

***Rhode Island Early Learning Council Meeting and
Early Learning Council Workgroup Meeting***

Thursday, March 22, 2012 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 4090
400 East Avenue, Warwick, RI

Agenda

1:00-1:05	Welcome /Meeting Overview	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Deborah Gist
1:05-1:35	Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Implementation	Elizabeth Burke Bryant Deborah Gist
1:35-2:35	Discussion/Feedback: RTT-ELC Scopes of Work	Michele Palermo Leanne Barrett Karen Beese Brenda Almeida Brenda Duhamel Blythe Berger
2:35-2:45	Early Learning Council Strategic Plan	Kristin Lehoullier
2:45-2:55	Public Comment	Public Participants
2:55-3:00	Next Steps ELCWG Meeting: May 17, 2012 9:30-11:30 a.m. ELC Meeting: June 13, 2012 12:00-2:00 p.m.	Elizabeth Burke Bryant

Carrying out the Work of the Early Learning Challenge Grant

RTT ELC Scope of Work Project	Core Project Management Teams	Corresponding Council Sub-Committees	Early Learning Council
<p><i>The grant work will be laid out by project in the Scope of Work (SOW) document approved by the Feds. This will include budget, staff, activities, milestones & deliverables. The SOW's are based on the projects that were included in the grant application</i></p> <p>Core Projects</p>	<p><i>Core Project Management Teams will carry out the work in the SOW. Each will be led by the state-agency staff designated in the SOW, and will include a representative from the corresponding Early Learning Council Sub-Committee. Each Core Project Management Team will also include local and national experts for policy guidance as needed and state staff to carry out activities in the SOW. They will seek input and feedback from, and regularly report out, to the corresponding Council Sub-Committee(s).</i></p> <p>Core Project Team Staff Lead</p>	<p><i>Early Learning Council Sub-Committees will take the lead on providing stakeholder and public input to the Core Project Management Teams as they embark upon their work, and in providing feedback and guidance throughout.</i></p> <p>Corresponding Council Sub-Committee Co-Chairs*</p>	<p><i>Per the grant application, the RI Early Learning Council shall provide leadership and oversight to the grant implementation to ensure the development of cross-sector and cross-departmental systems and programs. The Council is also charged with facilitating overarching policy decisions to help ensure the effective implementation of the grant. Council Sub-Committee Co-Chairs will report out at the quarterly Council meetings. Final products/policies will be reviewed by the Early Learning Council.</i></p>
Using Early Learning & Development Standards	RIDE New Hire – ELC Standards	Early Learning Standards <i>RIDE Hire and Susan Dickstein*</i>	<p><i>Throughout the grant, at the direction of the Co-Chairs, the Early Learning Council will ensure public updates on the progress of the grant and send representatives of the Council to periodically meet with important groups and associations.</i></p> <p>The Early Learning Council Work Group will provide input on projects and policies related to the grant and ensure integration across project areas</p>
Developing and Supporting Effective Early Childhood Assessment	RIDE New Hire – ELC Assessment Blythe Berger	Kindergarten Assessment <i>RIDE Hire and Mindy Mertz*</i>	
Aligning and Measuring Tiered Program Quality Standards for Early Learning Programs	Michele Palermo Karen Beese Brenda Almeida	Program Standards Alignment <i>Michele Palermo and Elizabeth Burke Bryant*</i>	
Improving the Quality of Early Learning Programs	DHS Administrator or Karen Beese	Incentives and Support for Quality Improvement <i>Karen Beese and Leanne Barrett*</i>	
Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Early Learning Workforce	DHS Administrator or Karen Beese	Professional Development Higher Education <i>Karen Beese and Khadija Lewis Khan*</i>	
Building an Early Learning Data System	Ed Giroux	Early Learning Data System <i>Ed Giroux and Tammy Camillo*</i>	
Managing the Early Learning Challenge Grant	RTT ELC Grant Officer RTT ELC Associate Director	N/A	

**Will be the Council Sub-Committee's representative on the Core Project Management Team*

**RHODE ISLAND
EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL
AND EARLY LEARNING
COUNCIL WORK GROUP
MEETING**

March 22, 2012

1:00-3:00 p.m.
CCRI





MEETING AGENDA

Welcome/Meeting Overview

Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Implementation

Discussion/Feedback: RTT-ELC Scopes of Work

Early Learning Council Strategic Plan

Public Comment

Next Steps

**RACE TO THE TOP EARLY
LEARNING CHALLENGE
IMPLEMENTATION**



RTT-ELC Projects

- ❖ The RTT-ELC grant work is organized by projects. Each project has a Scope of Work (SOW) document that will be approved by the Feds and includes a budget, staff, activities, milestones and deliverables.

