



**Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council (BBF SAC)  
Meeting Minutes  
October 25 2021 (via Zoom)**

**SAC Members Present:** Chloe Learey, Flor Diaz Smith, Jessica Brumsted, Miranda Gray, Cheryle Wilcox, Renee Kelly, Eddie Gale, Ken Jones, Wendy Scott (AOE representation) Ilisa Stalberg, Becca Webb, Paul Dragon, Emily Merrill, Aly Richards

**Absent:** Amy Johnson, Christy Swenson, Lexi Duquette, Ashley Miller, Mike McRaith

**Community Partners/Guests:** Lynne Robbins, Sandra Graves, Matthew Lafluer, Ruth Brisson, Lee Lauber, Dimitri Garder, Liz Mitchell, Nancy Russell, Matt Levin, Susannah Wright, Sonja Raymond, Anna Milkowski, Sherry Boudro, Rex Butt, Sue Lapointe, Wendy Cunningham, Pam McCarthy, Judy Harvey, Nolan Langweil, Michelle Parson, Tori Anguish, Laurie Metcalfe, Becky Millard, Daniel Brown, Sherry Carlson, Lisa Pike, Jessica Lambert, Bethany Caruso, Tabitha McGlynn, Brooke Grams, Melissa Jackman, Jill Larson, Cynthia Greene, Megan Godfrey, Janet Kildburn, Kathi Apgar, Stever Dawn, Deb Grennon,

**Staff present:** Morgan Crossman, Beth Truzansky, Katie Mobbs, Darla Senecal, Ellen Taetzsch, Allison Oskar, Anna Brouillette, Dora Levinson

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## **Welcome & Introductions**

### **1. Welcome all in attendance, review agenda**

On October 25th, 65 early childhood leaders representing all levels of the BBF Network (Regional Councils, VECAP Committees and SAC members) gathered at the State Advisory Council meeting for an examination of the workforce shortage impacting how we serve children and families. You can view the recording from the October 25 meeting [here](#).

On the 1 year anniversary of the death of Mariah McGill, we took a moment to remember Mariah who served as a Regional Coordinator for BBF and contributed as a keen leader, advocate, and problem solver in other roles throughout the community. The Council took a moment of silence to remember Mariah's impact on the early childhood system and the gap left by her death.

### **2. SAC General Business**

#### **a. Approval of September 27th minutes**

- Motion to accept September 27, 2021 minutes by Becca Webb, second by Cheryle Wilcox,
- Opposed- 0
- Abstain- 1 Ken Jones
- All members voted in favor of approving the September 27, 2021 minutes.

### **3. BBF Policy Recommendations-**

The SAC voted to endorse the [2021-2022 Policy Recommendations](#) developed by the BBF Network. The recommendations serve as one tool the BBF Network develops as the primary advisor to the Governor and Legislature on the well-being of children, families and the early childhood system. The recommendations were drafted with input gathered from each level of the BBF network. From here, recommendations can be used to inform policy development, resource allocation, and to guide legislators, state administrators and the state's Federal delegation on the priority policy needs to improve the lives of children and families in Vermont.

At the September SAC meeting, the policy recommendations were presented for final review and feedback. The proposed recommendations address emerging needs facing children, families and the early childhood system, originally identified within VECAP committees and Regional Councils:

- o *Respond to Vermont's mental health crisis*
- o *Address chronic inequities in Vermont's early childhood system*
- o *Elevate families as decision makers*
- o *Develop a well-resourced early care and education system*
- o *Evolve the early childhood data system and infrastructure*

A vote was called to formally endorse the policy recommendations.

*Motion: The Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council, in its role as advisory body for Vermont's early childhood system, moves to endorse the recommendations that serve to inform the ongoing work of the system to support children and families.*

- Motion to endorse by Flor Diaz Smith, second by Becca Webb.
- Opposed- 0
- Abstain- 0
- All members voted in favor of endorsing the 2021-2022 Policy Recommendations!

**4. Vermont Early Childhood Action Plan Spotlight on Goal 4:** The Early Childhood will be integrated, well resourced and data-informed.

BBF is excited to commence a process to develop an Early Childhood budget. This work is both in BBF's charge in statute, and is a tool to track investment in the early childhood system over time, yet not something we have been able to do consistently thus far. Funded by the Integration in Vermont's Prenatal-3 Early Childhood and Maternal Child Systems grant (VIP3) in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Health, the project seeks to develop and implement innovative financing, health, and equity strategies to improve policies, services provision, and outcomes for the children in the prenatal period to age three and their families. This work supports Goal 4 of the VECAP 'To build an integrated, well resourced and data-informed system' and the role of one of the VECAP committees. Through this project, BBF presented about the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Team (ECICT) which has membership of the public members of the SAC who work to identify and break down silos at the highest level in state government to move toward the VECAP vision.

**5. Vermont's Workforce Crisis: Spotlight for the State of Vermont's Children Report**

BBF has heard from many SAC members, Regional Council members, and partners across the early childhood system about the challenges contributing to and resulting from the early childhood workforce shortage, and workforce challenges more broadly. While this has been a longstanding issue, the pandemic has exacerbated it to crisis levels, and has become a top priority across the state this year and it was identified as one of the top 2 priorities for [7 of the 12 BBF Regional Councils](#).

Because of this, the data spotlight for this year's State of Vermont's Children is on **Vermont's early childhood workforce**. We reviewed some of the data we have pulled together and also to highlight some of the work other partners in the state have done to gather and publish data related to workforce challenges. We were joined by Al Johnson-Kurts who serves as the Communications Director at Change the Story, and Kellie Campbell, who is a Co-Chair of the Vermont Commission on Women. Al and Kellie shared interesting data trends about what we know about women and the workforce, existing data, and ongoing efforts to learn more. A sample of the data presented includes:

- Nationally, women are a majority of the workforce in 7 of the 10 lowest paid occupations including: child care workers, personal care aides, and food preparation
  - Women are 4 times more likely than men to cite family and/or personal obligations as reasons for working part time. Women are 7 times more likely than men to cite child care problems as a reason to work part time.
- In Vermont, a recent survey conducted by the UMass Amherst in partnership with the Vermont Commission on Women, Change the Story, the Vermont Women's Fund, and Vermont Works for Women found that:
  - 79% of respondents reported disruptions in school and child care to varying levels of productivity in their jobs, and
  - 55% of respondents with kindergarten-age children reported their productivity being extremely affected by disruptions in child care.
- Our data stewards have shared so far that:
  - Between December 2018 and December 2020 there appears to be a significant decline in the number of individuals working with children in regulated child care settings according to BFIS
  - Similarly, there are significant vacancies in the mental health field, a 31% turnover rate system wide across Designated Mental Health Agencies and Specialized Service Agencies (reported to be the highest it has ever been); and 27% turnover rate specifically in mental health programs

BBF continues to capture and be interested in data related to the vacancies and staffing needs in the child care and early childhood workforce, overall and in relation to the unknown, true demand for child care, and the extent of COVID-19's impact on current workforce challenges (inconsistent school and child care schedules and availability, mental health, etc.) A spotlight on Vermont's workforce challenges will be included in this year's State of Vermont's Children published in January 2022. There was a request if SAC members or your teams have any relevant data related to the workforce that you would like to share, please be in touch with BBF's Research and Data Director, Dora Levison, [dlevinson@buildingbrightfutures.org](mailto:dlevinson@buildingbrightfutures.org).

## 6. Adjourn

3:00pm meeting adjourned

**Next Meeting- Monday November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 | 1:30-3:00 pm via Zoom**