

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Save the Bay

## **Agenda**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Lead</b>
11:30-11:45	<b>Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview</b>	Elizabeth Burke Bryant David Abbott Melba Depena Nicole Alexander-Scott Jamia McDonald
11:45-12:00	<b>Legislative Update</b>	Elizabeth Burke Bryant
12:00-12:20	<b>NGA Project Overview - Developing Comprehensive Plan for ECE</b>	Kevin Gallagher Heather Hudson Leanne Barrett Anna Lovejoy
12:20-1:20	<b>Effective Early Care &amp; Education Workforce: Higher Education</b>	Sara Mickelson Susan Zoll Leslie Sevey Carol Patanaude Courtney Read Deb Anthes
1:20-1:30	<b>Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data System – Early Learning Program Search Demo</li><li>• Communications</li><li>• Sustainability</li><li>• Rising Stars Program</li><li>• Head Start Child Care Partnership</li></ul>	Melissa Emidy Aimee Mitchell
1:30-1:45	<b>Public Comment</b>	Public Participants
1:45-1:45	<b>Next Steps</b>  <b>Next Early Learning Council Meeting:</b> September 30, 2015 11:30-2:00 p.m. Save The Bay	Elizabeth Burke Bryant

## *Rhode Island Early Learning Council and Subcommittee Meeting Calendar*

**July 1, 2015 - December 31, 2015**

<b>Council/ Subcommittee</b>	<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Early Learning Council</b>	RTT-ELC Sustainability	September 30, 2015	11:30-2:00 p.m.	Save The Bay, 100 Save the Bay Drive, Providence, RI
	Year in Review: Progress Against the Strategic Plan	December 9, 2015	11:30-2:00 p.m.	TBD
<b>Access</b>	Identify Access Gaps and Barriers	September 8, 2015	2:30-4:00 p.m.	Rhode Island Foundation One Union Station, Providence, RI Gallery Room
<b>Data</b>	Joint Meeting with Workforce: Workforce Registry	July 22, 2015	9:30-11:30 a.m.	Warwick Public Library 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI
	Admin WKC and Professional Development Systems	October 21, 2015	10:00 – 12:00 p.m.	Warwick Public Library 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI
<b>Early Learning Development Standards and Assessment</b>	RIELDS Evaluation Initial Findings, KEA Pilot Plan, RTT-ELC Extension Work	September 28, 2015	2:00-4:00 p.m.	Warwick Public Library 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI
	KEA Roll Out of the Pilot, RTT-ELC Projects -4 year review of accomplishments	December 7, 2015	2:00-4:00 p.m.	Northern Rhode Island Collaborative, 640 George Washington Hwy, Lincoln, RI tentative)
<b>Program Standards and Quality</b>	Participation Along the Continuum	October 13, 2015	2:00-4:00 p.m.	Warwick Public Library 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI
<b>Workforce</b>	Joint Meeting with Data: Workforce Registry	July 22, 2015	9:30-11:30 a.m.	Warwick Public Library 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI
	Higher Education	November 3, 2015	9:30-11:30 a.m.	Warwick Public Library 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI

# **RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL MEETING**

**June 17, 2015**

11:30-2:00 p.m.  
*Save the Bay*





# MEETING AGENDA

Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview

Legislative Update

NGA Project Overview - Developing Comprehensive Plan for ECE

Effective Early Care & Education Workforce: Higher Education

Updates

Public Comment

Next Steps



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

- PreK
- Full day K
- Head Start
- Child Care Rates and Eligibility
- Home Visiting



# CELEBRATIONS

- Early Learning Program Search
- NIEER PreK Evaluation
- PreK Grantees



# NGA ECE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

- ◎ National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices
- ◎ Opportunity for Technical Assistance to:  
“strengthen and implement a policy agenda related to expanding access and improving the quality of early care and education (ECE) for children from early childhood through third grade.”
- ◎ 5 States Selected – IL, KY, MS, MT RI
- ◎ ECE includes: Child Care, State Pre-K, Early Intervention, Preschool Special Education, Head Start/Early Head Start, K-3, home visiting



