Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Report

Colorado Early Childhood Councils

cde Improving Academic Achievement

Contents

History of Colorado's Early Childhood Councils

In 1997, the Colorado General Assembly created Consolidated Child Care Pilots (Pilots) in twelve communities in the state. In 1999, the Legislature expanded this number to 17 Pilots covering 30 counties. The Pilots were initially intended to create a "seamless delivery system of early care and education services" to:

- Ensure collaboration among public and private stakeholders;

- Respond to the needs of working parents;

- Enhance child care quality; and

- Consolidate funding sources to create an early childhood system.

After ten years, the Pilots were formalized in legislation (HB07-1062) as Early Childhood Councils (Councils) and the number was further expanded. Currently, 31 Councils are operating in 54 out of 60 counties across the state. The Early Childhood Councils initiative moves this work from a pilot project to a formalized program of the State to develop an integrated system of early childhood services that includes the following four domains:

Early Learning

Family Support and Parent Education
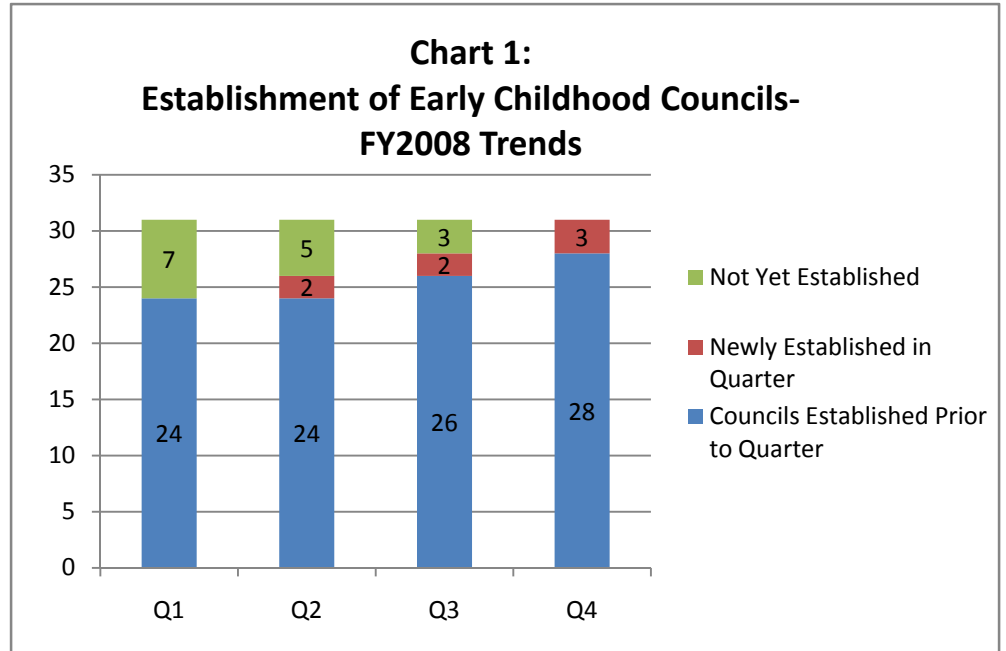
Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Health

The Early Childhood Councils are funded through both Federal and State funds that flow through the Colorado Department of Human Services. Through a collaborative, interagency agreement, the program is jointly managed by the Colorado Department of Education.

This report provides some baseline information on the Early Childhood Councils that was collected during their first full year under the new, expanded legislation. Each of the 31 Councils reports to the state quarterly on their work and on their expenditure of grant funds provided through the program. The information here reflects data collected as part of this quarterly reporting process and focuses on data that indicates coordination and integration of services to young children across the four domains. Additional graphs are provided in Appendix A of this report to show some of the organizational and governance approaches and directions of Colorado's Early Childhood Councils.

Establishment of Early Childhood Councils

As noted earlier, there were 17 Pilots under the former legislation directing this work. The expanded 31 Councils began to receive funding at the start of Fiscal Year 2008 (July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008), after a formal application process that all communities across the state were invited to participate in. By the end of the first quarter, 24 of the 31 funded Councils had established functioning bodies reflecting the specific representation and composition required by HB07-1062 (i.e., the 17 original Pilots plus an additional seven new Councils). By the end of the fourth quarter, twenty-eight of the 31 funded Councils had established the collaborative bodies that function as their Early Childhood Councils (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Establishment of Early Childhood Councils- FY2008 Trends

Legend:
- Not Yet Established (green)
- Newly Established in Quarter (red)
- Councils Established Prior to Quarter (blue)

Quarter	Councils Established Prior to Quarter	Newly Established in Quarter	Not Yet Established
Q1	24		7
Q2	24	2	5
Q3	26	2	3
Q4	28	3	

Although three remaining funded entities had not yet established their formal Councils, they did all have collaborative groups who were meeting to formalize their Councils to act under the new legislation and funding.
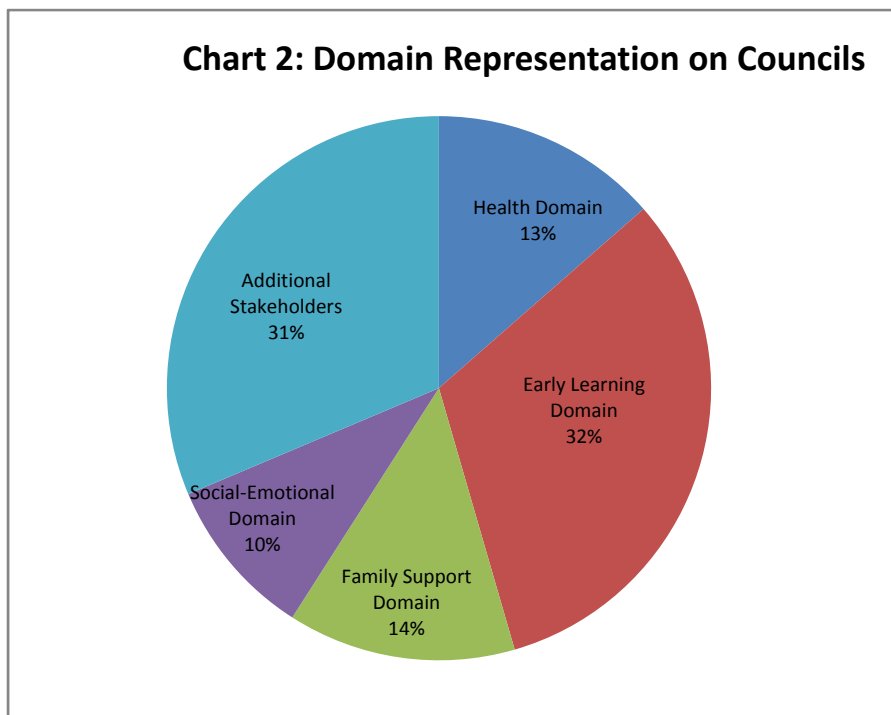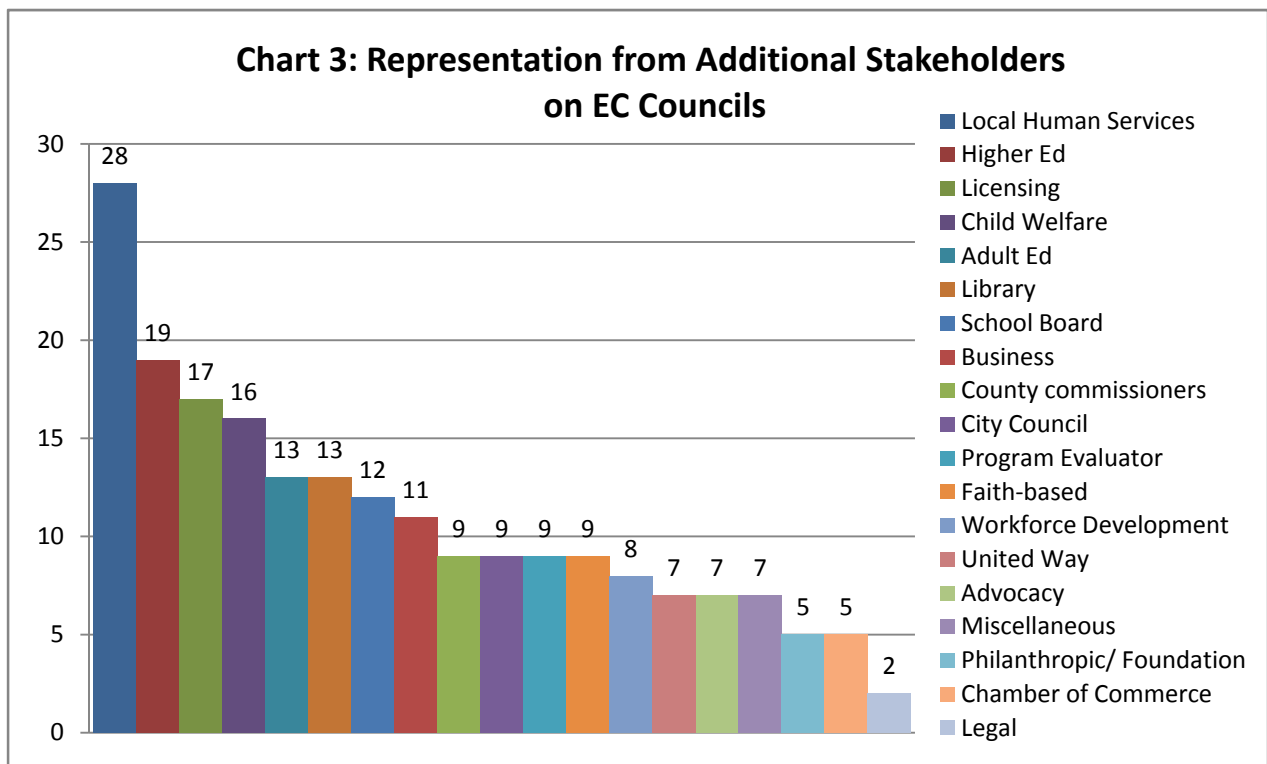
Representation on Early Childhood Councils

One indicator of an Early Childhood Council's ability to successfully integrate early childhood services in its community is the degree to which all four early childhood domains are represented in Council membership. During its first year as the Early

Chart 2: Domain Representation on Councils

- Health Domain 13%
- Early Learning Domain 32%
- Family Support Domain 14%
- Social-Emotional Domain 10%
- Additional Stakeholders 31%

Childhood Council program, Councils collectively reported that early learning makes up 32% of Council membership (Chart 2). The other three domains show smaller representation on Councils ranging from 10-14% of membership each. Additional stakeholders that do not fall into any of the four domains make up the remaining 31% of Council representation.

