Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting and Early Learning Council Workgroup Meeting

Wednesday, April 10, 2013 11:00-1:30 p.m.

Save the Bay, 100 Save the Bay Dr., Providence

Agenda

11:00-11:15	**Welcome /Meeting Overview**	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Sandra Powell
11:15-11:35	**Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Update**	Judy Rios-Willgren
11:35-12:20	**Program Quality Improvement Update**	Karen Beese Leanne Barrett Kristin Lehoullier
12:20-12:30	**Public Comment**	Public Participants
12:30-1:15	**Council and Subcommittee Purpose and Structure**	Leanne Barrett Kristin Lehoullier Council and Work Group Members
1:15-1:25	**Public Comment**	Public Participants
1:25-1:30	**Next Steps** • Next meeting: June 19, 2013 11:30-2:00pm	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Deborah Gist

Rhode Island Early Learning Council and Workgroup Meeting

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Save the Bay

Meeting Agenda

Welcome/Meeting Overview
Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Update
Program Quality Improvement Update
Public Comment
Council and Subcommittee Structure
Public Comment
Next Steps

Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Updates

RTT-ELC: Administrative Update

- Budget
- RFP's, LOI's, RFQ's and contracts
- Hiring and staffing

RTT-ELC: Clarification of RTT-ELC Goals and Scope of Work

- Goals for the RTT – ELC grant
- Scope of Work for each Project

2012 Annual Performance Report

- Status of the 2012 Annual Performance Report
- How the APR will be made available to the public

Communication Efforts

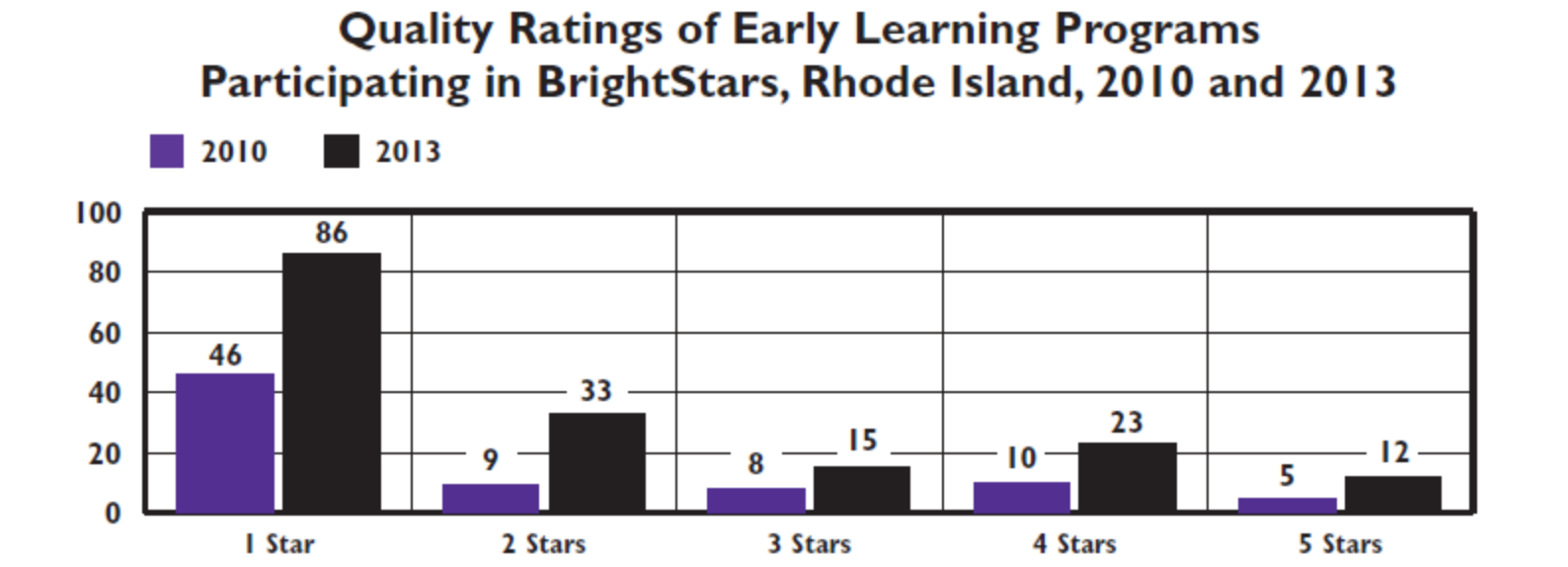
- Communication Team membership
- Race to the Top Monthly Report
- Introduction to RTT- ELC *Informational Briefs*
- RTT – ELC Public Feedback Form
- Upcoming communication events, activities and materials

