

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting

June 29, 2010 noon-1:30

Location: Rhode Island Foundation

Agenda

Meeting Goals:

- 1) Orient Council members on:
 - a. The vision for the Council
 - b. The role and responsibilities of the Council
 - c. The function of the Council and how the work will be carried out
 - d. Existing efforts that can be built upon or aligned through the Council's work
 - e. The State Advisory Council RFP opportunity

- 2) Make work assignments to the Early Learning Working Group to be completed by the next Early Learning Council Meeting

12:00-12:15	Welcome /Meeting Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome/Introductions• Opening Remarks• Review Agenda	Deborah Gist/Elizabeth Burke Bryant
12:15-12:30	The Role and Responsibilities of the Council Presentation and Q&A	Deborah Gist/Elizabeth Burke Bryant
12:30-1:10	Starting Point Presentation and Discussion	Leanne Barrett/Michele Palermo
1:10-1:25	State Advisory Council RFP and Discussion	Deborah Gist/Elizabeth Burke Bryant
1:25-1:30	Wrap-up/Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next steps for working group (will meet twice before next ELC meeting)• Send calendar by email	Deborah Gist/Elizabeth Burke Bryant

Handouts:

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Early Learning Council Focus and Starting Point Presentation
Starting Point Matrix
State Advisory Council RFP Presentation

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Section 3: Resources and Background

Successful Start State Plan
Rhode Island Kids Count Issue Brief
Glossary of Terms
Child Care Commission Priorities

Section : Rosters and Calendar

Roster of Council Members
Roster of Working Group Members
Calendar of Meeting Dates (both ELC and Working Group)

RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL:



Roles and Responsibilities

June 29, 2010



INTRODUCTION

- Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 requires governors to establish a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care.
- Law provides specific guidance on membership and allows the Governor to appoint representatives of other entities as relevant.
- The Council will build on the work of Successful Start.
- The Council will meet 4 times a year; public meetings posted on Secretary of State's website.
- The Council will provide periodic reports on its progress and activities to the PK-16 Council, the Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care and the Successful Start Steering Committee.
- The Council will be periodically asked to review state proposals/activities related to ECE.



OVERALL ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

Facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care (for birth – 8) designed to improve school readiness.



RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL

- ⦿ Conduct periodic needs assessments
- ⦿ Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination
- ⦿ Develop recommendations on increasing participation in ECE programs (including outreach to underrepresented populations)
- ⦿ Develop recommendations on statewide professional development for ECE educators



RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL (CONT'D)

- ⦿ Assess capacity of higher education to support development of ECE educators
- ⦿ Make recommendations for improvements in State early learning standards
- ⦿ Facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of ECE
- ⦿ Ensure smooth and successful transitions from early childhood to K - 3



PRIMARY COUNCIL DELIVERABLE

Develop a state plan for facilitating the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early care and education with the goal of improving school readiness and success in school.



WORK GROUP

- ⦿ The Early Learning Council will be supported by a work group.
- ⦿ The work group will help the Council complete the tasks set forth in the law.
- ⦿ The work group will meet 9 times a year; public meetings posted on Secretary of State's website.
- ⦿ Approximately 22 members comprised of representatives from key state agencies and community members; it is anticipated that several Council members will also participate in the working group.
- ⦿ Appointments will be made by ELC co-chairs.
- ⦿ Co-chaired by Larry Pucciarelli, Leanne Barrett and Michele Palermo who will also serve on the ELC in an ex officio capacity.



RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL



Early Learning Council Focus and Starting Point

June 29, 2010



RHODE ISLAND NEEDS A HIGH-QUALITY AND COORDINATED EARLY LEARNING SYSTEM TO ENSURE SCHOOL READINESS AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

- ⊙ Educational excellence for all children starts with a high quality system of early care and education.
- ⊙ Participation in high-quality early learning programs have a proven long-term payoff in better educational and economic outcomes for children, families and society.
- ⊙ Many children still do not have access to high-quality early learning programs. States have a critical leadership role in improving access to high-quality early learning programs.



