



**Nevada Early Childhood
Advisory Council**
**Executive Leadership Strategic Planning
Ad Hoc Committee**
Public Meeting
Monday, December 15th, 2025
9:00 am-11:00 am

This is a Virtual Meeting held via Zoom.com, join [HERE](#)
Meeting ID: 876 2844 7120 **Passcode:** 620835 **Phone:** 1.346.248.7799 [Zoom Directions](#)

MINUTES

1. Welcome, Purpose of Ad Hoc, Roster Review, and Roll Call

Denise Tanata and Abbey Bernhardt, Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chairs

- Abbey Bernhardt called the meeting to order at 9:04 am
- Brandi Hearst conducted roll call

Members' Present

1. Tiffany Alston, Director of Programs, Sunrise Children's Foundation
2. Abbey Bernhardt, The National Alliance on Mental Illness, Nevada Chapter
3. Patrice Gardner, M.Ed, ECAC Vice Chair, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
4. Amanda Haboush-Deloye, Associate Professor, The Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy, UNLV
5. Brandi Hearst, ECAC Administrative Coordinator, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
6. Dr. Jamelle Nance, Early Childhood Policy Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance
7. Tiffany Olivas, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Manager, The Children's Cabinet
8. Rachel Stepina, PDG B-5 Grant Manager, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
9. Denise Tanata, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Advisor, The Children's Cabinet
10. Dr. Dianne Nicolet, Trustee, Washoe County School District
11. Brooke Yarborough, CCDP Agency Manager, Department of Supportive Services, State of Nevada

Members Absent

1. Brianna Cambra, Provider Support Director, The Children's Cabinet

Public in Attendance

1. Crystal Jones, CEO, Crystal Clear Academy
2. Lela Gonzales, The Children's Cabinet

2. Public Comment #1

Public Comment is not given during this agenda item regarding any item appearing on the agenda.

- No Comment

3. Approval of a Flexible Agenda (Discussion for Possible Action)

The Committee approved a flexible agenda.

Denise Tanata and Abbey Bernhardt, Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chairs

- Tiffany Olivas motioned to approve a flexible agenda
- Patrice Gardner seconded the motion.
- Members voted, motion passes, flexible agenda approved.





4. Review of Proposed Strategic Plan, Drafted Goals and Implementation Strategies (*Discussion for Possible Action*)

The Committee reviewed the drafted goals.

Denise Tanata and Abbey Bernhardt, Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chairs

- Denise Tanata explained the purpose of this Ad Hoc, which is to finalize the Goals using the Public Works goals, the drafted Retreat Goals, and the goals written in the Strategic Plan. Our Role would finalize and develop key objectives and strategies to include in the strategic plan, and what we want to add to it as soon as possible, adding that we need to look at capacity
 - Denise Tanata shared a Goals Worksheet she created, color-coding all the drafts of goals into 3 columns for easier reading.
 - Patrice Gardner confirmed the purpose is as Denise Tanata shared above.
 - Denise Tanata asked Patrice Gardner who will be approving our work here and who will be creating the new version of the goals and strategic plan.
 - Patrice Gardner responded that the work from the Ad Hoc will go to the Executive Leadership for approvals, and we can decide there how we will move forward. Including the need to be aware of sustainability, with us without support from Brandi Hearst and Sabrina Jones, we need to keep the ECAC moving.
 - Denise Tanata added that the goals from Public Works did not include any mention of ECAC Governance or Infrastructure
 - Dr. Diane Nicolet asked how Public Works was a part of the creation of ECAC Goals
 - Patrice Gardner answered, explaining that the Public Works team facilitated the October 2025 Strategic Planning Retreat and asked us to develop goals and strategies that would align with the plan. As the time frame was very short, our final documents, including the goals, are not exactly what we want.
 - Tiffany Olivas suggested our focus would be looking at the mismatches or things we don't see across all 3 columns, regarding the Early Childhood Integrated Data System, families with lived experiences, policies, and fiscal strategy, and then from Public Works, the organizational infrastructure pieces as our approach.
 - Rachel Stepina noticed the gray colored text is not worded the same, adding pieces of conversation that happened at the retreat as follows:
 - A Question raised at the retreat: How do we bring families into all areas of the goals?
 - A Question raised at the retreat: How do we bring data into all areas of the goals?
 - An idea presented at the retreat: Instead of having one isolated goal that focuses on data, we discussed having data integrated across the strategies related to each goal.
 - Remember, we had started with 18 goals; those were pared down twice during the retreat.
 - A suggestion presented at the retreat: clarify or move the Data/Family pieces to a different goal, if they fit better somewhere else
 - Dr. Nicolet sees Goal One written more as a long-term vision
 - Discussion between several members about the strategic plan being a 3-year plan and the goals being too broad and unachievable. The 3-year plan is not the same as a 10-year plan and a big picture; the goals are a lot of work because our hearts are in it, but we need to be careful of putting too much on our shoulders
 - Dr. Nance brought up using Public Works language as it is not concrete that Nevada will do something, but we can promote it, using language from Column 3 (Public works goals, verbiage referenced below) and Retreat goals from Column 1
 - Public works verbiage is "Promoting, elevating, advocating."
 - Amanda Haboush-Deloye would like to have a 5-year plan as things move so slowly, and will give more time for actions and goals to be achieved without losing what we are doing or wanting to accomplish
- Rachel Stepina suggested this is where we'd like to be moving toward, and these are the current goals of this strategic plan to move toward that North Star. Our retreat goals can still be included in the plan as the North Star, and the 5-year goals are how we're working towards it, being aware that we move very slowly in Nevada
- Denise Tanata asked members if there were any more comments, or if anyone was against a 5-year plan.
 - With no comment from members, Denise Tanata suggested the Strategic Plan be from 2026-2030 as a 5-year plan
 - Dr. Diane Nicolet suggested combining the drafts without rewording everything and taking the time to do that.