Program Quality Improvement Update

Program Quality Improvement Goals

- Increase the number of early learning programs that participate in the BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System.
- Make lasting improvements to the quality of early learning programs, especially those serving children with high needs.
- Provide support to programs, especially those serving low income children, to meet high quality standards in BrightStars and RIDE CECE Approval.
- Increase the number and proportion of early learning programs, especially those serving infants and toddlers, that achieve and maintain 3, 4, and 5 Stars.

BrightStars Participation and Ratings



Source: Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, 2010 and 2013.

- As of January 1, 2013 there were 169 early learning programs actively participating in BrightStars, 48 (15%) centers and 121 (21%) family child care homes.
- In 2012, 19% of eligible programs achieved a quality rating increase.

How to Reach Quality Improvement Goals?

- The PQI Core Team worked with Anne Mitchell to develop a Cost of Quality Model for Rhode Island.

- Combined the PQI goals with data from the Cost of Quality Model to begin developing a package of financial incentives and supports that will have the combined effect of promoting quality improvement:
  - ***Participation Incentives*** *to encourage and support programs as they enter the TQRIS quality continuum.*
  - ***Quality Improvement Grants*** *to support the cost of improving quality.*
  - ***Quality Awards*** *to encourage and support programs to reach and maintain the highest levels of quality.*

- Expand, streamline and align quality improvement resources, including technical assistance efforts, to help programs advance within the TQRIS.

Participation Incentives

Availability: February - March 2013

Eligibility: Program must apply to BrightStars and receive a rating by 3/22/2013. Retroactively applied to October 2011 (end of ARRA funded incentives).

Funding:

- Family Child Care Homes - $250
- Child Care Centers/School Age Programs* - $500

Outcomes: 74 programs received an incentive

- 14 Centers
- 58 Family Child Care Homes
- 2 School Age Programs*

Participation Incentives

Lessons Learned:

- Initial period was too short a period to allow programs to apply and receive star rating.
- Cannot determine the impact of the incentives due to the short time frame.
- Core Team plans to extend the participation incentives through June 30, 2013 to better determine the effectiveness of the incentives on encouraging programs to join BrightStars.

Interim Quality Improvement Grants

$400,000 to support programs in improving quality
increasing Quality Rating or achieving RIDE CECE Approval

Availability: April 1 - July 1 or until funds expended
Programs serving children with High Needs will be given priority in the event that demand is greater than funds available.

Funding:

- Licensed Child Care Centers – up to $30,000
- Public School Programs – up to $30,000
- Family Child Care Homes – up to $5000

Interim Quality Improvement Grants

Eligibility:

- Must currently participate in BrightStars
- School districts qualify if they are currently participating in the RIDE Technical Assistance Project
- Must have a Program/Quality Improvement Plan

Requirements:

- Quality Improvement Grants must be spent on items directly related to a Program/ Quality Improvement Plan.
- Items purchased must comply with DCYF Licensing Standards.
- Funds must be spent at the site, classroom, and/or home for which the Quality Improvement Plan was developed.
- Improvements to facilities (renovation or construction) are not an allowable expense.