IMPACT OF HIGH QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Impact on Children:

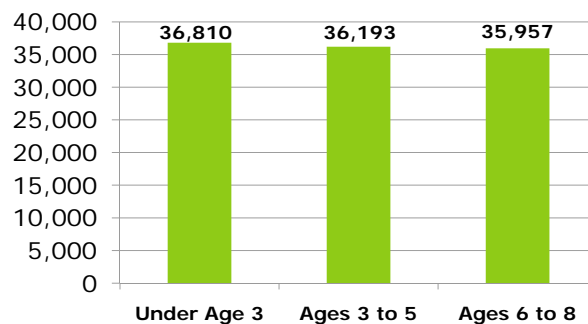
- ⦿ Improved social behavior and cognitive skills
- ⦿ Improved math and language skills
- ⦿ Less grade repetition, special education, teen pregnancy
- ⦿ Higher graduation rates & earnings; more employment

Impact on Society and Economy:

- ⦿ Increased school achievement
- ⦿ More productive workforce and increased competitiveness
- ⦿ Reduced crime
- ⦿ Increased tax revenues
- ⦿ Significant government savings in K-12 costs, social service costs and crime costs



TARGET POPULATION



- ⦿ 73,003 children under age 6
- ⦿ 19% (13,686) of children under 6 live below poverty
- ⦿ 9% (921) of kindergartners in RI public schools receive English Language Learner services (18% in the core cities)



TARGET POPULATION

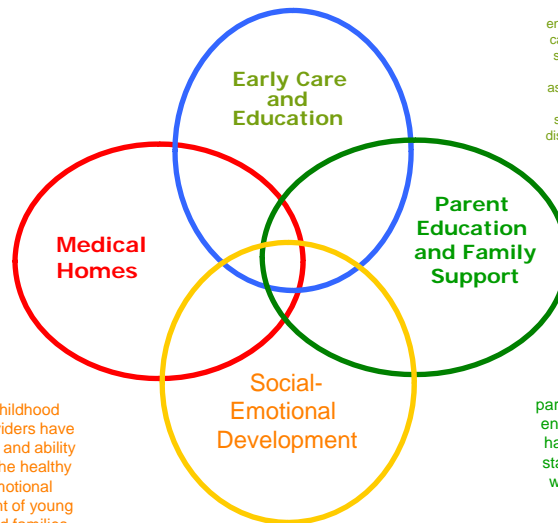
- ◉ 4% (376) of eligible children under age 3 are enrolled in Early Head Start
- ◉ 40% (2,455) of eligible children ages 3 to K entry are enrolled in Head Start
- ◉ 4,603 children under age 6 receive child care subsidies with 29% in family child care, 70% in center-based child care and 1% in license-exempt care.
- ◉ 126 children in State Pre-K
- ◉ Approximately 8% (2,635) of children ages 3 to K entry in preschool special education
- ◉ 10% (3,795) of children under age 3 in Early Intervention



Components of a State Early Childhood System

Comprehensive health services that meet children's vision, hearing, nutrition, behavioral, and oral health as well as medical needs

All early childhood service providers have the capacity and ability to support the healthy social-emotional development of young children and families



Early care and education opportunities in nurturing environments where children can learn what they need to succeed in school and life.
Early identification, assessment and appropriate services for children with special health care needs, disabilities, or developmental delays

Economic and parenting supports to ensure that children have nurturing and stable relationships with caring adults



STARTING POINT: PROGRAM QUALITY

- ⊙ BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System
- ⊙ RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Program Approval
- ⊙ NAEYC Accreditation
- ⊙ DCYF Licensing
- ⊙ Child Care Facilities Fund



STARTING POINT: WORKFORCE SUPPORT/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ⊙ RI Early Learning Standards
- ⊙ RI Core Competencies (in development)
- ⊙ Professional Development System Planning
- ⊙ TEACH Project (in development)



STARTING POINT: DATA

Understanding gaps and needs:

- ⦿ Existing data and reports

Building a comprehensive ECE data system

- ⦿ NGA Ready States Data Project (cross departmental initiative)



STARTING POINT: CHILDREN'S SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FROM ECE TO K-3

- ⦿ Early childhood coordinators in some school districts
- ⦿ Pre-school Special Education



NEXT STEPS

- Assess strengths and gaps using existing data and recommendations
- Develop a plan for the work
- Focus on time-sensitive responsibilities of the Council including RFP submission.