- ❖ The SOWs are based on the projects that were included in the application.

- ❖ Projects include:
 - Early Learning Workforce Development
 - Program Quality Improvement
 - Program Quality Standards, Alignment, and Measurement
 - Early Learning and Development Standards
 - Child Assessment
 - Early Learning Data System
 - Grant Management



General RTT-ELC Roles and Responsibilities

Group	Role
Core Project Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Carry out the work in the SOW. •Seek input and feedback and regularly report out to the corresponding Council Work Team(s). •Will include representative from Council Work Team. •Will include local and national experts and state staff.
Corresponding Council Sub-Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lead efforts to seek stakeholder and public input. •Provide feedback and guidance to Core Project Group.
Early Learning Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Provide leadership and oversight to the grant implementation. •Facilitating overarching policy decisions. •Review final products. •Ensure public updates on the progress. •Send Council representatives to meet with key stakeholders.
Early Council Work Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Provide input for projects and policies related to the grant and ensure integration across project areas.



RTT-ELC Roles and Responsibilities: Alignment and Leadership

Projects	Core Project Management Team - Staff Lead	Corresponding Council Sub-Committee - Co-Chairs*
Early Learning Workforce Development	DHS Administrator or Karen Beese	Professional Development Higher Education <i>Karen Beese and Khadija Lewis Khan*</i>
Program Quality Improvement	DHS Administrator or Karen Beese	Incentives and Support for Quality Improvement <i>Karen Beese and Leanne Barrett*</i>
Program Quality Standards, Alignment and Measurement	Michele Palermo Karen Beese Brenda Almeida	Program Standards Alignment <i>Michele Palermo and Elizabeth Burke Bryant*</i>
Early Learning and Development Standards	RIDE New Hire – ELC Standards	Early Learning Standards <i>RIDE Hire and Susan Dickstein*</i>
Child Assessment	RIDE New Hire – ELC Assessment Blythe Berger	Kindergarten Assessment <i>RIDE Hire and Mindy Mertz*</i>
Early Learning Data System	Ed Giroux	Early Learning Data System <i>Ed Giroux and Tammy Camillo*</i>
Grant Management	RTT ELC Grant Officer RTT ELC Associate Director	N/A

*Will be the Council Work Team's representative on the Core Project Group



RTT-ELC: Outreach and Communication

- ❖ The Early Learning Council will host community forums two times per year.
- ❖ Information about RTT-ELC will be housed at www.earlylearningri.org with an e-news sign-up.
- ❖ Several communication tools are being developed including:
 - ❖ A RTT-ELC information sheet for legislators.
 - ❖ A Frequently Asked Questions document for the public.

**DISCUSSION/FEEDBACK:
RTT-ELC SCOPES OF
WORK**



EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: KEY GOALS AND COMMITMENTS

- ❖ Complete the development of workforce knowledge and competency (WKC) frameworks for remaining sectors of the early learning workforce.
- ❖ Collect and publicly report aggregated data on early childhood educator development, advancement, and retention.
- ❖ Increase the availability and accessibility of high quality professional development opportunities that are aligned with RI's new WKC.
- ❖ Support professional improvement and career advancement along the articulated career pathway in the WKC framework through increasing access to higher education.

Early Learning Workforce Development: Scope of Work

Task	Agency Responsible	2012				2013	2014	2015
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Ensure effective implementation of project activities								
Develop detailed project work plan	DHS							
Complete the development of WKC Frameworks for remaining sectors of the early learning workforce.								
Develop WKC frameworks for Family Child Care	DHS							
Create an addendum to the teacher WKC framework for special educators and early intervention professionals.	RIDE							
Develop WKC framework for PD providers and HE staff	RIDE							
Develop WKC framework for program administrators and education coordinators	RIDE							
Collect and publicly report aggregated data on early childhood educator development, advancement and retention								
Conduct professional workforce study and publicly report findings	DHS							
Using early learning data system, produce and disseminate annual reports on the early learning workforce	RIDE							
Increase the availability of and accessibility of high quality PD aligned with WKC frameworks								
Identify RI PD system baseline	DHS							
Engage national experts to assist in the design of PD center systems	DHS							
Establish the PD center to facilitate statewide access to high-quality PD	DHS							
Support professional improvement and career advancement along the articulated career pathway in the WKC framework through increasing access to HE.								
Expand RI TEACH scholarship program	RIDE							
Review existing teacher-preparation program curricula against WKC Frameworks	RIDE/DHS							
Review existing program at CCRI and establish a Level 1 career pathway	DHS							



PROGRAM QUALITY IMPROVEMENT: KEY GOALS AND COMMITMENTS

- ❖ Develop and implement tiered quality incentive payments through the Child Care Assistance Program with higher rates paid to higher quality programs.
- ❖ Provide focused technical assistance to align quality improvement resources to address the program improvement goals of early learning programs.
- ❖ Strengthen and expand the resources available to programs to support continuous quality improvement.

