

Rhode Island Early Learning Work Group Meeting

Thursday, January 13, 2011 9:30-11:30 a.m.

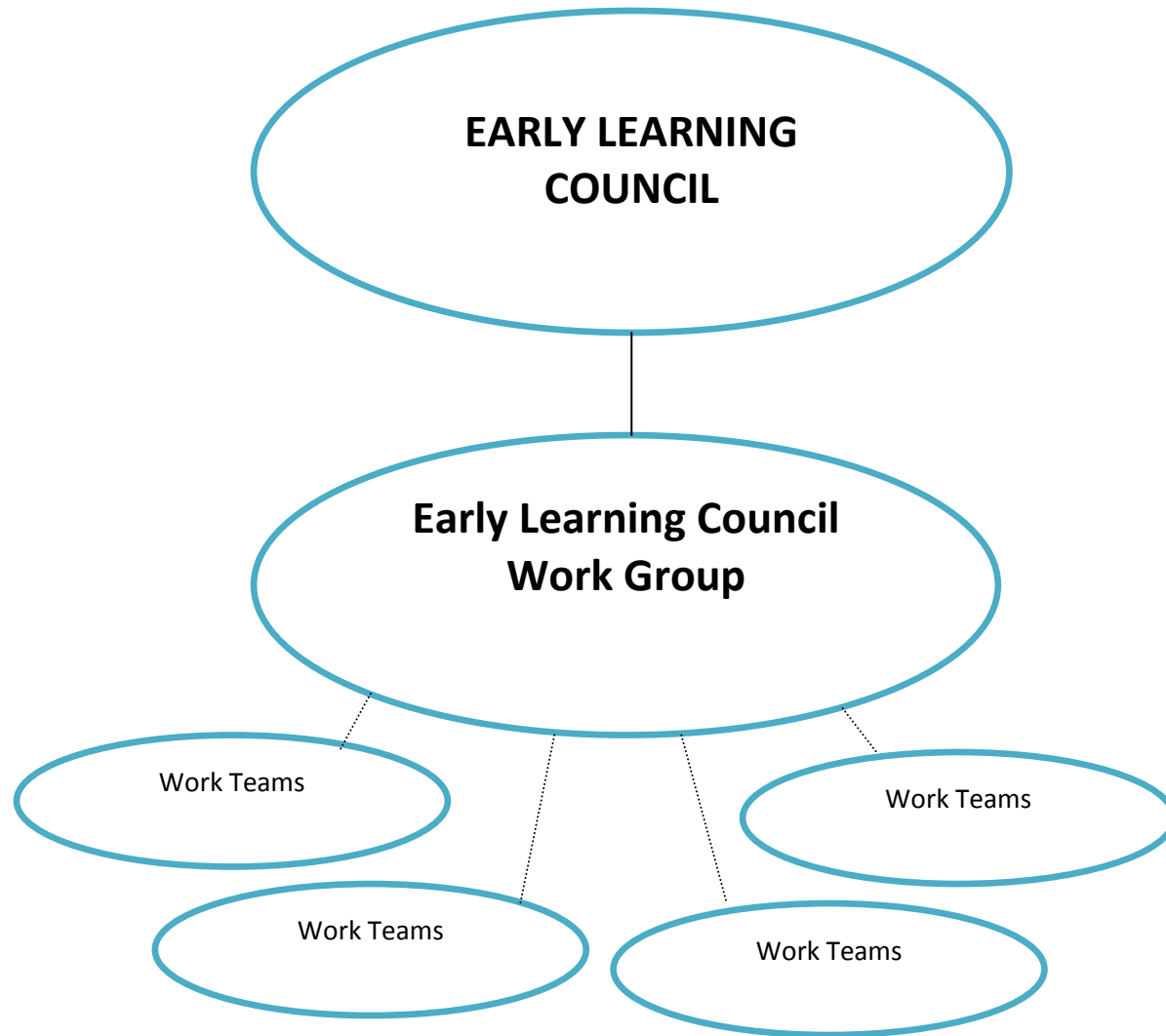
Location: Warwick Public Library, Large Meeting Room 101

