

# Rhode Island Early Learning Council

MARCH 29, 2023

9:00 - 11:00 A.M.

*BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTER OF RI*



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**EARLY LEARNING RI**

9:00	<b>Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Meeting Overview</b>	<b>Angélica Infante-Green, RIDE</b> <b>Kimberly Brito, DHS</b> <b>Paige Clausius-Parks, RI KIDS COUNT</b>
9:15	<b>Birth to 8 State Policy Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>B-8 Highlights from Gov. McKee’s FY24 Proposed Budget</b></li> <li>• <b>B-8 Highlights of Proposed Legislation</b></li> <li>• <b>New PDG Birth to 5 Grant</b></li> </ul>	<b>Kayla Rosen, RI Children’s Cabinet and Governor’s Office</b> <b>Leanne Barrett, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT</b> <b>Meg Hassan, Governor’s Office</b>
10:00	<b>Child Care WAGE\$ in Rhode Island</b>	<b>Meg Hassan</b> <b>Nicole Chiello, DHS</b> <b>Lisa Hildebrand, RI Association for the Education of Young Children</b>
10:15	<b>Update: Early Childhood Governance Working Group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief brainstorm/discussion – identify cross-agency challenges</li> </ul>	<b>Kayla Rosen</b>
10:30	<b>Update: RI Pre-K Expansion Report &amp; Recommendations</b>	<b>Kayla Rosen</b> <b>Zoe McGrath, RIDE</b> <b>Nicole Chiello</b>
10:45	<b>Announcements, Public Comments, &amp; Next Steps</b>	<b>Paige Clausius-Parks</b> <b>Kimberly Brito</b> <b>Angélica Infante-Green</b>

# State Plans

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- Due 12/31/22: RIDE, DHS, Children's Cabinet - Pre-K Expansion and Early Childhood Workforce Recruitment/ Retention/Compensation Plan
- Due 12/31/22 DHS Early Childhood Facilities Bond Report
- Due 04/01/23: Governor's Workforce Board – Plan to address barriers to entering the Early Childhood Education Workforce
- Due 06/30/23: EOHHS Task Force - Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Medicaid Plan
- Due 10/01/23: Children's Cabinet Working Group -Early Learning and Child Development System Governance Recommendations

# FY24 Proposed Investment: Sustain RI Pre-K and Prepare for Expansion in 2024-2025 School Year

More than 800 RI Pre-K seats are funded through time-limited federal funds that end after this current school year.

Fund Source	Amount for SY22-23	Notes
Pre-K Categorical Funds (State)	\$14,850,000	<i>Level funded since FY20</i>
Preschool Development Grant Funds (Federal)	\$5,042,000	<i>Grant funds end after SY22-23</i>
Governor's Emergency Education Relief Funds (Federal)	\$1,000,000	<i>Grant funds end after SY22-23</i>
CRRSA CCDBG Direct Award Funds (Federal)	\$650,000	<i>Grant funds end after SY22-23</i>

To address this need for sustaining funds and prepare for expansion, the FY24 budget includes the following proposed investments:

## Funds to Sustain Programs and Operations (\$7M)

- Funding to sustain all existing RI Pre-K seats (\$6.7M)
- Funding to support operations, including enhanced RI Pre-K lottery system and data systems support for program applications (RISES system at DHS) (\$0.3M)

## Investments to Prepare for Expansion

- Investments in the mixed-delivery system to support more providers to be ready for future RI Pre-K application cycles (quality investments; curriculum; materials; etc)
- Investments in the early education workforce pipeline, such as supporting educators to pursue the Pre-K to 2 Teacher Certification

# FY24 Proposed Budget: B-8 early learning

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- Fully funds the **education funding formula**, including an increase of **\$57.8 million** over FY 2023.
- Recommends **an increase in the student success factor from 40% to 42%**, providing an additional \$9.9 million to school districts to meet the needs of students in low-income families.
- Creates a new component of the education funding formula to **support students experiencing homelessness**. Funding will be determined using 25% of the core student per pupil education expenses multiplied by the homeless enrollment and the state share ratio and is budgeted at \$2.5 million for FY 2024.
- **Increases categorical funding by \$7.8 million for Multilingual Learners**, bringing total state funding to \$12.8 million.
- **Increases categorical funding by \$4.8 million for special education**, bringing total state funding to \$9.3 million.
- **New Positions**: Recommends funding for two new RIDE positions, including \$155,909 to support a **Multilingual Learner Specialist position** to support and train district leaders and \$133,907 for a **Transformation Specialist** to work with district leaders in consistently low performing schools.

# FY24 Proposed Budget: B-8 early learning

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- **Out-of-School Time:** Recommends \$4 million in ARPA funds for out-of-school time learning grants that will be distributed through the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) Office of Student, Community, and Academic Support.
- **Longitudinal Data System:** Section 1 of Article 3 of the Governor’s proposed FY 2024 budget moves what is currently known as the DataHub and operated by DataSpark at the University of Rhode Island to the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner. Puts the State’s Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) in statute to be overseen by the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner. To track progress from **early learning** through postsecondary education to employment.
- **Educator Workforce:** Recommends \$4 million in funding, \$800,000 over FY 2023, for the Wavemaker Fellowship, a competitive student loan reimbursement program overseen by RI Commerce. Section 7 of Article 7 of the Governor’s proposed FY 2024 budget includes language **adding teacher to the list of professions that would be eligible** for the RI Wavemaker Fellowship. “Teacher” to be defined by RI Department of Education.

# FY24 Proposed Budget: B-8 early learning

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- Governor has indicated there will be an amendment to his proposed budget to comply with new federal Medicaid requirements, including **mandatory 12-month continuous coverage for all children enrolled in Medicaid starting January 2024** and gradual reductions in the percentage of federal funds for Medicaid that were increased during the pandemic.

# Right from the Start Campaign Legislative Priorities

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- **Child Care is Essential (H-5193, S-522):** Expands family eligibility, increases provider rates, and removes the statutory requirement that families participate in child support enforcement for the RI Child Care Assistance Program.
- **Pre-K & Head Start (H-6009, S-463):**
  - Allocates sufficient state general revenue to prevent closure of 40 RI Pre-K classroom and reopen and prevent permanent closure of 30 Head Start and 11 Early Head Start classrooms.
  - Requires revisions to the Pre-K expansion plan to include funding for Head Start classrooms, family child care, compensation parity with K-12, spending benchmarks to sustain and expand access to high-quality infant/toddler early care and education (including Early Head Start), and a plan to ensure that all families, including those who have children with developmental delays and disabilities, can make choices among high-quality preschool options to include those located outside of their city/town of residence.
- **First Connections & Family Home Visiting (H-5810, S-207)**
  - Makes the long-needed (22 years!) rate increase permanent for the First Connections newborn home visiting program to prevent program collapse.
  - Develops a plan to sustain and expand voluntary family home visiting services, including meeting the new state funding requirements, so that high-quality programs are offered to all families who could benefit.

