

Interagency Resource Management Committee
Meeting Minutes
Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Monthly Meeting
Monday, June 22, 2026
Office of Lt. Governor Kyle Evans Gay
Carvel State Building, 10th floor/ Hybrid Meeting
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

IRMC June 22, 2026: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XCDi6immR3mr5i46iZDGBw

Committee Members Present:

Lieutenant Governor Kyle Evans Gay, State of Delaware
Department of Education Secretary Cindy Marten, State of Delaware
Department of Health and Social Services Secretary Christen Linke Young
Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services Lisa Scheiffert, State of Delaware
Department of Services for Children, Youth, & Their Families Secretary Steven Yeatman, State of Delaware
Office of Budget and Management Deputy Director Ann Visalli, State of Delaware
Delaware Early Childhood Council Chair Madeleine Bayard, State of Delaware
Senator Elizabeth Lockman, Delaware State Senate
Caitlin Gleason, Department of Education
Controller General Ruth Ann Miller

Facilitators: Nasha Patel, Watershed Advisors

Staff from the Office of the Lieutenant Governor:

- Sarah Stowens, Chief of Staff
- Mark Brainard Jr., Director of Policy
- Pelumi Adesina, Office Manager

Overview

The Interagency Reform Management Committee (IRMC) held its June meeting and focused on reviewing the governance landscape analysis and initial recommendations for improving Delaware's early childhood education system. Lieutenant Governor Kyle Evans Gay presented findings from a comprehensive landscape analysis conducted over the past three months, which identified key challenges including fragmented services across agencies, lack of visibility into program outcomes, and difficulty navigating the system for families and providers. The analysis recommended creating an elevated early childhood education division within the Department of

Education as the preferred governance model, building on Delaware's strong relationships while establishing more sustainable structural coordination. Several cabinet secretaries provided feedback emphasizing the importance of clear implementation details, including specific budget authority, decision rights, and avoiding dual accountability within DOE. The discussion highlighted the need to balance system consolidation with maintaining the state's diverse mixed-delivery approach across nearly 900 providers, while ensuring families only need to navigate a single pathway to access services.

Delaware Early Childhood Governance Review

The meeting focused on reviewing governance landscape analysis and initial recommendations for improving Delaware's early childhood education systems. The discussion highlighted that while substantial funding investments have been made over 15 years, nearly 50% of the 0-5 population cannot access care, necessitating system-level changes. The committee commissioned a landscape analysis using PDG funding to examine different governance models and determine the most effective approach for Delaware, with plans to continue discussions over the next few months and complete a critical financial analysis to support the governance recommendations.

Early Childhood Development Progress Review

The meeting participants reviewed progress on early childhood development initiatives since September, including work by DEC, the Birth to Five Accountability Committee, and legislative engagement. They discussed how various stakeholders have been aligning their efforts and strategic planning, with significant legislative interest and engagement through the Kids Caucus. The group noted that 2026 presents a critical opportunity for action due to leadership alignment and funding convergence, particularly through the Preschool Development Grant.

Delaware Early Education System Analysis

The meeting focused on a landscape analysis of Delaware's early education system, highlighting substantial administration and legislature investment in fiscal year 27 budget. The PDG Governance and Finance Project team conducted extensive research over three months, meeting with government leaders and stakeholders to understand system operations and review historical strategic plans. Key statistics were shared, including 55,000 children under age 5 in Delaware with 71% of parents in the workforce, and approximately 10,000 children entering publicly funded kindergarten in fall 2025, with 1 in 5 children living in poverty ages 0-5. The discussion emphasized the need for better transparency and data to understand how investments are impacting children's outcomes and whether funds are reaching families with the greatest need.

Delaware Childcare Challenges Analysis

The committee also discussed Delaware's childcare challenges and policy outcomes. The discussion highlighted that 50% of families in Kent and Sussex Counties are looking for childcare, with some facing waitlists exceeding three years, and 71% of families have contacted

multiple agencies to find care. Key challenges identified included the 6-to-1 teacher ratio in early education, low preschool access rates, and poor literacy scores where 40% of 8th graders score below proficiency. The landscape analysis revealed that while Delaware has investments in early education, there is a lack of visibility into their effectiveness, overlapping functions across agencies, and inconsistent quality definitions that create friction for families seeking care.

