Rhode Island Early Learning Council Work Group Meeting

Thursday, November 10, 2011 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 1130
400 East Ave., Warwick, RI

Agenda

9:30-9:35 (5 min)	**Welcome /Meeting Overview**	Leanne Barrett Michele Palermo Kristin Lehoullier
9:35-9:45 (10 min)	**Fiscal Management Update**	Michele Palermo
9:45 -10:15 (30 min)	**Discussion: Next Steps for Kindergarten Entry Assessment and B-5 Early Learning Standards**	Michele Palermo Blythe Berger Early Learning Standards Team Kindergarten Assessment Workgroup
10:15-10:45 (30 min)	**Team Updates** • ACCESS • QUALITY FINANCING • PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM • HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM • ALIGNMENT OF STANDARDS • ECE DATA SYSTEM	Early Council Work Team Leaders
10:45-11:15 (30 min)	**January ELC/ELCWG Retreat**	Kristin Lehoullier
11:15-11:25 (10 min)	**Public Comment**	Public Participants
11:25-11:30 (5 min)	**Next Steps** **ELC Meeting:** December 15, 2011 3:00-4:30 p.m. **ELC/ELCWG Retreat:** January 25, 2012 12:00-3:00 p.m. **ELCWG Meeting:** February 16, 2012 9:30-11:30 p.m.	Kristin Lehoullier

Rhode Island Early Learning Council

These recommendations were approved by the Rhode Island Early Learning Council on June 29, 2011 to guide the development of a shared, statewide early learning data system. The recommendations were informed by a team of Rhode Island leaders' participation in the National Governors Association Ready States Initiative in 2010 and a site visit organized by the national Early Childhood Data Collaborative in June 2011 to learn more about Pennsylvania's Early Learning Data Network.

Overall Recommendation

Rhode Island needs a shared, statewide Early Learning Data System that will:

1) Provide aggregated data to inform policy makers and guide resource allocation to support increased school readiness of children.   Data about young children, early learning programs, and the early learning workforce should be used to track the results of investments, monitor trends over time, sustain and grow current investments in effective programs, identify areas most in need of intervention, and make changes to improve outcomes for young children and families.

2) Provide data to inform educators about individual children. Data on young children's development and learning is needed to guide instruction and services for specific children.

Rhode Island Needs Improved Access to Data to Answer Critical Policy Questions

Children's Development and Learning
- ❖ How many/what percentage of children are on track to succeed, during the early childhood years, at school entry, and beyond?

Access
- ❖ What percentage/how many children are in various early care and education settings? (unduplicated children by type of setting, location, and quality).
- ❖ Are low-income and disadvantaged children enrolled in high-quality early learning programs?
- ❖ How much high-quality early care and education programming are children receiving?
- ❖ How many different programs do children attend before entering kindergarten?

Program Quality
- ❖ What percentage/how many of early care and education programs are high-quality?
- ❖ Does program quality improve over time? What are the barriers for quality improvement?

Early Childhood Workforce
- ❖ What percentage/how many of the early childhood workforce are qualified, by meeting specific established standards, to prepare children to succeed at school entry (e.g. core competencies, career lattice education levels)?
- ❖ What are workforce characteristics and patterns (turnover, compensation, diversity, education, etc.)?

Recommendations re: Next Steps

1) Work with the co-chairs of the Early Learning Council and the current ELC Data Work Group to identify leadership and establish an **official cross-departmental, public-private planning/governing body** with authorized decision-makers for state early learning data systems to act on the recommendations of the Early Childhood Data Work Group.
   - Hire a consultant to support continued planning and development of more specific, detailed data system plan
   - Capitalize on Department of Education's expertise and resources re: e-transcripts and program-teacher-child data logic already developed
   - Build upon the capacity of the Department of Health's KIDSNET as a universal database with information on children beginning at birth
   - Determine best strategies to link/coordinate and build data capacity across state departments and in the community.
   - Use guidance from the national Early Childhood Data Collaborative (e.g. 10 Fundamentals of Coordinated State Early Care and Education Data Systems)
   - Strengthen data connections with health care providers.