Interim Quality Improvement Grants

Examples of Allowable Expenses:

- Program Support:
  - Portable outdoor play materials
  - Curriculum, Assessment, Family Engagement resources or materials
- Classroom Support:
  - Materials for learning centers/spaces
  - Developmentally and age appropriate furniture and equipment
- Staff Support:
  - Professional Development experiences, materials and resources
  - Costs for qualified substitutes while staff attend Professional Development experiences

Quality Awards

Availability: Beginning July 2013

Eligibility:

- Must participate in BrightStars
- Must have a minimum of 10% CCAP enrollment
- Must have a Quality Rating of 3, 4, or 5 stars

Two Part Award Structure:

- **Base Award -** based on the quality rating of the program and the total enrollment of children under age 6.
- **CCAP Infant-Toddler Incentive -** based on the quality rating of the program and the enrollment of CCAP infants and toddlers.

Center Based* Quality Awards

Base Award

Quality Rating	Annual Cost per Child
3 Star	$50
4 Star	$150
5 Star	$500

+

CCAP Infant/Toddler Incentive

Quality Rating	Annual Cost per Child
3 Star	$100
4 Star	$300
5 Star	$500

Relevant enrollment numbers are multiplied by annual per child cost, then divided by 12 to determine the amount of a program's monthly award.

*Award amounts for Family Child Care are being calculated, but the structure will be the same.

Quality Award

- Program completes Quality Award Application each month, reflecting enrollment data and star rating for the previous month (as of the 15th day).
- DHS will review and verify application data.
- Program must be in compliance with DCYF licensing to receive award.
- School year programs will be ineligible for awards during the months of July and August.
- At no time shall a program receive an award based on a per child calculation that exceeds their DCYF licensed capacity (infants, toddlers, preschoolers).
- School Age children and children in State funded Pre-K will not be included in the calculation of the Quality Award.

Quality Awards

Requirements

- Funds should be used to support direct costs of the early childhood program, such as:
  - Enhanced compensation for staff who meet qualifications outlined in BrightStars.
  - Support for expanded staffing needs to meet higher quality standards (e.g. expanded hours for teaching assistants, floaters, etc.).
  - On-going costs associated with meeting higher quality standards (e.g. individual child assessment system).
- A Summary Report indicating how the award was utilized will be required.
- DHS will conduct periodic audits to verify enrollment and/or Summary Report data.

Program Improvement Technical Assistance

Statewide Professional Development and Technical Assistance Center

- RFP to identify vendor in April/May 2013.
- Implementation in July 2013.
- Professional Development aligned with Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Frameworks, and based on needs identified through Workforce Study.
- Expanded and streamlined Technical Assistance that works in alignment with other state-funded TA resources.
- Administration of Quality Improvement Grant program, linked with individualized technical assistance.

Public Comment

Council and Subcommittee Structure

RI Early Learning Council Background

- The Head Start Authorization Act calls for State Early Learning Councils to strengthen state-level coordination and collaboration among the various sectors and settings of early childhood programs. Specifically, Councils are charged with:
  - Conducting periodic needs assessments.
  - Identifying opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination.
  - Developing recommendations on increasing participation in ECE programs (including outreach to underrepresented populations).
  - Developing recommendations on the establishment or improvement of core elements of the State early childhood system (e.g. unified data system, early learning standards, etc.)
  - Developing recommendations on statewide professional development for ECE educators.

Current RI Early Learning Council Structure

- The RTT-ELC Challenge grant necessitated that the role of the Council, Workgroup and Work Teams be revised.
- Work Teams became Subcommittees and roles were clarified as follows:
  - Core Project Groups carry out the work in the SOW.
  - The Early Learning Council Work Teams, now Sub-Committees, will take the lead on providing stakeholder and public input to the Core Project Groups as they embark upon their work, and in providing feedback and guidance throughout.
  - The RI Early Learning Council provides leadership and oversight to the grant implementation to ensure the development of cross-sector and cross-departmental systems and programs. This is done through Co-Chairs reports at the Council meetings.
  - The Council is also charged with facilitating overarching policy decisions to help ensure the effective implementation of the grant.
  - Final products/policies will be reviewed by the Early Learning Council and Work Group.

Discussion

- Given the Council roles and responsibilities laid out in the authorizing legislation, what is the on-going role for the Council and what processes should be in place to ensure the Council can continue to make informed recommendations to the governor about key policy issues?
- Should the Council continue to have a Work Group? If so, what role should it play?
- How should the subcommittees be structured to best support the Council?
- How should the meetings be structured to most effectively allow members to fulfill their role?