Additional stakeholders range from local Human Services Department officials, to School Board members, local government officials and business community representatives. Chart 3 shows the breakdown of additional stakeholders on local Early Childhood Councils as of the fourth quarter of FY2008. The most common additional stakeholders come from local human services departments, followed by higher education, licencing, child welfare and adult education. These categaories can cross domains (e.g., a human services representative may have child care and family support functions) and so reflect additional systems integration efforts of local Early Childhood Councils.

Chart 3: Representation from Additional Stakeholders on EC Councils

Local Human Services: 28
Higher Ed: 19
Licensing: 17
Child Welfare: 16
Adult Ed: 13
Library: 13
School Board: 12
Business: 11
County commissioners: 9
City Council: 9
Program Evaluator: 9
Faith-based: 9
Workforce Development: 8
United Way: 7
Advocacy: 7
Miscellaneous: 7
Philanthropic/ Foundation: 5
Chamber of Commerce: 5
Legal: 2

In addition to involvement in the Councils from the four early childhood domains, parent representation on Councils is also required by the legislation. Throughout their first year of funding under HB07-1062, the number of parents on all Early Childhood Councils across the state increased from 19 in the first quarter to 28 in the fourth quarter.

As of the fourth quarter, 36% of Councils with parent representation have two parents in their membership, while 32% have one parent representative. Nine Councils total have three or more parent representatives (Chart 4). Parent representation is displayed here as an indicator of the extent to which

the Councils are beginning to develop an early childhood system that integrates the needs of parents and families.
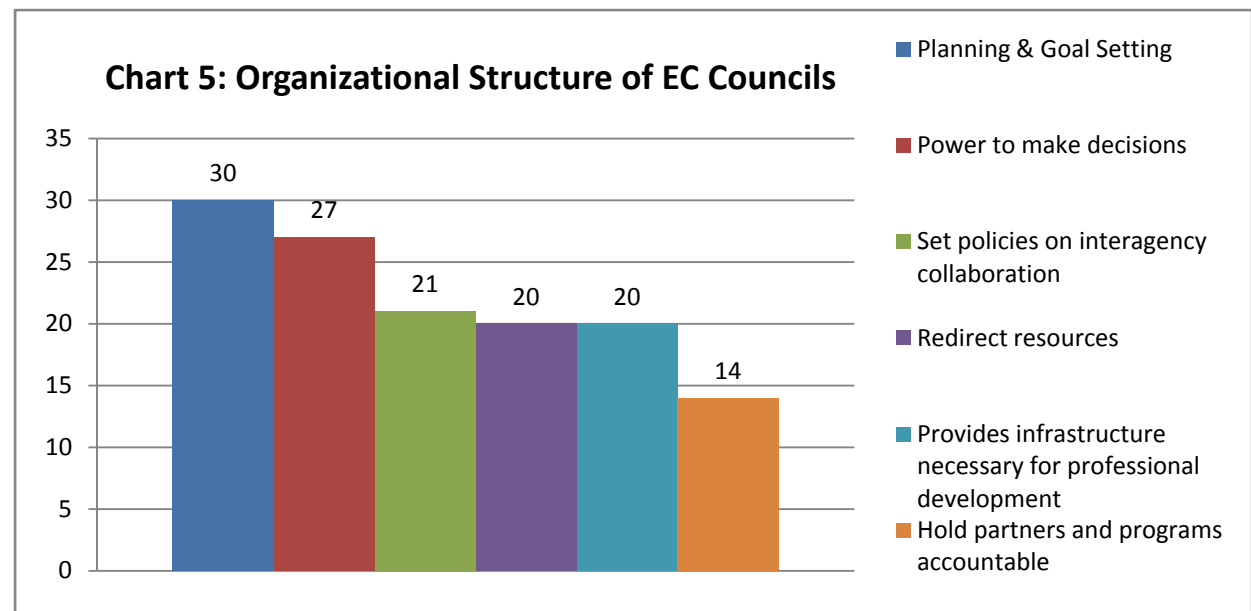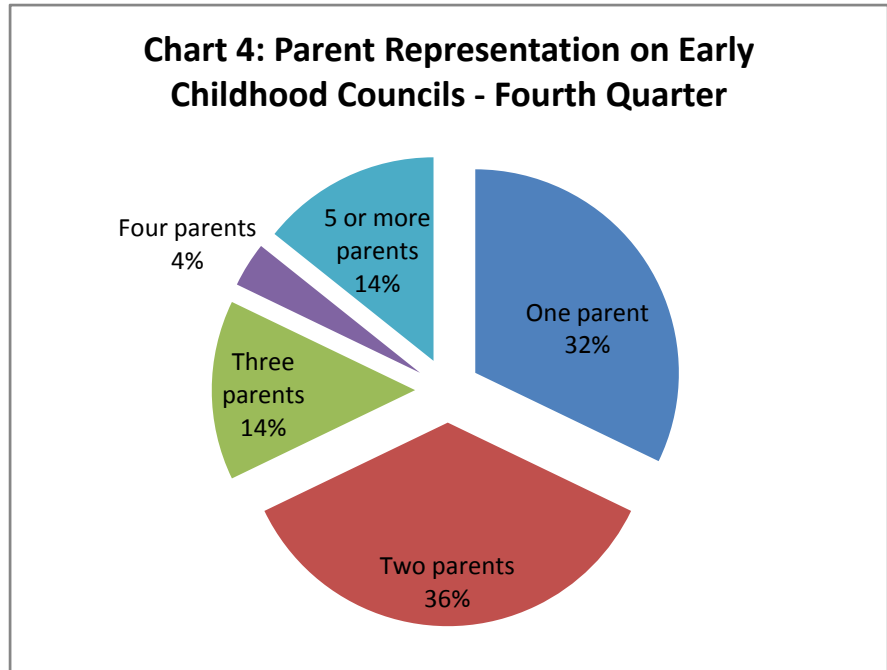
Functionality of Early Childhood Councils

By legislative design, all Councils have a strong element of local determination. Each one is encouraged to look at community needs and services to determine how

Chart 4: Parent Representation on Early Childhood Councils - Fourth Quarter

Four parents 4%

5 or more parents 14%

One parent 32%

Three parents 14%

Two parents 36%

the Council will be set up and governed, and what areas it will focus on. At the same time, the legislation also requires Councils to have a "consistent function and structure statewide." This section details the common themes that developed across Councils during FY2008.
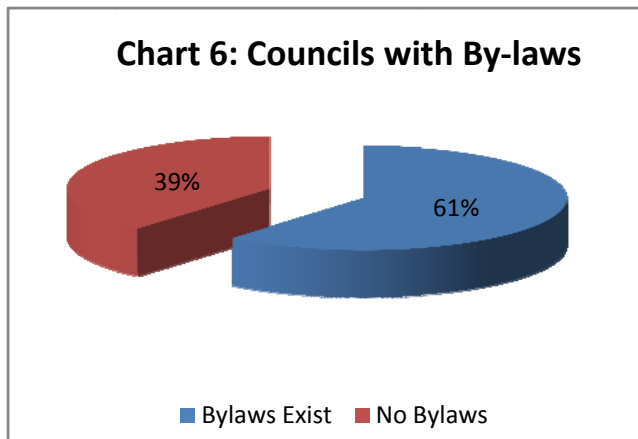
Organizational Structure

Reports from Colorado's Early Childhood Councils show that many have similar organizational structures and functions. For instance, almost all Councils (97%) are organized to develop plans and set goals around early childhood services in their community in their communities (Chart 5). Similarly, 87% of Councils reported that their members have decision-making authority around early childhood issues in the communities it serves. Other common functions of Councils are setting policies on interagency

Chart 5: Organizational Structure of EC Councils

- Planning & Goal Setting
- Power to make decisions
- Set policies on interagency collaboration
- Redirect resources
- Provides infrastructure necessary for professional development
- Hold partners and programs accountable

Values: 30, 27, 21, 20, 20, 14

collaboration, redirecting resources, and providing infrastructure for professional development (of early care and education providers). A much smaller number, 45%, reported that their Council has the authority or mechanisms in place to hold partners and programs accountable.
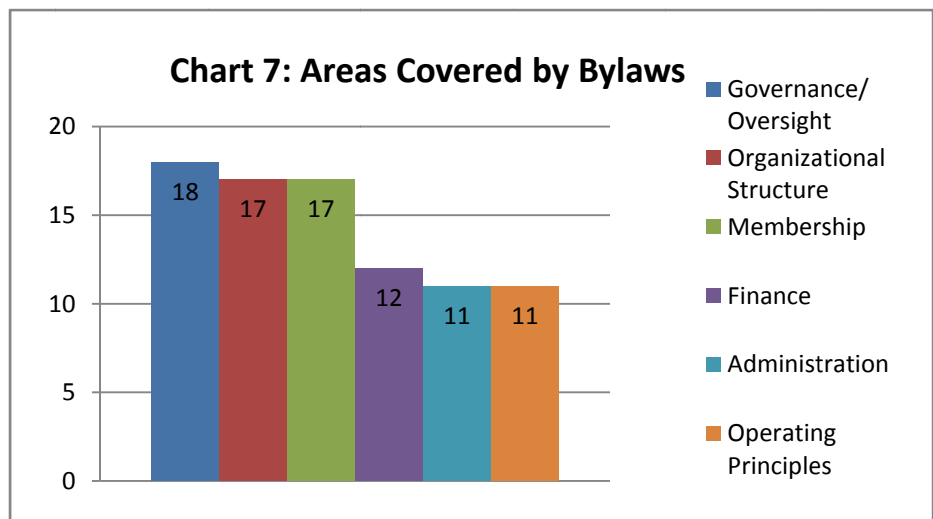
One mechanism that many Councils use to establish their lines of authority and to stay accountable to each other as collaborative partners is by-laws. While not all Councils are independent non-profit organizations, many have created by-laws to manage their partnership through the Council. In fact, as a best practice identified through the earlier Consolidated Child Care Pilots, the state funding and technical assistance process provided to

Chart 6: Councils with By-laws

39%

61%

■ Bylaws Exist ■ No Bylaws

Councils now requires all Councils to work toward establishing by-laws. These formal agreements help partners improve and clarify the nature and boundaries of their collaboration which, in turn, helps communities to integrate and coordinate services to young children and their families. By the end of FY2008, 61% of Councils – 19 total – had established by-laws. Another twelve were still working on putting by-laws in place.