# NGA ECE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

- ⊙ Goal: update and strengthen the RI Early Learning Council's Strategic Plan for a coherent B-8 system supporting children's early learning and development.
- ⊙ Goal: Coordinate with other key planning activities (e.g. RIDE Strategic Plan, RTT-ELC Sustainability Plan, etc.)
- ⊙ Goal: Identify/Elevate policy priorities for Governor to champion



# NGA ECE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

- ⊙ 12-member Public-Private Leadership Team (operating as Ad Hoc Committee of the RI Early Learning Council): Governor's Policy Advisor, RIDE, DHS, DCYF, HEALTH, EOHHS, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, RI Head Start Assn, Beautiful Beginnings
- ⊙ Multiple Opportunities for Community Input
- ⊙ Update/Input at September 2015 Council Meeting
- ⊙ Finalize at December 2015 Council Meeting
- ⊙ Governor's Summit on ECE in 2016

# **EFFECTIVE EARLY CARE & EDUCATION WORKFORCE: HIGHER EDUCATION**



# WORKFORCE: ALIGNED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Individuals completing aligned Professional Development (duplicated)

	Q1 2015	Q2 2015	Q3 2015	Q4 2015
Center for Early Learning Professionals	540			
External Approved/Aligned PD	1,361			
RI Early Learning & Development Standards and Next Steps PD*	295*			
	2,196			

Includes 256 participants in three Center-approved RIELDS trainings (Foundations and Next Steps).



# WORKFORCE: ALIGNED HIGHER EDUCATION

	Total 2014	Individuals Completed May 2015	Individuals Completed August 2015	Individuals Completed December 2015
CCRI – RI Early Childhood Education and Training Program (RIECETP) – 12 credits	87	108		
CCRI – RIDE Certification – 12 credits	NA	8		
CCRI - Early Childhood Certificate – 18 credits	20	45		
CCRI - Early Childhood Associates	31	NA		
RIC – New B.S. in Early Childhood Education	7	21		
RIC – Old B.A. in Early Childhood Education	6	1		
RIC – Old B.S. in Early Childhood Special Education	13	NA		
RIC – M.Ed. In Early Childhood Education	3	NA		
URI – B.S. HDF/Child Settings	46	35		
URI - B.S. HDF/ECE Certification	12	16		
URI - Post-Bac Teacher Certification/ECE	1	1		



# WORKFORCE: T.E.A.C.H. ACTIVE SCHOLARS

Degree Program	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*
CCRI Associate's Degree	9	26	44	52	52	42
RIC Bachelor's Degree	NA	NA	21	16	32	32
TOTAL Active Scholars	9	26	65	68	84	74

- As of May 2015, 128 individuals employed at 100 early learning programs have received T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contracts and 2,602 college credits have been earned.
- Since 2010, 20 individuals have completed an AA degree program at CCRI through T.E.A.C.H.
- Projected fall 2015 enrollment is expected to be at least 95 scholars.



# TODAY'S PURPOSE – LOOKING AT THEMES AND CHANGES REGARDING HIGHER ED

- ⊙ IOM Report
- ⊙ How RI has addressed promoting degree attainment
- ⊙ New efforts from:
  - ⊙ DHS funded GED Program
  - ⊙ CCRI
  - ⊙ RIC



# IOM RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop and implement comprehensive **pathways** at the individual, institutional, and policy levels for **transitioning to a minimum bachelor's degree qualification requirement**, with **specialized knowledge and competencies**, for all lead educators working with children from birth – age 8.

-- Institute of Medicine (IOM) Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation



# BARRIERS TO DEGREE ATTAINMENT\*

Affordability

Access

Relevance

Effectiveness

Connection

\*Joseph, Gail and Carrie Brennan, National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning. (2015). High Quality Coursework [PowerPoint Presentation]



# ADDRESSING: AFFORDABILITY & ACCESS

## ⊙ **Affordability:**

- ⊙ RI Early Childhood Ed & Training Program at CCRI;
- ⊙ T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships for AA and BA
- ⊙ GED Program through the Genesis Center

## ⊙ **Access:**

- ⊙ CCRI expands ECE courses to multiple campuses & caters to less “traditional” student
- ⊙ RIC Institute for EC Teaching and Learning – coursework at different hours, academic supports
- ⊙ Offering coursework at multiple levels of the pathway (GED, AA, BA)