# Right from the Start Campaign Legislative Priorities

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- **Early Educator Investment Act (H-5094, S-492):** Establishes statewide compensation goals for early educators across state agencies. Fund the Child Care WAGE\$ pilot. Require annual report on early educator workforce.
- **Child Care for Child Care Educators (H-6169, S-377):** Implements Kentucky's strategy to recruit and retain child care educators by making all child care educators categorically eligible for the RI Child Care Assistance Program, regardless of family income.
- **Early Intervention Wavemaker (H-5983, S-492):** Sets aside up to 10 Wavemaker Fellowships to help Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, and Physical Therapists who work in Early Intervention to help pay off their student loans.
- **Stabilize Health Care Access for Children Birth to 5 (H-5986, S-247):** Provides continuous Medicaid eligibility for children from birth to age 5.
- **Improve Rhode Island's Paid Family Leave program:** Increases the wage replacement rate for low-wage workers (H-5447, S-534) and increase length of leave from 6 weeks to 12 weeks (H-5781, S-139).

# Right from the Start Campaign Legislative Priorities

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- **Raising RI (H-5644, S-227)** - Ends deep child poverty by improving RI Works: Update the cash assistance benefit which thousands of young children rely on to meet basic needs. Repeal the full family sanction, allow pregnant women to receive support earlier, and restore eligibility for legal permanent residents.
- **Revenue for RI (H-6148, S-232):** Implements a fair share tax strategy to bring in much-needed revenue to invest in K-12 education and child care and early learning programs.
- **TBD Early Childhood IDEA Task Force:** Establishes a task force to review and develop recommendations to improve children's access to Early Intervention and preschool special education services required under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

# Other Relevant B-8 Legislation

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**Cap Class Size for Grades K-2 (H-5085, S-177):** Would cap class size at 20 children.

**Right to Adequate Education (H-5771, S-72):** Would amend the state constitution to guarantee equal opportunity to receive adequate, equitable, and meaningful. Provides judicial enforcement.

**Access to Bilingual Education (H-5777, S-549):** Would create a dual language programs fund to be administered by RIDE to support access to bilingual education.

**Office of Early Childhood Development and Learning (S-482):** Would establish a cabinet level office to manage a statewide early learning system for children from birth to five and ensure all children enter school ready to learn.

**Early Learning Hubs (S-185):** Would establish regional hubs to coordinate support for early learning providers.

**Wavemaker Expansion (S-229):** Would add public school teachers to the Wavemaker Fellowship.

# Other Relevant B-8 Legislation

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**Child Care for All (H-6122):** Would help all families access quality child care, regardless of their income.

**Building Opportunities in Out-Of-School Time (H-5520):** Would provide \$4 million to support after school and summer learning programs for students in grades K-12.

**RIDE Nursery School Approval (H-5339, S-699):** Would eliminate the two-tiered licensing system for child care and early learning programs and requires all public schools with preschool classrooms to participate in BrightStars.

**Summer Camp Licensing (H-5429):** Would establish a licensing system for summer camps.

**KIDS CONNECT (H-6044, S-790):** Would allow KIDS CONNECT service providers to bill commercial insurance to help children with special needs participate in child care and early learning programs.

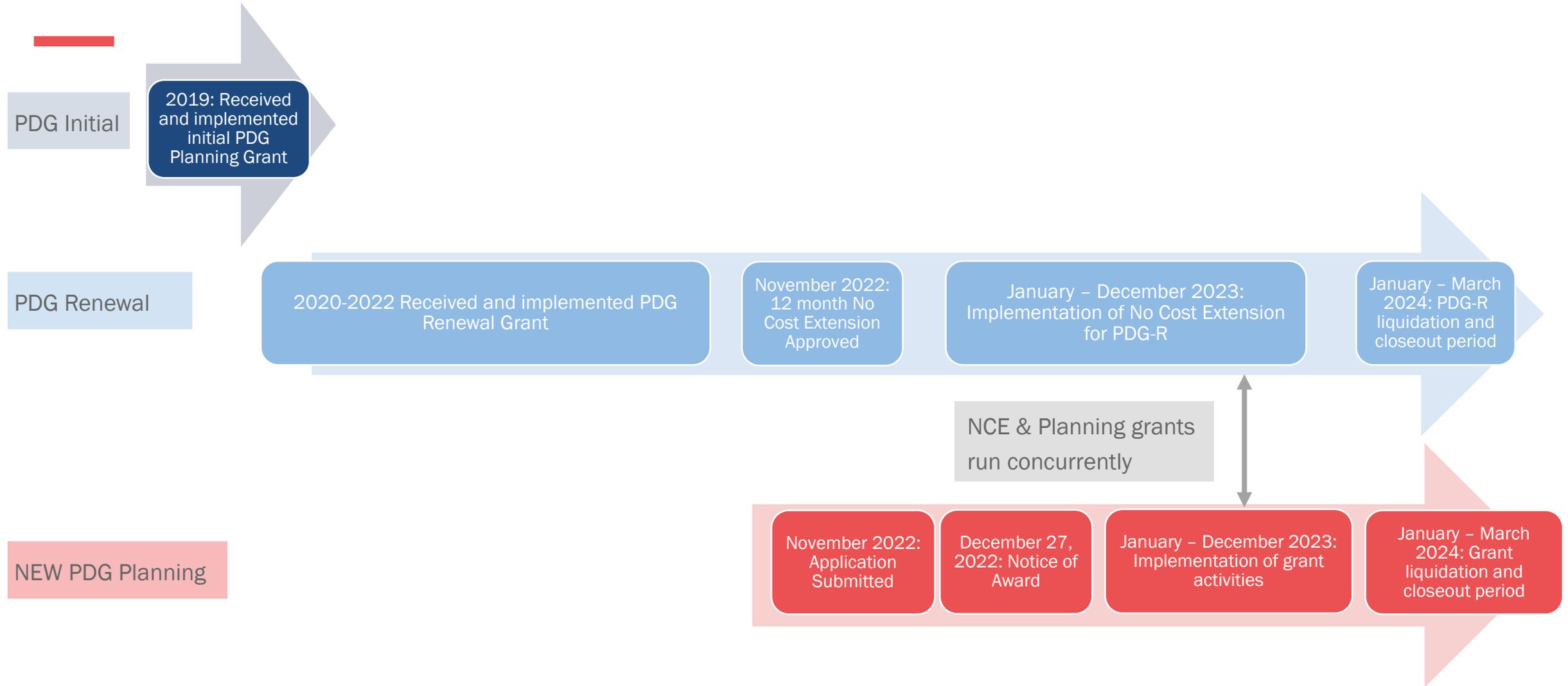
**RI Parental and Family Medical Act (H-5990, S-145):** Would increase job-protection for workers who need to take family leave from 13 weeks to 24 or 26 weeks over two years, which can be taken in one year.