Of those Councils that did have by-laws established, Chart 7 shows the areas of agreement that the by-laws generally cover. For Councils with established bylaws, most address their role around governance and oversight of the Council and the related coordination of early childhood services. Nearly as many also address organizational structure and membership on the Councils. A smaller, but still significant number, use their by-laws to spell out how they handle financial and administrative issues related to the Councils and their collaborative efforts. Others still incorporate operating principles into their by-laws. Because operating principles can have a strong impact on how well Council collaboratives function together, some Councils

Chart 7: Areas Covered by Bylaws

■	Governance/ Oversight
■	Organizational Structure
■	Membership
■	Finance
■	Administration
■	Operating Principles

20

18   17   17

15

12

10   11   11

5

0

have separate operating principles for their work (23 Councils had separate Operating Principles as of the fourth quarter of FY2008).
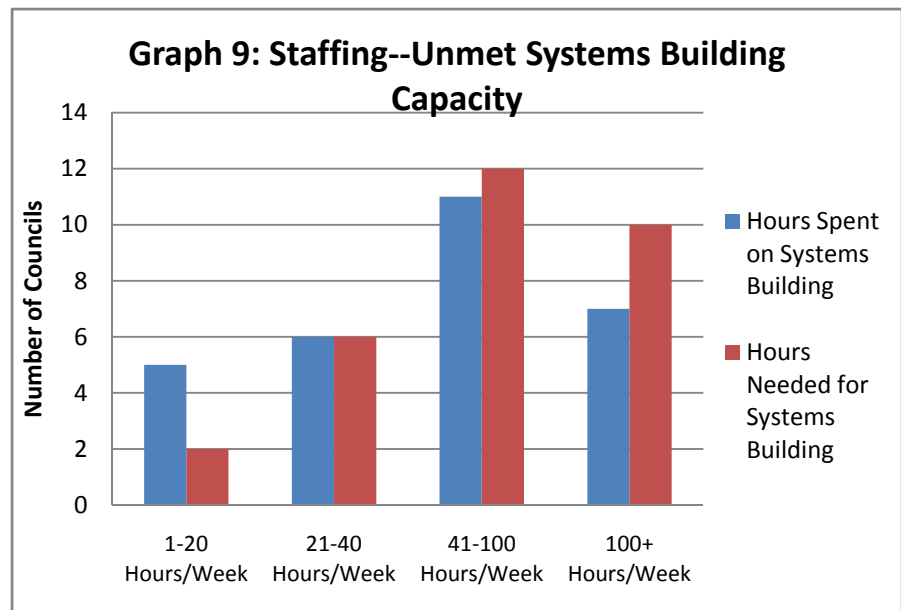
Council Staffing

Based on HB07-1062, all Early Childhood Councils funded by the State are required to develop a plan for their infrastructure to include the hiring of a Council coordinator or director (Graph 8). By the end of the

Chart 8: Staffing--Council Coordinators

Coordinator on Staff: Q1 25, Q2 26, Q3 31, Q4 31
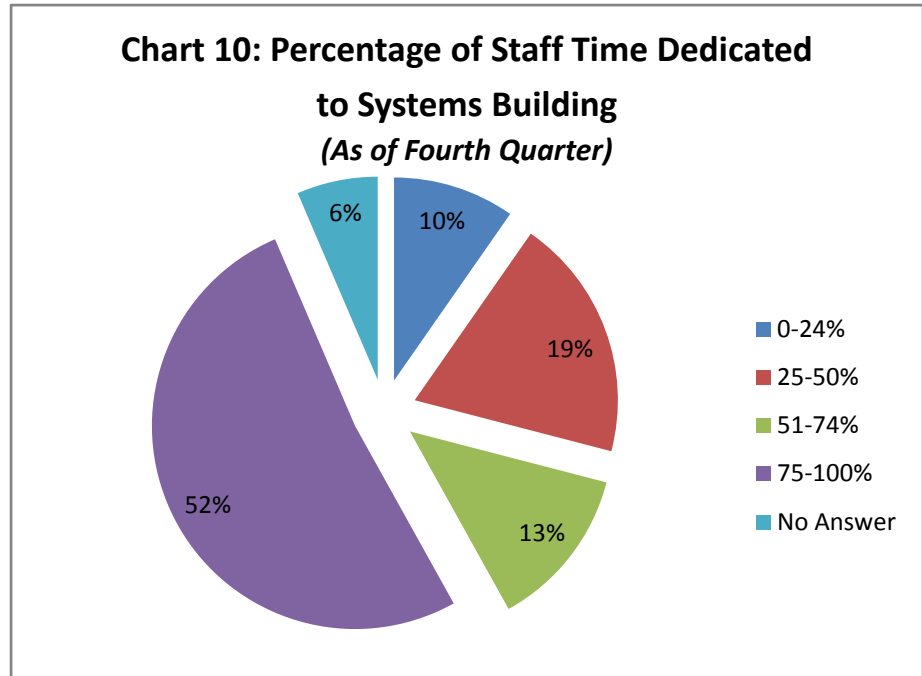No Coordinator on Staff: Q1 6, Q2 5
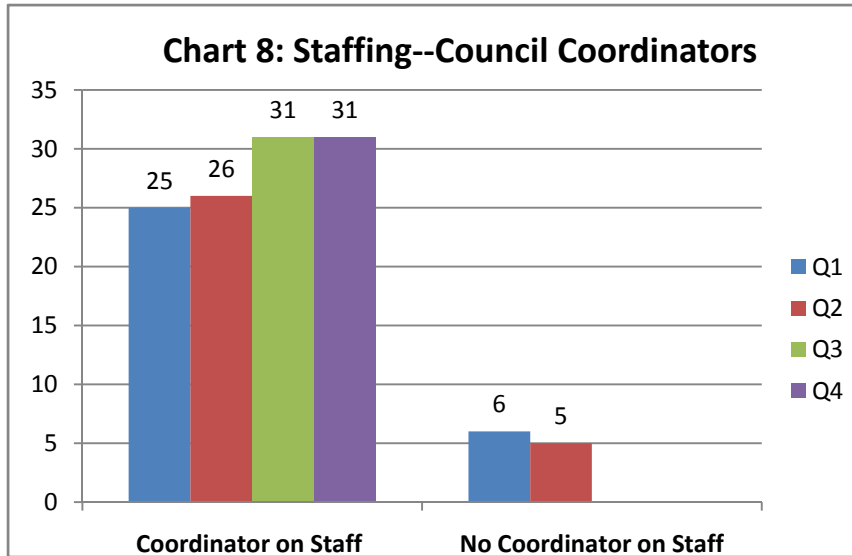
fourth quarter of FY2008, all 31 Councils had hired a Coordinator/Director to manage the work of the Council. While some of these Coordinators work full-time on Council work, others are only funded to work part-time for the Councils. Decisions about full-time and part-time staffing of the Council are local decisions that are based in part on available funding and other community needs.

Although some Councils (5) have Coordinators that are paid to work half time or less, only two of these report that those hours meet the need for systems building in their community. In general, Councils are reporting an unmet need for more hours to devote to early childhood systems building efforts. For instance, ten Councils reported that they need to devote more than 100 hours per week to systems building to be effective in meeting their community's early childhood goals. However, as of the fourth quarter of FY2008, only seven Councils had the capacity (funds and staffing) to invest this much in the work. Similarly, 12 Councils have reported a need to spend 41-100 hours per week on systems building efforts, but only 11 currently have the capacity to do so.

Graph 9: Staffing--Unmet Systems Building Capacity

Number of Councils

1-20 Hours/Week: Hours Spent on Systems Building 5, Hours Needed for Systems Building 2
21-40 Hours/Week: Hours Spent 6, Hours Needed 6
41-100 Hours/Week: Hours Spent 11, Hours Needed 12
100+ Hours/Week: Hours Spent 7, Hours Needed 10

Not all staff time is necessarily devoted strictly to systems-building activities (e.g., collaborative efforts to integrate and coordinateservices and funding in order to develop a more seamless system of early childhood services for families). Many Councils operate programmatic activities to fill gaps in community services, while others have staff that are shared with other agencies or departments to create full-time positions. As a result, just over half of Councils reported that 75-100% of their staff time

is dedicated to system building. Another 13% spend over half, but less than 75%, of their staff time on systems building. Over a quarter of all Councils spend 50% or less of their time on systems building. Future evaluation efforts should examine more closely how staff time is broken down and whether all Councils are interpreting systems-building work to mean similar things.

