

***Rhode Island Early Learning Council and
Early Learning Council Work Group Meeting***

Wednesday, October 5, 2011, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
United Way of Rhode Island, large conference room

Agenda

3:00-3:15 (15 mins)	Welcome /Meeting Overview	Deborah Gist/ Elizabeth Burke Bryant
3:15-3:25 (10 mins)	Public Comment	Public Participants
3:25-4:55 (90 mins)	Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State Goals and Targets• Governance• Overview of Investments	Grant Team/Early Council Members and Work Group Members
4:55-5:00 (5 mins)	Next Steps Next Meeting: December 7, 2011 12:00-2:00 p.m.	Elizabeth Burke Bryant/Deborah Gist

RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL & WORK GROUP JOINT MEETING

October 5, 2011

3:00-5:00 p.m.
United Way of Rhode Island





MEETING AGENDA

3:00-3:05	Welcome /Meeting Overview
3:05-3:15	Public Comment
3:15-4:55	Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none">•State Targets and Goals•Overview of Investments•Governance
4:55-5:00	Next Steps

PUBLIC COMMENT

**RHODE ISLAND'S
RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY
LEARNING CHALLENGE GRANT
APPLICATION**





STATE GOALS AND TARGETS

- ❖ The application must articulate:
 - ❖ The State's goals for improving program quality statewide over the period of this grant.
 - ❖ The State's goals for improving child outcomes statewide over the period of this grant.
 - ❖ The State's goals for closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers at kindergarten entry.



STATE GOALS AND TARGETS (CONT'D)

The state must also provide performance targets for:

- ❖ Increasing the # and % of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems
- ❖ Increasing the # of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating System
- ❖ Increasing the # and % of children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the QRIS.
- ❖ Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving credentials from post-secondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.
- ❖ Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

SELECTED STATE GOALS AND TARGETS: PROGRAM QUALITY

	Current	Target: December 31, 2015
Programs participating in BrightStars.	93	1,079
Programs at top tiers (levels 4 and 5) in BrightStars.	22	323
Children receiving CCAP enrolled in programs at top tiers (levels 4 and 5) in BrightStars.	244	2,382 (30%)

SELECTED STATE GOALS AND TARGETS: WORKFORCE

	Current	Target: December 31, 2015
Number of aligned higher education institutions and PD providers.	unknown	100%
Number of early childhood educators at lowest Career Lattice Level.	unknown	40%
Number of early childhood educators at highest Career Lattice Level.	unknown	15%



STATE GOALS AND TARGETS: PROGRAM QUALITY

The State's specific goals for improving program quality statewide over the period of this grant are as follows:

- ❖ By December 31, 2013, The number and percent of early learning program regulated by the state who will be participating in the BrightStars Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System will increase from 93(10%) to 1079 (100%).
- ❖ By December 31, 2015, the percentage of state-regulated and state-funded early learning programs meeting **high-quality benchmarks** as measured in BrightStars (Tiers 4-5) will grow to at least 30% of licensed centers and 8% of family child care homes.
- ❖ By December 31, 2015, 100% of children enrolled in a **preschool special education classroom or Title I funded preschool classroom** will attend a program at the 4 or 5 star level.
- ❖ By December 31, 2015, 100% of children enrolled in the **state Pre-K program** will attend a program at the 4 or 5 star level.
- ❖ By December 31, 2015, 100% of children enrolled in **center-based Head Start and Early Head Start programs** will attend a program at the 4 or 5 star level.
- ❖ By December 31, 2015, 30% of children with a **Child Care Assistance Program** subsidy who are enrolled in a center will attend a program at the 4 or 5 star level.
- ❖ By December 31, 2015, 8% of children with a **Child Care Assistance Program** subsidy who are enrolled in a family child care home will attend a program at the 4 or 5 star level.