Starting Point: Existing Initiatives Related to the Early Learning Council Role | 2010

Role of Council	Starting Point
<p>Conduct periodic statewide needs assessments on the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services from birth to school entry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Agency and Rhode Island Kids Count data (Head Start, child care, accredited programs, Pre-K, special education, etc.) • BrightStars data • Ready to Learn data
<p>Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful Start State Plan • Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care Priorities
<p>Develop recommendations on increasing participation in child care and early education programs; including outreach to underrepresented and special populations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIKC Issue brief • Successful Start State Plan • Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care Priorities • KIDSCONNECT • Outreach Efforts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental Screening Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch Me Grow • Child Outreach • Project Launch • Resource and Referral
<p>Develop recommendations on the development of a unified data collection system for public early childhood and development programs and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGA Data project (cross departmental initiative) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Data • Program Data • Workforce Data
<p>Develop recommendations on statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RI Core Competencies (in development) • RIELS Professional Development • DHS RFP for Early Childhood Resource Center (in development) • TEACH Project (in development) • Rhode Island Training and Technical Assistance Center (funded by Head Start) • Early Childhood Teacher Certification requirements • Higher Education Teacher Preparation Programs (CCRI, RIC, URI) • Outcomes Matter Professional Development

Starting Point: Existing Initiatives Related to the Early Learning Council Role | 2010

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • URI Early Intervention • Ready to Learn Providence professional development activities
Assess the capacity and effectiveness of institutes for higher education to support the development of early childhood educators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEACH Project (in development) • RIDE Program Approval Process for Teacher Preparation Programs • DHS RFP for Early Childhood Resource Center (in development) • Higher Education Teacher Preparation Programs (CCRI, RIC, URI)
Make recommendations for improvements in State early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards, as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RI Early Learning Standards • K-2 Common Core Standards
Enhance existing early childhood education and development programs and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCYF Licensing • Bright Stars • RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Program Approval • Accreditation • BrightStars Quality Rating and Improvement System • Rhode Island 2009 Child Care Center & Preschool Quality Study • Quality Improvement Projects (Child Care Support Network, Child Care Facilities Fund, PEP/PBIS, etc.) • Head Start Quality Support • Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Professional Development
<p>Facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care designed to improve school readiness through one or more of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting school preparedness of children from birth through school entry. • Supporting professional development, recruitment, and retention initiatives for early childhood educators. • Enhancing existing early childhood education and development programs and services • Carrying out other activities consistent with the State’s plan and application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Development Fund and TANF • Federal Head Start/Early Head Start funding (including ARRA) • Title I • IDEA • PreK (Expansion built into Education Funding Formula) • Early Learning Challenge Fund (potentially) • Community Foundations/Initiatives (United Way of Rhode Island, LISC, Rhode Island Foundation)
Ensure smooth and successful transitions from early childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early childhood coordinators in some school districts

Starting Point: Existing Initiatives Related to the Early Learning Council Role | 2010

to K - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-school Special Education
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RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL



State Advisory Council RFP Opportunity

June 29, 2010



INTRODUCTION

- ⦿ States can apply for \$500,000 in federal dollars to support the work of the Council
- ⦿ One-time start-up grant
- ⦿ Requires a 70% match that can be in-kind
- ⦿ Funds can be used over 3 years
- ⦿ Application due August 1, 2010



HOW THE FUNDS CAN BE USED

- ⦿ Can use funds to:
 - ⦿ Support the work of the Council
 - ⦿ To develop and implement a state plan
 - ⦿ To carry out activities to facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of ECE designed to improve school readiness through one or more of the following activities:
 - ⦿ Supporting professional development, recruitment and retention initiatives for ECE educators
 - ⦿ Enhancing existing early childhood and development programs and services in existence on the date of grant award.
 - ⦿ Carrying out other activities consistent with state plan.



APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- ⦿ The application must include:
 - ⦿ A statewide strategic report addressing the responsibilities of the Council
 - ⦿ A description of how the state will make effective use of the funds to create an ECE system by developing or enhancing programs and activities consistent with that report
 - ⦿ A description of the State's early learning standards and the State's goals for increasing the number of children entering Kindergarten ready to learn.
 - ⦿ The agency or joint interagency office and individual designated to carry out the activities
 - ⦿ A description of how the State plans to sustain activities beyond the grant period.



NEXT STEPS

- ⦿ Request that Working Group further develop the components of the proposal for approval and submission by the co-chairs on behalf of the Council.