600 Sandy Lane Warwick, RI 02889

Agenda

9:30-9:45	Welcome/Introduction	Kristin Lehoullier
9:45-10:50	Rhode Island Kindergarten Assessment	Kristen Greene Mary Ann Finamore Mary Ann Snider Michele Palermo
10:50-11:25	Development/Coordination of Work Teams to Support the Early Learning Council Work	Michele Palermo Leanne Barrett Larry Pucciarelli
11:25-11:30	Wrap-up/Next Steps	Kristin Lehoullier

Development and Coordination of Work Teams to Support the Early Learning Council Work



Key Features

- Work gets done in smaller work teams (either already existing groups or new groups) that align with the scope of work of the Council.
- Work teams include the right mix of content experts and state agency managers and engage both prior workgroup members and other expertise as needed. Frequency of meetings and the duration of the work team is based on need.
- All workgroup members are engaged in at least one work team.
- The ELC Working Group meets once before each Early Learning Council Meeting Team (4x/year); work team leaders share progress and invite feedback from the Working Group.
- Work team leaders are engaged to provide updates and recommendations to the Council as needed.

Draft List of Work Teams and Leaders

Focus Area	Early Learning Council Work Team	ELC Scope of Work	Team Leader(s)
ACCESS	To Be Developed	Child Care Subsidy Early Head Start/Head Start Pre-K Expansion Planning Special Education Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations 	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Larry Pucciarelli
INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	To Be Developed	Proposal for financial incentives and supports to help program achieve and maintain quality standards (BrightStars & RIDE approval): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonuses/grants • Tiered reimbursement • Tax credits • Other 	Leanne Barrett Tammy Camillo Karen Beese
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM	Professional Development Planning Committee for Resource Center	Plan for professional development system Link to Higher Education ERS/CLASS Training Core Competencies	Tammy Camillo Karen Beese
HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM	TEACH Advisory Group	Implement TEACH Build capacity/quality of higher education system Link to PD system	Leslie Gell
EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS	RI Early Learning Standards Steering Committee	Training Infant/Toddler Standards National Standards	Michele Palermo Blythe Berger
ALIGNMENT OF STANDARDS	To Be Developed	Update DCYF standards/systems Review and improve alignment among program quality standards	Brenda Almeida Leanne Barrett
ECE DATA SYSTEM	NGA Ready States Data Planning Team	Move forward with NGA Ready States plan to implement recommendations	Leanne Barrett
KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT	Kindergarten Assessment Work Group	Advise RIDE on creation of statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Michele Palermo

**RHODE ISLAND
EARLY LEARNING
COUNCIL
WORK GROUP
MEETING**

January 13, 2011

9:30-11:30 a.m.

Warwick Public Library, Large Meeting Room 101





MEETING AGENDA

9:30-9:45	Welcome /Meeting Overview
9:45-10:50	Rhode Island Kindergarten Assessment
10:50-11:25	Development/Coordination of Work Teams to Support the Early Learning Council Work
11:25-11:30	Wrap-up/Next Steps

KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT



REPORT OUT: KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT WORK TEAM

- ❖ Small work team meet in December : Michele Palermo, Ann Turrell, Kristen Greene, Mindy Mertz, Maryann Finamore
- ❖ Goal: to develop a set of draft kindergarten recommendations for the Work Group
- ⦿ The group reflected on previous Workgroup work around the purpose of a Kindergarten Assessment, RIDE's ongoing assessment work, and the NGA Ready States Initiative work and prepared the following recommendation on the purpose of a kindergarten assessment:
 - ⦿ *Prioritize the development of a kindergarten assessment which can be used for the purpose of guiding instruction and can also be used to describe the entry status of children at the population level (state and community).*
- ❖ Based on that purpose, the group developed a set of proposed recommendations for both the process of developing a kindergarten assessment and implementation and implementation of a kindergarten assessment.