STATE GOALS AND TARGETS: PROGRAM QUALITY

- ❖ By December 31, 2015, the percentage of state-regulated and state-funded early learning programs meeting **medium-quality benchmarks** as measured in BrightStars (Tier 3) will grow to at least 20% of centers and 10% of family child care homes.
- ❖ By December 31, 2015, the percentage of state-regulated and state-funded early learning programs meeting **basic quality benchmarks** (Tier 2) will grow to at least 25% of centers and 30% of family child care homes.



STATE GOALS AND TARGETS: CHILD OUTCOMES & SCHOOL READINESS

The State's specific goals for improving child outcomes and school readiness statewide over the period of this grant are as follows:

- ❖ By December 31, 2015, Rhode Island will have a cross-departmental, shared **Early Learning Data System** that includes all of the Essential Elements and is fully integrated with the State Longitudinal Data System and KIDSNET (the universal health and development database).
- ❖ By December 31, 2015, Rhode Island will have a **statewide formative child assessment system** to track children's development and learning from birth to kindergarten entry.
- ❖ By December 31, 2015, Rhode Island will have identified, piloted and begun to phase-in a **statewide comprehensive kindergarten entry assessment** to measure the status of children's knowledge and skills at school entry. This will provide the infrastructure needed to monitor "school readiness" so Rhode Island can better align resources to close the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.

OVERVIEW OF INVESTMENTS





OVERVIEW OF INVESTMENTS: HIGH-QUALITY, ACCOUNTABLE PROGRAMS

Investment Area	Proposed Investment 4yrs (Draft)
BrightStars Revision/Realignment and Validation	\$790,000
Strengthening program quality measurement and monitoring practices	\$4,484,682
Quality Improvement Supports and Incentives (Quality Improvement Grants and Quality Incentive Payments)	\$15,754,766
Focused Quality Improvement TA	\$4,258,800
Expanding Access to High Quality Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	\$1,000,000
SUBTOTAL	\$26,288,248



OVERVIEW OF INVESTMENTS: PROMOTING EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

Investment Area	Proposed Investment 4yrs (Draft)
Expanding and strengthening the RI Early Learning Standards	\$696,182
Supporting use of the RI Early Learning Standards	\$1,530,391
Establishing and supporting the use of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	\$1,659,400
Expanding developmental screening, including social and emotional screening	\$1,125,688
Investments in community-based efforts that engage primary health care providers in evidenced-based interventions that address children's healthy development and early learning.	\$1,200,000
SUBTOTAL	\$6,211,661



OVERVIEW OF INVESTMENTS: A GREAT EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

Investment Area	Proposed Investment 4yrs (Draft)
Workforce Study	\$100,000
Workforce Knowledge and Competency Development and Alignment	\$1,918,500
PD Expansion to PD Aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies.	\$1,918,500
Expanded Access to Higher Education and Alternative Pathways to College Credit.	\$4,540,000
SUBTOTAL	\$8,477,000



OVERVIEW OF INVESTMENTS: MEASURING OUTCOMES AND PROGRESS

Reform Strategy	Investment
Developing a shared, comprehensive Early Learning Data System (including enhancing KIDSNET to share information with RIDE's Longitudinal Data System) and supporting the use of the system.	\$3,320,304
Establishing and Supporting the Use of a Statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment.	\$574,452
SUBTOTAL	\$3,894,756.23