# ADDRESSING: RELEVANCE

- ⊙ Aligned to efforts nationally and in RI:
  - ⊙ CCRI's NAEYC Accreditation (URI and RIC already have NAEYC accr. For 4-year degree programs)
  - ⊙ URI, RIC, and CCRI alignment to Workforce Knowledge and Competencies
  - ⊙ URI, RIC, and CCRI alignment to RIELDS
- ⊙ Coursework and practica that acknowledges students are working in classrooms in tandem with coursework
- ⊙ GED Coursework is contextualized



# ADDRESSING: EFFECTIVENESS

- ⊙ Changes at various levels on how **effectiveness** and quality are defined
  - ⊙ Federal Policy: Higher Education Act requires states to look at student learning, employment, and survey data
  - ⊙ Accreditation Standards: Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) developing new standards
  - ⊙ State Policy: RIDE educator preparation standards revised and piloted in 2014 to include more emphasis on student learning, employment, and changes to program based on ongoing assessment
  - ⊙ RIC Institute for Early Childhood Teaching and Learning evaluation



# ADDRESSING: CONNECTION

- ⊙ Existing and new efforts acknowledge students need a connection to the **Institution, professors/instructors, and one another**
- ⊙ Cohort model in RIECETP, with first TEACH B.S. scholarship recipients, and as part of RIC's IECTL – Leads to social network to support one another
- ⊙ Small classes, repeat courses with instructors



# Adult Education

- ◎ The Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Adult Education funds qualified agencies to implement Adult Education and Workforce Training programs that support the achievement of the following two statewide outcomes.
  - ◎ All Rhode Island adults have the skills and credentials they need for upward mobility (college and career), for engaged citizenship, and for leading strong families and communities.
  - ◎ All Rhode Island employers have access to a pool of workers with the skills they need to remain competitive and grow.



# Program Relevance

- ◎ Early Childhood Providers who seek to further their own basic literacy and language skills, increase their QRIS rating or comply with licensing requirements will need learning opportunities that will allow them to reach their individual goals.



# ESL/GED Program Design

- This pilot program is subcontracted by the RIDE Office of Adult Education to provide contextualized ESL and GED instruction with wrap around support services for early childhood educators.
- The cohort model serves as a dynamic transitional growth opportunity that will help a group of learners make good use of each other by providing both the challenge that will encourage learners to grow and the support they need to meet those challenges.
- Program is located at the Genesis Center in the Elmwood section of Providence, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening.
- A total of 30 participants are enrolled, 12 in Spanish GED class and 18 enrolled in contextualized ESL classes.

Time Period for Pilot: April, 2015 – December 2015



# Contextualized Education – Career Pathways

- ◎ Contextualization is an instructional approach rooted in learning theories that adult learning is a process of constructing knowledge by drawing on existing knowledge and experiences, and by making a connection with contexts; learners can more easily transfer their new skill to other situations like the workplace.
- ◎ Contextualized instruction includes a diverse set of instructional strategies designed to seamlessly link the learning of foundational skills and academic or occupational content by focusing on concrete applications in a real life context.
- ◎ To put this approach into practice, we need to contextualize lessons whereby there is linkage with teaching of foundational skills in speaking, reading, math, and writing to contexts that are relevant and meaningful to the early education profession. Examples would include a connection to the Early Learning Standards, family involvement, nutrition etc. Input from experts such as Center for Early Learning Professionals will be key to curriculum development.



# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AT CCRI

CCRI recognizes that each student is at a unique place in their life. Because of that, the college offers diverse options for students. These include:

- a **12 credit, grant-funded program (RI ECETP)** containing core content in Early Childhood Education,
- a **24 credit certificate** in Early Childhood Education (*currently pending approval*) and,
- a 60 credit **Associate of Arts degree** in Early Childhood Education and Child Development



# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AT CCRI

Currently, CCRI is actively engaged in:

- working towards NAEYC accreditation of its **AA ECE** program
- aligning the AA program of studies to the RIELDS
- acting upon its quality improvement plans to fortify areas of strength and address challenges found in program analysis



# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AT CCRI

Quality Improvement Plans include:

- development and pilot of coursework focusing on *Infant and Toddlers*
- ongoing collaboration with URI and RIC regarding articulation for transfer students
- approve and publish new *Mission Statement* and *Conceptual Framework*
- Publish newly developed ECE web pages on [www.ccri.edu](http://www.ccri.edu)
- Updates to Field placement
  - Additional sites for student placements
  - Develop new K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade student observation tool