PROCESS

- ❖ The group reviewed the report describing Washington State’s process for developing a kindergarten assessment and prepared the following recommendations for the process of developing a kindergarten assessment:
 - ⦿ Identify a core team which will complete the following tasks:
 - Review of current research and national trends to identify key issues to be considered
 - Develop methods for gathering RI stakeholder information based on identified key issues
 - ⦿ Gather stakeholder information using surveys and focus groups
 - Stakeholders should include diverse representation from district staff – administrators and teachers; parents; higher education; community-based early childhood staff
 - Information collected should address key issues identified by the core team, as well as, the current state of kindergarten assessment
 - ⦿ Analyze the information collected develop guiding principles and recommendations for development and implementation of a kindergarten assessment, and the communication of kindergarten assessment information.



IMPLEMENTATION

- ⦿ The group reviewed the report describing Washington State's process for developing a kindergarten assessment and prepared the following recommendations for the implementation of a kindergarten assessment (starting point for the core team when identifying key issues):
 - ⦿ Assessment tools selected must be valid and reliable for RI population
 - ⦿ Assessment tools should be aligned with standards
 - ⦿ Adequate training and professional development for teachers needs to be incorporated into the implementation plan
 - ⦿ Kindergarten assessment needs to align with assessments done in PreK and in 1st and 2nd grade
 - ⦿ Assessment tools should address all domains of learning and development

