberg stated that it is often difficult to retain high quality practitioners because EIPs cannot compete with salaries that are offered in hospitals.

Susan Evans stated that the DOH staff met and discussed sustainable in evidence-based practice lens and want to move that forward. A few of the REICs are involved with reflective supervision. Modern is more than tech and sustainable is more than funds.

Joyce Salzberg stated that EIPs need support and funding goes with it.

Susan Evans responded that it is a bigger conversation. Sustainability goes with efficiency. SCUs look at how family cost is conducted and find a more efficient way to do family cost share.

Kate Colucci asked if there was a rate increase.

Susan Evans responded, yes. The commissioner has approved the rate increase. The field was provided that info a few weeks ago.

Joyce Salzberg state that the crises behind us, but the EIPs are still in crises mode. Some EIPs are operating at 60-70% and that is not sustainable. Joyce also suggested that in the future to responses provided to DOH, they respond.

Susan Evans concurred.

Sandra Howell commented that the transition to PCG/EIMS was a process and took time. It has been a while that the system needed to discuss PCG and claims, thanks to Susan Evans' efforts. This year will not be in a crises mode (EIMS or Covid-19).

Joyce Salzberg concurred that Susan Evans did a fantastic job!

Sandra Howell stated that DOH has rearranged the structure at the office and runs more like a business with a CEO and CFO. For example, Christine Nogami acts more like a CFO. With the new structure internally, now plan to move the program forward.

Kim Peto thanked the DOH and acknowledged that those were 3 crazy years in her career. She is optimistic with the new vision; however, she is apprehensive about a new system after all they went through with PCG/EIMS.

Susan Evans stated that the contract with PCG is close to expiring, but they will need to extend it. They (DOH) are in a much better position should a transition be needed. They had hired a consultant that does IT and is involved.

Ginny Lyn stated that communication between EIP and DOH has been much improved and is appreciative of it.

Joyce Salzberg asked if any other SICC member had additional comments.

New Business – REICs:

1. There are new, as well as existing SICC committees. Anyone interested in joining a

committee can contact the Chairperson of that committee.

2. Nicole Ramirez provided an overview of the NJEIS Completed Referral Count Comparison.

Old Business:

1. None.

Discussion:

The next SICC meeting is scheduled on 7/23. Joyce Salzberg asked if this meeting will be a retreat or public meeting.

Susan Evans stated she would check to see what the SICC meeting requirements would be during the year. She suggested that SICC members to attend the OSEP conference. Susan will review Robert's Rules.

Joyce Salzberg stated she believed the SICC met the meeting requirements. They met in January, March, April (retreat), May, and are scheduled to meet on September 24th and November 19th.

Public Comments:

David Holmes, ABCD, commented that he was impressed on the referral data presentation. David asked if there was a way to get more of the EI data to the EIPs to help the EIPs direct their future plans (i.e., bring staff back, etc.). He asked if the data could be public. He also thanked DOH for the rate increase and was grateful for it.

David Holmes raised the damages correspondence and felt disappointed he has not received a response. He reported that organizations are looking at their alternatives and are surprised the Federal funds of the \$5.1M were not targeted for damages. The NJEIS-09 are not in a place where it is visible on the website.

David Holmes also stated that EIPs are at 60-75% operation; they have made drastic cuts and it has been difficult. The EIPs are still in crises.

Patricia Carlesimo, LADICIN, echoed David Holme's comments and appreciate the increase. She had met with legislatures since January. There had been no increase in 16 years. They continue to advocate for the full 8% increase. Patricia stated that she appreciated the data presentation. Patricia reported that her EIP lost 30% of workforce. Advocacy efforts in conjunction with colleagues have emailed the video of families and how they appreciate EI. It is being shared to the legislatures once a week.

Joyce Salzberg commented that as professionals they have something to say but when you have a family member testimonial it is powerful.

Virigina Lynn stated how frightened families were during Covid, and she understood.

Susan Evans stated that they reviewed data from the southern part of the state. What was found that families wanted, overwhelmingly, was food security. The referral numbers decreased. Family priorities are food and jobs.

Joyce Salzberg asked for any additional comments.

Susan Evans will send a link to the OSEP conference to SICC members.

Meeting adjourned at 12:01p.m.

Next SICC meeting scheduled for Friday, September 24, 2021, at 9:30 a.m.