Delaware Early Childhood Governance Structures

The meeting also discussed systems governance structures for early childhood education in Delaware. The group reviewed findings from research indicating that while relationships are strong, the current system relies too heavily on personal connections and struggles with accountability and coordination when key stakeholders leave the ecosystem. After analyzing different governance models including standalone agencies, cross-agency coordination, and elevated offices within existing departments, the initial recommendation was to establish an elevated early childhood education division within the Department of Education. Nasha Patel from Watershed provided details about Maryland's similar model, explaining how it allows for shared budgeting between K-12 and early childhood programs while maintaining coordination across agencies.

Maryland Early Childhood Program Consolidation

The discussion focused on Maryland's early childhood program consolidation experience and lessons for Delaware. Nasha Patel explained that while Maryland successfully consolidated early childhood services into the Department of Education, they initially kept pre-K and childcare separate and didn't fully define quality standards or develop strong data systems, which created challenges they are now addressing under new leadership. The conversation highlighted how Maryland is now better positioned to make strategic improvements and move more quickly on system enhancements, including cross-funding initiatives and improving transparency for legislators. The discussion concluded with a connection to Delaware's current opportunity to establish stronger accountability structures and strategic planning across early childhood programs.

Early Childhood Strategy Implementation Plan

The group discussed next steps for their early childhood strategy project, with a focus on moving forward with legislative and administrative alignment over the next three months. Key actions include distributing feedback forms, conducting one-on-one meetings with stakeholders, and developing an implementation guide with a phased timeline and defined roles and responsibilities. The discussion highlighted concerns about maintaining service capacity while implementing changes and avoiding the creation of new silos that would separate early childhood services from other family support programs like Medicaid and SNAP.

Delaware Early Childhood Governance Restructuring

The meeting focused on discussing recommendations for restructuring Delaware's early childhood education governance and implementation. Key concerns were raised about the clarity and feasibility of proposed changes, particularly regarding funding, costs, and the specific responsibilities that would transfer between agencies. Secretary Cindy Martin emphasized the need to define clear decision rights, budget authority, and outcomes metrics before finalizing any governance structure, while Lieutenant Governor Gay outlined plans for further engagement over the next three months to develop a more detailed implementation guide. The group agreed to continue discussions in October after gathering input from stakeholders and legislative partners, with an emphasis on ensuring any changes would help families access services more easily while maintaining the state's mixed delivery system of early childhood providers.

Next Steps

Office of the Lieutenant Governor will distribute feedback forms to IRMC members and relevant stakeholders before the end of the month. Lt. Governor's and Watershed will conduct one-on-one meetings and feedback sessions with IRMC members and external stakeholders over the next 3 months. They will engage in feedback from DEC members and communities, especially those with insight into early childhood system needs, and share findings with the IRMC. The team will present initial findings and engage with the B5 Accountability Committee in July. The Lt. Governor's team and the Watershed team will develop and deliver a more final set of recommendations and a draft implementation guide, including phased timelines, roles, responsibilities, funding/staffing/technology considerations, and decision points, for review by September. The team will map out and clarify for the group what specific programs, funding streams, and responsibilities would move (or not move) under an elevated DOE early childhood division, including impacts on federal funding and required systems. They will define and propose a "decision rights map" or similar document outlining budget authority, escalation processes, and roles for agency secretaries and the Lieutenant Governor; Develop a clear fiscal map showing where early childhood dollars sit, what is restricted/flexible/duplicated, and where new investment would have the greatest impact; Create and propose a shared outcomes dashboard with metrics such as kindergarten readiness, access to high-quality care, family experience, provider retention, workforce credentials, and unduplicated child counts; Facilitate substantive engagement and information sharing between IRMC members and counterparts in Maryland and New Mexico to inform Delaware's path forward. At October meeting, the team will provide opportunity for review and discussion of final report, implementation guide, and all feedback received, including specific focus on implementation feasibility and required authorities.

Public Comment

Jamie Schneider from the Delaware Association for the Education of Young Children, provided public comment. They stressed the importance of keeping the workforce at the center of decisions and ensuring implementation doesn't create barriers for providers.

Adjournment: Lt. Governor Gay thanked all in person and virtual attendees for attending the Interagency Resource Management Committee meeting and shares the date and time for the next meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for October 1st.