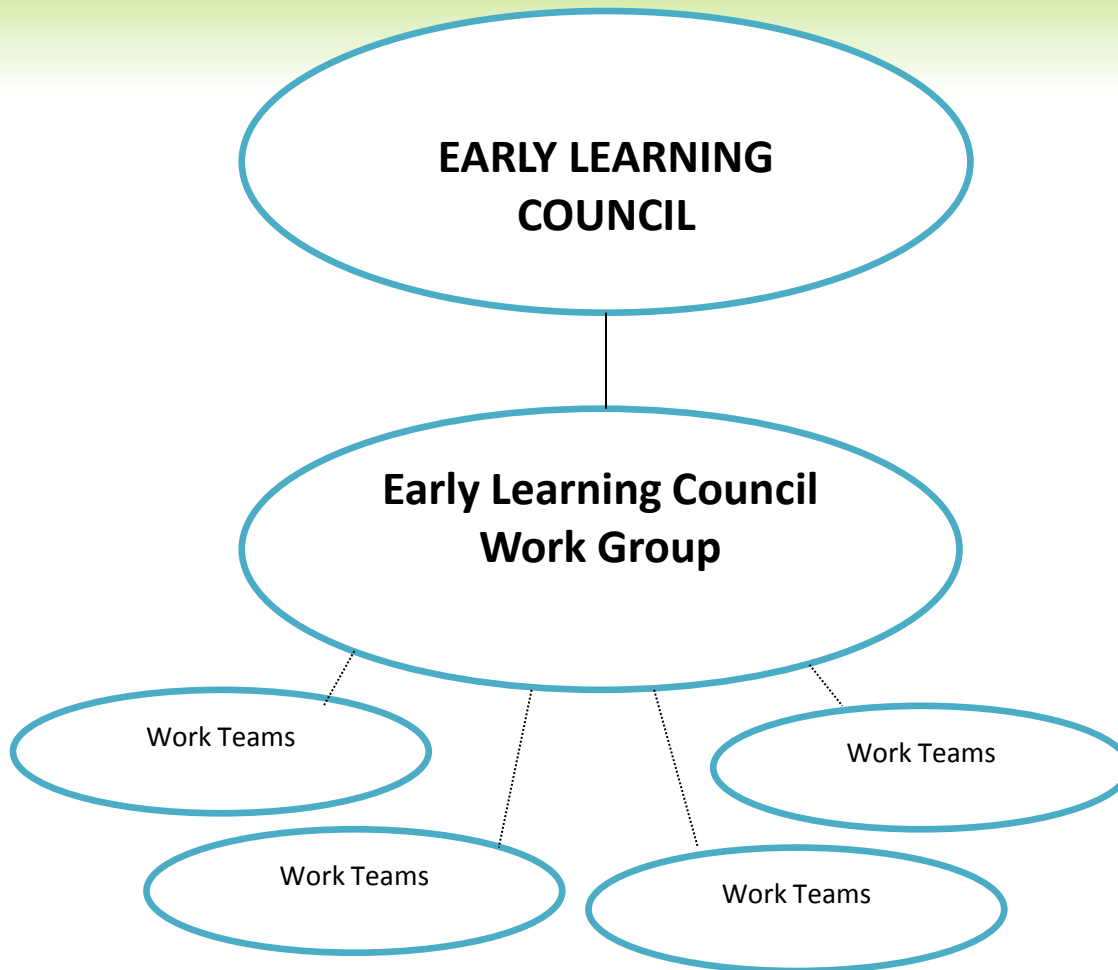


IMPLEMENTATION (CONT'D)

- ⦿ Methodology of assessments chosen will impact many components (e.g. professional development, cost, time)
- ⦿ Multiple sources of input should be considered (e.g. preschool teachers, family)
- ⦿ Potential barriers should be considered (e.g. cost, time to implement)
- ⦿ The timeline for implementation should be thoughtful (pilot, voluntary, then mandatory; phase in over time).

DEVELOPMENT/ COORDINATION OF WORK TEAMS

WORK TEAM STRATEGY



Key Features

- Work gets done in smaller work teams (either already existing groups or new groups) that align with the scope of work of the Council.
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- All workgroup members are engaged in at least one work team.
- The ELC Working Group meets once before each Early Learning Council Meeting Team (4x/year); work team leaders share progress and invite feedback from the Working Group.
- Work team leaders are engaged to provide updates and recommendations to the Council as needed.



NEXT STEPS

- ⦿ **IMPORTANT** – Date Change for the Next Meeting: Instead of February 17th we will be meeting March 3, 2011 9:30-11:30; Location TBD
- ⦿ First meeting with new work team structure
- ⦿ Will be hearing report outs from work teams focused on workforce development

Kindergarten Assessment: Ad Hoc Meeting Summary

December 14, 2010

9-10:30 am

In Attendance: Michele Palermo, Ann Turrell, Kristen Greene, Mindy Mertz, Maryann Finamore

Purpose

The group reflected on previous Workgroup work around the purpose of a Kindergarten Assessment, RIDE's ongoing assessment work, and the NGA Ready States Initiative work and prepared the following recommendation on the purpose of a kindergarten assessment:

Prioritize the development of a kindergarten assessment which can be used for the purpose of guiding instruction and can also be used to describe the entry status of children at the population level (state and community).

Process

The group reviewed the report describing Washington State's process for developing a kindergarten assessment and prepared the following recommendations for the process of developing a kindergarten assessment:

- Identify a core team which will complete the following tasks:
 - Review of current research and national trends to identify key issues to be considered
 - Develop methods for gathering RI stakeholder information based on identified key issues
- Gather stakeholder information using surveys and focus groups
 - Stakeholders should include diverse representation from district staff – administrators and teachers; parents; higher education; community-based early childhood staff
 - Information collected should address key issues identified by the core team, as well as, the current state of kindergarten assessment
- Analyze the information collected develop guiding principles and recommendations for development and implementation of a kindergarten assessment, and the communication of kindergarten assessment information.

Implementation

The group reviewed the report describing Washington State's process for developing a kindergarten assessment and prepared the following recommendations for the implementation of a kindergarten assessment (starting point for the core team when identifying key issues):

- Assessment tools selected must be valid and reliable for RI population
- Assessment tools should be aligned with standards
- Adequate training and professional development for teachers needs to be incorporated into the implementation plan
- Kindergarten assessment needs to align with assessments done in PreK and in 1st and 2nd grade
- Assessment tools should address all domains of learning and development
- Methodology of assessments chosen will impact many components (e.g. professional development, cost, time)
- Multiple sources of input should be considered (e.g. preschool teachers, family)
- Potential barriers should be considered (e.g. cost, time to implement)
- The timeline for implementation should be thoughtful (pilot, voluntary, then mandatory; phase in over time).