GOVERNANCE



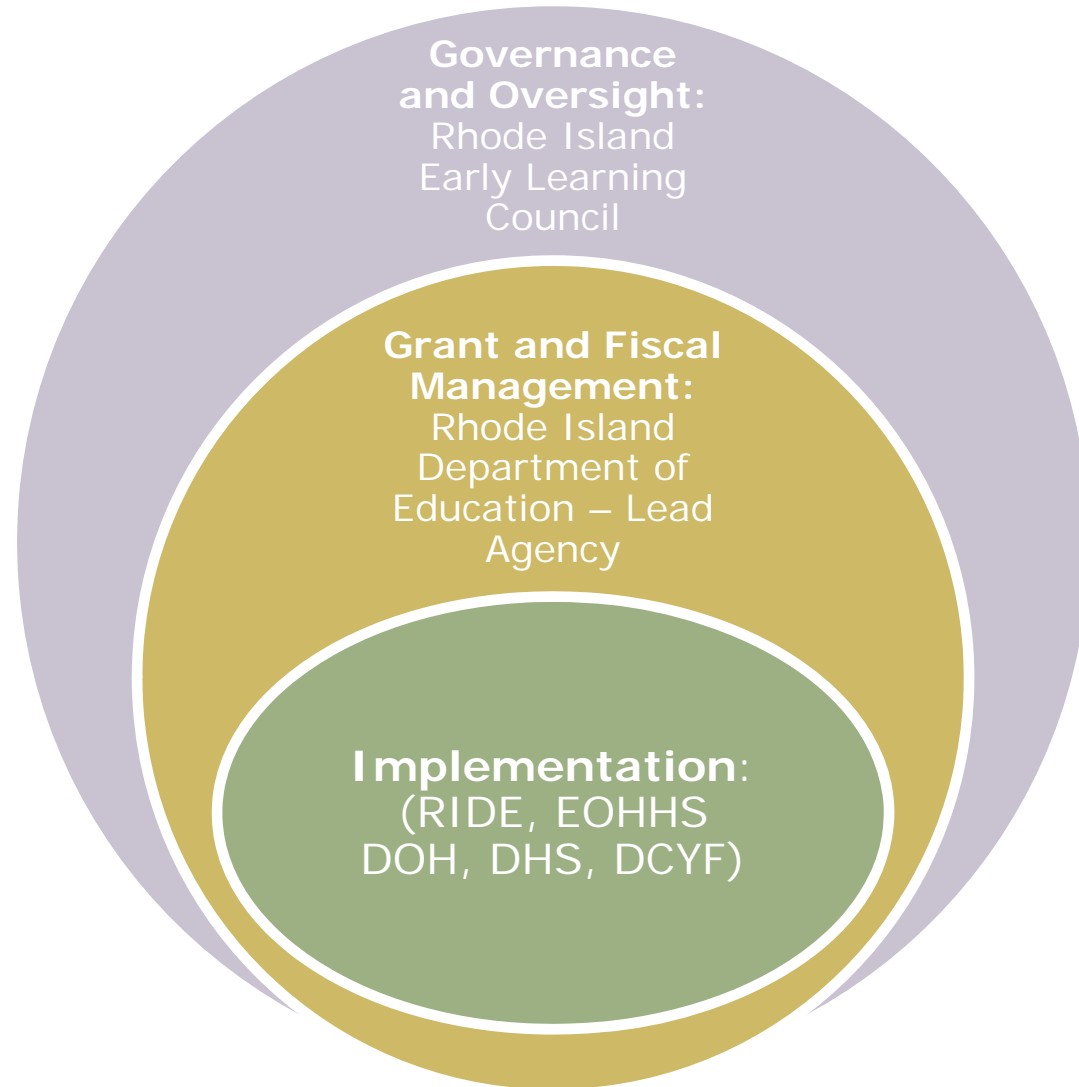


GOVERNANCE ROLES - OVERVIEW

Overall Role	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
RI Early Learning Council	Leadership and Oversight
RI Department of Education	Fiscal and Grant Management
RI Department of Education RI Department of Human Services RI Department of Children Youth and Families RI Department of Health RI Executive Office of Health and Human Services	Implementation of High Quality Plans



Governance Structure





GOVERNANCE ROLES – EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL

Overall Role	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
RI Early Learning Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide leadership and oversight to the grant implementation to ensure the development of cross-sector and cross-departmental systems and programs.• Facilitate overarching policy decisions to help ensure the effective implementation of the grant.• Ensure public updates on the progress of grant implementation.• Solicit broad-based public input and feedback on key aspects of the grant implementation.• Send representatives of the Council to periodically meet with important groups and associations.