Chart 10: Percentage of Staff Time Dedicated to Systems Building
(As of Fourth Quarter)

Legend:
- 0-24% — 10%
- 25-50% — 19%
- 51-74% — 13%
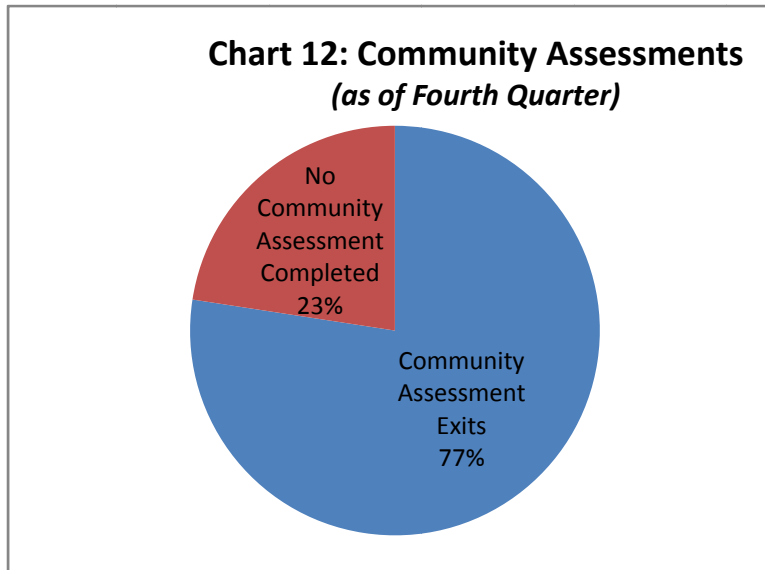- 75-100% — 52%
- No Answer — 6%

Systems Building

Some similarities in systems building definitions are evident from the tasks that Councils report as their two most important systems building functions. As of the fourth quarter, 60% of Councils reported that collaboration and building relationships is one of the two most important systems building tasks in their current work. At the same time, 40% of Councils said the same thing about communication and public engagement. Strategic planning/implementation and organizational structure activities are each listed as key for 27% of Councils. While not an indicator of systems building success, per se, this question does provide important information about what Councils perceive to be the activities that form the basis of systems building work around early childhood at the local level.

Chart 11: Most Important Systems Building Tasks

Legend:
- Tracking and Monitoring — 1
- Programs — 2
- Policy Development — 2
- Resource Development — 4
- Community Assessment — 5
- Organizational Structure — 8
- Strategic Planning and Implementation — 8
- Communication and Public Engagement — 12
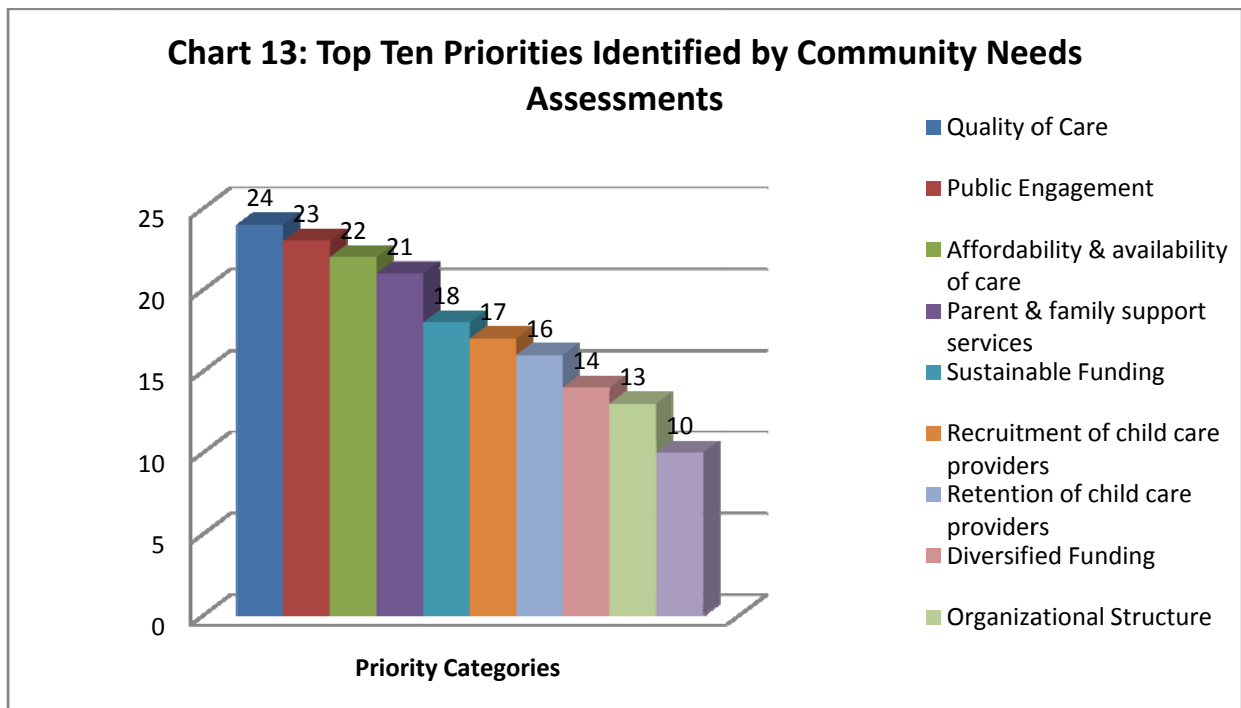- Collaboration and Building Relationships — 18
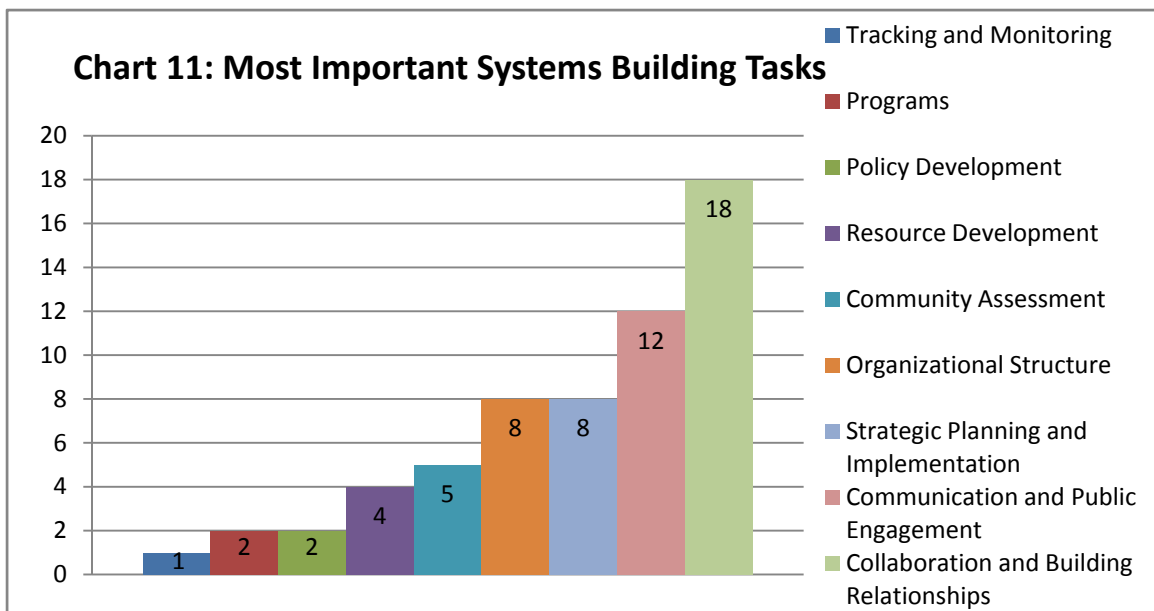
Strategic Planning

As part of the requirements of HB07-1062, Councils are required to base strategic plans for their work on an assessment of the early childhood ne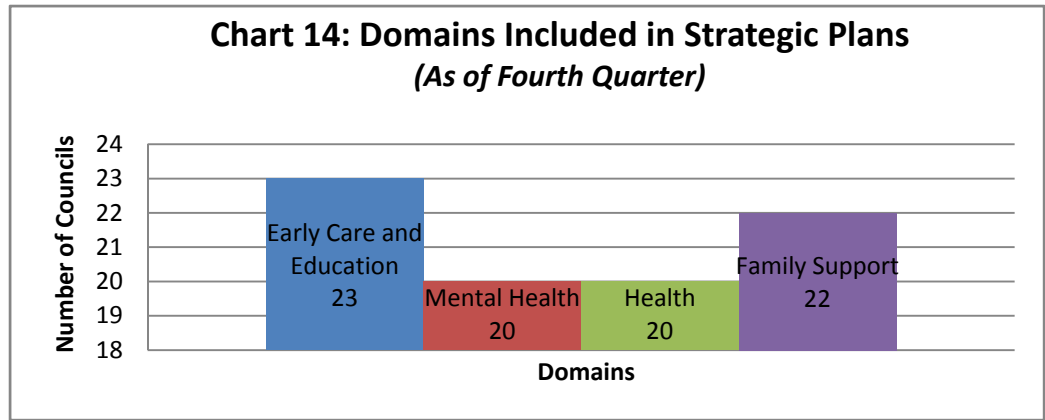eds in the community. As of the fourth quarter of FY2008, 77% of Councils (24) had completed a community needs assessments. This number aligns closely with the number of Councils that had formed earlier in the fiscal year. Council formation itself is a time-intensive task that must precede development of community needs assessments, so this timeline makes sense with the expected progression of Council development.

Chart 12: Community Assessments
(as of Fourth Quarter)

No Community Assessment Completed 23%

Community Assessment Exits 77%

Of the 24 Councils that had completed a community needs assessment by the end of the fiscal year, each identified key priority areas to focus the work of collaborative systems. Chart 13, below, shows the top ten priorities identified by all the community needs assessments. All of the completed community needs assessments identified quality of care as a top priority. Of the top ten priorities, four focus on the early learning domain, one on family support and parent education, and one on the health domain. The remaining needs have more to do with organizational and funding issues and overall public outreach.