**In December, RI received funding from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) as part of the PDG Planning Grant opportunity. Grant funds will support activities that complement – but are distinct from – the current PDG-Renewal.**

PDG opportunities follow RI’s successful implementation of other federal grant opportunities, including Race to the Top, as well as continued and dedicated state and community partnerships.

Goals of PDG-Planning, as outlined in ACF’s notice of grant	Allowable Uses of PDG-Planning	Differences from Current PDG-Renewal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance coordination of state early learning systems</li> <li>• Ensure families have knowledge and choice within the system</li> <li>• With the realities of Covid, encourage states to continue strategic planning efforts B-5 system</li> <li>• Emphasis on supporting the ECCE workforce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessing and planning to advance our state early childhood system</li> <li>• Encouraged states to consider meaningful workforce supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cannot</b> pay for certain kinds of direct services, including seats in programs</li> <li>• One year grant</li> <li>• Focus on needs assessment and strategic planning</li> </ul> <p>Pending continued funding from ACF, we anticipate this PDG Planning Grant will allow us to be eligible to apply for future renewal grants</p>

# PDG-Planning activities will run concurrently with PDG-Renewal No Cost Extension Year



## RI's PDG Planning application focused on funding needs that had been discussed repeatedly.

PDG Planning activities have a particular emphasis on alignment to our Strategic Plan objectives and areas of need identified in the RI Pre-K Report.

Workforce pipeline & supports

Dedicated focus on infants & toddlers

Support of the mixed-delivery system

Family voice & choice

Equitable access to programs & supports for priority populations

**Educator compensation – and understanding changes precipitated by COVID – remains a priority across our system. We know that supporting the workforce is critical for the success of our children and system.**

Agency	Item	Activity Explanation	Updates
DHS	<b>Wage study + recommendations</b>	Understand the impact of the pandemic on early educators’ wages to create updated recommendations, which can inform future practice.	Drafting an RFP
DHS	<b>Pilot tiered supplemental compensation</b>	To support RI’s early childhood workforce, the PDG planning grant will pilot a supplemental compensation model. <b>This activity represents more than half of the total grant award.</b> The primary focus will be infant/toddler educators. Given the logistics of the grant, there’s still various elements of program design to be determined.	DHS is working with Child Care Services Association (CCSA) and RIAEYC to pilot  (More information momentarily!)
OPC	<b>Higher Education articulation support</b>	As part of stimulus GEER funding, RI has been supporting the early childhood workforce in various career pathway opportunities. This would provide OPC with additional capacity to review and support prior learning articulation so that students are matched to programs that meet their current needs.	OPC working on a job description

**Infants and toddlers came up repeatedly as needing dedicated focus. These activities will support on-going activities and allow for new strategic planning efforts related specifically to I/T care.**

Agency	Item	Activity Explanation	Updates
EOHHS	<b>Infant/toddler Mental Health Planning</b>	This will support existing work at EOHHS on children’s behavioral health system of care work and the infant/toddler mental health task force to engage families in the strategic planning process.	Supporting vendor engagement in the Infant/Toddler Mental Health Task Force, including family and provider input through surveys.
EOHHS	<b>Infant/toddler Mental Health Initial Implementation</b>	Implementation activities based on strategic planning activities.	TBD – pending findings from Activity 2.1
RIDOH/ DHS/ RIDE	<b>Infant/toddler strategic planning + transitions</b>	The RI Pre-K Expansion Report identified a need for dedicated resources to support infant and toddler strategic planning, this provides resources to support the work.	Drafting an RFP

**Each component of our birth-through-five system is interconnected. The PDG Planning grant will fund activities related to strategic planning to support various components of the mixed-delivery system.**

Agency	Item	Activity Explanation	Updates
RIDE/DHS	<b>Pre-K Expansion planning</b>	The RI Pre-K Expansion Report identified multiple areas that need additional planning which this funding can support.	Exploring opportunities and create recommendations for FCCs to participate in the RI Pre-K model, based on national best practice.
DHS	<b>Expert review of BrightStars</b>	RI has created a robust QRIS, which was last expertly reviewed in 2014. Given the creation of various competencies, standards, and evolving best practices, RI will use funds for an updated review of QRIS.	Plan to engage national expert to support a review.

## Centering family voice and choice remains a priority of the Strategic Plan and the PDG Planning Grant. PDG funds are going to multiple activities to support family engagement across our system.

Agency	Item	Activity Explanation	Updates
DHS/ RIDOH/ DCYF	<b>Funds for Family Engagement Groups</b>	Will provide funding to agencies to support family groups. Each agency may have a different model for these funds such as funding a facilitator, providing resources to participants. The aim is to ensure robust engagement and empowerment from families across our system.	DCYF funds will support birth families training staff  RIDOH & DHS will conduct family engagement groups related to agency-specific programming
RIDE	<b>Pre-K Family Liaison</b>	Provide small grants to support awareness of Pre-K lottery and support to complete applications. By embedding resources within communities, these efforts will encourage families from a variety of backgrounds to apply.	Working on grant applications for funding
RIDE	<b>Pre-K Lottery Design Review</b>	The RI Pre-K Expansion Report identified the need to review the technology that supports and runs the RI Pre-K lottery. This includes understanding what future needs for the lottery might be if Pre-K expands and what best practices are in other places.	Working to identify internal resources for a review of the system and create plan for vendor

## RI will engage in planning activities to ensure that our systems are designed to support children and families equitably.