GOVERNANCE ROLES – RIDE

Overall Role	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
RI Department of Education	<p>As Lead Agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Administer and serve as fiscal agent for the grant.•Ensure that the work plan of the grant is effectively carried out.•Ensure that the budget is properly managed.•Ensure that the MOUs executed between RIDE and each of the Participating Agencies, including the scope of work for each MOU is carried out according to the timelines set forth in the application.



GOVERNANCE ROLES – PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Overall Role	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
RI Department of Education RI Department of Human Services RI Department of Children Youth and Families RI Department of Health RI Executive Office of Health and Human Services	Manage the implementation of the set of activities articulated in the agency's scope of work as articulated in the Memorandum of Understanding.



DECISION-MAKING

- ❖ Each participating state agency will have the authority to make decisions for the programs and services that fall under the jurisdiction of the agency.
- ❖ The RI Early Learning Council will use a consensus style to make policy decisions to help ensure effective implementation of the grant.
- ❖ If consensus can not be achieved the issue will be referred to the Participating State Agency Directors and the Co-Chairs of the Early Learning Council.
- ❖ Key stakeholders will be engaged through the RI Early Learning Council; ongoing dialogue with early childhood leaders; plus periodic public forums to obtain input from parents and families, including parents of children with high needs.



NEXT STEPS

Application Reading Day:

- ◉ Thursday, October 6, 2011 (located at RIDE)

Feedback Due:

- ◉ Friday, October 7, 2011 by noon – email to klehoulrier@gmail.com.

Letters of Support Due:

- ◉ Wednesday, October 12, 2011 by noon - email to ebb@rikidscount.org

Next ELC Meeting:

- Wednesday, December 7, 2011 12:00-2:00 p.m.

Rhode Island Early Learning Council and Early Learning Council Work Group Meeting

Wednesday, October 5, 2011, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
United Way of Rhode Island, large conference room

Council & Work Group Members In Attendance: Chris Amirault, Leanne Barrett, Blythe Berger, Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Tammy Camillo, Maryann Finamore-Allmark, Ruth Gallucci, Leslie Gell, Pamela High, Lisa Hildebrand, Kristin Lehoullier, Mindy Mertz, Joseph Morra, Michele Palermo, Sandra Powell, and Barbara Schermack

Additional Attendees: Carol Panaude, Michelle Wolstenholme, Indira Prado, Kim Ash, Nina Pande, Lori Cruise and Joyce Ruppell

Welcome/Meeting Overview

The Rhode Island Early Learning Council and Workgroup Joint meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Co-chair Deborah Gist. Deborah reviewed the agenda and shared the recent article in the Providence Journal regarding the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Initiative. Co-chair Elizabeth Burke Bryant joined the meeting at 3:20.

Public Comment

None

Presentation and Discussion: Rhode Island's Application for Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge - State Goals and Targets:

Leanne presented the proposed state goals and targets for the application (see meeting slides for more detail) and asked if anyone had questions or comments.

Several discussion points and questions were raised on the presentation:

- Are the targets for BrightStars enrollment realistic in that timeframe? Should the top tiers for family child care be defined as 3-5 or 4-5?
- If a program becomes a 1 star when it receives its license won't that skew things as currently programs must verify certain quality criteria to get a 1 star (licensing compliance) so 1 star won't be "meaningful" anymore? Will legislative changes be required to make this happen?
- If we think about New Jersey's Abbott preschool program, they had both program incentives for quality improvement and individual teacher incentives for pursuing college degrees. The reason why New Jersey was successful at rapidly improving program quality and achieving staff qualification benchmarks was because people's salaried doubled. There is only so much you can do about quality when you are paying people \$28K.
- We might want to look at tools to collect data about parent's perception of children's school readiness.
- How important is the validity and reliability of assessments to the grant?