# INSTITUTE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHING AND LEARNING

## Fall 2014 – Cohort I

15 students

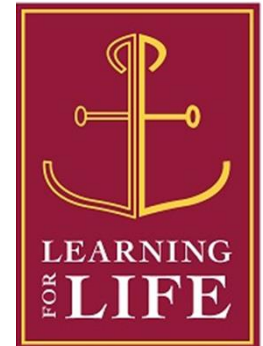
Hybrid delivery / on campus 1 day / week

Weekly academic and non-academic support

Successfully pass 3 Praxis CORE exams

Bachelor's degree:

Early Childhood Learning (PreK-2) \*pending approval





# INSTITUTE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHING AND LEARNING

## Fall 2015 – Cohort II

20 students

Bachelor's degree:

Early Childhood Learning

- (PreK-2 certification) \*pending approval
- Birth – 5 concentration





# DISCUSSION

**Given increasing expectations of early childhood educators regarding credential attainment, what policies or initiatives could promote higher compensation?**

# UPDATES



# RTT-ELC: UPDATE

- ◎ Data System – Early Learning Program Search Demo
- ◎ Communications
- ◎ Sustainability
- ◎ Rising Stars Program



# OTHER UPDATES

- ❖ Head Start Child Care Partnership

# **PUBLIC COMMENT**



# NEXT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Council/ Subcommittee	Focus Area	Date	Time	Location
<b>Access</b>	Identify Access Gaps and Barriers	September 8, 2015	2:30-4:00 p.m.	Rhode Island Foundation One Union Station, Providence, RI Gallery Room
<b>Data</b>	Joint Meeting with Workforce: Workforce Registry	July 22, 2015	9:30-11:30 a.m.	Warwick Public Library 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, RI
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# NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

- ◎ **DATE:** September 30, 2015
- ◎ **TIME:** 11:30 a.m. -2:00 p.m.
- ◎ **THEME:** RTT-ELC Sustainability
- ◎ **LOCATION:** Save the Bay

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council***

## ***Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, June 17, 2015 11:30-2:00 p.m.  
Save the Bay

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **AGENDA SUMMARY**

The Early Learning Council agenda addressed the following topics:

- Opening Remarks
- Legislative Update
- NGA Project Overview-Developing Comprehensive Plan for ECE
- Effective Early Care and Education Workforce: Higher Education
- Updates
- Public comment

#### **KEY POINTS**

Key discussion points from the meeting are summarized below:

#### **OPENING REMARKS**

- Acting Commissioner of Education David Abbott told the Early Learning Council that the No Cost Extension for the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant (RTTT-ELC) was approved yesterday. He thanked Melissa Emidy for all her work on the Extension request. Additionally, he explained that a new draft statewide education strategic plan will be presented to the Council of Elementary and Secondary Education sometime during the next 6 weeks. The strategic plan was drafted through a community based iterative process involving 11,000 people who wrote the plan and 4,000 people who commented on and edited the plan. The strategic plan has 6 priority areas, one of which is early learning.
- Director of DHS Melba Depeña explained DHS's mission to help improve the economic security of families through access to high quality child care. Access to child care for low income families will become increasingly important as Governor Raimondo works on getting Rhode Islanders back to work. Furthermore, DHS has made changes to help move programs up in the quality rating system.
- Director of the Department of Health Dr. Nicole Alexander Scott explained that her department's goal is to promote health equity and eliminate health disparities. High quality early childhood care and education is a key component to achieving that goal. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that high quality early childhood education and child care for young children improves health and promotes development and learning.
- Chief Strategy Officer at EOHHS Jamia McDonald could not attend the Council meeting, but she was represented by Kevin Aucoin. The changes in child care regulations have had a positive impact on improving the quality of child care and promoting healthy and safe environments. Access to high quality child care will help reduce child maltreatment, a priority for DCYF.
- A moment of silence was observed in memory of Kathie Sandberg, an active early childhood education and care advocate.