5. Discuss Outline and Content for 2026-2028 ECAC Strategic Plan *(Discussion for Possible Action)*

The Committee reviewed the Public Works draft Outline and Strategic Plan, discussing potential revisions.

Denise Tanata and Abbey Bernhardt, Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chairs

- After much discussion between Committee Members, Denise Tanata asked for a follow-up email to be sent to Public Works, requesting they add the North Star statements, use language from the October retreat goals, and add a section for the role of the ECAC to the best of their ability
- Rachel Stepina to send the email
- Amanda Haboush-Deloye suggests that the Public Works team move the extra content not needed to the back of the plan or another document in the email that isn't today
- Rachel Stepina replied that they have been asked to move the extras to the Appendix at the end of the document.
- Denise Tanata suggests we finalize the outline at the next meeting, allowing Public Works to implement the revisions
- Rachel Stepina asked if there are objections to the named 5 categories for the goals:
 - Workforce
 - Connected Services
 - Funding and Affordability
 - Advocacy and Implementation
 - Organizational capacity
- Tiffany Alston, Denise Tanata, and Patrice Gardner verbally agreed
- Brandi Hearst to post and email Committee members the draft of the document

6. Ad Hoc Meeting Schedule *(Discussion, Informational)*

The Committee chose an Ad Hoc meeting timeline, end date, and a meeting schedule.

Denise Tanata and Abbey Bernhardt, Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chairs

- The goal of the Ad Hoc is to have work conclude by the end of January 2026, with a finalized 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.
- Hold 2 more 2-hour meetings scheduled
- Tiffany Alston proposes to have time on the Executive Leadership meeting
- Monday, January 5th, 9-11 am, review final draft from public works
- January 20th, 10:30-12:30 pm, finalize and submit for approval to Executive Leadership 2.03.25 and March General ECAC Meeting

7. Meeting Agenda Items *(Discussion, Informational)*

The Committee chose items to add to the January 5th, 2026, meeting agenda.

Denise Tanata and Abbey Bernhardt, Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chairs

- Denise Tanata adds:
 - Finalize Draft of Strategic Plan
 - Objectives, outline, implementation strategies
- Rachel Stepina suggests having a process to adopt our finalized product in January as opposed to March because of the General ECAC meeting schedule

8. Public Comment #2 *(Discussion for Possible Action)*

Public comment is taken during this agenda item on any matter within the Council's jurisdiction, control, or advisory role power.

- Tiffany Alston thanks Abbey Bernhardt and Denise Tanata for co-caring for this Ad Hoc and all of the participants taking their own time to be a part of the Village.

9. Adjournment

- Abbey Bernhardt adjourned the meeting at 10:42 am