

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

*Special Meeting to Discuss RI Application for Race to the Top/ Early Learning Challenge*

**August 19, 2011**

**3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**Location: The Rhode Island Foundation – Rhode Island Room**

One Union Station, Providence, RI

## **Agenda**

|           |  |   |
|-----------|--|---|
| 3:00-3:10 | <b>Welcome /Meeting Overview</b>   | Deborah Gist<br>Elizabeth Burke Bryant                  |
| 3:10-3:20 | <b>Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge (RTT/ELC)</b>  | Deborah Gist<br>Elizabeth Burke Bryant<br>Sandra Powell |
| 3:20-4:20 | <b>Discussion: Rhode Island’s Application for RTT/ELC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of Draft Guidance including priorities and criteria</li><li>• Input for Early Learning Council and Work Group</li></ul> | Michele Palermo<br>Leanne Barrett                       |
| 4:20-4:25 | <b>Public Comment</b>  | Public Participants                                     |
| 4:25-4:30 | <b>Wrap-up/Next Steps</b>  | Deborah Gist<br>Elizabeth Burke Bryant                  |

# **RHODE ISLAND EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL AND WORKGROUP JOINT MEETING**

**August 19, 2011**

3:00 -4:30 PM

The Rhode Island Foundation





# MEETING AGENDA

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 3:00-3:10 | Welcome /Meeting Overview  |
| 3:10-3:20 | Opening Remarks: Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTTT-ELC) |
| 3:20-4:20 | Discussion: RI's Application for RTTT-ELC                              |
| 4:20-4:25 | Public Comment   |
| 4:25-4:30 | Wrap-up/Next steps   |

# **RACE TO THE TOP – EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE OVERVIEW**



# OVERVIEW: WHAT WE KNOW FROM THE DRAFT GUIDANCE

- ❖ Rhode Island is eligible to compete for \$50 million of funding
- ❖ There are two Absolute Priorities:
  - ❖ Using early learning standards and kindergarten entry assessments to promote school readiness
  - ❖ Using tiered quality rating and improvement systems to promote school readiness
- ❖ There is one Competitive Priority
  - ❖ Include all early learning programs in the tiered quality rating and improvement system
- ❖ There are two Invitational Priorities
  - ❖ Sustaining program effects in the early elementary grades
  - ❖ Encouraging private sector support



# OVERVIEW: WHAT WE KNOW FROM THE DRAFT GUIDANCE

- ❖ Four (4) key criteria/policy areas in the application
  - ❖ Successful State Systems
  - ❖ Promoting Early Learning and development Outcomes for Children
  - ❖ High-Quality, Accountable Programs
  - ❖ A Great Early Childhood Workforce
- ❖ Timeline
  - ❖ RFP released late-August
  - ❖ Application due mid-to-late October
  - ❖ Funding granted by December 31<sup>st</sup>



# SUPPORTS

- ❖ Rhode Island was selected to receive technical assistance from the Early Learning Challenge Collaborative
  - ❖ Assigned a technical assistance coordinator
  - ❖ Access to targeted webinars not available to all states
- ❖ Application project coordination
- ❖ US DOE TA Planning Workshop – Sept. 13th



# RTTT-ELC APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

## August

- ❖ Form Leadership Team
  - ❖ Develop work plan based on final RFP
- ❖ Articulate a key Theory of Action and Guiding Principles
- ❖ Identify Resources and Take Stock
- ❖ Form Work Groups to draft application sections

## August-September

- ❖ Begin to engage Stakeholders
- ❖ Develop Memorandum of Understanding for all key partners

## Mid-September

- ❖ Circulate draft plans



# RTTT-ELC APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

## September/October

- ❖ Scheduled joint meetings of Early Learning Council and Work Group to review drafts
  - ❖ September 15, 2011 – 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. at United Way of Rhode Island, 50 Valley Street, Providence, Conference Room
  - ❖ September 28, 2011 – 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. at Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 1130
  - ❖ October 5, 2011 – 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. at United Way of Rhode Island, 50 Valley Street, Providence, Conference Room

## Late September-Early October

- ❖ Secure Approvals and Finalize

## Mid-October

- ❖ Submit winning application!