# ***Rhode Island Early Learning Council***

## ***Early Learning Council Meeting***

Wednesday, June 17, 2015 11:30-2:00 p.m.  
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### **Meeting Summary**

#### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Elizabeth Burke Bryant updated the Early Learning Council on the legislative session. (See slides). Key comments included:

- There was a 3% increase in child care reimbursement rates across the board and an additional increase for the infant/toddler rate for family child care providers. This was an important breakthrough for the child care community since rates have been frozen for 7 years. Although this base increase is a good starting place, plans are still underway to develop a tiered reimbursement system, which exists in 36 other states.
- Comment: Neither the 3% increase nor the tiered reimbursement will help programs that do not serve CCAP children, even if those children are still low income and families are struggling to pay private tuition rates.
- The approved budget added an additional \$1 million to continue to grow the State Pre-K expansion program. That amount is in addition to the \$2.29 million Rhode Island was awarded for this fiscal year under the competitive Federal Preschool Expansion grant. This funding will allow 594 children to enroll in high quality State Pre-K programs in fall 2015.
- The General Assembly has included \$1 million for Head Start programs in the budget.
- The sunset provision for the Short Term Training Child Care Pilot was removed, which makes that program permanent.
- There are 7 districts that still need to implement Full-Day K. The General Assembly approved \$1.4 million to assist those remaining districts in implementing Full-Day K. Included in both Governor Raimondo's proposed budget and in the final approved budget is a mandate that all school districts must provide Full-Day K by the school year that starts September 2016.
- It is extremely important to advocate for the sustainability of the RTTT-ELC grant work. In addition to sustaining programs and providers, sustaining the infrastructure at the state level is necessary to keep the quality improvement work going. Everyone's voice is needed to advocate for sustainability.

#### **NGA PROJECT OVERVIEW- DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR ECE**

Leanne Barrett, Heather Hudson and Anna Lovejoy explained the National Governors Association (NGA) project. (See slides). The following comments were made:

- After all of the hard work we have accomplished in Rhode Island, we are in a good position to take advantage of the technical assistance offered by the NGA project to help with our next steps.
- The Governor will provide her thoughts and guidance, but the true experts on early education and care are Council members and other stakeholders.

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### **Meeting Summary**

- Anna Lovejoy will help with the visioning process, including developing the theory of change. She will also provide technical assistance to help guide the conversation, such as research on best practices and trends.
- Governor Raimondo wants Rhode Island to be a national leader in early childhood and wants to release her own agenda in early childhood that champions key strategies.
- As part of the NGA project, a 12 member subcommittee of the Early Learning Council, including representatives from key state agencies, will meet to draft an update to the Council's 2012 strategic plan. Although it is a good strategic plan, many of the goals included in the strategic plan have been accomplished over the last three years. Therefore, it needs to be modified in some areas and, based on new information we've gathered since the strategic plan was originally drafted, strengthened in other areas. During the update process, the subcommittee will confer and coordinate with other related planning activities currently happening in the state, such as the RIDE strategic plan, the DHS triennial child care plan, the Head Start collaboration office planning process, HEALTH's toxic stress and home visiting planning processes, special education's planning process and the RTTT-ELC grant Sustainability Plan. In this way, the Council's updated strategic plan will fit in with the state's overall plan for early childhood education and care.
- A 1-2 page overview of Governor Raimondo's early childhood agenda will identify and elevate the policy priorities Governor Raimondo will champion. This overview will be released at a summit on early care and education in 2016.
- There will be multiple opportunities for community input on the Council's updated strategic plan, including at the next Early Learning Council's meeting on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The plan will be finalized at the December 9<sup>th</sup> Early Learning Council meeting.
- The Council's strategic plan targets children from birth through age 8, but, there are not many goals or strategies for the K-3 sector so that is one area that can be expanded in the update.

### **EFFECTIVE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE: HIGHER EDUCATION**

Leanne Barrett presented updated Data Dashboard slides on the Workforce. Sara Mickelson, Susan Zoll, Courtney Read and Deb Anthes reported on the progress made in early childhood higher education in the state. (See slides). Key comments and questions included the following:

- With 2,196 individuals completing aligned professional development during the first quarter of 2015, we are already close to our goal for the whole year. Once the Workforce Registry is in place, it will give us a better idea of the actual size of the workforce so these goals can be updated.
- For 2015, we expect to exceed the 84 TEACH Scholars we had in 2014.
- A national report from the Institute of Medicine sent a strong message that a BA degree improves outcomes for children Birth-3 and 3-5. Through all of our work to improve the quality of early

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### **Meeting Summary**

childhood education and expand access to higher education, Rhode Island is already working to achieve the Institute of Medicine's recommendations. National experts agree that it will take decades of work and a significant infusion of new resources to achieve the goal of getting all early care and education providers to have a BA degree.