Agency	Item	Activity Explanation	Updates
RIDE	<b>MLL Needs Assessment</b>	Collaboration between MLL team and early childhood team to ensure young children have needed MLL supports.	Internal planning at RIDE
RIDE/ EOHHS	<b>Developmental supports alignment</b>	RI has various supports for young children with developmental support needs (Kids Connect, Early Intervention, Early Childhood Special Education, etc.) – this activity will support a review and alignment of these services to serve children and families more effectively.	Working across agencies to draft an RFP

# Step Up to WAGE\$ Pilot

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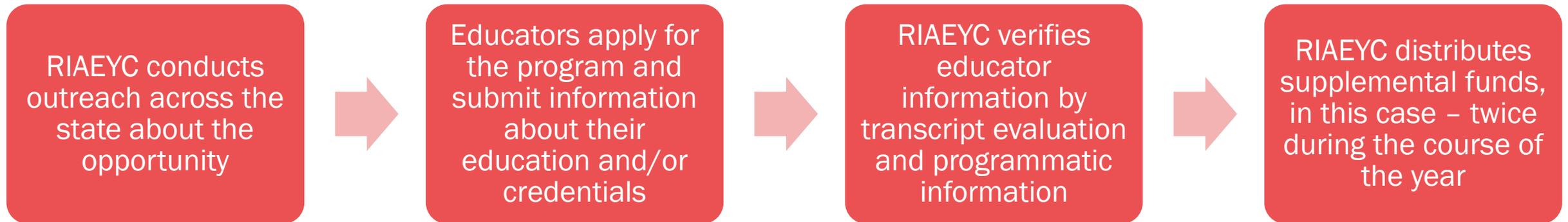
# The ELC has a history of prioritizing educator compensation.

**Building on the work of the Moving the Needle Task Force, principles of the Early Educator Investment Act, and a host of other initiatives, RI will pilot the Step Up to WAGE\$ supplemental compensation model.**

- With PDG Planning funds, DHS is partnering with CCSA and our T.E.A.C.H Early Childhood RI affiliate RIAEYC to pilot the Step Up to WAGE\$ Program for a group of RI early educators
  - This will provide direct, supplemental compensation to the early childhood educator
- This pilot leverages the WAGE\$ model, and is structured to fit within the constraints of the PDG Planning Grant
  - One calendar year pilot program
  - Size of pilot
  - Bonus distributions, including the eligibility categories

## **Step Up to WAGE\$ provides supplemental compensation to educators based on their credentials**

RI is leveraging a national model, Step Up to WAGE\$, which research shows reduced staff turnover, to support implementation of the pilot opportunity.



# Coming soon: Opportunities for educators to apply for Step Up to WAGE\$ supplement!

**To make this pilot successful, we need everyone's help to spread the word about the opportunity.**

- RIAEYC will train with the Child Care WAGE\$ team at the Child Care Services Association/National Center before the model launches this Spring 2023
- RIAEYC is still hiring two additional positions for this work: WAGE\$ Counselor (*requires a BA in ECE*) and a Billing Specialist. The WAGE\$ Coordinator has been hired to implement the program in alignment with the T.E.A.C.H./WAGE\$ National Center
- Pilot funding ends December 30, 2023 – so timely recruiting is key! We will need everyone's help to share recruitment information with the field- more to come!

# Questions?

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More information:

Lisa Hildebrand, RIAEYC Executive Director or  
Marinel Russo, RIAEYC Assistant Director

[Lhildebrand@riaeyc.org](mailto:Lhildebrand@riaeyc.org) or [mrusso@riaeyc.org](mailto:mrusso@riaeyc.org)

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## Working Group on Early Childhood Governance – Update

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# Recall: The FY23 budget establishes a working group on early childhood governance to review current approach and identify proposals for future structures.

## Overview of Budget Article

### FY23 Budget Requirements

By October 1, 2023, the early childhood governance working group must deliver a report on early childhood governance. The report includes:

- Coordination + administration
- Governance + organizational structure
- Fiscal cost of proposals
- Implementation of data systems

The Article names the members: DHS, RIDE, OPC, RIDOH, DOA, Chair of the Children’s Cabinet, and RI Kids Count. It notes that staff of the Children’s Cabinet will staff the group to complete the duties and the Early Learning Council will be an advisory body.

It provides \$250,000 to enable completion of the report and recommendations.

# Mission & Scope

## Mission

The goal of Rhode Island’s Working Group on Early Childhood Governance is to examine systems, structure, and authorities that govern and administer early childhood programs (as defined in the Scope). The Working Group will use this information to make recommendations that would advance RI’s vision for children enter kindergarten educationally, social-emotionally, and developmentally ready to succeed, putting them on a path to read proficiently by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade that sets Rhode Islanders up for successful completion of postsecondary education. The Working Group will conduct a comprehensive review of the current conditions and identify gaps and opportunities for improvement to best achieve the goals set forth in the ECCE Strategic Plan and the Governor’s 2030 Plan. The Working Group shall develop a report that includes recommendations regarding the governance of early childhood programs in the state. The recommendations shall address, but need not be limited to:

- The coordination and administration of early childhood programs and services;
- The governance and organizational structure of early childhood programs and services, including whether, and under what circumstances, the state should consider unifying early childhood programs under one state agency;
- The fiscal structure of proposed recommendations; and
- The implementation of early childhood data systems, for strategic planning, program implementation and program evaluation.

## Scope of Analysis:

The Working Group’s efforts will focus on the following core programs:

- **Child care licensing** (DHS)
- **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)** (DHS)
- **Head Start / Early Head Start Collaboration** (DHS)
- **RI Pre-K** (RIDE)
- **Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Standards (CECE)** (RIDE)
- **Early Childhood Special Education – IDEA Part B, 619** (RIDE)
- **Early Intervention (EI)** (EOHHS)
- **KidsConnect** (EOHHS)
- **Family Visiting** (RIDOH)

To conduct a comprehensive review, the Working Group’s scope will also include analysis of the gaps and opportunities of the supporting systems for ECCE programs, including but not limited to:

- Workforce development, career pathways, and higher education pathways (in collaboration with the Governor’s Workforce Board report in April, 2023)
- Professional development and technical assistance
- Quality evaluation, improvement, and support (with focus on Quality Rating and Improvement System, the RI Early Learning and Development Standards, and the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies)

# Progress since last meeting

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## Procurement of a Systems Analysis Vendor

- RFP posted on Ocean State Procures on 12/19/22
- Bids due to the State on 1/24/23
- Five vendors responded to the RFP and were reviewed by an interagency committee and subject matter experts. Review was finalized in February and recommendation made to Purchasing.
- A vendor has been given a tentative award and we are hopeful of finalizing a contract soon we can get started!