# DISCUSSION



# **PROPOSED KEY THEORY OF ACTION**

**Children in Rhode Island will enter kindergarten ready to succeed as a result of access to high-quality early learning and development programs staffed with effective early childhood educators.**



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES: VALUES AND PRIORITIES

- ❖ Develop plans which address the needs of all children and ensure that our children who are at-risk benefit first
- ❖ Build on the strong, effective foundations which exist before creating new initiatives and opportunities
- ❖ Our success will depend upon shared governance, accountability, and commitment

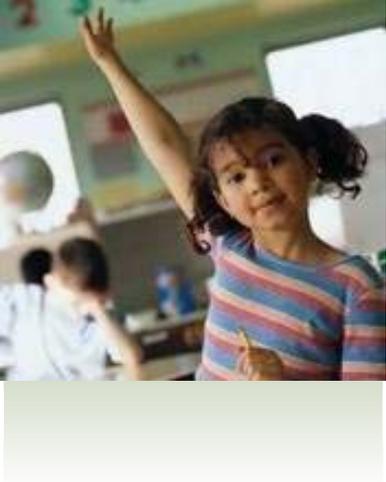


# Taking Stock: RTTT-ELC Template

- ❖ Join a group focused on one of the four (4) key criteria/policy areas outlined in the application
  - ❖ Successful State Systems
  - ❖ Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children
  - ❖ High-Quality, Accountable Programs
  - ❖ A Great Early Childhood Workforce
- ❖ Review and discuss the template
- ❖ Add any information which is missing
- ❖ Identify one big idea for each sub-category {e.g. A(1)}

# **PUBLIC COMMENT**

**TOPICS: RACE TO THE TOP-EARLY LEARNING  
CHALLENGE**



# NEXT STEPS

- ❖ Identify additional level of participation interest
- ❖ Joint Meeting Schedule:
  - ❖ Thursday, September 15, 2011 –3:00 – 4:30 at United Way of Rhode Island, 50 Valley Street, Providence, Conference Room
  - ❖ Wednesday, September 28, 2011 12:00-2:00 p.m. at Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 1130
  - ❖ Wednesday, October 5, 2011 – 3:00 – 4:30 at United Way of Rhode Island, 50 Valley Street, Providence, Conference Room

**Special Rhode Island Early Learning Council and Work Group Combined Meeting**  
**August 19, 2011, 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**  
**The Rhode Island Foundation – Rhode Island Room**  
**One Union Station, Providence, RI**

**Council & Work Group Members In Attendance:** Co-Chair Commissioner Deborah Gist, Co-Chair Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Kevin Aucoin, Leanne Barrett, Karen Beese, Tammy Camillo, Janice DeFrances, Brenda DuHamel, Maryann Finamore-Allmark, Dr. Michael Fine, Ruth Gallucci, Leslie Gell, Kristen Greene, Jerry Hatfield, Cindy Larson, Khadija Lewis Khan, Michele Palermo, Larry Pucciarelli, Katheryn Tavares, Susan Warford and Denise Jenkins.

**Additional Attendees:** Patrick McGuigan (The Providence Plan), Lynda Dickinson (CHILD, Inc. for the Head Start Association), Rosemary Reilly-Chammat (RI DOH), Karen Pucciarelli (RIDE), Maryellen Butke (RI CAN), Corinne Russo (RI DHS), Stephanie Enos (RIDE), Sue Washburn (EDC), and Christine Chiacu-Forsyth (R2LP).

**Welcome/Meeting Overview**

The meeting of the Special Rhode Island Early Learning Council and Workgroup Joint meeting was called to order at 3:08 p.m. by Co-chairs Elizabeth Burke Bryant and Deborah Gist with opening remarks by Elizabeth and Deborah:

Elizabeth welcomed everyone to the special meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves. She also gave a preview of the RFP and stated that the Early Learning Council & Work Group is the go-to-group to provide ongoing input for the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge application.

Deborah also welcomed the group and said this group is committed to Early Care and Education and stated that it's the long standing community that we have that makes us competitive for this application.