2) Use a central data system to **track child participation in early learning programs across sectors**.

3) Continue progress expanding KIDSNET to track **child-level developmental screening data** for children ages birth – K entry. Build on RIDE-Health partnership and add RIDE's Child Outreach screening data to KIDSNET. Consider creating SASID at age 3 (or earlier) in KIDSNET.

4) Move forward to develop a statewide **kindergarten entry assessment system** using best practices for early childhood assessment with the goal of supporting kindergarten instruction. Link to development of early childhood and Grade 1 and 2 assessment systems.

5) **Examine statewide use of early childhood assessment tools and data collection and storage systems** (e.g. Teaching Strategies GOLD). Consider alignment across early childhood and K-2 assessment systems.

6) Use **BrightStars as the central storage place for program quality data** (including star level, licensing status, accreditation status, RIDE preschool classroom approval status). Clarify state ownership of database. Strengthen resources to encourage program participation and support quality improvement.

7) Establish a **central storage place for data on Rhode Island's early learning workforce** (including demographic , education, compensation/benefit, and turnover/retention data). Build on data collected and systems in place at DCYF, BrightStars, RIDE, and R2LP (TEACH). Consider using licensing data as foundation by requiring programs applying for and renewing a DCYF license to enter/update workforce data in a registry where they can also track annual professional development hours

RI Early Learning Council: Status Update for Access Team | November 2011

The Team

Team Leaders: Elizabeth Burke Bryant and Larry Pucciarelli

Team Members: Khadija Lewis Khan (Beautiful Beginnings),Leslie Gell (R2LP), Karen Ennis (Connecting for Children and Families), Ann Turrell and Michele Palermo (RIDE), Karen Beese (DHS), Chris Amirault (RIAEYC), Cindy Larson (LISC), Pam High (DCYF), Lee-Ann Beaupre (EI Directors' Association), Lynda Dickinson and Aimee Mitchell (RI Head Start Association), Kathy Keenan (Warwick Public Schools), Rachel Flum (The Poverty Institute), Kim Maine (Sunshine Child Development Center), MaryAnn Finamore (Westbay Children's Center), Pam High (Hasbro Children's Hospital), Colleen Dorian (Family Childcare Homes of Rhode Island), Kat Tavares (United Way of Rhode Island)

Scope of Work

❖ Work to expand access for more children (particularly from low income and vulnerable families) to participate in high-quality early learning programs, including high-quality child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, Pre-K, Full Day Kindergarten and Early Childhood Special Education programs (including Early Intervention and preschool special education).

❖ Conduct periodic needs assessments on the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs (access, quality and workforce).

❖ Identify opportunities and barriers for collaboration and cooperation.

❖ Develop recommendations on increasing participation in high-quality child care, Head Start and Early Head Start, Pre-K, Full Day Kindergarten and Early Childhood Special Education programs (including Early Intervention and preschool special education).

Timeline

Major Milestone	Comments/Status	Planned Due Date
Request ideas from the field to improve children's access to high-quality early learning programs	Complete	November 2010
Team meeting to review recommendations from the field and legislative/budget opportunities	Complete	March 2, 2011
Discuss priorities for improving access at Early Learning Council Work Group	Complete	March 3, 2011
Present recommendations to Early Learning Council	Complete	March 24, 2011
Use access recommendations to raise awareness about the need for increased access to high quality early learning programs (including high quality child care, Early Head Start/Head Start, public Pre-K, full-day K, and early childhood special education)	Ongoing	
Access priorities approved by the Council were included in the state's Early Learning Challenge grant application		October 17, 2011

Details

Process
- Sent memo to formal and informal associations from the early learning field asking each group to identify 3-5 ideas to improve children's access to high-quality early learning programs.
- Formed small work team to review access issues and discuss priorities. Team included both ELC Council and Work Group members as well as other community leaders.
- Refined priorities at Work Group Meeting.
- Early Learning Council endorsed recommendations with a few changes.