Rhode Island Early Learning Work Group Meeting Summary

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Meeting Summary

Work Group Members in Attendance: Co-Chair, Leanne Barrett, Co-Chair, Michele Palermo, Christine Arouth, Blythe Berger, Tammy Camillo, Kenneth Duva, Mary-Ann Finamore, Leslie Gell, Kristen Greene, Khadija Lewis Khan, Mindy Mertz, Ann Turrell

Guests: Mary Ann Snider (Rhode Island Department of Education)

Public Attendees: Susan Zoll (Ready to Learn Providence), Karen Ennis (Connecting for Children and Families)

Facilitator: Kristin Lehoullier

9:30-9:35	Welcome/Introduction	Kristin Lehoullier
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The meeting of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council Work Group was called to order at 9:35 am by facilitator Kristin Lehoullier.

Kristin welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda.

Kristin facilitated introductions.

9:35-10:50	Rhode Island Kindergarten Assessment Discussion	Kristin Lehoullier
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Report Back from Kindergarten Assessment Team (Kristen Greene/Mary Ann Finamore)

As a next step from the last meeting, a small group met to develop a set of recommendations for Kindergarten Assessment.

They started with reviewing the purpose.

The group reflected on previous Workgroup work around the purpose of a Kindergarten Assessment, RIDE's ongoing assessment work, and the NGA Ready States Initiative work and prepared the following recommendation on the purpose of a kindergarten assessment:

Prioritize the development of a kindergarten assessment which can be used for the purpose of guiding instruction and can also be used to describe the entry status of children at the population level (state and community).

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The group also reviewed the report describing Washington State's process for developing a kindergarten assessment and prepared the following recommendations for the process of developing a kindergarten assessment:

- Identify a core team which will complete the following tasks:
 - Review of current research and national trends to identify key issues to be considered
 - Develop methods for gathering RI stakeholder information based on identified key issues
- Gather stakeholder information using surveys and focus groups
 - Stakeholders should include diverse representation from district staff – administrators and teachers; parents; higher education; community-based early childhood staff
 - Information collected should address key issues identified by the core team, as well as, the current state of kindergarten assessment
- Analyze the information collected and develop guiding principles and recommendations for development and implementation of a kindergarten assessment and the communication of kindergarten assessment information.

Finally, the group reviewed the report describing Washington State's process for developing a kindergarten assessment and prepared the following recommendations for the implementation of a kindergarten assessment (starting point for the core team when identifying key issues):

- Assessment tools selected must be valid and reliable for RI population
- Assessment tools should be aligned with standards
- Adequate training and professional development for teachers needs to be incorporated into the implementation plan
- Kindergarten assessment needs to align with assessments done in PreK and in 1st and 2nd grade
- Assessment tools should address all domains of learning and development
- Methodology of assessments chosen will impact many components (e.g. professional development, cost, time)
- Multiple sources of input should be considered (e.g. preschool teachers, family)
- Potential barriers should be considered (e.g. cost, time to implement)
- The timeline for implementation should be thoughtful (pilot, voluntary, then mandatory; phase in over time).

Comments/Discussion

- The ability to describe the entry status of children at the population level is an important part of the work. It will help Rhode Island make the right investments at the right time.
- The variability between and within districts is just as important.

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- What we are doing now is not really a picture of the whole child – we need to move in that direction.
- It worked well to have a small group work on this and come back and make recommendations to the larger group.
- Kindergarten entry assessment is really a bridge between the early childhood world and the K-12 world. Getting it right is important to support alignment and to improve transitions.

Background and context on RIDE's assessment work (Mary Ann Snider)