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Attendees: *Deborah Gist, Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Khadija Lewis Khan, Andrea Underwood, Barbara Schermack, Tammy Camillo, Larry Pucciarelli, Kristen Greene, Maryann Finamore, Leslie Gell, Ana Novais, Gary Alexander, Thomas Brady, Anthony Maione, Cynthia Garcia Coll, Pamela High, Patricia Martinez, Neil Steinberg, Colleen Dorian, Marcia Reback, Michele Palermo, Leanne Barrett*

Meeting Goals:

- 1) Orient Council members on:
 - a. The vision for the Council
 - b. The role and responsibilities of the Council
 - c. The function of the Council and how the work will be carried out
 - d. Existing efforts that can be built upon or aligned through the Council's work
 - e. The State Advisory Council RFP opportunity

- 2) Make work assignments to the Early Learning Working Group to be completed by the next Early Learning Council Meeting

12:00-12:15	Welcome /Meeting Overview	Deborah Gist/Elizabeth Burke Bryant
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Opening Remarks

Deborah Gist:

- Welcome and thank you for coming. Elizabeth and I are both really thrilled to be here.
- We are the co-chairs of this Council and we couldn't be more excited to have this opportunity to kick off this first meeting of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council.
- There are a few things I would like to point out:
 - You all have probably heard me say that our role is nothing short of having the best schools in the country and in the world.
 - To truly reach this goal it will take everyone in our state and that will include high quality early learning programs.
 - This topic is near and dear to me. I have a background in early care and education.
 - We need to make sure that in our work we have a focus on high quality infant and early care as well as high quality Pre-K and K-12.
 - As I was interviewing for this job, I remember being startled as I was looking at the NIEER (National Institute for Early Education Research) Annual State Pre-K report and seeing the big words "NO PROGRAM" next to Rhode Island. I thought, "this is one thing we needed to work on." But I learned when I got here that there is no shortage of wonderful people working on Early Care and Education in our state and there is a really solid foundation to build from.
 - I believe this really important work and that one of the things that the Council will do is take that work and build on it.
 - Rep. Grace Diaz is here as the Chairperson of the Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care. I just wanted to point out that we will be building from the work of the Commission and not just doing it all over again. We want to avoid re-doing work and it will take all of us to make sure that we don't do that.

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- The last thing I want to say is that all around the country Early Learning Councils are either formed or are forming and are having this same conversation so it is exciting to know we are part of this collective work.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant:

- It is great to welcome everyone to the Council today.
- Thank you to many of you who have been working in the background to try and get this rolling.
- As Deborah mentioned, this Council is well timed – Early Learning Councils are being formed by Governors across the country.
- As many of you know, there are specific people that the Head Start reauthorization law required to be on the Council.
- This is a really multi-departmental effort with the Department Directors here en force. This isn't a Council that will work on its own in a silo.
- It is very exciting to pull together our State Departments working as one.
- It is also exciting to have so many leaders in the early learning community here as well. The more engagement we have with the experts in the field, the community and the passion of the early learning field the better off we will be.
- Before we start, let's go around the table to introduce ourselves.

12:15-12:30	The Role and Responsibilities of the Council Presentation and Q&A	Deborah Gist/Elizabeth Burke Bryant
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Introduction – Deborah Gist

- Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 requires governors to establish a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care.
- Law provides specific guidance on membership and allows the Governor to appoint representatives of other entities as relevant.
- The Council will build on the work of Successful Start.
- The Council will meet 4 times a year; public meetings posted on Secretary of State's website.
- The Council will provide periodic reports on its progress and activities to the PK-16 Council, the Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care and the Successful Start Steering Committee.
- The Council will be periodically asked to review state proposals/activities related to ECE (early care and education).

Overall Role – Deborah Gist

- The overall role of the Council is to facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care (for birth – 8) designed to improve school readiness.

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Responsibilities of the Council - Elizabeth Burke Bryant

The Council has a set of specific responsibilities that are laid out in the law. When you see these items that the Council has to accomplish, think about all the great work that has already been done in some of these areas as well as the important work we still need to do. We should also be asking ourselves, "What kids are not getting into these programs, where are they and how can we increase access for them?"