Next Steps
- Refresh membership and participation on the Access team.
- Access team meeting on November 30, 2011 (location and time TBD) to plan to review and update access priorities

Plans for Community Input/Engagement

- Connect with the Child Care Commission, the Rhode Island Head Start Association, the ICC, and other groups to discuss access issues, state budget developments, and legislation for the 2012 General Assembly.

RI Early Learning Council: Status Update for Alignment of Standards Team

The Team

Team Leaders: Brenda Almeida and Leanne Barrett

Team Members: TBD (the following Council/Work Group members have expressed interest: Maryann Finamore, Cindy Larson, Karen Beese, Joseph Morra, Tammy Camillo, and Michele Palermo)

Scope of Work

❖ Update DCYF child care center licensing regulations, monitoring procedures, and licensing data system to incorporate best practices from other states.

❖ Conduct a review of program quality standards and identify any inconsistencies. Discuss possible modifications that improve alignment. Share findings with providers and develop educational materials to explain alignment.

❖ Ensure alignment of quality standards and monitoring across program settings, including local Rhode Island systems of child care licensing, BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System, the Department of Education preschool approval and the national quality systems of accreditation (NAEYC and NAFCC) and Head Start.

Timeline

Major Milestone	Comments/Status	Planned Due Date
Hire consultants from the National Association of Regulatory Administrators to facilitate process to update DCYF center licensing regulations	Contracting delayed.	January 2012
NARA to develop recommendations for update of DCYF regulations and monitoring systems		TBD
Small team review/discussion of proposed updates		TBD
Finalize recommendations for DCYF licensing updates		TBD

Details

Process
- Draft scope of work for licensing consultant completed. Includes a review of national best practices, review of RI school-age child care recommendations, and review alignment with other standards (BrightStars, RIDE approval, etc.)

Next Steps
- Complete project planning and contracting for licensing consultant.
- Race to the Top –Early Learning Challenge grant application includes a 6 month cross-system review/revision of DCYF licensing, BrightStars and RIDE preschool approval.

Plans for Community Input/Engagement
- Proposed changes to DCYF regulations and systems will be reviewed by small team of stakeholders
- Summary of recommended changes will be presented to ELC Work Group and ELC
- DCYF will hold public hearings on updated licensing regulations
- Alignment team will gather input from stakeholders re: how to improve alignment of program standards.

The Team

Team Leaders: Leanne Barrett

Team Members: Cathie Walsh, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT; Leslie Gell/Katie Murray/Rebecca Lee, R2LP/Providence Plan; Blythe Berger/Kristine Campagna/Ellen Amore, HEALTH; Larry Pucciarelli, Head Start; Brenda Duhamel, Karen Beese, DHS; Michele Palermo/Ann Turrell/James Wiley/Jason Becker, RIDE; Brenda Almeida/Leon Saunders, DCYF; Tammy Camillo, BrightStars; Ron Seifer, Brown University

Scope of Work

❖ Using technical assistance from the National Governors Association's Ready States Initiative, **develop recommendations for a coordinated birth to age 8 data system** that will provide information on young children's development and learning, their participation in early learning programs (including child care, Head Start, special education (EI and preschool special education), and Pre-K), the quality of programs, and the early learning workforce. This system needs to include information on children, programs and workforce characteristics, begin at birth and be linked to the K-12 data system.

Timeline

Major Milestone	Comments/Status	Planned Due Date
Participate in NGA Ready States technical assistance initiative.	Completed	April – December 2010
Site visit to Pennsylvania organized by the Early Childhood Data Collaborative	Completed	June 5-7, 2011
Present recommendations and draft action plan to RI Early Learning Council	Completed	June 29, 2011
Incorporate Early Learning Council data system recommendations into state application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge	Completed	October 19, 2011

Details

Process

- Early Learning Data System team participated in the NGA Ready States Initiative from April – December 2010 and received training and technical assistance support to review state data system needs and develop next step recommendations for Rhode Island.
- Developed a list of basic state policy questions that required improved access to data.
- Mapped existing data systems in Rhode Island with relevant data on young children, early learning programs, and/or the early learning workforce.
- Identified data system gaps and coordination/linkage issues
- Developed and presented recommendations to the Early Learning Council regarding next steps.