Public Comment

Upcoming Subcommittee Meetings

Subcommittee	Date
Access Subcommittee	TENTATIVE: Thursday, May 9 from 11 am- 12:30 pm
Early Learning and Development Standards	Thursday, May 2 from 11am – 12:30 pm
Program Quality Standards Alignment and Measurement	Late Spring TBD
Early Learning Workforce Development	Late Spring TBD
Program Quality Improvement	TENTATIVE: Wednesday, May 8 from 1 pm – 3 pm
Child Assessment	Monday, May 6 from 2 pm – 4 pm
Early Learning Data System	~~Monday, April 29 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm~~ TBD

Next Meeting

- **Next Council and Work Group Meeting:** Wednesday, June 19, 2013 11:30-2:00 p.m. at Save the Bay

Rhode Island | Race to the Top
EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE GRANT

Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund, Rhode Island
Update to the Early Learning Council – March 2013

Project 1: Overall Grant Management

Program Management is responsible for overall coordination, communication, project management, performance management, finance management and federal relations. In the Month of March, the final 2012 Annual Performance Report was submitted. This report outlines our progress on year one of the RTT-ELC grant. Once final approval is received from the federal project officer, the 2012 APR will be posted on the Early Learning RI website in addition to posting on the U.S. Department of Education website in April.

Program Management has formed a Communications Subcommittee composed of state agency staff and early childhood stakeholders (additional early childhood stakeholders will be sought). The Communications Subcommittee plans to meet on a biweekly basis to coordinate internal and external communication efforts. To work in conjunction with this group, a vendor was identified in late March to assist in the design and implementation of a formal Communications Plan. While this formal communications plan is in process, Program Management created *Informational Briefs* to respond to the more immediate questions that have emerged from the public and key stakeholders regarding implementation activities of the Race to the Top Grant. The Informational Briefs address issues in the areas of Program Standards and Alignment, Early Learning Development Standards, Building a High Quality Early Learning Workforce, Data Governance, and Supports for Programs, Administrators, Educators and Parents. Informational Briefs will be made available on a periodic basis as the need arises.

Project 2: Improving the Quality of Early Learning Programs

Quality Improvement funding has been made available to programs! BrightStars recently released participation incentives of $500 per center and $250 per family child care homes. The incentive payments were provided to programs that enrolled in BrightStars between October 2011 and March 2013. Checks were mailed the last week in March. The Program Quality Improvement Core Team in coordination with the Department of Human Services (DHS) has created an application for Program Improvement Grants. The vendor, Northern Rhode Island Collaborative, will release $400,000 to programs in BrightStars to fund their continuous improvement plan. These funds are also available to public preschool and Pre K programs participating in the RIDE Technical Assistance program. This month the team also finalized the cost structure of Quality Awards that support the ongoing costs of programs

maintaining BrightStars levels three, four and five. The PSA Core Team will begin outlining the policies and procedures for how the state will process awards, and verify and monitor program status, enrollment, and use of funds.

Project 3: Establishing and Measuring Tiered Quality Program Standards for Early Learning Programs

The Program Standards and Alignment Core Team held a subcommittee meeting on March 14th. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the feedback received through facilitated public forums on the program standards alignment. In March, departments met weekly to review and incorporate the feedback to Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) child care licensing regulations, the BrightStars Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement standards, and RIDE CECE Approval standards. In April, the DCYF regulations and RIDE CECE Approval Standards will go to public hearing while BrightStars standards will continue to be vetted and aligned. DCYF will also begin revising licensing regulations for Family Child Care providers.

Project 4: Using Early Learning and Development Standards

The Early Learning and Development Core Team finalized the birth to five Early Learning and Development Standards. RIDE recently released a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to identify a vendor to design and publish the newly revised state early learning and development standards. *Charting a Course for Success in the Ocean State: Rhode Island's Early Learning and Development Standards*, is due to be released in July 2013.