# Goal Statement : What is the opportunity we are trying to realize through the governance systems analysis? How do we define the problem needing to be addressed?

## Other State Examples of Problem/Goal Definitions (Summarized)

### Vermont:

- Differing expectations for private providers and schools in the UPK program
- Different monitoring expectations for service providers
- Different requirements for personnel in different settings
- Divergent expertise (across Human Services, Education, and Health)
- Private providers still see schools as an existential threat
- There can be a divergence between where special education services are needed and where they are offered.
- A lack of systemic data
- Access deserts

### Wyoming

- The system needs to be more coherent
- The system needs high-level leadership
- Greater policy clarity
- Better information for parents
- The infrastructure needed to actually deliver quality and increase access

# Discussion: What is your description of aspirations/objectives we are trying to achieve through the governance systems analysis? How do you define the goals/principles?



State Government	Early Childhood Providers	Early Childhood Educators/Workforce	Families

# What to expect moving forward:

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- Public engagement sessions with the governance systems consultant
- Deep dive meeting at next ELC on the findings to date and discussion of the draft goal statements and potential options for recommendations
- Full draft report will be available in mid to late Summer
- Final report will be done in mid-September for submission by October, 2023

# Let me know if you are interested!

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- If you are interested in potentially joining the informal advisory group and/or receiving updates via email about the Working Group on Early Childhood Governance work, please email me at [kayla.s.rosen@governor.ri.gov](mailto:kayla.s.rosen@governor.ri.gov)
  - Information about upcoming Working Group on Early Childhood Governance meetings
  - Updates about progress of the Working Group
  - More frequent, informal discussions with the vendor & staff team on the development of the report and recommendations
  - Group of advisors for the Vendor team to engage with throughout the process



# RI Pre-K Expansion Report and Recommendations

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# The FY23 budget included a charge to develop a plan to reach 5000 RI Pre-K seats by 2028.

## Statute Overview

By December 31, 2022, develop an annual growth plan to expand the **state prekindergarten program to five thousand (5,000) seats, for three- and four-year-old children, over five (5) years**, beginning in FY 2024, as well as recommendations for achieving universal prekindergarten in the state. The growth plan shall detail annual targets and projected funding needs, as well as how the state will:

- Equitably distribute prekindergarten funding to eligible providers
- Ensure that access to infant and toddler care is not at risk as the state prekindergarten program is expanded
- Prepare, recruit and retain a highly-qualified early childhood workforce, including adequate wages for early childhood educators, regardless of setting
- Build capacity among new and existing providers to ensure quality standards are met in all settings
- Ensure providers in the mixed-delivery system have sufficient facilities to expand access to high-quality prekindergarten services

# The Report and Recommendations was developed with significant input and feedback from the community – thank you!

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## Timeline Overview

- **July, 2022:** Enacted FY23 Budget passed with requirement to develop a plan to reach 5,000 seats by 2028
- **September, 2022:** Discussion at Early Learning Council and brainstorming activity in small groups about key challenges, opportunities, and considerations for expanding RI Pre-K related to the mixed-delivery system, infant/toddler, educators, Early Childhood Special Education, including 3-year olds, etc.
- **October 17, 2022:** Full Draft Report published online for feedback. Feedback collected via:
  - Online survey
  - Two public feedback sessions on Zoom
  - Multiple partner meetings including with PLEE, RISSA, ECSE Coordinators, BOCA, and more
- **November 17, 2022:** All feedback received and reviewed
- **December ELC Meeting:** Overview of the feedback received
- **December 30, 2022:** Final Report with feedback incorporated delivered to Governor and General Assembly, and posted online!

# Overview of the RI Pre-K Expansion Report and Recommendations

## Summary – since it’s 66 pages, sorry!

- Why Invest in High Quality Pre-K
- Definition and Principles of RI Pre-K
- Current State of RI Pre-K
- Key Focus 1: Equitable Access to RI Pre-K
- Key Focus 2: Expanding RI Pre-K to Three-Year Olds
- Key Focus 3: Ensuring Equitable Access to RI Pre-K for Children with Disabilities
- Key Focus 4: Expanding RI Pre-K in the Mixed Delivery System
- Key Focus 5: Supporting Early Childhood Educators: Preparing, Recruiting, and Retaining a High Qualified Workforce
- Key Focus 6: Supporting Strong Transitions to Kindergarten
- Key Focus 7: Sustaining and Growth the Infant/Toddler Sector
- Cost of Delivering High-Quality RI Pre-K
- Annual Growth Plan and Budget Projections

## Setting the stage: RI has a high-quality state pre-kindergarten program to build upon and expansion needs to be considered within the broader context of early education.

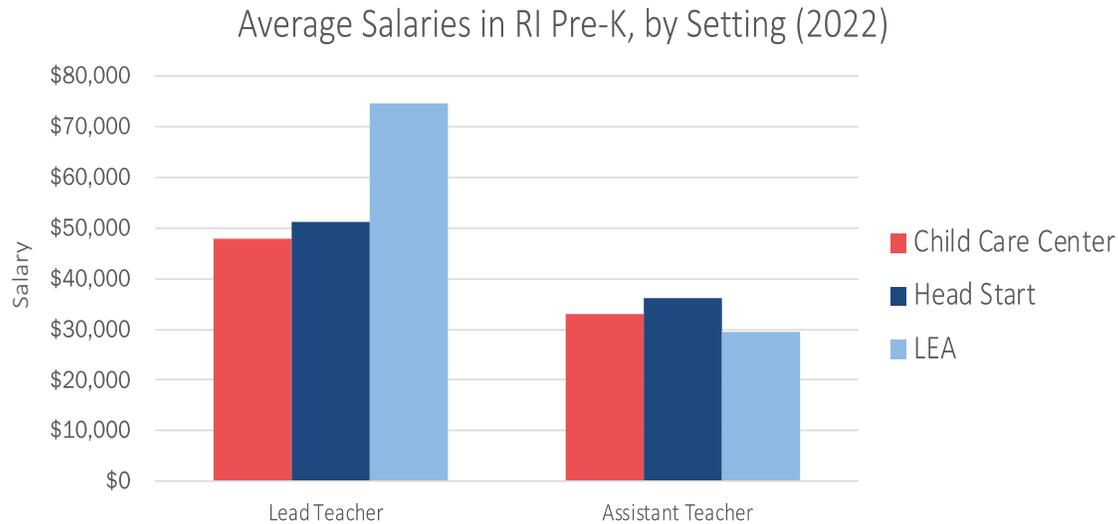
- High-quality early learning programs lead to improved academic achievement and increased economic benefits for families
- RI's state prekindergarten program, RI Pre-K, is a high-quality early learning program delivered through the mixed-delivery system of community-based child care centers, Head Start agencies, and schools.
- To be successful, RI Pre-K expansion must be considered in the context of the broader birth to age five early education sector and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - **Pandemic Recovery:** The COVID-19 pandemic has had an immense impact on the social-emotional growth and developmental experiences of young children. The students who will be attending RI Pre-K in the coming years experienced unprecedented childhoods and RI's early learning classrooms must be prepared to support increased developmental needs.
  - **Early Childhood Workforce:** The pandemic also significantly exacerbated existing workforce challenges within the early learning sector. As of the writing of this report, many classrooms across RI's early learning sector that were open prior to the pandemic are not operating due to a lack of educators, many of whom have left the field for higher-paying positions. Attracting and retaining highly-qualified educators for RI Pre-K comes in the context of a field that continues to face challenges in finding, training, and retaining educators due to the persistently low wages
  - **System Capacity & Pipeline Development:** Many of the programs that were early adopters of RI Pre-K have already maximized their capacity to deliver RI Pre-K classes. To reach 5,000 seats, additional support and resources will be needed to develop a pipeline of ready providers.