Next Steps

- Resources from the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge would enable the state to move forward rapidly and build a shared, statewide Early Learning Data System to be managed by the Rhode Island Department of Education and connected with other key state department databases.

Plans for Community Input/Engagement

- If the state is awarded a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, a cross-departmental, public-private planning and governing body for the data system will be established.

RI Early Learning Council: Status Update for Early Learning Standards Team

The Team

Team Leaders: Michele Palermo and Blythe Berger

Team Members: TBD

Scope of Work

❖ Support implementation of the **Rhode Island Early Learning Standards** in a variety of programs through professional development with college credit and on-site technical assistance and coaching.

❖ Participate in national planning and development of common core Early Learning Standards to include comprehensive learning guidelines across all domains of child development (physical, cognitive, social emotional, language and literacy, and approaches to learning) for children birth to age three and children ages three and four.

❖ Continue to support the RI Early Learning Standards training for early learning providers serving preschool-age children.

❖ Work with the Council of Chief State School Officers to provide input into the common core standards for early learning for preschoolers and infants/toddlers.

❖ Review and consider adopting Infant-Toddler Early Learning Standards developed by another state as an interim strategy to guide the development of high-quality professional development opportunities for infant-toddler educators in Rhode Island.

Timeline

Major Milestone	Comments/Status	Planned Due Date
Team Leaders will meet to review scope of work and plan first meeting		March 1, 2011
Team Leaders met on March 7, 2011		March 7, 2011
Identify core team and national experts	Seek ELCWG input	November 10, 2011
Invite potential team members to first meeting		TBD 2011

Details

Process

- Team Leaders identified three preliminary goals: update and revise RIELS in light of adoption of Common Core and Head Start Child Outcomes Framework; review and identify interim B-3 early learning standards; support the continued implementation of RIELS
- Team Leaders identified list of potential team members to recruit

Results/Outcomes

Next Steps

- Identify core team and national experts with ELC Workgroup
- Finalize development process

Plans for Community Input/Engagement

The Team

Team Leader: Leslie Gell

Team Members: Leanne Barrett, Karen Beese, Blythe Burger, Mary Ann Finamore, Laura Harper, Jerry Hatfield, Lisa Hildebrand, Khadija Lewis-Kahn, Joseph Morra, Michele Palermo, Maura Pearce, Barbara Schermack, Alexander Sidorkin, Sue Warford

Scope of Work

❖ Establish and implement the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood workforce scholarship model and secure public and private funding for scholarships.

❖ Expand access to higher education and ensure institutions have the capacity to effectively support the development of early childhood educators.

❖ Map the capacity of institutes of higher education in the development of early educators and assess effectiveness in meeting needs of the early childhood workforce.

Timeline

Major Milestone	Comments/Status	Planned Due Date
27 T.E.A.C.H. scholars enrolled in CCRI		Fall semester, 2011
Recruitment underway for Spring 2012 semester		Ongoing
First T.E.A.C.H. monitoring visit		September 2011
Third meeting of the advisory council/higher ed group		October 2011
Notification of renewed commitment from Rhode Island Foundation for second year of funding		October 2011
2nd "Higher Education Summit" planned for Dec.		December 2011
		.

Details

- In the last status update, we reported that that we anticipated enrolling 40 Early Childhood Educators in CCRI coursework by fall 2011.   We did not meet this target due to funding limitations; however we did enroll 27 and we expect to have 40 in place for the spring semester.
- Deans and faculty members from the three state institutions of higher education will reconvene in December to revisit the articulation discussion.
- Priority for T.E.A.C.H. scholarship: BrightStars rated programs, programs that serve children who receive DHS subsidies, educators who are 8 classes shy of completion, and family child care providers (until they represent 20% of our population)
- Working with CCRI to ensure that specialist program and T.E.A.C.H. align appropriately.