Program Quality Improvement: Scope of Work

Task	Agency Responsible	2012				2013	2014	2015
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Ensure effective implementation of project activities.								
Develop detailed project workplan.	DHS							
Develop and implement tiered quality incentive payments through CCAP with higher rates paid to higher quality programs.								
Year 1: Implement payment mechanism to incentivize TQRIS participation.	DHS							
Year 2-4: Design and implement tiered quality incentive payment system based on new TQRIS standards.	DHS							
Provide focused technical assistance to align quality improvement resources to address the program improvement goals of early learning programs.								
Year 1: Expand current technical assistance initiatives aligned with TQRIS improvement.	DHS							
Year 2-4: Identify state-wide technical assistance vendor.	DHS							
Strengthen and expand the resources available to programs to support continuous quality improvement.								
Year 1: Provide initial program improvement grants via existing aligned TA initiatives and in conjunction with TQRIS participation incentives.	DHS							
Year 2-4: Develop and release RFP for program improvement grant vendor.	DHS							



PROGRAM QUALITY STANDARDS ALIGNMENT AND MEASUREMENT : KEY GOALS AND COMMITMENTS

- ❖ Use BrightStars as the State's unified Quality Rating and Improvement System with linkages to DCYF licensing and RIDE Preschool Approval.
- ❖ Build staff capacity of state systems to measure and monitor the quality of all early learning and development programs.
- ❖ Validate the effectiveness of the BrightStars system by working with an independent evaluator.

Program Quality Standards Alignment and Measurement: Scope of Work

Task	Agency Responsible	2012				2013	2014	2015
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Ensure effective implementation of project activities.								
Develop detailed project work plan.	RIDE, DCYF, DHS							
Use BrightStars as the State's unified Quality Rating and Improvement System with linkages to DCYF licensing and RIDE Pre-school approval.								
Engage national experts to assist in revision/alignment.	RIDE, DCYF, DHS							
Gather input from providers, families and stakeholders re: program quality standards and alignment.	RIDE, DCYF, DHS							
Revise and align existing program standards (child care center licensing, BrightStars, RIDE preschool approval, family child care licensing).	RIDE, DCYF, DHS							
Gather feedback from stakeholders on draft regulations/standards.	RIDE, DCYF, DHS							
Finalize aligned program standards.	RIDE, DCYF, DHS							
Develop common measurement and monitoring policies, procedures and forms.	RIDE, DCYF, DHS							
Assess and monitor the program quality of all early learning and development programs.								
Provide ongoing communication to early learning programs regarding TQRIS	RIDE, DCYF, DHS							
Expand the capacity to assess and monitor program quality of all early learning and development programs.	RIDE, DCYF, DHS							
Enroll all licensed programs and CCAP programs in BrightStars.	DCYF, DHS							
Provide licensing inspections to family child care homes once per year	DCYF							
Enroll all early childhood programs in public schools BrightStars.	RIDE							
Validate the effectiveness of BrightStars.								
Design and conduct validation study.								



EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS: KEY GOALS AND COMMITMENTS

- ❖ Develop a set of high-quality B-5 early learning standards.
- ❖ Accelerate the widespread use of the new Early Learning and Development Standards.

Early Learning and Development Standards: Scope of Work

Task	Agency Responsible	2012				2013	2014	2015
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Ensure effective implementation of project activities.								
Develop a detailed project workplan.	RIDE		■					
Develop a set of high quality B-5 learning and development standards.								
Seek broad-based community input on the standards revision and expansion.	RIDE		■					
Engage national experts to assist in the development and review of draft standards.	RIDE		■	■				
Draft B-5 Early Learning Standards	RIDE		■	■	■			
Seek broad-based community feedback on the draft standards through a series of public forums.	RIDE			■	■			
Develop final B-5 Early Learning Standards	RIDE			■	■			
Design, publish and distribute the final standards.	RIDE			■	■	■		
Ensure use of early learning and development standards.								
Convene Curricula Review Committee to review identified commercial curriculum resources	RIDE					■		
Develop new early learning standards PD and TA opportunities for infant/toddler workforce.	RIDE					■		
Revise existing early learning standards PD opportunities for preschool workforce.	RIDE					■		

