**Council Members Attending:** Hawley Carlson, Monica DellaMea, Brittney Doss, Lisa Ertl, Jeanette Barker, Jackie Newson, Randall Reid-Smith, Laurie McKeown, Margaret O’Neal, Pam Roush, Mitzi Payne, Lori Milan

**Start Time: 11:04 am**

**Administrative Updates**

Hawley outlined the meeting schedule for 2022. ECAC meeting will be held on Zoom on the 4th Thursday of the month at 11:00 am in January, April, July, and October.

Monica notified the council that many new appointees are in process with the Governor’s Office. The council ls in need of a representative from the business community. If you know of anyone who would be interested in serving on this council, please let Hawley or Monica know.

**Discussion Topics – Led by Executive Committee**

* Childcare Updates
  + ARPA Funding

Lisa updated the council on two ARPA opportunities relevant for early childhood program:

Capacity Building Grants: <http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/>

To provide funding for current critical care site providers and new care providers to secure supplies, staff retention, payment of rent/utilities, personal protective equipment, and other needed purposes as outlined in the application for continuity of services during the public health emergency.

Childcare Stabilization funds: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bcf/ece/Pages/default.aspx>

These payments are available through September of 2023 for eligible childcare providers.

* + Build Back Better

Watching this federal bill because a major goal of the bill is to reduce childcare costs. Other benefits of the program are funding to make higher education more affordable and to address food insecurity.

* Head Start Program Updates

Brittney updated the council on challenges faced by Head Start programs. Currently staffing is a major issue and the Head Start Council is encouraging making safety a first priority and not opening classrooms unless there is sufficient staffing. Goal is to open classrooms fully by January. In January the federal vaccine mandate for Head Start goes into effect. There are concerns that this will intensify the staffing shortage for head Start Program

* WV Department of Education Updates

Monica updated the council on WV Department of Education. The Universal Pre-K State Steering Committee is conducting an assessment. Monica was able to participate in a panel with Alabama on universal pre-K as West Virginia has a strong universal pre-K program. Monica shared the Department of Education strategic plan: <https://wvde.us/strategic-plan/>. Monica expects enrollment rate data to change next year as many children did not enroll in kindergarten at age 5 due to the pandemic.

* Benedum Data Grant Update
  + Extension on use of remaining funds approved

Program began in 2015 with goal of connecting state and federal data systems. This was determined to be unnecessary and Benedum granted an extension for the remaining $45,000 of this grant. This funding will be used to conduct a landscape survey of gaps in services for children ages 0-3 in West Virginia. Draft of report will be available by December 15, 2021, and the final report will arrive January 15,2022. Project will end in March of 2022.

**Committee Activity Reports**

* Professional Development Committee
* Health Committee
* Higher Education Committee

**Meeting Adjourned at 11:58 am.**