Plans for Community Input/Engagement

- Advisory Council
- Statewide orientation sessions
- Site visits to participating sites
- Satisfaction Surveys

The Team

Team Leaders: Leanne Barrett, Tammy Camillo and Karen Beese

Team Members: Chris Amirault, Cindy Larson, Maryann Finamore, Kim Maine, Khadija Lewis Khan, Tania Quezada, Michele Palermo

Scope of Work

❖ **Continue expansion of participation in BrightStars,** Rhode Island's evidence-based quality rating and improvement system. Ensure that administrative/program costs to operate and sustain BrightStars continues to be supported through a public-private funding partnership and that participation in BrightStars is encouraged, rewarded, and recognized by all parts of the early learning system.

❖ **Develop effective supports and strategies to help programs achieve high-quality standards** by providing financial incentives for participation in BrightStars and for program quality improvements tied to improving a BrightsStars rating and/or achieving RIDE Approval.

❖ **Ensure there are adequate resources and supports** for high-quality facilities, equipment and materials, and a qualified and stable workforce across all types of early learning programs, from birth to third grade.

❖ **Review tiered reimbursement systems, quality bonuses, and financial incentives** developed by 29 other states to support program quality improvement and develop recommendations for implementing in Rhode Island.

Timeline

Major Milestone	Comments/Status	Planned Due Date
Hire consultant to conduct an analysis and review of quality incentives and supports.	Contract delayed.	December 2011/ January 2012
Develop estimates of costs to operate programs at BrightStars quality levels and classrooms meeting RIDE approval standards.	Will include estimates for centers, family child care, and school-age providers. Consultant will work with providers in Rhode Island when needed to gather local information on budgets.	TBD
Review financial supports and incentives used by other states.	Some work on this completed for RTT-ELC application. More to be done by consultant.	TBD
Develop recommended package of financial supports and incentives for Rhode Island	Some work on this completed for RTT-ELC application (see attached). More to be done by consultant. Then, a review will be completed by ELCWG.	TBD

Details

Process
- We have had 2 conference calls and 1 meeting with Anne Mitchell to discuss the project and outline a scope of work.
- As part of RI's RTT-ELC grant application, Work Team leaders drafted recommendations that were adopted by the grant writing team. A comprehensive plan for program improvement support was included in the application.

Next Steps
- Complete contracting.

The Team

Team Leader: Michele Palermo

Team Members: Maryann Finamore, Kristen Greene, Mindy Mertz, Ruth Gallucci, Kenny Duva

Scope of Work

❖ Explore best practices in other states and develop a **statewide kindergarten assessment system** that builds on the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards and is used to guide practice and policy and inform kindergarten teachers of children's strengths and areas for growth.

❖ Review kindergarten assessment systems in other states and develop recommendations to RIDE for the development and implementation of a kindergarten assessment system for Rhode Island.

Timeline

Major Milestone	Comments/Status	Planned Due Date
Recommendations presented to ELCWG	Approved to send to ELC	March 23, 2011
Recommendations presented to ELC	ELC endorsed recommendations	March 23, 2011
Identify core team	Seek ELCWG input	November 10, 2011
Invite team to first meeting		TBD 2011

Details

Process
- 12-14-2011 Small group met to draft recommendations for ELC Workgroup to review
- 1-13-2011 ELC Workgroup reviewed draft recommendations
- 3-23-2011 ELC endorsed recommendations

Results/Outcomes
- Recommendations discussed, no revisions needed
- Recommendations endorsed

Next Steps
- Recommendations to be presented to ELC
- Identify core team to begin to implement recommendations
- Schedule first meeting