The responsibilities of the Council are to:

- Conduct periodic needs assessments
- Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination
- Develop recommendations on increasing participation in ECE programs (including outreach to underrepresented populations)
- Develop recommendations on statewide professional development for ECE educators
- Assess capacity of higher education to support development of ECE educators
- Make recommendations for improvements in State early learning standards
- Facilitate the development of enhancement of high-quality systems of ECE
- Ensure smooth and successful transitions from early childhood to K - 3

One of the specific requirements of the Council is to assess the capacity of higher education to support the development of ECE educators. We are pleased to have Cynthia Garcia Cole with us who can add so much to that conversation and later down the line we will make sure we engage other key people from the public higher education system in that conversation as well.

Primary Council Deliverable – Deborah Gist

- The primary deliverable of the Council will be to develop a state plan for facilitating the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early care and education with the goal of improving school readiness and success in school.

Work Group – Deborah Gist

- The Early Learning Council will be supported by a work group.
- The work group will help the Council complete the tasks set forth in the law.
- The work group will meet 9 times a year; public meetings posted on Secretary of State's website.
- Approximately 22 members comprised of representatives from key state agencies and community members; it is anticipated that several Council members will also participate in the work group.
- Appointments will be made by the Early Learning Council co-chairs.
- The work group will be co-chaired by Larry Pucciarelli, Leanne Barrett and Michele Palermo who will also serve on the Early Learning Council in an ex officio capacity.

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Questions

1) Public Comment: Can we get copies of the PowerPoint presentations? Would you have a link to a website where these meetings are actually posted?

Deborah: Yes, we will send out the website link and the PowerPoint presentation. We would also love feedback on how we can make sure that everyone knows about the meetings. We will send it out through Michele Palermo's distribution list and send it out to the council again to make sure that everyone has it. We welcome your input.

Pamela High: How is Early Intervention represented here?

Elizabeth Burke Bryant: Gary Alexander is here representing early intervention. This Council is multi-departmental in nature because there are so many factors that go into a child's readiness and success (social emotional, developmental, etc.).

12:30-1:10	Starting Point Presentation and Discussion	Leanne Barrett/Michele Palermo
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Leanne Barrett spoke to the need for a high quality and coordinated early learning system to ensure school readiness and school success, described the impact of high quality early childhood education on children, society and the economy and shared some data on the population of young children in Rhode Island (see attached presentation).

Questions and Answer

Neil Steinberg: What has been the poverty trend?

Elizabeth Burke Bryant: We have seen a slight decrease in child poverty overall but the percentage of young children in poverty has remained steady at about 19%. It is also the case that the youngest children are the poorest children, both in Rhode Island and nationally.

Cynthia Garcia Cole: Why can't we use the number of children in households with one or more English Language Learner (ELL) as a marker for the number of children who are English Language Learners?

Leanne Barrett: There is definitely data on that for children age 5-17 but I did not see that data for children under 6.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant: As a first proxy for English Language Learners in the early childhood system, we used the number of child under 6 in immigrant families. This is a bit of a high ball number because some of these families do speak English, so instead we used the number and percentage of English Language

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Learners in kindergarten as a proxy. We know this is an urgent issue and we intend to do more work on this to get the best available data to guide the Council's work.

Ana Novais: We have seen a decrease in the number of children needing English language learner services because more kids are being born into the state into immigrant families and they are more likely to be exposed to English as an early age.

Public Comment: How are we addressing the gap between Early Intervention services (0-3) and entry into Kindergarten?

Elizabeth Burke Bryant: That is an important point and we will be sure it is captured for a later agenda.

Larry Pucciarelli: This is a useful page (see second Target Population slide). How many different kinds of licensure are on this page? And standards?

Leanne Barrett: The other thing to notice is that these are not exclusive systems. Kids can be participating in more than one system and programs can be providing more than one service to a child.

Kadija Lewis Khan: Are we concerned with children who are not in the programs listed on the slide?

Leanne Barrett: We do not have kids whose parents are paying privately. This data only includes government paid programs. We are working on collecting data on private pay programs too.

Patricia Martinez: So these numbers are duplicated?

Leanne Barrett: Yes.

Patricia Martinez: So what are we targeting - are we looking at the number of kids or looking at improvement the system?

Deborah Gist: This is the question we want to answer. There are models from other State's that we can look to for how to approach our work

Elizabeth Burke Bryant: Yes and we really need to know who is being left out and how we reach them. As Kadija said, there are many children who are not in any of these programs.