- There are 5 barriers to degree attainment that we have specifically addressed in Rhode Island:
  - Affordability
    - To make degree programs more affordable, Rhode Island offers TEACH scholarships, the free Rhode Island Early Childhood Education and Training Program funded through DHS and RTTT-ELC grant resources, and the contextualized ESL/GED program funded through the Genesis Center.
  - Access
    - Courses are being offered at more flexible times such as at night and there are academic supports that offer a foundation in math and literacy for students who need help in those areas.
  - Relevance
    - All coursework at URI, RIC and CCRI is aligned with the WKC. There is coursework available in all the domains. Also, there is currently work underway to work toward a goal of ensuring students graduating with a degree from URI, RIC and CCRI AA program will also receive a RIELDS certificate for the Foundations course. .
  - Effectiveness
    - The Federal Higher Education Act requires states to examine what students are learning from their degree programs and to identify and potentially close teacher preparation programs that do not meet the relevant metrics.
    - RIDE just piloted new standards for higher education. Changes include a new focus on employment metrics and outcomes. Those standards also look at whether programs make changes based on student assessments.
    - There is increased emphasis on diverse learners.
    - The evaluation of the Institute for Early Childhood Teaching and Learning (Institute) will provide local data on whether our new approach is working.
  - Connections
    - The cohort model, which is used throughout the state, is best. It encourages connections among students and between students and faculty.
- What can we do to ensure that the new credential requirements do not act as a barrier to some of our minority teachers and teachers whose primary language is not English?

A: We want to keep a diverse workforce to reflect the diverse children that are being served. Through our strong partnerships with URI, RIC and CCRI, we can collect data to make sure candidates are not being excluded for attributes we value in the field. In particular, the Institute for Early Childhood Teaching and Learning at RIC wants to ensure that the workforce is diverse so they partnered with Learning for Life, an on campus support program, to collect data and to create individualized supports based on that data. With these individualized supports, all students should have access to the resources they need to achieve the required credentials.

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- Comment: Family child care providers also need access to higher education and 75% of the family child care workforce speaks Spanish as a primary language. However, there are no college credits taught in Spanish available in the state. This is a barrier for family child care providers who are ready for college-level course work who are trying to move up the quality continuum. Additionally, some of the currently available coursework may not be as relevant as it could be for family child care providers because their classrooms, which are in their homes with multiple ages together, look different. We need to use data to make sure there is higher education coursework available in the state that addresses the specific issues of access and relevance for family child care providers, as needed.

### **ESL/GED Pilot Program**

- The new ESL/GED pilot program with contextualized instruction provides academic support to providers that are not yet ready for higher education coursework. The RIDE Office of Adult Education is managing the pilot since one focus of that office is on workforce training. Contextualized instruction starts with looking at the subject area (either ESL or GED) and then integrating early childhood education workforce competencies or instructional practices. The goal of the pilot program is to help these providers start moving up the career ladder towards a degree.
- The courses for the ESL/GED pilot program are held at the Genesis Center in the Elmwood section of Providence since that is easily accessible to the majority of providers needing this coursework. The courses are offered at convenient times in the evening and there is child care available. There are currently 30 participants in the pilot, which started in April and runs through December. There are rolling admissions so we expect more people to participate.
- The Center for Early Learning Professionals is co-teaching some of the ESL classes and is integrating FCCRS vocabulary and content into the instruction.
- What happens after providers complete the ESL/GED pilot program?  
A: The Genesis Center will offer supportive services, including financial literacy help. They are also working with both the individuals and colleges to support providers who want to transition to college.

