

Joint Meeting of ECAG/EMAG
March 13, 2012
Meeting Minutes

State Superintendent Chris Koch opened the meeting with a welcome to the group by emphasizing the importance of this committee to consider how do children best learn and what should teacher preparation programs look like to prepare teachers with the knowledge and skills to assure this.

Before talking about the charge of the day, Linda Tomlinson gave an overview of the work to date, which began with the work of EMAG to redesign teacher preparation program around the common core standards. To do this, EMAG looked at program standards for elementary and middle school around the common core standards. In doing this, a clear break between fifth and sixth grade in content standards was identified and made the recommendation that the elementary endorsement should be K-5 and the middle school endorsement should be 6-8.

The convening of the ECAG committee brought in the realization that there is overlap between Kindergarten and Third Grade within the system and ECAG and EMAG have spent a lot of time talking about content and common core. However, it also became apparent that there two approaches to teaching K, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade.

The purpose of today's meeting is to come to a consensus on what approach should be used to teach 1st, 2nd, and 3rd that can be framework for standards for both the early childhood and elementary endorsement. The day's meeting will also include looking at both NAEYC and ACEI standards and where there is overlap between the two standards.

Linda also gave a brief history of the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards, which have been in place since 2010 and should be implemented into teacher preparation programs to focus the pedagogy approach. However, Linda also emphasized that there should be clear overlap and reinforcement between the standards, including the content standards, pedagogy (ILPTS), and social/emotional learning (SEL). Purpose of today is to have a major discussion on how you would describe the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade teacher considering these standards and overlap.

Linda then passed the conversation onto Reyna Hernandez who talked about social/emotional standards. Reyna led the group through a conversation on how to break down the social emotional standards into what a teacher has to know and be able to do in the classroom.

Reyna lead a general discussion among the group on the IPTS and SEL Standards. The IPTS include knowledge and skills teachers have to have while SEL focus on the social and emotional development of children. Reyna led the group through a couple of examples of teasing out the IPTS tied to the SEL, including:

Knowledge indicator 1a. & 1h.

What does the teacher have to know to be able to do this work? What would you see in the first grade classroom?

- SES—how that might influence what child brings to the setting
 - How are needs similar; how are needs different?
- Teacher tries to get to know their students from the first day of school and use that to guide their instruction
 - Collect data—how might they collect data in first grade classroom?
 - Connecting with parents
 - Talk with kids
 - Observe kids in classroom
 - Home visits
- Teacher doesn't make the assumption that all children's experiences are the same
 - Looks at what child is bringing—but also how does their experiences that morning (e.g., difficult transportation issues)—how this might impact the child's learning that day
- Make children feel accepted in the classroom
 - Choose books that represent the children in the classroom (book selection)
- What would it look like when leading a dialogue in the classroom?
 - Mirror the language used; what is the child hearing at home; what is the type and extent of the vocabulary; level of eye contact
 - Can't always tell by the way children are dressed
- Collecting data
- Translating what teacher is learning about the child into instruction

SEL 1A. Stages A-C (First grade classroom)

What knowledge does a teacher have to have to be able to help children meet the performance indicators SEL 1A. Stages A-C

Knowledge:

- Mark Bracket's work—the whole school and the young children; everyone in the school assesses themselves where they are at emotionally
 - Institutional psychology
 - Pedagogical approaches to SEL
 - Theorist
- What is developmentally appropriate for age range and for individual child
 - What can child do in terms of expression and where can the child move forward?
 - Know the range of development
 - Social skills in a crowd
 - Vocabulary and language development
 - Cognition
 - Background and cultural—what is acceptable expression; what is expected

Skills

- Teacher needs to be able to ask open-ended questions
- Observation skills (checklists, record-keeping)
- Knowledge of what to do next
- Teachers have rapport with children
- Knowledgeable of family
- Regularly communicate with family