# Key Strategies: Build on the strengths of existing program, with specific initiatives to support providers across the mixed-delivery system and increase equity.

Strategies	Steps Now Underway
<p><b>Expand RI Pre-K through the existing program framework</b>, which is nationally recognized for quality, maximizes family choice, and optimizes public investments across early learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to the mixed-delivery system</li> <li>• Continuing to braid and blend funding streams to maximize choice and engage more providers participate</li> <li>• Educator compensation</li> <li>• Center equity and family choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed investment in the Governor’s FY24 Budget</li> <li>• Update the RI Pre-K lottery design (PDG)</li> <li>• Invest in community-embedded supports for families to apply to the lottery (PDG)</li> </ul>
<p>Make <b>targeted investments across the mixed-delivery system</b> to build a pipeline of programs ready to become RI Pre-K providers so the state can open 35-40 new classrooms a year from 2025-2028.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program pipeline</li> <li>• Educator pipeline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Pipeline: Proposed investment in Governor’s FY24 Budget to support 35 new classrooms to be ready for future RI Pre-K expansion</li> <li>• Educator Pipeline: New Pre-K to 2 Teacher Certification Pathways at URI; Expansion of TEACH</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop, pilot, and implement additional program models</b> to meet expansion goals for increased equity, access, and inclusion of 3-year olds that meet all quality standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RI Pre-K for 3 Year olds</li> <li>• Delivery of Early Childhood Special Education services</li> <li>• RI Pre-K in Family Child Care</li> <li>• Supports for Multilingual Learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmental Supports Alignment strategic planning (PDG)</li> <li>• RI Pre-K model for Family Child Care planning (PDG)</li> <li>• Multilingual Learner Needs Assessment for ECCE (PDG)</li> </ul>
<p>Make aligned investments and pursue additional strategic planning to <b>support the sustainability, quality, and growth of the birth to five sector as a whole.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant/toddler care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant/toddler strategic planning (PDG)</li> </ul>

# Highlight: Educator Compensation

Key Finding: Compensation is not equitable across settings in RI Pre-K and is not at parity with Kindergarten



Key Recommendation: Base grant amounts for RI Pre-K classrooms need to adjust over time to allow for compensation increases and address inflation

**Percent yearly inflation adjustment:** As noted in the *Cost of RI Pre-K* section, RI Pre-K has provided a stagnant baseline classroom grant since 2011 to RI Pre-K grantees. During the same time period, public schools have received an average of a 3.3% per pupil funding increase each year through the school funding formula. This has resulted in salary disparities between community-based and LEA-based RI Pre-K classrooms and has led to significant staff turnover as RI Pre-K competes for educators with the same credentials required to teach kindergarten. To achieve pay parity for educators with the same credentials, a similar annual adjustment to the funding formula is needed for RI Pre-K.

- *Lower investment estimate:* The lower investment estimate includes a 1% annual adjustment for all RI Pre-K classrooms.
- *Higher investment estimate:* The higher investment estimate includes a 4% annual adjustment for all RI Pre-K classrooms.

# Highlight: Reaching 5000 Seats in the Mixed-Delivery System

Key Finding: There is capacity in the mixed-delivery system to reach 5000 RI Pre-K seats

	Child Care Centers	Head Start Agencies	Public Schools	Family Child Care
<b>Current Engagement in RI Pre-K</b>	<p>Currently, of the 2,364 RI Pre-K seats, <b>782 are in 18 child care centers, representing 33% of the total RI Pre-K capacity.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>36 classrooms using the traditional model</li> <li>6 classrooms braiding funding with CCAP</li> </ul>	<p>Currently, of the 2,364 RI Pre-K seats, <b>918 are in all 6 Head Start agencies, representing 39% of the total RI Pre-K capacity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40 classrooms using the traditional model</li> <li>11 classrooms supplementing Head Start funds with RI Pre-K</li> </ul>	<p>Currently, of the 2,364 RI Pre-K seats, <b>664 are in 7 LEAs, representing 28% of the total RI Pre-K capacity</b></p>	<p>Currently not RI Pre-K providers but may support before/after care</p>
<b>Potential Future Capacity for RI Pre-K</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>BrightStars 3-5 Stars</i>: Approximately 2,700 child care center-based seats that not currently part of the RI Pre-K program or Head Start</li> <li><i>BrightStars ratings of 1-2 stars or that are unrated</i>: 6,964 licensed preschool-aged seats in child care centers</li> </ul>	<p>As of September 2022, there are approximately 1000 Head Start seats in RI that are not part of the RI Pre-K program</p>	<p>125 LEA classrooms – mostly special education integrated or self-contained classes – that are currently serving children ages three- to five-years-old that are not part of RI Pre-K</p>	<p>Planning to develop FCC model for RI Pre-K</p>

Key Recommendation: Invest in pipeline supports across the mixed-delivery system

- **Classroom/program pipeline:** Investments associated with supporting a classroom/program to be ready to deliver RI Pre-K. This could include purchasing and training on new curriculum; purchasing new furniture; supporting PDATA for the program; or addressing requirements to reach a rating of 3 stars on BrightStars.
- **Educator pipeline:** Investments associated with supporting the educator pipeline are a range depending on the prior experience and credentials of the potential RI Pre-K teacher. While some teachers may only need minimal supports, others may require support to attain their Bachelors' degree or teacher certification.