Corrine Russo: We have wonderful cooperation within and between the departments and we will be successful with the application.

Janice DeFrances: Children need to have the right direction and support to be successful. Support for children and families during early childhood is essential.

Rosemary Reilly-Chammat: We are eager to continue to build and make sure we have a coordinated, high-quality early learning system. Health is looking forward to this collaborative effort.

**Discussion: Rhode Island's Application for Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge**

Leanne Barrett gave an overview of what we know about the federal competition from the draft guidance released in late June 2011:

- We are eligible to compete for \$50 million
- Two absolute priorities: using early learning standards and kindergarten early assessments and using tiered quality rating and improvement system to promote school readiness.
- One competitive priority to include all early learning programs in the tiered quality rating and improvement system.

- Two invitational priorities to include sustaining program effects in the early elementary grades and encouraging private sector support such as the United Way and the Rhode Island Foundation.
- Four key criteria areas: Successful State Systems (data systems, governance, etc.), promoting early learning and development outcomes (early learning standards, child assessment, health/behavior/development screening and services, family engagement), High-quality, accountable programs (using QRIS system and financial support) and a great early childhood workforce (professional development and higher education to build educator knowledge and competencies).
- Overview of timeline

Michele Palermo:

- We were selected to receive technical assistance from the Early Learning Challenge Collaborative at Level 2 which gives us access to our own personal consultant and webinar access.
- We have support for application project coordination, work plan and timeline
- We will be attending the US Department of Education TA planning workshop in DC on September 13<sup>th</sup>.
- We need to form a grant leadership team to develop a work plan based on RFP.
- Today we will work on our theory of action and guiding principles and start to identify resources and take stock.
- We need to form work groups to draft application sections. Application requires sign off of governor and the attorney general.
- In addition to the regular ELC meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm at CCRI, we added September 15<sup>th</sup> and October 5<sup>th</sup> both at 3:00 pm at the United Way of Rhode Island to review drafts prior to application submission.

Deborah Gist:

- We will need letters of support, take care of logistics and writing the plan. The challenge is how to get it done within the timeframe. We need to make sure the Early Learning Council rapid response and turn around time needs to be really quick.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant:

- Requested everyone to add all the joint meeting dates onto their calendars.
- Elizabeth read a piece from the application – “The RTT-ELC competition is a powerful tool that will help highly committed States provide more children from birth to age five from low-income families with access to high-quality Early Learning and Development programs. As with the first two rounds of Race to the Top, the bar to receive an RTT-ELC grant will be set high. We will be looking to fund applications that demonstrate courage, commitment, capacity and creativity.”

## POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Jerry Hatfield: Higher Education needs to be more current and effective at building core knowledge and competencies for people working in the early care and education field.

Kristen Greene: We need to realize how much attention we need to give the providers. This is an opportunity to provide intensive, individualized support to providers.

Janice DeFrances: It's an opportunity for all children. We should use this opportunity to educate the public on the importance of early childhood education.

Leslie Gell: Possibility of collaboration among early childhood professional development providers and higher education. We need to build multiple pathways for professionals to gain and demonstrate skills and knowledge.

Sue Warford: Opportunity to address compensation issues for teachers. This is a major, underlying issue affecting quality.

Khadija Lewis Khan: More opportunity for early childhood education for families due to the economy. More opportunities for ECE not linked to parents working

Lynda Dickinson: Be sure standards do not force us from moving away from what's important for the child. Standards need to be realistic for the families.

Corinne Russo: A system needs to be realistic. How do we help the family? We need a system so that we can help families.

Leanne Barrett: We need courage. This is an opportunity for RI to make some bold move and major progress in key areas.

Kristen Greene: Need support to figuring out transitions within and between schools and programs / continuum for birth to kindergarten to grade 2.

Karen Beese: If we work together we are going to accomplish so much more.

Maryann Finamore-Allmark: Opportunity to help moderate income families too. Many moderate income families cannot afford high-quality early learning programs. These families need support as well as low-income families Access to Pre-K should be universal regardless of income.

Deborah Gist: We will be looking at building systems and professional development.

Elizabeth distributed the Initial Data Sheet prepared by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT.