- RIDE began working on a statewide assessment system over ten years ago (NECAP)
- There have been concerns of over-testing and redundant testing and that the tests are not reflective of the whole picture.
- Currently, RIDE is participating in a regional consortium called PARCC; Rhode Island is a governing state. The scope of the work is developing assessments for K through 12 that align with the Common Core Standards. The Common Core Standards address literacy and math. The PARCC states have committed to developing assessment system for literacy and math for K-2 as well.
- Rhode Island will align with PARCC but can do things in addition to it.
- The purpose of the assessment is not fully articulated yet. But it will be used in place of NECAP.
- We are looking at three categories of assessment:
 - Formative – short cycle assessments that teachers do naturally in the classroom to check understanding and make mid-course corrections. To do this well it is important to understand child growth and development, content standards and cognitive development.
 - Interim – assessments that you do at the end of a block of time, like a unit or semester, to see where kids are. Can be done at a classroom or school level.
 - Summative – assessments that you do after big milestones, like the end of the school year or at certain ages, on a population level (e.g. whole school, etc.) These are usually more structured and more standardized.
- The PARCC work will be mostly focused on summative assessment. But we would also like to develop some online tools for teachers to use to support interim assessment as well, like an instructional management system.
- We will be issuing an RFP to build or purchase some sort of instructional management system and we need recommendations from all of you on shaping that RFP by understanding the needs of the early childhood through grade 2 community.
- We have one statewide assessment system for special education Pre-K (Teaching Strategies GOLD) and the state funded Pre-K system that is aligned with the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards. It supports formative assessments based on teacher observation.

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Comments/Discussion

It is very helpful to have Teaching Strategies GOLD to use as a communication tool with parents to show them how their child is doing.

- Teaching Strategies GOLD is also being used by some Head Start programs. It makes a lot of sense to have a kindergarten assessment system that is intentionally linked to both early childhood assessment systems and the K-12 system. It is important that kindergarten teachers know how to use early childhood assessment information that is shared with them. If kindergarten teachers use the same system as the early childhood community, they are more likely to understand the information shared with them.
- It is great that GOLD can be used from birth to 6 years. It would be great if whatever we do links to GOLD. Even though it will take some to train teachers to reliably input data, it produces very valuable information.
- There is a big opportunity with Race to the Top to get the systems and platforms right. It might take years to teach everyone how to use the system but that is OK as long as we have built a solid system foundation. The critical decision we face today is what is the connection we want to make and how do we build it.
- We still need to align the GOLD objectives to the Common Core Standards – Teaching Strategies has committed to doing that. It is also likely that they would be willing to make sure that they can link up to RIDE’s instructional management system for the older grades.
- RIDE is currently paying \$11.95/child for GOLD for 2,584 children. We should see if we can get it to \$7/child when we have more volume.
- Head Start is also revising their Child Outcomes Framework and some of them are already using GOLD – that is another approximately 2500 kids. I imagine that Teaching Strategies will do the work they need to do to make sure GOLD is aligned with the national Head Start standards.
- Can you put other data into GOLD?
 - You can upload other documents and input observations and look at it.
- We need to make sure we have the capability to see the standardized data at a population level. E.g. scores or the percent of the population that is on track.

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- GOLD is based on teacher observation – we need to be careful about making population statements without standardized measures. GOLD is still working to build systems to support reliability across teachers using observation techniques.
- California uses a statewide early childhood assessment system starting at birth that relies on teacher observations. It was interesting to see that they are able to carefully use data from that system to make some statements about the overall child population. However, they are very careful to say that you can't use data from teacher observations to compare teachers or schools.
- Testing isn't bad; it is how you use it. We need to be clear on what claims we can reliably make with the data and what claims we need to be able to make. That will drive how much standardized data we need.
- We need to make sure we don't leave out child care programs. Head Start and Pre-K classrooms may have the ability to access GOLD and the professional development and support needed to use it, but child care programs do not. Most young children are receiving their early education in child care programs. We need to make sure that we keep affordability for child care and all early learning providers in mind as well as have a plan for professional development.
- Perhaps RIDE could build an early childhood assessment data management system so that we can make it more accessible.
- GOLD might not work as well in a child care setting where teachers are in classrooms 8-10 hours a day and there is a lot more information to input.
- We also need to remember that the costs go way beyond \$11.95/child when you factor in the cost for professional development. Also \$11,95 is the rate that RIDE pays. Community-based child care providers without a RIDE funded program would have to pay much more.
- A lot of Head Start programs have developed their own system based on Creative Curriculum.net; it might be helpful to look at what they have done.
- Our focus is on Kindergarten assessment but the more aligned it is with early childhood the better.

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- As a next step, this group should meet with the team at RIDE who is responsible for developing an instructional management system.
- RIDE is looking forward to the recommendations of this group re: Kindergarten Assessment.

