



**Policy, Research and Communications Committee
of the Board of Early Education and Care**

October 6, 2014
10:00AM - 12:00PM

Department of Early Education and Care
51 Sleeper Street
Boston, MA 02210

Minutes - Draft

Members of the Committee/Board Present:

Joan Wasser Gish, Board Member/Policy, Research and Communications Committee Chair
Sharon Scott-Chandler, Board Member
Joni Block, Board Member
Katie Joyce, Board Member (by phone)

EEC Staff Present:

Gwen Alexander, Program Quality Improvement Manager
Jennifer Amaya-Thompson, Director of the Head Start State Collaboration Office
Liz Belsito, Race to the Top Project Director
Katie DeVita, Educator Provider Support Specialist
Kathleen Hart, Director of Communications and External Affairs
Chau Ly, Program Manager for Statewide and Community Supports
Carol Nolan, Director of Policy
Chris Pond, Educator Provider Support Specialist
Philip Steigman, Program Quality Specialist
Felicia Sullivan, Assistant General Counsel

Members of the Public Present:

MaryAnn Anthony, Director of the Child Care Division, Catholic Charities
Pam Kuechler, Director, Massachusetts Head Start Association
Kaela Chevalier, Communications and Policy Associate, Child Development and Education

The meeting was called to order at 10:06am

Disclosures:

There were no disclosures.

Minutes:

Minutes from the September 6, 2014 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Agenda Items

1) EPS and Workforce Development -- Presentation and Discussion

Katie DeVita and Chris Pond presented an overview of the Educator and Provider Support (EPS) grant, the state's main infrastructure for delivering professional development to the workforce. The presentation included information on professional development system best practices, coaching and mentoring, and competency development.

Topics of discussion focused on assessment of professional development needs of the workforce at the program level and individual educator level, challenges facing the early childhood workforce, how to best evaluate the effectiveness of coaches and mentors, and how to collect data in a comprehensive manner as well as measure the effectiveness of the EPS grant. The committee also discussed the coordination of EPS with other parts of the system supporting educators, including QRIS and institutions of higher education.

Suggestions for next steps include hiring a consultant to analyze current EPS and Professional Qualifications Registry (PQR) data and having more discussions at the Board level about workforce development and how to invest more resources to improve the quality of programs.

2) Early English Development Standards/WIDA -- Update

Jennifer Amaya-Thompson provided an update on the Early English Development Standards (E-ELDS) and how it is being implemented in the state. The E-ELDS are in alignment with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's K-12 English Development Standards and are integrated into QRIS. EEC, in collaboration with WIDA, have sponsored conferences, webinars, training of trainer sessions and parent and family focus groups. There is a master cadre of 75 individuals who are being trained to provide trainings to the field. There has been overwhelming interest in professional development opportunities on this topic giving the growing population of English Language Learners (ELL) in the state.

Discussion centered around providing coaching and mentoring on the standards, how to embed E-ELDS into the current EPS grant activities, the importance of supporting ELLs in order to reduce the achievement gap and providing higher education to educators who are ELLs. There was also discussion about how best to sustain the efforts in supporting ELLs.

Next steps include doing an analysis of how ELLs supports can be strategically embedded in the current EEC infrastructure and connect it to a broader birth through grade 12 system.

3) QRIS -- Presentation and Discussion

Gwen Alexander presented on recent activities and accomplishment of QRIS, including data on the number of center/school based, family childcare and out-of-school time programs participation levels in QRIS. Overall, there has been an increase in the number of programs participating in QRIS, especially at the upper tiers (level 2 and above). Accomplishments include full staffing of Program Quality Specialist positions, granting of programs at level 3 ratings, partnering with Kaplan to support QRIS program improvement grants, launching of the QRIS Validation Study, holding technical assistance webinars and in person meetings for educators and providers and establishing an online QRIS community.

Discussion centered around the timing of the QRIS standards revisions for family childcare, out-of-school time and public school settings and how to best share the expertise of early childhood with the public schools so that high quality early education is understood across sectors.

A next step identified is to have another discussion about QRIS at the November committee meeting to discuss the timing of QRIS revisions.

4) Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Grant -- Update

Liz Belsito presented an update on spending on each of the 12 RTT-ELC projects. Currently the spend down rate of the grant budget is approximately 44%. There is an opportunity for a 1 year no-cost extension on the grant. The state can request a no-cost extension for individual projects but not the entire grant.

There was discussion about the fiscal monitoring of the grant to ensure the budget is spent down in a timely manner, the Federal no-cost extension policy, and how to prioritize which projects should be sustained after the grant period ends.

A next step discussed was to analyze the RTT-ELC projects and identify the projects that best align with EEC's strategic plan.

The meeting adjourned at 12:01pm.

Next Meeting:

November 3, 2014

10:00am - 12:00pm

EEC Conference Room #1