Michele Palermo reviewed the components of a State Early Learning System and shared highlights of the work that the Council can build upon. (see PowerPoint presentation)

Michele Palermo: These are the circles the way that Successful Start is organized. The Health Department did a great job of bringing together early childhood leaders and developing a Successful Start plan.

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Michele Palermo: My job is to give you a sense of where we are starting from system wide. This is not an exhaustive list but rather highlights of everything we have to build on. In your binder is a matrix with a detailed list of work that related to the Council's responsibilities and a glossary of terms. The highlights are organized around three to four big areas that the Council is responsible for.

The first is program quality. Programs are looking for a common definition and a clear path forward as well as resources and supports to get there. The efforts listed here are some of the work that is being done to strengthen this in the state.

Another area that the Council will be primarily focused on is workforce support and professional development. RIDE and DHS are partnering to provide professional development on early learning to practitioners. We are also partnering with DHS to finalize the Rhode Island Teacher Core Competencies for Early Care and Education. This current effort is an opportunity to revise the existing core competencies and get them out into the hands of the field by next summer. In addition, DHS has recently issued an RFP around planning a comprehensive professional development system. And we are working to launch TEACH in this state. TEACH is a national scholarship program that helps ECE educators pay for professional development. Ready to Learn Providence will be the managing entity for TEACH and now we are working to put together funding to finance the project.

The Council is also focused on data. To make good decisions we need to know where the children are, what services they are getting and what the outcomes are. We have existing data; in fact state agencies have a lot of data but we need to get that data to talk to each other to get an unduplicated count of where all the children are and what services they are receiving. Rhode Island has been selected to receive technical assistance from the National Governors Association for 12 months to help us work on this. It is a cross department effort.

Finally the Council is also focused on transitions to K-3. We have a few things to build on now. We have some districts that have Early Education Coordinators now. Also, Head Start has been focusing on smooth transitions to K - 3 for years now so we have a lot to build on and Ready to Learn Providence has also done a lot of work on this and continues to do so.

Questions/Comments

Public Comment: Who is the Council targeting?

Cynthia Garcia Cole: I think we should be targeting everyone who is poor and the really question is who is poor?

Deborah Gist: I don't disagree that we should be concerned with children in poverty. But I don't think we have decided that yet – that is part of what this Council should decide.

Ana Novais: The Department of Health is doing state wide needs assessment for Rhode Island's Title V Maternal and Child Health application. We will be getting the results this summer and then we have

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another two months to determine how we will respond to the results. We should include this work in the thinking of the Council. We also just finished an update of the goals and status of Successful Start and we should include that.

Patricia Martinez: When are we going to use a student identifier for all systems?

Gary Alexander: I think that we all recognize that data is critical – we need data to make informed decisions. In the Medicaid world we are rolling out a data warehouse for the first time in the history of this state. We should look at that model as an example for this effort so we can make informed decisions. The other thing is that some of the children in our target population are children who are Medicaid eligible. We receive a 90% match for information technology efforts that serve Medicaid eligible children. We could build in a medical home model to pay for the data warehouse. We have the expertise and experience to get it done quickly.

Deborah Gist: That is really helpful. That is exactly the kind of work we want to do.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant: Also keep in mind that the Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook is counting these kids. We have a very robust set of data thanks to the state agencies.

Rep. Grace Diaz: Deborah, what is your opinion how the school funding formula will impact the early care and education field overall?

Deborah Gist: We feel really pleased that in there is a place for early care and education in the funding formula. While it isn't part of the foundation formula itself, it is a categorical amount so we can grow the slots for state funded Pre-K over time. It will take advocacy to keep the growth consistent.

Elizabeth: The other thing it does is embraces a mixed delivery system. It is set up that any program that can meet the quality standards can participate including child care programs, Head Start programs, and schools rather than a district only program. This builds on Rhode Island's strengths. We are happy to see that model continued in the funding formula. And we are excited that there is a plan to gradually grow the state commitment over time because early childhood education is so important to closing the achievement gap and ensuring children's later success in school.

Deborah Gist: I want to take a moment and introduce Representative Grace Diaz. She is the Chair of the Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care which has done great work on child care in this state. We are looking forward to working together.