Public Comment:

No public comments

10:50-11:25	Development/Coordination of Work Teams to Support the Early Learning Council Work	Michele Palermo Leanne Barrett Larry Pucciarelli
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Michele Palermo

- We are about half way through our first year and we have been looking at what is working and what is not working in terms of how we are getting the work done.
- There has been some good feedback from some of you that has been helpful and we have been discussing possible ways to fine-tune our structure and how we do our work.
- Our primary goal is to effectively facilitate the work in a way that values your time and expertise.
- With that in mind, Deborah and Elizabeth are suggesting a small shift in how we are organized to do our work. We want to share their draft plan with you today for feedback.

Leanne Barrett

- Through this change we hope to use your time more effectively and also get the work done more effectively.
- We like that our current structure has engaged all of the State Agency leaders responsible for carrying out the decisions and direction of the Council.
- It engages key experts and stakeholders to foster input and alignment.
- And it fosters information sharing, feedback and discussion among diverse stakeholders.
- We want to make sure that we keep all of these things going because we as a Council are charged to move the ball in all of these areas.

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- At the same time, there is significant overlap in membership between the Council, the Workgroup and related committees.
- The meetings feel redundant to the Council Meetings.
- And the diversity of levels and types of expertise in the room makes it difficult to do work; spend most of the meeting time briefing the workgroup rather than diving deeper into the work.
- With that in mind, as was mentioned at the last Early Learning Council meeting, we are proposing that we increase the productivity of the workgroup and use people's time wisely by adding smaller work teams as the primary vehicle for moving specific strands of work ahead .
- The work teams are either already existing groups or new groups that align with the scope of work of the Council. For example, the ECE Data System Team is a group that has already been working together under the NGA technical assistance grant that was awarded to the State last year and whose work is closely aligned with the Council's scope of work. From the outset, Deborah and Elizabeth pledged that we would not duplicate efforts in terms of work groups. Using the existing NGA data group is an example of working to improve alignment and make efficient use of people's time.
- Each work team would include the right mix of content experts and state agency managers and engage other expertise as needed. Frequency of meetings and the duration of the work team would be based on need.
- We would make sure that all workgroup members are engaged in at least one work team.
- Given the extra number of work team meetings, we will pare down the number of full Work Group meetings, but since the full Work Group is so important to helping quarterback the work across areas, the Work Group will meet 4x per year.
- The ELC Work Group would meet once before each Early Learning Council Meeting Team (4x/year). The Work Group meeting would be a place where work team leaders could share progress and invite feedback from the Working Group. The meetings will be public.
- Work teams would also be asked to provide updates and recommendations to the Council as needed.
- You can see on the second page of the handout the proposed work teams and their scope of work.
- The timing and schedule of each team will be different; not every team will meet monthly. It will be driven by the work. The work teams will be worker teams and they will likely be diving deep on a specific scope of work.

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- The same for the composition of the teams. The team leaders will be responsible for figuring out who they need on their teams and who else they need to engage at different points in their process.
- And as co-chairs we will make sure that each of you are participating on at least one team.
- However, it would be helpful to the team leaders to know what your interest areas are and what time commitment you can make. Even if you don't have time to commit to be on more than one team, there are other ways you could be involved and it would be helpful to know what your interests are.
- After our discussion we will pass around a sheet for you to fill out with your interests.
- Deborah and Elizabeth would like your feedback on their plan.
- What questions do you have?
- What feedback do you have?

Comments/Discussion

- This is a good plan and I think it will make us more effective and make the meetings feel less redundant.
- How will we make sure that the Work Group meetings don't feel redundant to the Early Learning Council?

The Work Group meetings will be a place for work team leaders to update everyone on their work invite feedback, keep the work aligned and foster discussion. Some of the work will be pushed up to a Council level as appropriate.

11:25-11:30	Wrap-up/Next Steps	Kristin Lehoullier
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- Next Work Group Meeting: March 3, 2011, 9:30 to 11:30, Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 4090
- Next ELC Meeting: March 23, 2011 12:00-2:00 p.m. Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 4090