Chart 13: Top Ten Priorities Identified by Community Needs Assessments

Values: 24, 23, 22, 21, 18, 17, 16, 14, 13, 10

Priority Categories

Legend:
- Quality of Care
- Public Engagement
- Affordability & availability of care
- Parent & family support services
- Sustainable Funding
- Recruitment of child care providers
- Retention of child care providers
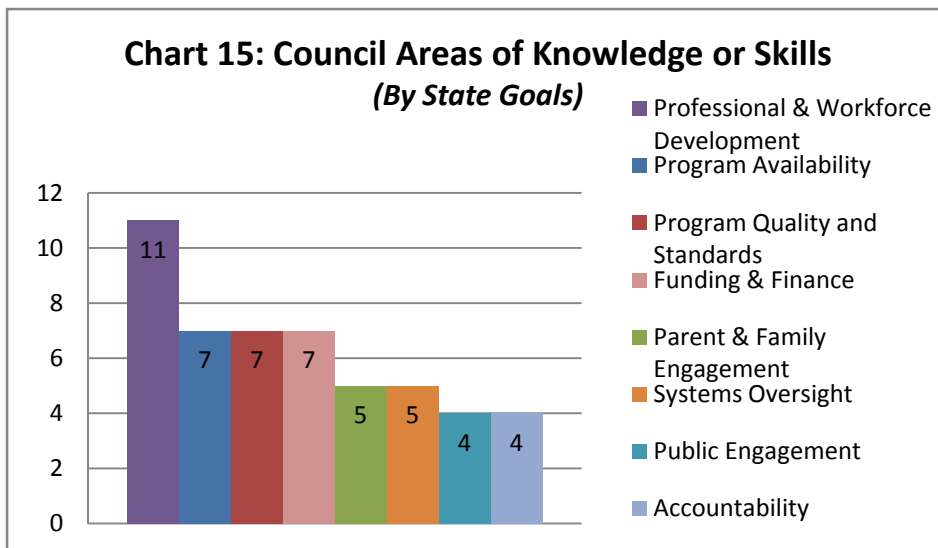- Diversified Funding
- Organizational Structure

Following their work on community needs assessments, 23 Councils reported completing a strategic plan by the end of FY2008. All 23 of these plans included strategies

Chart 14: Domains Included in Strategic Plans
(As of Fourth Quarter)

Number of Councils

Domain	Value
Early Care and Education	23
Mental Health	20
Health	20
Family Support	22

Domains

that address the early care and education domain (Chart 14). Additionally, all but one included strategies aimed at improving family support and parent education. The mental health and health domains were addressed by strategies in 20 of the 23 completed plans. While a handful of Councils that completed strategic plans report a more limited one or two domain focus, fully 87% of the plans had strategies that addressed all four domains. This is an in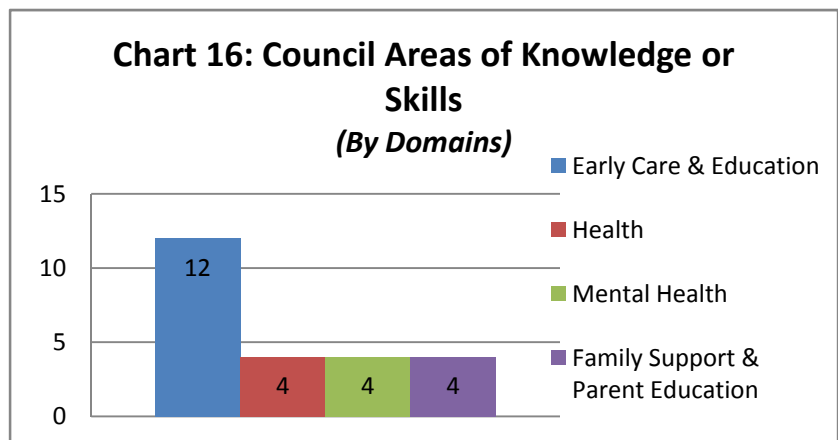dicator that those Councils are working to move toward a systemic approach to early childhood services that is broader than just early care and education.

Chart 15: Council Areas of Knowledge or Skills
(By State Goals)

- Professional & Workforce Development
- Program Availability
- Program Quality and Standards
- Funding & Finance
- Parent & Family Engagement
- Systems Oversight
- Public Engagement
- Accountability

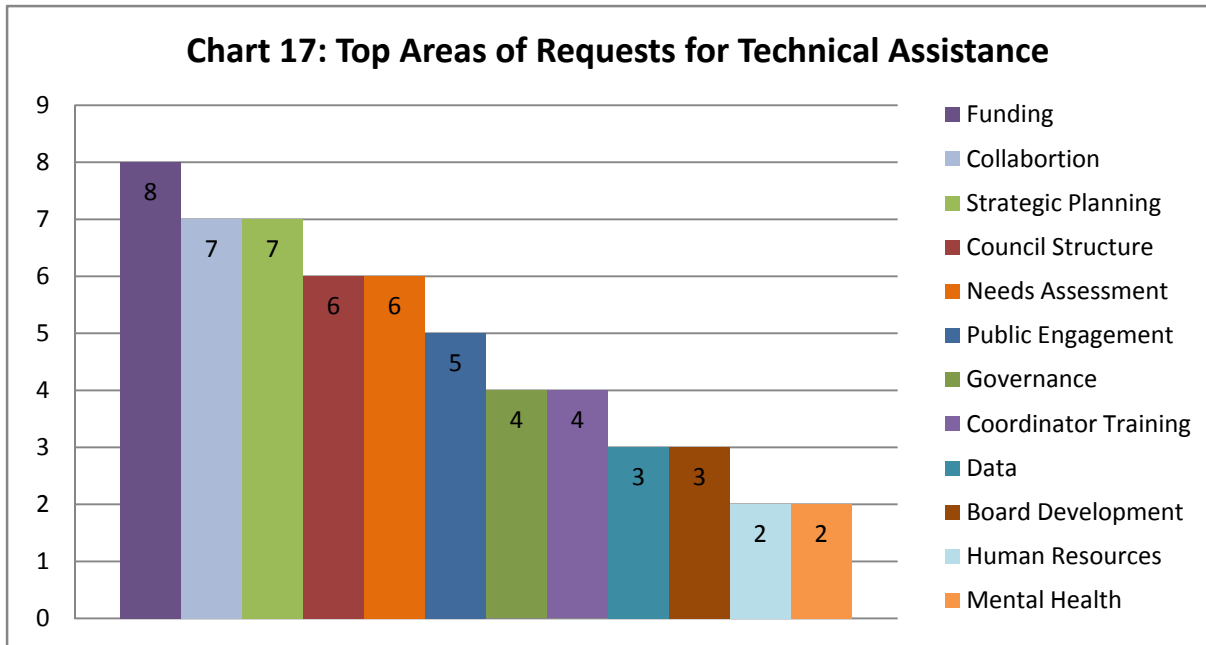| Area	Value
Professional & Workforce Development	11
Program Availability	7
Program Quality and Standards	7
Funding & Finance	7
Parent & Family Engagement	5
Systems Oversight	5
Public Engagement	4
Accountability	4

Council Knowledge and Skills

Since approximately half of all 31 Early Childhood Councils had been in operation as Consolidated Child Care Pilots for at least 7 years prior to the passage of HB07-1062, quite a number of them have developed areas of particular skill or expertise. According to their own reports, eleven Councils have expertise in professional and workforce development. Chart 15, below, shows other areas where Councils have reported having a particular area of knowledge. Most Councils report their skills or knowledge as being focused in the early learning domain (Chart 16), although a few seem to be building some expertise in the other three domains.

Chart 16: Council Areas of Knowledge or Skills
(By Domains)

- Early Care & Education
- Health
- Mental Health
- Family Support & Parent Education