- Seeks out resources for families
 - Whole school/whole community approach
- Teaching a child, not a class—bring in children’s and families’ strengths
- What kind of homework do you assign; what will be supported by parents?
- Teacher Ed Programs
 - Aspiring teachers need to have the experiential experiences through clinical experiences
 - Aspiring teachers need to have experiences where they reflect on their own SEL development and expressions
 - Vivian Hailey
 - Case study, PBL, scenarios-before clinical experiences
- How would you see this in the classroom?
 - Process for developing community guidelines or rules (in collaboration)
 - System teacher has in place for helping kids resolve conflicts
 - For having kids identify emotions
 - Systems are embedded in lesson plans
 - Transitions
 - Teaching SEL skills
 - Rationale for how and why teaching
 - Multiple opportunities to learn in different groups (whole group, small group, individual)
 - Presumed skill set
 - Understand how children learn; would know that you need to set up classroom and learning in such a way that you would minimize transitions, multiple ways of learning
 - Understand the continuum of learning and development in the different domains and be able to transfer that knowledge to the children in the classroom
 - Systems approach—develop that in the classroom
 - This is what we do in the classroom when there is conflict; when someone is upset
 - Know what children have to learn
 - Know how children learn
 - Know how to teach and what to teach to help children learn
- What is it we want to see in the classroom?
- What do we need to have in our teacher education programs that will develop teachers with this knowledge and skills?

Following the whole group discussion, Linda invited Dean Deborah Curtis to talk about what the dean's group is thinking as far the grade configuration. Public deans said that they would support a structure that is PreK-3rd grade and did not make sense to reach before and was not a unanimous decision. There is a belief that there should be an overlap; however, the public deans group urged a sense of caution to standardizing too much and in that spirit of respecting each institution, it should be the institution's decision if they want to reach down to birth.

Kellee Sullivan and Cindy Zuwalt presented on the NAEYC (early learning) and ACEI (NCATE) standards and shared a document that had both standards to allow the group to look at the standards to see where they are the same and where they are different. Kellee led the group through a group exercise using one of the common standards. She then had everyone go through the standards and find similarities that could be applied in looking at the knowledge and skills that are needed for Grade 1, 2, and 3 teachers.

Reyna emphasized that the purpose of this exercise is to look at this through a philosophical perspective of what is best for children as the philosophical difference has kept the two groups from coming together. In terms of development, learning and motivation, what pieces of the standards should you see with an effective 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade teacher to clarify what is a good place for kids. Reyna described this as to the best of your knowledge, how do you articulate the "I know it when I see it" for good teaching practices at each of these levels. Results of the chart exercises are attached.

After this exercise, Vickie convened the whole group to have a conversation answering the question, "Today's meeting has made me think about" ... Responses to her question are included below:

- Developmental appropriateness
- What's missing and what's not missing
 - For example—assessment ACEI/NAEYC—but IPTS covers what's missing and more
 - Teachers prepared around IPTS on assessment would be well prepared
 - IPTS intentional to make it focus on development P-12
 - Have to prepare teachers who can meet children where they are at all grade levels
 - Are there areas of standards that we need to add to, to make sure teachers are prepared—what are the standards by which we train all teachers?
 - Many areas of consensus between EC, ELED, and MS
 - Some of our assumptions about differences in philosophies may not be accurate
 - ALL teachers have to meet IPTS
 - Ultimately it comes down to how we design our programs, and how it is implemented in the classroom
 - How important it is that our aspiring teachers have clinical experiences where they see high quality teaching
 - Practical implications are hard for large teacher education programs
 - Important to have demonstration schools
 - How once you have initial credential—how does a practicing teacher go about adding endorsements to teach at a different level?
 - Should be similar to what we have today when programs determine what a candidate has to do to be able to earn that subsequent endorsement. IPTS may facilitate that as it serves as the core across programs. Career lattice structure to the credential—where teachers are able to articulate learning and experience from one credential to the next.

- We all agree that you teach by understanding kids and meet them where they are at.