# Highlight: Infant/toddler capacity

Key Finding: Need to consider impact on infant/toddler in every step of RI Pre-K Expansion

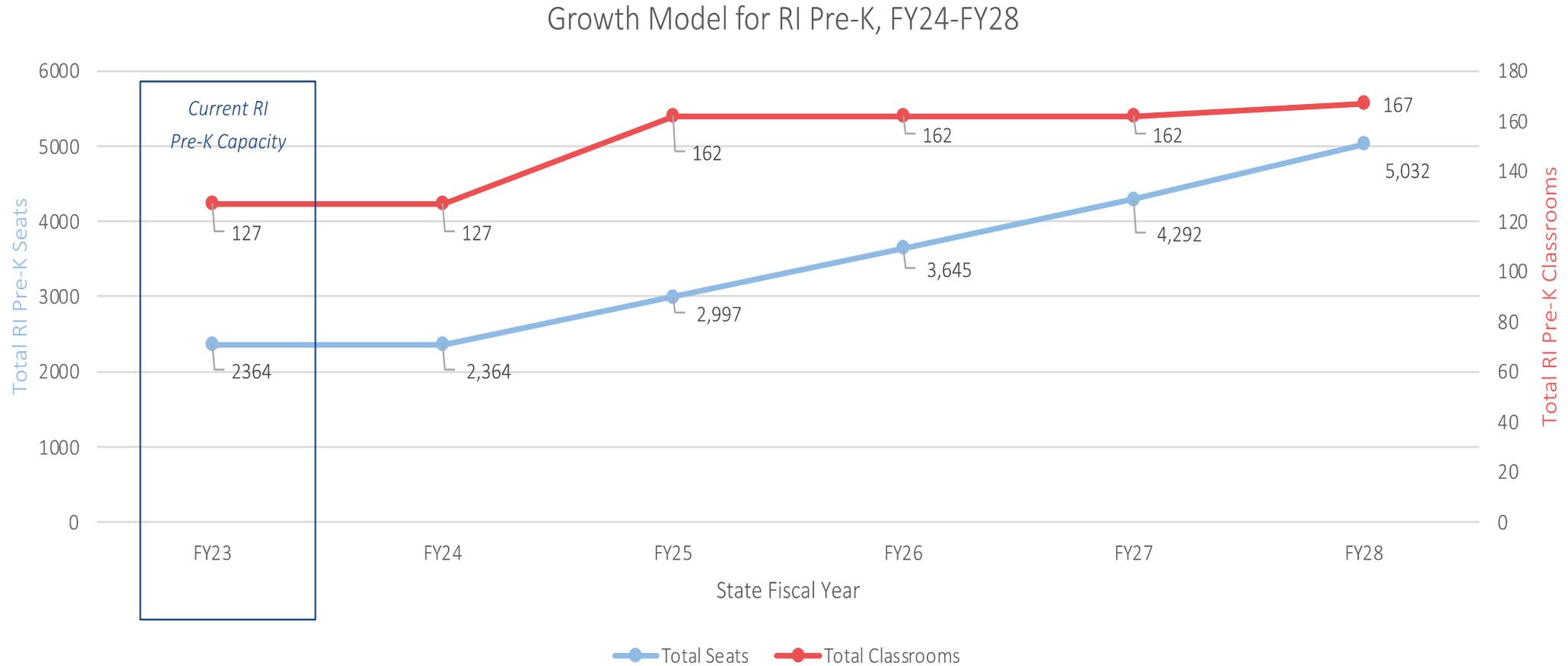
As RI Pre-K expands and more reliable funding is available for older children, more providers may consider reducing their infant/toddler offerings and expanding preschool classrooms. This outcome would significantly harm children, families, and RI's economy if families cannot find infant/toddler care for their children.

Key Recommendation: Develop more specific strategies for Infant/Toddler and Create an infant/toddler funding set aside as a percentage of RI Pre-K investment

- **Develop a specific strategic plan for Infants/Toddlers:** As a corollary to the RI Pre-K, develop a robust, specific plan with goals and targets for infants and toddlers.
- **Percent of set aside for Infant/Toddler sector:** While a set-aside is noted as a best practice, the percentage of that set-side can vary. The growth model incorporates the following lower and higher set asides:
  - *Lower investment estimate:* The lower investment estimate includes a 10% set-aside.
  - *Higher investment estimate:* The higher investment estimate includes a 30% infant/toddler set aside. Of note, Illinois provides a 33% infant-toddler set aside.

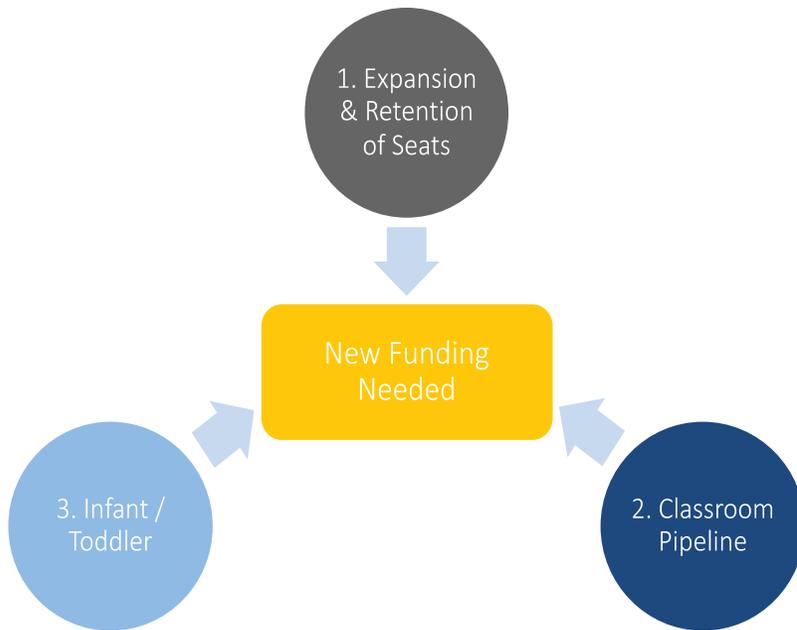
# Growth Model: The proposed growth model envisions maintaining all capacity in SY23-24 and expanding by 35-40 classrooms a year 2025-2028.