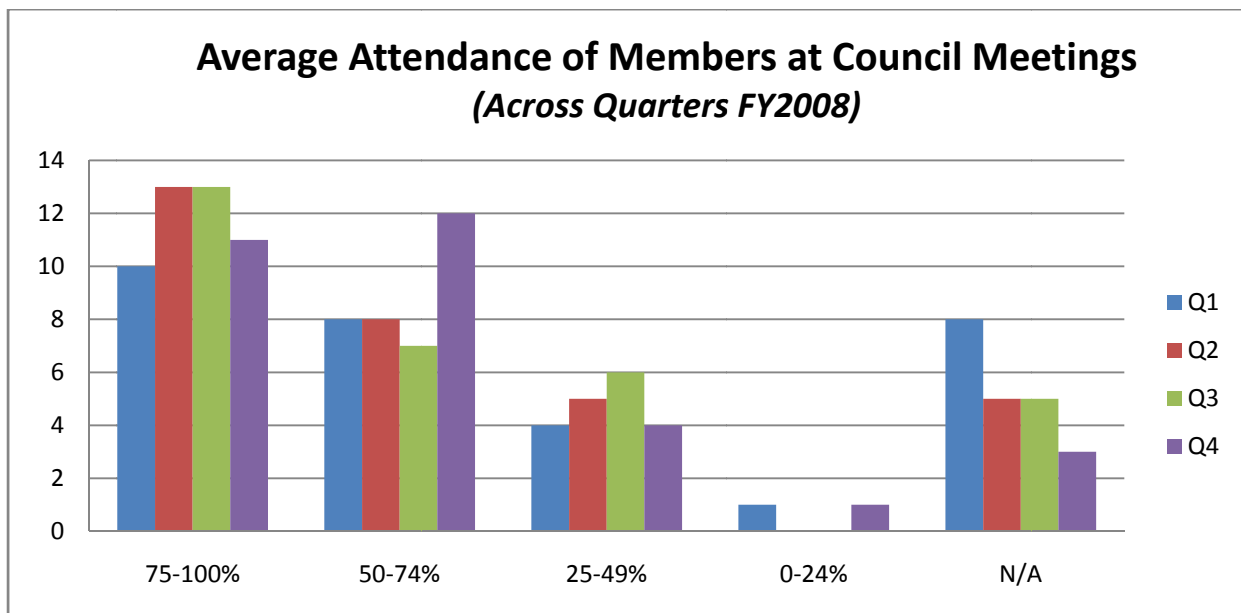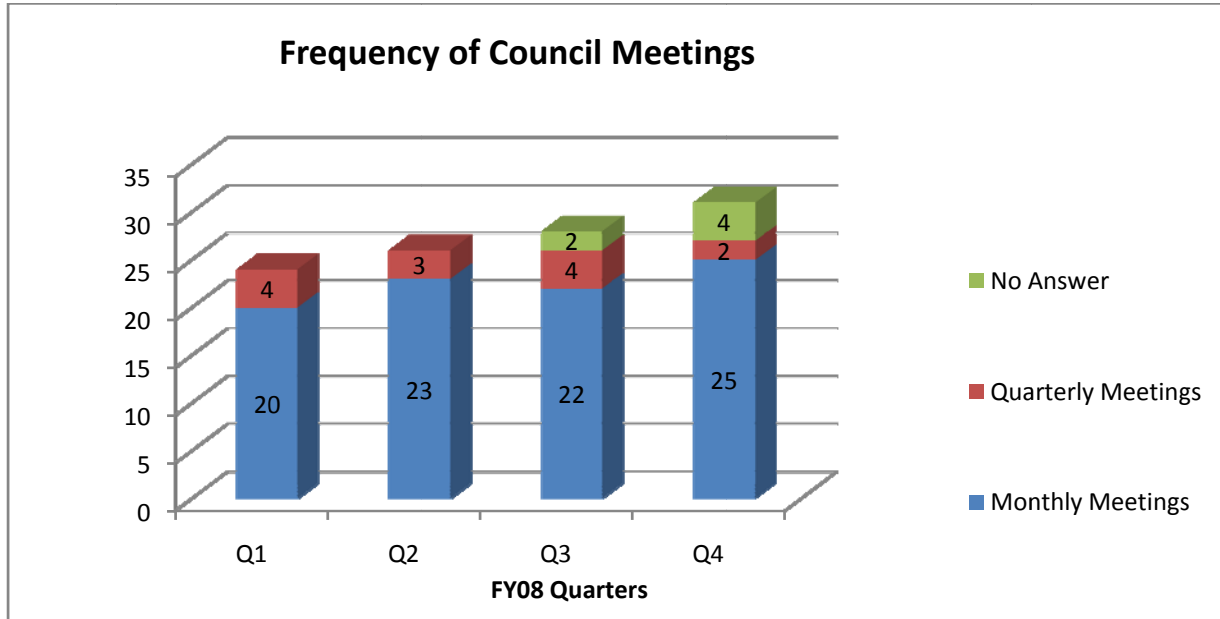| Domain	Value
Early Care & Education	12
Health	4
Mental Health	4
Family Support & Parent Education	4

No matter what area of development Councils are in, they all have technical assistance needs that, when met, can strengthen the early childhood system in that community. The most frequently requested technical assistance need in the fourth quarter of FY2008 was for help around funding the Council and its efforts. Nearly as many requests were for support with facilitating collaboration among early childhood partners and developing strategic plans. According to the responses, displayed in Chart 17,

Chart 17: Top Areas of Requests for Technical Assistance

Legend:
- Funding
- Collabortion
- Strategic Planning
- Council Structure
- Needs Assessment
- Public Engagement
- Governance
- Coordinator Training
- Data
- Board Development
- Human Resources
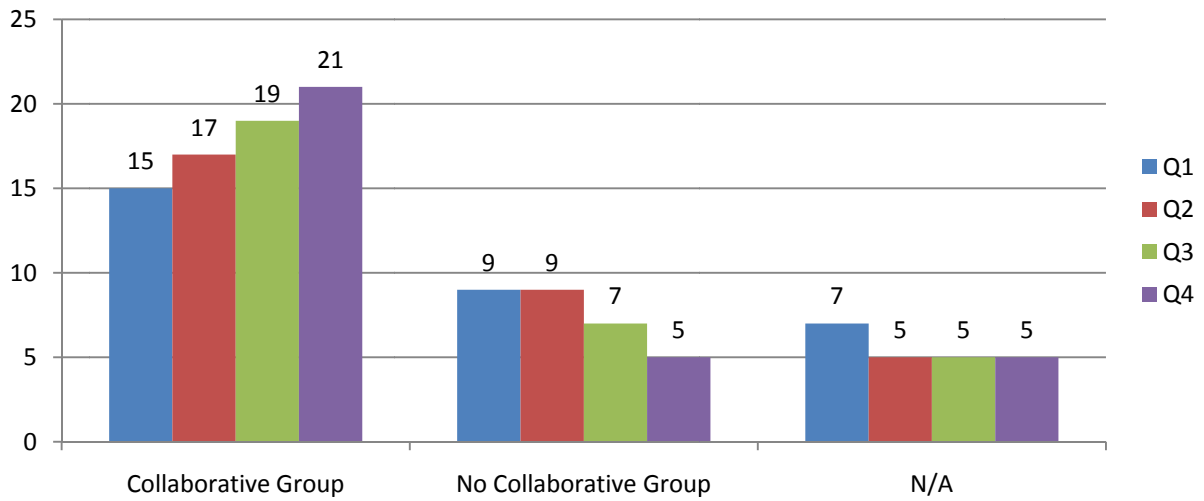- Mental Health

Values: 8, 7, 7, 6, 6, 5, 4, 4, 3, 3, 2, 2

most technical assistance requests were around Council functioning , rather than early childhood content areas. Systems-building is a fine dance of community partnerships, shared decision making, cooperative programming, and braided funding efforts. These technical assistance requests demonstrate that the effectiveness of systems building efforts to improve services for families can depend on how well the collaborative Council itself is structured and functioning.

Appendix A:
## Additional Early Childhood Council Charts and Graphs from FY2008

Frequency of Council Meetings

Legend:
- No Answer
- Quarterly Meetings
- Monthly Meetings

FY08 Quarters	Monthly Meetings	Quarterly Meetings	No Answer
Q1	20	4	
Q2	23	3	
Q3	22	4	2
Q4	25	2	4

Average Attendance of Members at Council Meetings
(Across Quarters FY2008)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
75-100%	10	13	13	11
50-74%	8	8	7	12
25-49%	4	5	6	4
0-24%	1			1
N/A	8	5	5	3

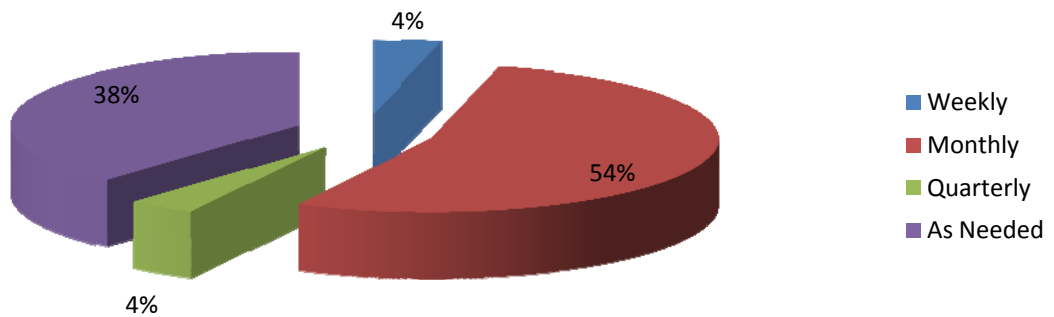## EC Councils with Collaborative Oversight Groups