Plans for Community Input/Engagement
- Public comment at ELCWG meeting and ELC meeting
- Recommendations call for specific public participation in development process

RI Early Learning Council: Status Update for Professional Development Team

The Team

Team Leaders: Tammy Camillo, Karen Beese and Lisa Hildebrand

Team Members: Anne Mitchell (facilitator); Brenda Almeida, DCYF; Leanne Barrett, RI Kids Count (ELC Coordinator); Blythe Berger, HEALTH; Angela Brightman, South County Head Start; Colleen Dorian, Family Child Care Homes RI; Brenda DuHamel, DHS Early Intervention; Leslie Gell, R2LP; Kim Keiser, NCCIC; Claudia Kelly, Woonsocket Head Start; Ellen Kiron, HEALTH; Mindy Mertz, Providence School Dept.; Joseph Morra, RIASPA; Michele Palermo, RIDE; Carol Patnaude, CCRI; Larry Pucciarelli, Head Start Collaboration; Sue Washburn, EDC/RITTA Center

Scope of Work

❖ Develop an adequately-funded, evidence-based system of professional development to prepare an effective and well-qualified workforce of early educators with appropriate levels of training, education, and credentials.

❖ Develop high-quality professional development opportunities and technical assistance that support program quality using the Environment Rating Scales, CLASS, and other research-based tools.

❖ Support implementation of effective professional development with college credit and on-site technical assistance, including the RI Early Learning Standards and other local and national models.

❖ The workforce includes staff of child care centers, preschools, Head Start programs, public Pre-K, early childhood special education programs, family child care, and school-age programs.

Timeline

Major Milestone	Comments/Status	Planned Due Date
Select/contract facilitator	complete	Feb 2011
Convene Work Team	complete	Feb-Sept 2011
Formal progress report to ELC	complete	June & Sept 2011
Draft PD System Plan to ELC	Postponed to Dec 2011	Dec 2011
Draft PD System Plan to DHS	Postponed to Dec 2011	Dec 2011

Details

Process
- Contracted Anne Mitchell, President Early Childhood Policy Research, for facilitation/TA. Also received TA from Kim Keiser, NCCIC.
- Developed a Goal Statement, Work Plan and Timeline based on National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Policies and Principles of Professional Development.
- Completion of Work Team meetings and a draft of the PD System Plan. The team met a total of seven times and has completed a draft of the PD System Plan, including review of a framework for PD system design, information on the status of professional development from the perspective of each ECE sector, including the required and preferred credentials for practitioners, continuing education requirements, and available resources and review of current and needed articulation agreements between state's institutions of higher education. A timeline, charge and plan for implementation is included in the draft plan.

Next Steps
- Present completed Draft PD System Plan to ELC and other stakeholders at the meeting in December.
- Present completed Draft PD System Plan to DHS following the ELC meeting in December.

Plans for Community Input/Engagement
- RIAEYC staff will gathered information from interviews with state and organizational stakeholders and conducted a rough needs assessment as a part of the PD System planning meetings based on the results of those interviews, along with information gathered from BrightStars baseline and Pilot studies and quality improvement plans on record.

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Work Group Meeting

Thursday, November 10, 2011, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 1130

Work Group Members In Attendance: Christine Arouth, Leanne Barrett, Blythe Berger, Tammy Camillo, Rhonda Farrell, Leslie Gell, Kristen Greene, Kristin Lehoullier, Khadija Lewis Khan, Michele Palermo and Susan Warford

Additional Attendees: Lisa Hildebrand

Welcome/Meeting Overview

The Rhode Island Early Learning Council Workgroup meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by facilitator, Kristin Lehoullier. Kristin facilitated introductions and reviewed the agenda.

Michele and Leanne noted that we are expected to hear the outcome of the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) sometime in mid-December as the federal government needs to obligate the funds by December 31st. Thirty-five states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico applied for the RTT-ELC funds. Rhode Island has gotten feedback from technical assistance providers that our application was good and we have a good chance of getting the award because of our size and the level of community engagement that we had. We had 73 letters of support including one from every Head Start program, which is a sign of great support from the community.