### **CCRI**

- The CCRI 12 credit program is a strong pathway for many students that are already working in the field who need additional knowledge to be more effective in an early childhood classroom. It contains core content. The former 18 credit certificate program (soon to be a 24 credit program once it is officially approved) is also a core content program. The CCRI 60 credit AA degree program offers equal amounts of core content and general education credits.
- CCRI is in the final stages of the NAEYC accreditation process. The decision from the Commission will come before the end of August. For now, CCRI is focusing on quality improvements, such as

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aligning its coursework to RIELDS and creating an infant toddler curriculum that includes caregiving, understanding developmental principles for infants and toddlers, knowing and using RIELDS to provide care and learning opportunities, considering optimal environments and materials, examining the role of the caregiver-family partnership, and learning to assess very young children. The infant toddler course will pilot in the fall.

- CCRI is working with RIC and URI to ensure that CCRI's coursework is foundational and will articulate into the programs of study at RIC and URI without students needing to duplicate courses.
- CCRI is incorporating its Conceptual Framework, which was developed as part of the NAEYC accreditation process, into all of its early childhood education studies, field placements, internal supports, faculty teachings and faculty professional development. That Conceptual Framework includes the following excerpt: The vision of the Early Childhood Education/Child Development program at the Community College of Rhode Island is to ***develop candidate's abilities to function as competent, ethical teachers and practitioners who are prepared to fulfill and continue in a variety of positions in a diverse society***. Students will also be well equipped to pursue a Baccalaureate degree in their chosen profession, and advance their knowledge through intentional professional development activities.
- The CCRI early childhood website will contain detailed information about programs and options so students, stakeholders and faculty can view that information.
- CCRI is looking into more field placement sites to make that sequence more effective, including more family child care homes.
- Together with RIDE, CCRI is developing a new observation tool for students in kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade field placements.

### **Institute for Early Childhood Teaching and Learning**

- The Institute was developed through a collaboration between RIDE and RIC. It is a program designed specifically for educators working in the field and it provides a new pathway for educators to move from an AA degree to a BA degree. The program began 9 months ago.
- Cohort I, consisting of 15 students, is fully funded through TEACH scholarships. The students receive data informed supports through Learning for Life, an on campus program that focuses on supporting nontraditional students. Learning for Life helps the students pass the Praxis exams and ensures student success and retention in other ways as well.
- Cohort II, which begins this fall, will consist of 20 students. Two-thirds of Cohort II is funded through TEACH scholarships and the other third is funded by the Institute because those teachers do not meet the TEACH criteria. The available supports and the course design and delivery for

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## ***Early Learning Council Meeting***

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Save the Bay

### **Meeting Summary**

Cohort II are the same as for Cohort I. However, Cohort II students will have the option of a new Birth-5 concentration in addition to the Pre-K -2 certification option.

- Through a joint venture with Zero to Three, RIC envisions the new Birth-5 concentration being offered nationally to infant toddler teachers.
- The Institute provides all the needed components to ensure that providers currently in our workforce can achieve a BA degree. However, we need to identify additional funds in order to sustain this program over time.
- How far into the program of study are students required to pass the Praxis 1 exam?  
A: TEACH requires it by June 15<sup>th</sup> of the first year and RIC requires it within the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 semesters so those non-TEACH students have until the end of the summer to pass the Praxis 1. At the July 8<sup>th</sup> orientation meeting for the incoming cohort, RIC will encourage the students to begin taking the Praxis exam. The math Praxis is the most difficult for students so there is math coursework available to academically support the students. Two of the incoming 20 people in Cohort II have passed all 3 exams.
- How is the Institute supporting people who do not understand the cultural basis for the questions on the Praxis exams?  
A: Because providers in the Institute's cohorts have already completed their general education credits, they should have enough content knowledge to understand the questions on the Praxis exams. For those students that need more support, Learning for Life at RIC provides students with individualized supports that help students complete the Praxis exams, e.g., extended test taking times and different test taking procedures. The Institute is doing everything it can at the local level to support the cohort students.
- What happens if students do not pass the Praxis exams?  
A: Since Cohort I's deadline for taking the Praxis exam has not yet passed, we have no data on the effectiveness of the Institute's approach. Once that data is collected and RIC gets a better understanding of how the students did on the Praxis exam, they can maintain or improve the program accordingly. Currently, however, all students are required to meet standards that are required to be eligible for state PK-2 Certification and thus, , a student that does not pass the Praxis exam (after significant support is given) will no longer be able to participate as part of the cohort at Rhode Island College.
- Discussions around the Council's updated strategic plan can include concerns about the disparities highlighted by the Praxis exam and how that affects equity and access to coursework. Those concerns could also be brought up at the Subcommittee level.
- There are no plans to require BA degrees for providers, although the need for a BA degree does affect programs trying to move to higher BrightStars levels (50% of preschool teachers in centers need a BA degree for a 5 star rating).