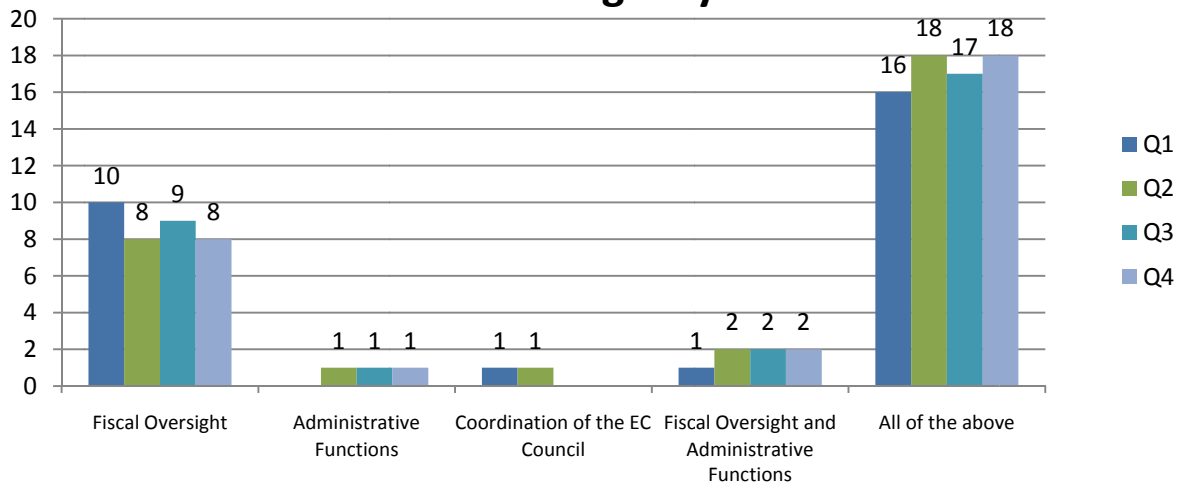## Frequency of Collaborative Oversight Group Meetings
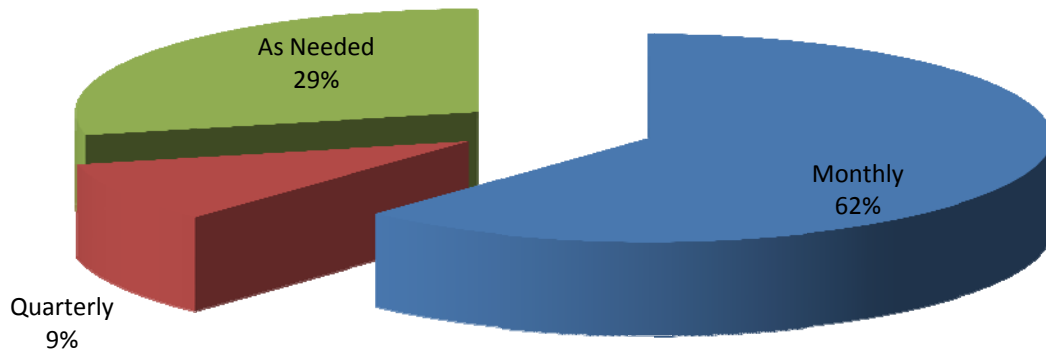
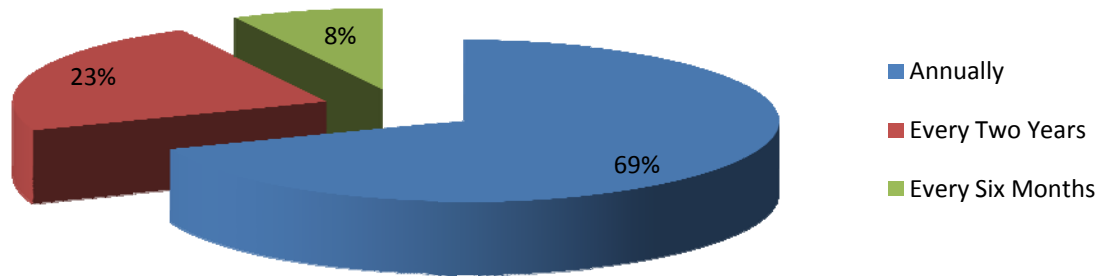# Existance of Collaborative Planning Groups within Councils (Across Quarters)
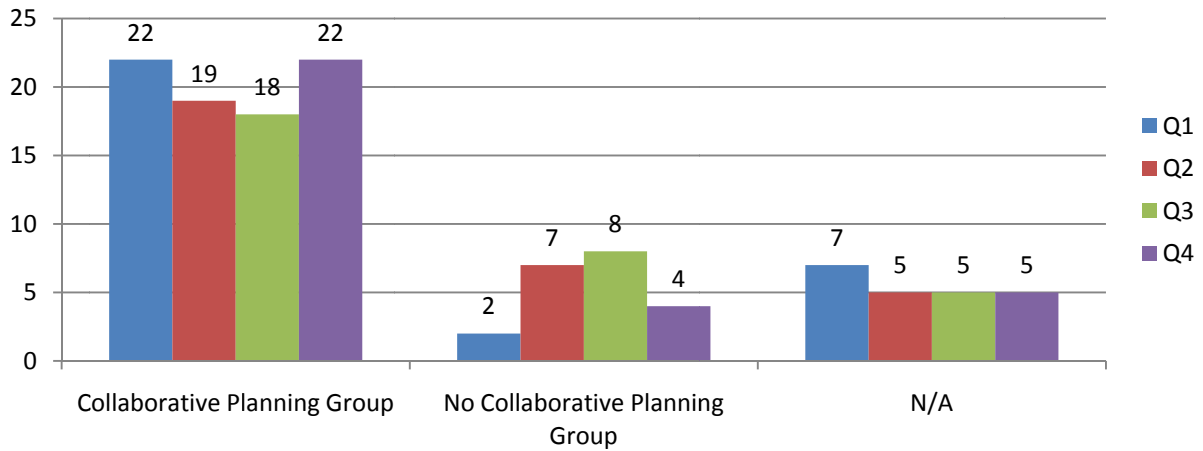
Frequency of Collaborative Planning Group Meetings
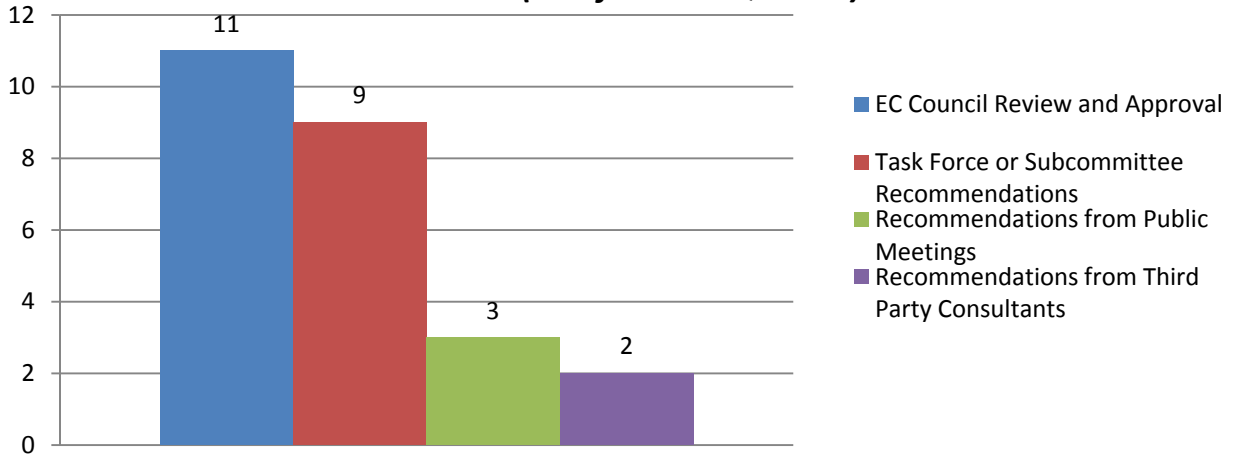
Primary Responsibility of Grant Management Agency

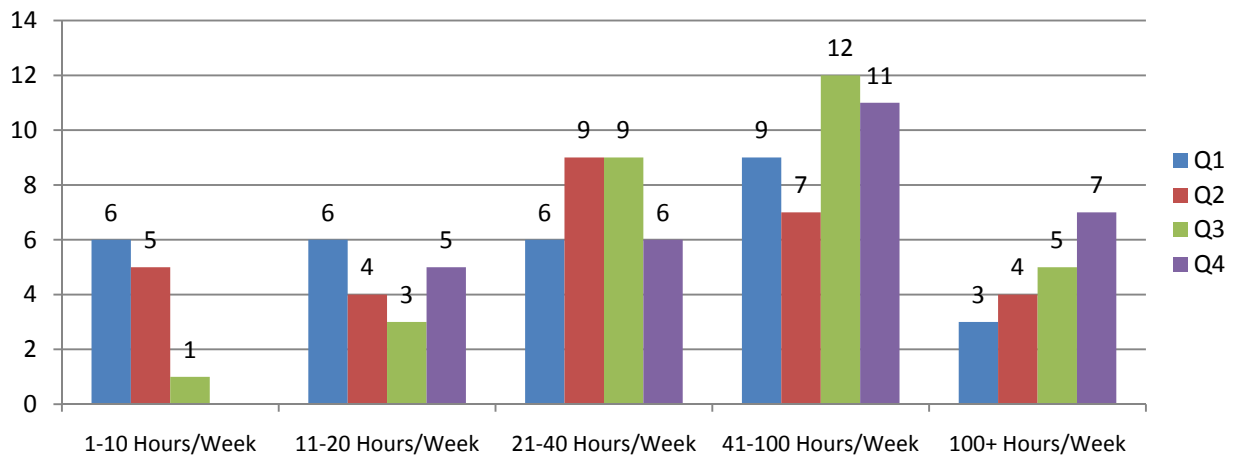## Frequency of Operating Principle Review
(As of Fourth Quarter)
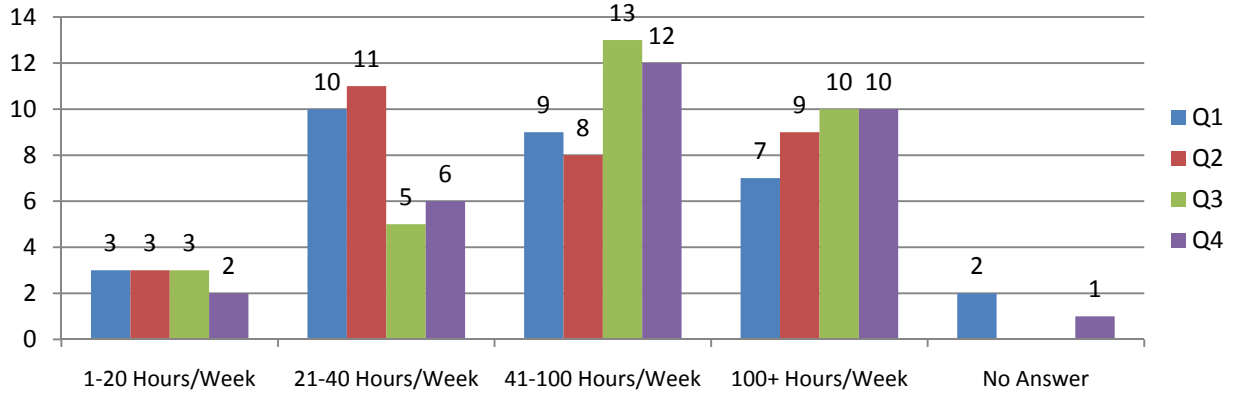### n=13

EC Council Processes for Amending Operating Principles
(As of Fourth Quarter)

Legend:
- EC Council Review and Approval
- Task Force or Subcommittee Recommendations
- Recommendations from Public Meetings
- Recommendations from Third Party Consultants

Values: 11, 9, 3, 2

Staffing: Weekly Staff Hours of Coordination

Hours/Week	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1-10 Hours/Week	6	5	1	
11-20 Hours/Week	6	4	3	5
21-40 Hours/Week	6	9	9	6
41-100 Hours/Week	9	7	12	11
100+ Hours/Week	3	4	5	7

Staffing: Hours Per Week Actually Needed to Coordinate Systems Building

Chart showing number of councils by hours per week needed, grouped by quarter (Q1 blue, Q2 red, Q3 green, Q4 purple):