## Growth Model



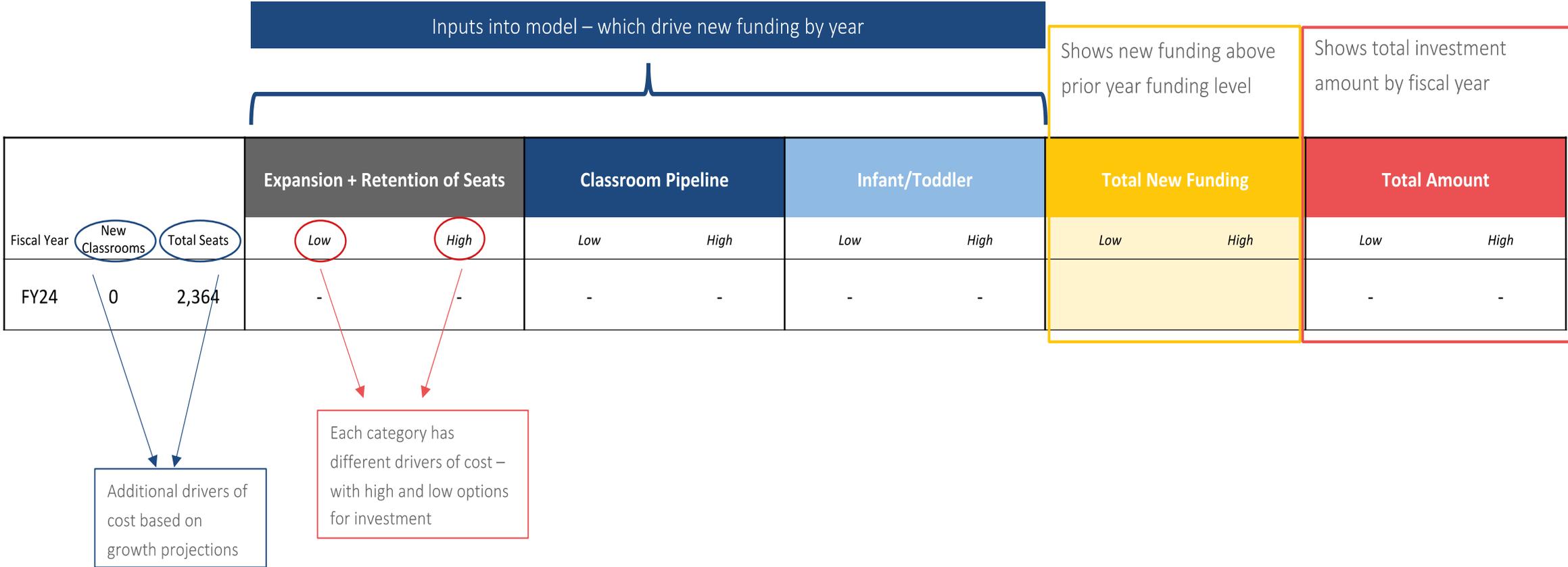
# Cost Model: The cost model takes into account three cost components: program sustainability/operations, program expansion, and infant/toddler set aside.

## Cost Model Approach



Component of Expansion	Rationale	Investment inputs	Assumptions driving investment amount
1. Expansion and Retention of Seats: Investments to expand and sustain RI Pre-K	Cost of new seats, retention of existing seats, and administrative capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost per classroom (including quality supports)</li> <li>• Average # of students</li> <li>• ECSE supplemental</li> <li>• Administrative capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of classrooms braiding/blending funding</li> <li>• % inflation adjustment</li> <li>• % students eligible for ECSE</li> </ul>
2. Classroom Pipeline: Investment to cultivate a pipeline of new providers to reach 5,000 seats	Costs of professional development, facilities, teacher training, etc. to meet RI Pre-K standards and be eligible to apply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost per classroom for PDTA</li> <li>• Cost for educators to attain RI Pre-K required credentials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of classrooms needing high vs. low readiness supports</li> <li>• % of teachers with requisite degrees</li> </ul>
3. Infant/Toddler: Investment to ensure a strong system exists to care for RI's youngest children	Support infant/toddler care in parallel with RI Pre-K expansion, per national best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total RI Pre-K investment amount per year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % set aside (high or low set aside)</li> </ul>

# Cost Model Overview



# Cost Model Summary

The FY24 proposed amount represents the investment needed to maintain all existing RI Pre-K seats, as approximately \$7.0M in time-limited federal funds will expire after the current school year. Without additional investment, approximately 800 existing RI Pre-K seats will not have ongoing funding. For FY24, the recommendation is to ensure continuity of all existing seats.

Growth Model for RI Pre-K, by Fiscal Year and Low and High Estimate Ranges

Fiscal Year	New Classrooms	Total Seats	Expansion + Retention of Seats		Pipeline		Infant/Toddler		Total New Funding		Total Amount	
			Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
FY24	0	2,364	\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000	-	-	-	-	\$7,000,000	\$7,000,000	\$ 21,850,000	\$ 21,850,000
FY25	35	2,997	\$9,089,282	\$11,982,055	\$ 875,000	\$ 4,200,000	\$908,928	\$3,594,616	\$10,873,210	\$19,776,671	\$ 32,723,210	\$ 41,626,671
FY26	35	3,645	\$9,441,307	\$12,950,225	\$ 875,000	\$ 4,200,000	\$944,131	\$3,885,068	\$11,260,437	\$21,035,293	\$ 43,108,647	\$ 58,461,964
FY27	35	4,292	\$9,796,852	\$13,957,123	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 4,800,000	\$979,685	\$4,187,137	\$11,776,537	\$22,944,260	\$ 54,010,184	\$ 77,206,224
FY28	40	5,032	\$11,287,845	\$16,337,737	-	-	\$1,128,784	\$4,901,321	\$12,416,629	\$21,239,059	\$ 65,426,813	\$ 93,645,283

# Questions?

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Find the Full Plan here!

[http://www.kids.ri.gov/cabinet/documents/Report%20and%20Recommendations%20on%20RI%20Pre-K%20Expansion\\_12-30-22.pdf](http://www.kids.ri.gov/cabinet/documents/Report%20and%20Recommendations%20on%20RI%20Pre-K%20Expansion_12-30-22.pdf)

**RHODE  
ISLAND**

# Public Comment

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## **2023 Early Learning Council Meetings:**

- Wednesday, June 28<sup>th</sup> -- 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- Wednesday, September 27<sup>th</sup> -- 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
- Wednesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> -- 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Locations TBD

See [www.earlylearningri.org](http://www.earlylearningri.org) for meeting schedules, handouts, notes, and state reports