- In terms of capturing assessments for children – will we be able to look at a child’s educational experience over the long-term?
- When do we find out if we get the award?

Leanne explained that programs will have two years to come into BrightStars voluntarily and will be required to participate as of December 2013. BrightStars will be a clearing house of information about programs and the application proposes to move people into BrightStars as a 1 star program as a part of being licensed. So at this point it does not seem likely that it will require legislation to put people into a database of licensed programs. Leanne also noted that currently 23% of programs in BrightStars are in the top tiers of quality and we are proposing that we increase that to 30% but that is because BrightStars has been voluntary and it has been skewed to programs that are already high quality. We will be adding a huge number of programs so our denominator will get a lot bigger. Keep in mind that we will be multiplying by 7 the number of programs that will be actively engaged in BrightStars. Our estimate is that 700 of the 1079 programs will be actively engaged by December 2013.

Tammy noted that this will necessitate changes in BrightStars and that the process to align licensing, RIDE and BrightStars that is being proposed would need to address the changes needed to make this work.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant said that we will find out if we were awarded funds on or about Dec 15th of 2011. She noted that the country, is moving in this direction of requiring participation in QRIS and this is really, really pushing states. She also noted that New Jersey was able to dramatically increase salaries because of a court order that changed funding for Abbott school districts and mandated high-quality preschool for all 3 and 4 year olds. The Race To the Top Early Learning Challenge Initiative amounts to \$12.5 million a year for 4 years which is a significant amount of money that will make a big difference for Rhode Island, but does not fundamentally change the way programs are funded.

Deborah stated that while we recognize the lift that it will take to get everyone enrolled and engaged in BrightStars in two years, any timeline beyond 2 years starts to feel to people like it doesn’t matter. We need to put a bold marker out there otherwise we will be less competitive and our state it is less likely to move forward.

Leanne mentioned that we could look at the Rhode Island data about parent’s perception of children’s school readiness as a benchmark, however, most states are using a standardized tool that can be used in the classroom. She also mentioned that we definitely want to be able to look at a child’s learning experiences over a period of time which is why we want to build a longitudinal data system. The goal is to expand the longitudinal data system that RIDE already has to include data on children B-5.

Presentation and Discussion: Rhode Island’s Application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge – Overview of Investments:

Leanne went over the proposed investments for the application for the “High-Quality Accountable Programs” section of the application (see meeting slides for more detail) and asked if anyone had questions or comments.

Several discussion points and questions were raised on the presentation:

- Do we have to address sustainability? Have you delineated the pieces that must continue after the grant? Do we know how much we have to sustain after the grant is over?
- How much are we spending on measuring quality versus investing in quality? How are we going to identify the most important quality investments that we need to make?
- Does this address high needs children and particularly children in Early Intervention? Is there anything to support parents that are keeping their children at home and not in a center or program?

Elizabeth explained that we must explain how we will sustain all the projects in this application. She also noted that we are proposing a tiered quality payment. And that we have a four year opportunity to plan for things that we need to sustain beyond the grant.

Sandra Powell noted that because of the Council we will have multiple ambassadors to advocate for what is important. We will also have data that will show the impact of the investment on child outcomes and that will help us make the case for the sustainability.

Deborah noted that if we look at the numbers for the tiered quality payments than we would need \$10 million dollars over 4 years which is a doable amount to advocate for sustainability. We should say in the proposal that we will need to continue to invest as a state and that we will advocate for this funding. Most states will have to do that because everything requires ongoing advocacy.

Leanne talked about the need to balance measurement and improvement and told an story about a farmer who has a pig that he wants to grow. He can't just measure the pig over and over and expect it to grow, he has to feed it for it to grow. And the same is true for quality. If we look at our proposed investments in the same way, we are spending 21% on measurement and 79% on improvement in the "High Quality Accountable Programs" section of the budget. As programs complete quality improvement plans, we will identify what each programs needs are and we will also learn a lot about needs from the workforce study.