Category	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1-20 Hours/Week	3	3	3	2
21-40 Hours/Week	10	11	5	6
41-100 Hours/Week	9	8	13	12
100+ Hours/Week	7	9	10	10
No Answer	2			1

Staffing: Percentage of Paid Staff Time Dedicated to Systems-Building

Chart showing number of councils by percentage of paid staff time, grouped by quarter (Q1 blue, Q2 red, Q3 green, Q4 purple):

Category	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
0-24%	5	5	3	3
25-50%	7	5	6	6
51-74%	2	8	4	4
75-100%	15	12	18	16
No Answer	2	1		2
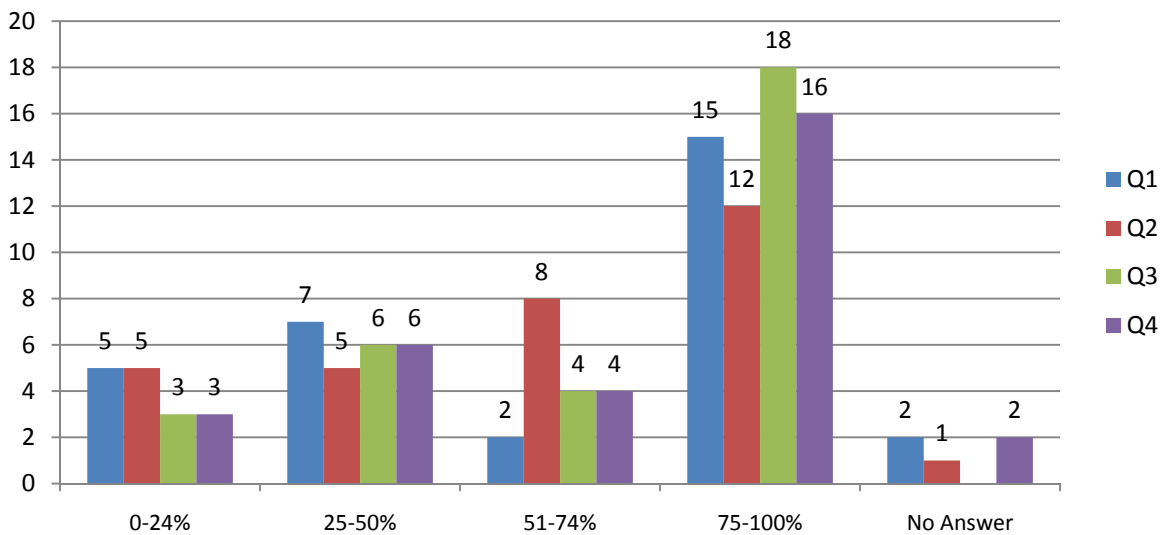
Strategic Planning
(As of Fourth Quarter)

No Strategic Plan
7
23%

No Answer
1
3%

Council Has
Strategic Plan
23
74%
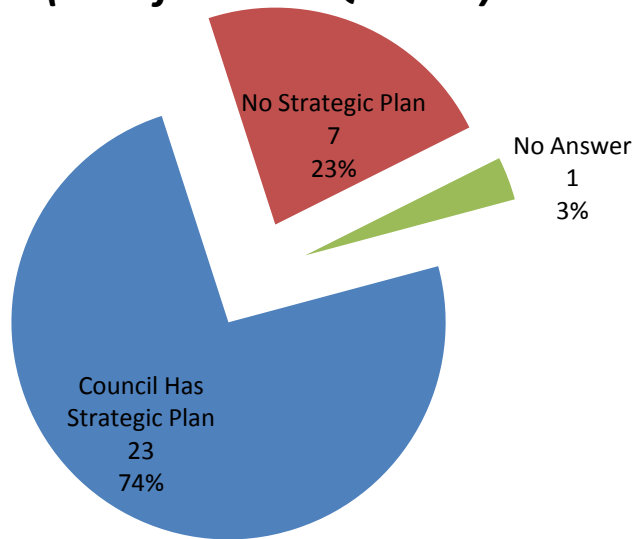
Fiscal Monitoring: Responsible Party

Responsible Party	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Fiscal Officer	11	9	9	5
Accountant	1	1	1	1
Director/coordinator	12	16	16	17
All or combination of other options	2	5	5	6

■ Q1 ■ Q2 ■ Q3 ■ Q4
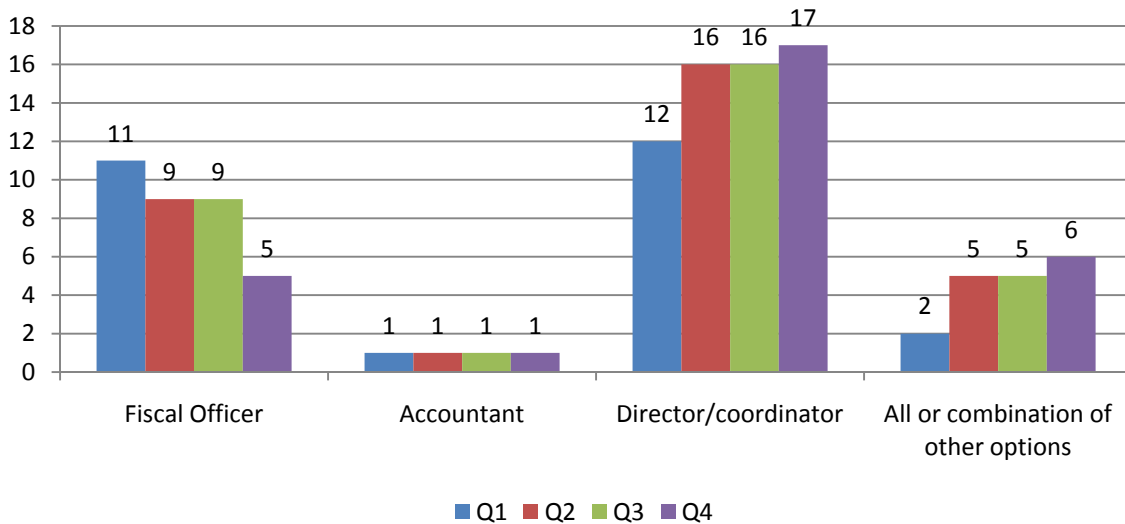
Fiscal Monitoring: Budget Review Frequency
(As of Fourth Quarter)

- 3%
- 3%
- 13%
- 55%
- 26%

Legend:
- ■ Monthly
- ■ Quarterly
- ■ Bi-Annually
- ■ As Needed
- ■ N/A
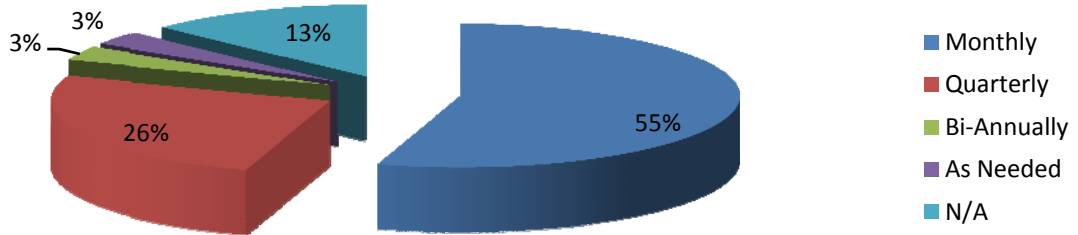
Sustainability: Resource Development Plans
(as of Fourth Quarter)

Resource Development Plan Exists 30%

No Plan Exists 70%
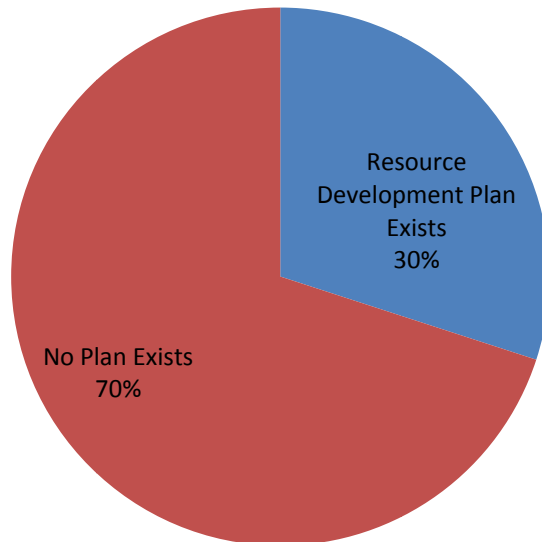
Sustainability: Policies and Practices
(As of Fourth Quarter)

No Policies and Practices in Place 53%

Policies and Practices Exist 47%
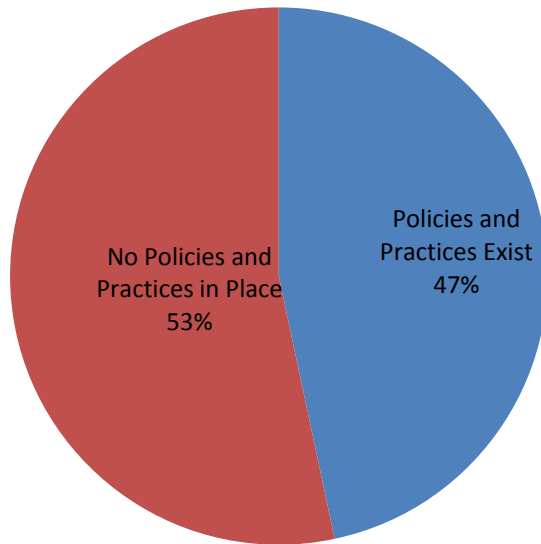
Frequency of Plan Objectives Review
(n=23)

Quarterly 48%

Annually 17%

Monthly 35%

Professional Development Plans
(As of Fourth Quarter)

Council Has a Professional Development Plan
18
58%

No Professional Development Plan Exists
12
39%

No Answer
1
3%

Public Engagement Plans

No Public Engagement Plan Exists
45%

No Answer
3%

Council Has a Public Engagement Plan
52%