Fiscal Management Update

RIDE has selected the Northern Collaborative to provide fiscal management for the Early Learning Council funds. RIDE has completed a contract and sent it over to the Department of Administration for a purchase order. The purchase order is expected to be done by mid-December which will allow us to start spending the funds.

Decisions about purchasing can be made in two ways:

1) The work team leader can make an argument that they have a sole source situation where there is only one vendor qualified to do the work.
2) In all other cases, potential contractors will need to submit bids for the work. The bids will go through a process managed by RIDE, Rhode Island KIDSCOUNT, a person from Northern Collaborative and the work team leaders to make decisions on which bids to accept.

A few discussion points and questions were raised on the presentation:

- Will there be a cost extension because it has taken so long to access to funds?
- When does the money need to be spent by?

Michele explained that the funds need to be used within the two year contract period which ends August 31, 2013. There cannot be cost extensions beyond that date. If we have an existing contract that has been delayed while we were going out to bid for a fiscal agent (like TEACH), we may need to change the time limits in the contract to adjust for the delay.

Discussion: Next Steps for Kindergarten Entry Assessment and B-5 Early Learning Standards

Michele went over the current plan and timeline for developing birth-5 early learning standards and a kindergarten entry assessment. She also reviewed the Kindergarten Entry Assessment Recommendations have already been made to the Council by the Kindergarten Entry Work Team (see meeting slides for more detail). Michele noted the following:

- We can use existing funds to pay a consultant to analyze our current standards using a framework developed by Catherine Scott Little, that assesses the standards for the following things:
  - Balance – Do the standards address the whole child?
  - Coverage – Within each domain do the standards cover everything that research says is important?
  - Depth – to what extent is the domain covered by the standards?
  - Difficulty – What is the level of difficulty of the standards and do the standards align vertically? Do the standards for what preschoolers should know and be able to do align with the standards for kindergarteners?

- We will need additional funds to convene a Standards Development Work Team that can review the analysis done by the consultant and then make some recommendations.

- We wrote in the RTT-ELC application that we would finish the development of the early learning standards before we began working on the kindergarten entry assessment. However, if we want to be able to pilot a kindergarten assessment, then we cannot wait more than a year to develop the standards and put the pilot in place. If we started reviewing current research on kindergarten assessment and gathering stakeholder information now we can be developing the early learning standards and preparing to develop a kindergarten assessment at the same time.

- Specifically, we could engage a consultant to start the standards alignment analysis right now so that in January the Early Learning Standards work team can come together and review the consultants work and think about next steps. Then in the spring, the Kindergarten Assessment Work Team can start reviewing current research and national trends to identify key assessment issues to be considered. By June, the work of the two teams could come together with the set of draft early learning standards. Over the summer we can have a series of broad-based public feedback sessions that would gather input on the draft standards. During the feedback sessions we could also share lots of information about the kindergarten assessment and what it would look like and gather input. The Kindergarten Assessment Team could then take that feedback and starting look at options for assessment tools in the fall 2012, putting in place supports and training in spring of 2013 and rolling out a pilot in the fall of 2013.

Michele asked the Early Learning Council Work Group several questions:

- How do we align the timelines for these projects so we can work on them in tandem?

- What areas of expertise do we need to have represented on the team to ensure that we develop an effective Early Learning Standards and Kindergarten Entry Assessment?

- Are there national experts that you would recommend we engage to provide technical support to the work?