Leanne also said that the planning team got clarification in D.C. that because Early Intervention is a 1 to1 program that takes place in many different settings and frequently in a child's home, that there wasn't a way to effectively incorporate it into the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). However, Early Intervention is very much encompassed in the other systems building pieces such as the new B-3 early learning standards, the statewide data system, core knowledge and competencies, professional development, comprehensive assessment, etc.

Michele noted that there will be professional development for families around the early learning standards.

Leanne went over the proposed investments for the "Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children" section of the application (see meeting slides for more detail) and asked if anyone had questions or comments.

Several discussion points and questions were raised on the presentation:

- There was a concern by two people that the amount being invested in the Comprehensive Assessment System number is too low. Teaching Strategies GOLD is very complicated and takes a lot of resources to implement.
- There was a recommendation that the technical assistance proposed in the grant be customized to the needs of individual programs.

Leanne agreed that there needs to be a lot of basic training around doing assessment. She also noted that, similar to Pennsylvania, we will probably only roll out Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG) in top tiered programs at first. We do not expect that all programs will be using TSG by the end of year 4.

Leanne went over the proposed investments for the “Great Early Childhood Workforce” section of the application (see meeting slides for more detail) and asked if anyone had questions or comments.

Several discussion points and questions were raised on the presentation:

- There was a concern that the proposal was not being realistic about the impact of TEACH. Right now, it is still a ten year path to a bachelor’s degree and a 5 year path to an associate’s degree for people working full-time. We need to get commitments from higher education to eliminate the barriers. We specifically need to think about how the CCRI Specialist program aligns with TEACH. CCRI is reaching a similar demographic as TEACH but there are specific strategies in TEACH that are not included in CCRI and other strands that are not included in TEACH. Also, the entry requirements for TEACH and the CCRI Specialist program are different and we need to figure that out. In one you need to demonstrate a level of competencies before you get in and in the other you don’t.
- There was a proposal that we find ways to engage higher education that aren’t linked to credentialing. Can we envision a time when other types of professional development are validated on the quality framework – other than college credentials?
- There was also a concern that our 15% target for the number of early childhood educators at highest Career Lattice Level is way too high with the current draft career lattice. It was also noted that since there will be multiple pathways for different roles it will be hard to predict how many people can get to the highest tiers.
- It was also noted that we still have an issue of compensation parity. Once people reach the highest levels, their salary will still not be on par with other professionals.
- Adding in public school staff and Head start staff to the tiered quality rating and improvement system will help us meet targets for staff with credentials and degrees. Those program settings have more resources for staff compensation and professional development. However, the hurdle will be child care. They are so far beyond the mark and it will be hard to reach those targets without lifting up the child care workforce.

Leanne went over the proposed investments for the “Measuring Outcomes and Progress” section of the application (see meeting slides for more detail) and asked if anyone had questions or comments. There were no questions or comments.

Presentation and Discussion: Rhode Island’s Application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge – Governance:

Elizabeth went over the proposed governance structure for the application with the governance roles proposed as follows:

- The Early Learning Council would provide leadership and oversight to the grant.
- The RI Department of Education would provide fiscal and grant management
- The partner agencies (RIDE, DHS, DCYF, DOH and EOHHS) will be responsible for implementation of the high quality plans.

See meeting slides for more detail. Elizabeth asked if anyone had questions or comments. There were no questions or comments.

Next Steps

Elizabeth encouraged everyone to send additional feedback via email to Kristin at klehoullier@gmail.com and reminded everyone of the following dates:

- Application Reading Day: Thursday, October 6, 2011
- Feedback Due: Friday, October 7, 2011 by noon – email to klehoullier@gmail.com
- Letters of Support Due: Wednesday, October 12, 2011 by noon – email ebb@rikidscount.org.
- Next Meeting: December 7, 2011 12:00-2:00 p.m.

She also asked everyone to help reach out to their networks to get letters of support.