Rep. Grace Diaz: Thank you Commissioner Gist. This is a great opportunity to work together. The Child Care Commission is ready to keep working in same way. It is a pleasure to have many of our Commission members on the Council. Our focus this year will be to educate the General Assembly. The General Assembly plays a very important role in Early Care and Education. With the election year there will be many new minds and new faces. It is important that we prepare these minds. The first person I spoke to was the new Finance Committee Chair and he is happy and willing to come to our Commission meetings.

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I look forward to serving the Council in the best way possible. Thank you. We really look forward to this Council coordinating with the Commission.

Colleen Dorian: Are family child care programs able to participate in the State funded Pre-K program?

Leslie Gell: I was on the planning group and there was a lot of discussion about that. For the Pre-K demonstration program family child care programs were not included, however it was decided that this issue should be revisited in the future once it is not longer a demonstration project.

1:10-1:25	State Advisory Council RFP and Discussion	Deborah Gist/Elizabeth Burke Bryant
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Introduction – Deborah Gist

- We have a time-sensitive opportunity to apply for funds to support the work of the Council.
- States can apply for \$500,000 over three years in federal dollars to support the work of the Council
- One-time start-up grant
- Requires a 70% match that can be in-kind
- Application due August 1, 2010

How the Funds Can Be Used – Deborah Gist

Can use funds to:

- Support the work of the Council
- To develop and implement a state plan
- To carry out activities to facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of ECE designed to improve school readiness through one or more of the following activities:
 - Supporting professional development, recruitment and retention initiatives for ECE educators
 - Enhancing existing early childhood and development programs and services in existence on the date of grant award.
 - Carrying out other activities consistent with state plan.

Application Requirements – Elizabeth Burke Bryant

The application must include:

- A statewide strategic report addressing the responsibilities of the Council
- A description of how the state will make effective use of the funds to create an ECE system by developing or enhancing programs and activities consistent with that report

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- A description of the State's early learning standards and the State's goals for increasing the number of children entering Kindergarten ready to learn.
- The agency or joint interagency office and individual designated to carry out the activities
- A description of how the State plans to sustain activities beyond the grant period.

States all over the country are forming Early Learning Councils to take advantage of this RFP. The Federal Government wants to know that we have a robust council and input from the community to be able to carry out the plan. You all will be receiving a copy of the draft application to respond to and there will also be a public hearing on July 29, 2010 from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm at CCRI in Warwick. We will send more information on this around. Since we won't be meeting again before August we will rely on you to turnaround comments to us quickly.

Deborah Gist: So please keep in mind that the public hearing is a month from now.

Pamela High: How many states will get funded?

Elizabeth Burke Bryant: Just about all of them. At a recent meeting, the Federal officials were encouraging states to turn in their applications on time. But the good news is that there is a strong desire on the part of the federal agency to get these dollars out to states, so if we do a good, thorough job with the application, it is likely that Rhode Island will receive this funding.

Mary Anne Finamore: I just wanted to say that at the public hearing or at some point that we need to keep in mind that the provider community is quite fragile right now. I have been doing this for a long time. Early childhood providers want to feel like we are headed in the right direction. We have just embarked on new comprehensive standards from RIDE that are very difficult. The economy is difficult. And most early care and education providers are in survival mode. We read the new standards and most of us say that this is the way to go...it is hard but it is good for kids. The problem is being able to meet the standards without the funding. So when I hear \$500K for three years my heart stops. This Council has been cloaked in secrecy for several months. I think the work will be good work – there is a lot of good work to build on. We need it to be good for the kids and somehow good for the provider too. I know there is no answer. And we know our parts – your part is to be diplomatic and our part is to let you know how difficult it really is, and to advocate for the early childhood community.

Deborah Gist: I think one of the things the Council can do is advocate in an informed way. We are advocating at the state level. I also want to address the secrecy because I have heard that in more than one place. There really wasn't a secret process. The Governor had to appoint people and we were waiting to find out who was appointed before we could invite people. I want to make sure that we build into our future Early Learning Council agendas an official public comment time to give anyone who is interested across the state an opportunity to make their thoughts known.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant: Thank you for coming to the first meeting of the Rhode Island Early Learning Council.

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Handouts:

Agenda

Early Learning Council Overview Presentation
Early Learning Council Starting Point Presentation
Early Learning Council Starting Point Summary
Funding Opportunity Presentation