She also asked for the group's thoughts about the conversation on the grade span configuration. Below summarizes the conversation:

- We know EC is important and we know that teaching is important
- Given that we know these 2 things: what do we want to do as a state?
 - Do something really important and powerful?
- Content and pedagogy? Will there be a separation of these 2 areas in programs or taught together? (e.g., calculus in math department or calculus for math educators)
 - Deep understanding for teaching of that content—math for teaching
 - Embedded pedagogy specific for teaching mathematics; best of all worlds it would be a collaboration of math faculty and teacher education faculty
- Hoping that now having higher expectations of people coming into the programs with higher standards for passing the Basic Skills Test
 - Hoping that the pedagogy becomes better through this process and not lost in the discussion and focus on common core standards
 - We're teaching kids not teaching content; content is important but we may lose focus on kids if we are so focused on content
 - Need to find the balance between content and pedagogy
- What span can teacher education programs adequately teach?
- When talking about the overlap, important to remember that there is not a separate distinction between grades and levels. Important to remember both the up and down. (gave example of becoming a better K teacher by teaching 4th grade and coming back)
- New research on social emotional, cultural influences on education. Let's get rid of turf wars and focus on what we know about learning and getting it built into the system.
- Opportunity for teachers to tell us what questions they have about this policy. How can we solicit more practitioner feedback? PD opportunity for us all. Not just shifting grade level configurations.
- When hiring, don't care if they are a Type 04 or Type 03
 - Developmentally appropriate instruction
- TPAC—will there be an EC TPA?
 - UIC piloting the EC TPAC and will provide feedback to inform the assessment to be appropriate at that level. TPAC is Prek-3rd grade.
- Hiring process for 04 certificate
 - She was afraid that she wouldn't get considered for a district job
 - Type 04 is not as flexible; so hiring is a little more difficult
- Educating administrators/stakeholders of the value of 04 teachers is a part of this so that they actively seek out 04's for early grades
 - Constraints of the system sometimes don't allow district administrators to move or hire people where they want
- What are we thinking about for the Elementary overlap? (K-5, 1-5...)
 - What might the overlap look like?
 - Overlap is important because in practice, in the classroom—teachers teach at all different levels depending on where the children are at in the classroom

- Benefits to both programs (EC and ELED)—leaves each age group with span of 6 grades. If there was going to be change than change it to P-3, 4-8.
- As a literacy person with the common core standards and looking at the breakdown—let the knowledge and content base be the guide. An assumption that by grade 5, kids will have learned certain things. Looked at the ELA on common core website—format is different. 2 pages K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5—a package. K-5 that is a box set in the standards. So, make the case for not breaking up the K-5.
- Is there a recommendation in the Getting ‘Sync report for span?
 - Report recommends no overlap
- Continuity—in order to maintain the gains—there needs to be continuity of defining programs—strong correlation between grade 3 achievements and life outcomes (e.g., high school dropout). Good instruction is good instruction. Something we haven’t talked about is the demographics of the kids coming into our schools. State has changed dramatically based on 2000 and 2010 consensus—look very different—high levels of poverty, rate of children coming in dual language learners, rate of single parent households. Children not coming in school ready at a far greater rate than in past years—doesn’t look like that will be changing by the looks of our economy. So, need to prepare teachers with content and pedagogy so they can be as strongly prepared as possible to meet the needs of these children.

In concluding the meeting, Linda thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and having this good conversation. She understood that some of the conversation may have been tedious but felt that it was necessary in order to be able to make an informed decision regarding the grade span conversation. As for next steps with this work, Linda informed the group that ECAG will continue to meet to develop the early childhood program standards and what early childhood preparation programs will look like and to discuss the early childhood special education endorsement. One member asked about the draft timeline for programs that was distributed at the last joint meeting and Linda said that the timeline is going to be revised. The revised copy will be sent to the group. Reyna reinforced the value of today's meeting in that whatever is developed needs to have value to the field in how to best meet the needs of students.

The meeting convened at 3:00 p.m.