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#### Wage Discussion

- If we are requiring teachers to increase their credentials, we also need to support them with salaries and benefits that compensate them for the additional requirements.
- The 3% increase in child care reimbursement rates will help increase teacher salaries, but even with the 3% increase, salaries in Rhode Island for child care employees in every age group are still more than 50% below average. Also, the 3% increase is paid to programs and not directly to providers so it does not necessarily translate into increased wages.
- Even if we continue to provide free high quality relevant and contextualized coursework, people will still not enter the early childhood education field if the wages are too low.
- Some ideas to increase wages include:
  - A tiered reimbursement strategy attached to programs.
  - A wage supplement strategy attached to the workforce. For example, a person with high level credentials working in a 2 star program could receive a supplement to encourage them to stay with the 2 star program so they can help that program move up in quality.
  - Refundable tax credits attached to programs and the workforce. For example, Louisiana has a comprehensive tax credit system that helps programs receive a tax credit based on quality ratings and helps members of the workforce receive a tax credit based on their position on the career ladder.
  - The Child Care WAGE\$® Project used in North Carolina. This requires raising money.
- The 2015 Market Rate Survey closed on June 15<sup>th</sup> so newer market rate data will be available soon.
- Staff salaries and benefits make up 77% or more of program costs. Costs are similar throughout the education industry.
- We must reinvent the funding streams for early childhood education by foreseeing the pushback from the General Assembly and creating responses that address the General Assembly's concerns. Incremental increases will never get wages to where they need to be. We need a tiered approach where the money follows quality. All of us need to advocate a succinct message designed to address concerns from the General Assembly.

#### **UPDATES**

Melissa Emidy, Aimee Mitchell and Deb Anthes updated the Early Learning Council on several projects. (See slides). Key comments and questions included:

- The Exceed website is now live at <https://exceed.ri.gov>. It brings together information from InRhodes at DHS, the RIDE Statewide Longitudinal Data System, the DCYF licensing information system and information provided from the early learning community.

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- Are there plans to add information about licensing visits or compliance?  
A: The CCDBG Reauthorization requires that monitoring reports be accessible online so we are working on accomplishing that. There are many steps to take to get to that end. We are in the early stages of the ECEDS system release. First, we are working on interface between ECEDS and the DCYF systems. For example, we recently learned the DCYF system is causing programs to disappear from the Exceed website for a day whenever DCYF updates information.
- Enhancements to the Exceed website will be made over the summer.
- A communication survey is available through the end of June on the Exceed Facebook page and Twitter account.
- The Sustainability Report will include information on how to fund the whole early childhood system as well as individual reports about potential ways to fund each project. The Exceed newsletter will include information when the Sustainability Report is released on how to provide feedback on the Sustainability Report.
- The Rising Star Program is a reward system for programs moving up the quality continuum. There will be more information released on this program over the next 2 weeks. We recognize how much it takes to move up in quality and we want to support those efforts.
- The Head Start-Child Care Partnership kicked off on Saturday with a training for 75 people. The Partnership is on the cusp of enrolling students and with 2 new programs joining the Partnership there will be 100 children enrolled.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Comments and questions from the public included:

- Why isn't Family Court represented on the NGA subcommittee?  
A: The subcommittee is limited to groups directly involved in managing or coordinating early care and education. The Family Court is not directly involved in the early care and education system so that is why it was not included, but we could talk to them about the role they could play in connecting children to high quality early childhood programs.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> TEACH cohort includes 16 BA candidates that are now in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of coursework. Leslie Sevey has worked hard with this cohort to move them towards their BA degree.
- If a provider does not qualify for the TEACH scholarship at the AA level, they will be referred to the Genesis Center, Dorcas Place or RIRAL as part of the transition to college preparatory program. Some of the providers that were referred to these other programs are currently TEACH Scholars attending CCRI and a few of those will be attending RIC soon.