\*\*\*\*\*Group divides into 4 groups to review the draft Early Learning Challenge: Template for State Planning

**Group A: Successful State Systems:**

(Deborah Gist, Rosemary Reilly-Chammat, Corinne Russo, Larry Pucciarelli, Kat Taveras, Patrick McGuigan, Brenda DuHamel, Kevin Aucoin and Leanne Barrett)

- KIDSNET as key early childhood data system
  - Tool to identify children at risk
  - Tool to improve child outcomes
  - Health care providers
  - Early learning providers
- Universal Development Screening
  - Pediatricians and family physicians are key for screening
  - Access to effective programs when children have needs

- Use Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) scale to identify children for high-quality early childhood services.
- Develop systems that are sustainable after RTTT-ELC
- Build on Reach Out and Read / relationships with pediatricians and family physicians
- Identify and Address Gaps
  - Continuum 0-8 / transitions
  - Access
  - Breaking down silos
  - Rigorous standards but flexible to make sure standards are in the best interest of child
  - Summit/cross-departmental
- BIG IDEAS
  - Early Learning Council role in governance, accountability
  - Invest in Parent and Families
    - Home visiting as a way to reach families early
    - Grandparents/extended family
    - Families -- not just children – parent/child relationship
  - Data System
    - Need to track children most at risk and ensure they are in a high-quality program
    - Family risk factors
  - Coordinating Services for young families and young children

**Group B: Early Learning and Development Outcomes**

(Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Michele Palermo and Kristen Greene)

- Develop learning standards
  - Aligned B-12
  - Vertically (up & down) and Horizontally (across programs)
- Universal developmental
- Kindergarten Assessment
- Screening linked to a continuum of supports
  - Statewide early childhood system
- Engaging and supporting families
  - FFA activities parent training

**Group C: High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

(Stephanie Enos, Christine Chiacu-Forsyth, Janice DeFrances, Cindy Larson, Tammy Camillo and Ruth Galucci)

- Current Status:
  - United Way and CVS are supporting BrightStars
  - QRIS collaborates with others / quality projects
- Next Steps:
  - Facilities
  - Infant/Toddlers – (service, cost, quality)
  - NAEYC
- All programs/age levels included in the tiered approval system (family too)
- Big Idea: More than Preschool
- One Umbrella that connects all programs

- Infant/Toddler – facilities, institutional/approval, codes/spaces
- All programs in BrightStars to be in state system
- Higher Education
- Furthering collaboration among quality initiatives
- Financial incentives to participate and advance in quality systems
- Better system and support for family providers, kith and kin care
- Big Idea
  - Bonds/Facilities Improvement
  - Jobs Bill connection
  - Financial Incentives – tie to staff compensation
  - InfantToddler quality

**Group D: A Great Early Childhood Workforce**

(Karen Pucciarelli, Jerry Hatfield, Sue Warford, Denise Jenkins, Karen Beese, Leslie Gell, and Khadija Lewis Khan)

- Knowledge & Competencies
  - Current :
    - School age CKC complete
    - competencies exist for I/T consultants
  - Next Steps:
    - Ensure alignment with current research
    - Increase alignment between 0-5 and 6-8
    - Revamp teacher certification process
    - Expand number of positions; expand definition of workforce
    - Define how teachers demonstrate competence
- Professional Development
  - Strategies for working with English Language Learners (ELL)
  - Incentive money to build Infant-Toddler workforce
- Higher-Education Alignment
  - Redefine what we mean by “Early Childhood Educator”
  - Better alignment and articulation between three state colleges
  - Reexamination of course work in three state colleges
  - Include private institutions

**Big Ideas:**

- Create comprehensive, supportive system of educator evaluation
- System for earning credits through experience, reflective practice and other creative approaches
- Compensation
- Comprehensive system of induction, mentoring and supervision
- Highly qualified administrators and supervisors
- Indicators for highly-effective educated teachers
- Cadre of well-educated teachers that choose community-based programs

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment

The combined meeting of the Special Rhode Island Early Learning Council and Workgroup was adjourned at 4:30 p.m. by Co-Chairs Deborah Gist and Elizabeth Burke Bryant.