To ensure the standards are used as intended and as they are designed, the Core Team is also in the process of revising the RIELDS training series. In addition, the Core team has been in the process of researching approaches used in other states for reviewing and approving appropriate curriculum aligned to the state's early learning standards.

Project 5: Developing and Supporting Effective Early Childhood Assessment

The Assessment Core Team continues to plan for implementation. Contract negotiations began with EDC, the vendor awarded with the Assessment professional development project. EDC will work with the Core Team to develop training for early care and education providers to promote appropriate child assessment practices. The professional development opportunities will address the different purposes for and uses of child-assessment information in early childhood classrooms including; how to select assessment systems; using assessment for appropriate purposes and populations; using formative child-assessment practices, including using appropriate authentic assessment strategies and planning for ongoing classroom assessment; and using child-assessment data to improve instruction in the classroom.

The Assessment Core Team released an invitation to recruit participants for an early intervention child assessment pilot study that will evaluate the process of implementing a system in Rhode Island's Early Intervention Programs. The pilot will provide valuable information regarding the training, implementation, and decision-making processes and allow the State to make revisions and improvements to this approach to assessment.

The Rhode Island Departments of Education and Health are working together to promote and support primary care providers to conduct developmental screening using standardized tools. In addition to increasing developmental screening, other efforts include promoting primary care providers to conduct follow-up to those screenings. On March 28, a Letter of Intent (LOI) was released to seek a vendor to help support pediatricians to provide resources to their patients when areas of concern are identified through the screening process.

Project 6: Building an Early Learning Data System

The Data Core Team conducted a final gathering session to identify and collect Student Domain Requirements elements. These requirements have been compiled into a business requirement document (BRD) that outlines the raw data needs, as well as the functional and technical needs from various early care and education stakeholders for the development of the three primary domains in the early learning data system: program, educator and student. The business requirement document will be an iterative document, updated over time, to capture requirements as they are identified through each phase of the system development life cycle.

Project 7: Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Workforce

The Workforce Core Team recently consulted with Allyson Dean of the National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives (PDW Center) and Barbara Wall, the Child Care State System Specialist for Rhode Island. The purpose of the meeting was for team members to hear and learn about current best practices, the latest research and the role technical assistance plays in building a statewide system of professional development. The information will be used to guide the team in developing and creating a state wide system of professional development and a Professional Development/Technical Assistance Center.

This Race to the Top Monthly Report will be made available on a regular monthly basis and posted on the Early Learning RI Website in the future. http://earlylearningri.org/

Rhode Island | Race to the Top

EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE GRANT

Public Feedback Process

The Rhode Island Department of Education, the Lead Agency, and Participating State Agencies (DCYF, DHS, EOHHS, and HEALTH) are charged with implementing the activities outlined in the state's RTT-ELC Scope of Work towards achieving the goals outlined in the State plan. In collaboration with the Early Learning Council, the Participating State Agencies want to ensure that there is a clear process for soliciting and considering public input.

Each of the RTT-ELC core teams utilize multiple approaches for ensuring public input and recommendations are considered at major juncture points in developing the programs, policies and supports for the state's early learning system. To ensure that the input and feedback sought is clear, specific, and understandable, the following process was drafted:

1. Forums, focus groups and surveys are conducted statewide by an independent facilitator to gather public feedback and recommendations on proposed programs, policies and systems of support.
2. The feedback is summarized and presented at Subcommittee meetings.
3. During Subcommittee meetings and other public comment opportunities additional information will be gathered and public stakeholders will be requested to:
    - identify the issue, providing clear evidence/data
    - provide as much rationale or background information for the concern (verbally or in writing)
    - propose a solution or recommendation
    - include any research, evidence, or data and supporting documentation which supports the solution/recommendation
    - describe how the feedback impacts RTT-ELC goal of positively impacting child outcomes
4. Information is then taken back to the core teams and reviewed for consideration.
5. This cycle may repeat through several phases before final decisions are made.
6. Technical papers and/or informational briefs will be used to inform the public on actions taken by the core team and the rationale for final decisions.
7. Subcommittee minutes, including public feedback, are posted on the Early Learning RI website.