Several discussion points and questions were raised in response the presentation and Michele's questions:

- If we don't get RTT-ELC, how would we roll out the early learning standards and get public feedback?
- Would we look at how the Early Learning Standards align with the Common Core Standards?
- The Common Core Standards are very specific and the Early Learning Standards are not – how would we match up the level of specificity between the two documents?
- Can the consultant also look at how other states are structuring ELS? We should ask the consultant to do research on what is already out there.
- How do we integrate the work with something that is already fixed, like Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG)? How would we handle it if TSG did not represented everything that we felt was needed to support the B-5 Early Learning Standards?
- We need to make sure that we clearly map alignment between potential assessment tools and our standards - it may be that there are gaps and we will need to recommend other tools that fill those gaps or have supplemental tools.
- It might be a valuable tool to have a focused infant/toddler group and really engage early intervention representatives and providers of infant/toddler programs.
- The stakeholders for kindergarten assessment are extensive. It will be very complicated to engage them.

Michele noted that if we don't get the RTT-ELC funding then the Early Learning Standards Work Team would need to do more of the development work. Rather than having 8 groups working on it, we would have one group.

She also noted that we would ask the consultant to evaluate how the Early Learning Standards align with both the Common Core Standards and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. We would look to the consultant to advise us on how to achieve the right balance of specificity so we are not overly prescriptive. And we would use the analysis to understand the alignment that does and does not exist between the standards so we can make design decisions. We can customize TSG to meet our needs. We can look for another tool or supplemental tools if we need too.

Several group members note that before we engage early interventionists we should consider how the standards would be used by them and whether the early learning standards will be used at the center of their practice.   They felt that the early learning standards will be one tool that early interventionists might use but that it might not be central to much of their practice.

Leanne noted that as part of the state's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application, each state department signed off on using one set of statewide Early Learning Standards for all programs (including child care, Pre-K, home visiting, Early Intervention, etc.). It doesn't mean that it is the only tool they can use, but each state agency has agreed to use the statewide B-5 Early Learning Standards in their programs. Early Intervention providers have expressed interest in being involved in the development of B-3 early learning standards.

Some of the group members suggested that we ask Catherine Scott-Little at the University of North Carolina - Greensboro, Kelly Maxwell at FPG Child Development Institute at UNC – Chapel Hill and Sharon Lynn Kagan at Columbia University for some recommendations of potential consultants.

Michele noted that the new state Basic Education Plan requires schools to have a kindergarten assessment and most of them do not have it. So the kindergarten assessment work will help them.

Other Team Updates
Other Work Team Leaders gave updates on their work (see team progress reports). Some of the work has been slowed down because of funding delays.

Several discussion points, questions and next steps were raised in response to the team updates:

- The Data System Team will be posting their Early Learning Data System Recommendations on the Early Learning Rhode Island Website. It was suggested that the team add the policy questions and a list of workforce information that we want to collect (such as wage data) to the document before posting.
- A question was raised about the scope of the Access Team's work. Specifically, some asked how the Access team would identify opportunities and barriers for collaboration and cooperation.

All group members were in favor of posting the data system recommendations with the suggested changes. Leanne also noted that she would ask Elizabeth Burke Bryant and Larry Pucciarelli, co-chairs of the Access Team about how they planned to identify opportunities and barriers for collaboration and cooperation.

ELC/ELCWG Retreat
Kristin present proposed goals for the January ELC/ELCWG retreat and an outline of how a strategic plan might be structured using the Early Learning Council and Early Learning Council Work Group's efforts to date, including the plans articulated in the State Advisory Council and RTT-ELC application. (see presentation for more detail).

Kristin asked the Early Learning Council Work Group for input and suggestions.

- Do the retreat goals make sense? Is the desired outcome of the retreat clear?
- Does the proposed organization of the strategic plan make sense? Does it align well with state agency strategic plans?
- What other suggestions do you have?
- What would make this retreat worth your time?

Workgroup members agreed with the goals and proposed structure for the strategic plan.

Public Comment

None

Next Steps

Kristin reviewed next steps with the group:

- Upcoming Access Team Meeting: November 30, 2011; 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. at United Way of Rhode Island
- Next ELC Meeting: December 15, 2011 3:00-4:30 p.m.
- ELC/ELCWG Retreat: January 25, 2012 12:00-3:00 p.m.
- Next ELCWG Meeting: February 16, 2012 9:30-11:30 a.m.