Early Learning and Development Standards: Scope of Work (cont'd)

Task	Agency Responsible	2012				2013	2014	2015
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Ensure use of early learning and development standards (cont'd)								
Train cohorts of trainers to support trainings for infant toddler and preschool standards training.	RIDE							
Implement early learning standards PD opportunities for infant/toddler workforce.	RIDE							
Implement early learning standards PD opportunities for preschool workforce.	RIDE							
Develop new Fun Family Activity (FFA) Cards and training opportunities based on new standards.	RIDE							
Conduct FFA Train the Trainer sessions for a variety of groups.	RIDE							
Implement new FFA Parent Training sessions statewide and make final revisions to training content based on pilot feedback.	RIDE							



CHILD ASSESSMENT: KEY GOALS AND COMMITMENTS

- ❖ Provide professional development opportunities to support reliable child assessment and to support the use of assessment data to inform practice.
- ❖ Expand the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD in early learning programs.
- ❖ Increase developmental screening rates to identify children with high needs.
- ❖ Develop or identify valid, reliable, and appropriate K-entry assessment and a plan to pilot the K-entry assessment by the school year 2014-15.

Child Assessment: Scope of Work

Task	Agency Responsible	2012				2013	2014	2015
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Ensure effective implementation of project activities.								
Develop detailed project workplan	RIDE							
Provide PD supports for child assessment								
Develop/identify and implement child assessment PD opportunities for teachers and administrators.	RIDE							
Develop and implement PD opportunities that address formative infant/toddler practices in EI programs.	EOHHS, RIDE							
Develop contract to assist in the development and provision of assessment trainings.	RIDE							
Expand the use of Teaching Strategies GOLD (TSG)								
Incentivize the use of TSG for Head Start, Title I funded preschools and private early learning programs by incorporating them under the state license and affording them the state rate	RIDE							
Develop and implement a plan for using TSG in Early Intervention Programs.	EOHHS, RIDE							
Develop and implement a coordinated set of PD opportunities that address using TSG and achieving reliability status.	RIDE							
Identify and invest in technological supports to facilitate seamless, effective child-assessment data entry.	RIDE							

Child Assessment: Scope of Work (Cont'd)

Task	Agency Responsible	2012				2013	2014	2015
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Increase developmental screening rates.								
Create and implement a public awareness campaign regarding the importance of regular developmental screening for children between B and 5.	RIDE, DOH							
Train ELL screening teams to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate Child Outreach screening to young English Learners.	RIDE							
Disseminate information to PCP's and recruit screening system development participants.	DOH							
Increase children's language and literacy skills and family engagement in health settings								
Develop RFP to distribute funding for evidence-based programs to increase children's language and literacy skills and family engagement in health settings.	RIDE, DOH							
Implement a state-wide K-entry assessment (KEA)								
Engage national experts to assist in the development of KEA.	RIDE							
Gather stakeholder information using forums, surveys, and focus groups	RIDE							
Identify K-entry assessment	RIDE							
Develop policies and procedures for administration of the assessment and use of assessment data.	RIDE							
Develop supports for kindergarten teachers and administrators.	RIDE							
Train pilot districts using developed supports	RIDE							
Pilot Kindergarten Entry Assessment	RIDE							



EARLY LEARNING DATA SYSTEM: KEY GOALS AND COMMITMENTS

- ❖ Ensure shared planning, access, and use of an Early Learning Data System across State Departments, by early learning intermediary organizations, and by early learning programs.
- ❖ Expand the RI Department of Education's State Longitudinal Data System (the RIDE Data Warehouse) and build a strong link to the RI Department of Health's KIDSNET database to track information on 1) young children's participation and attendance in early learning programs, 2) young children's learning and development, 3) early learning programs and classrooms, and 4) the early learning workforce.
- ❖ Expand the RI Department of Health's KIDSNET database to link to RIDE's SLDS and to track information on children's developmental screenings and follow-up action.
- ❖ Develop an interface between the RI Department of Education's State Longitudinal Data System and DCYF's Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST) to share early learning facility, inspection and licensing information, and workforce information.
- ❖ Expand the capability of the Department of Human Services' Data Systems by 1) Expanding the capability of the DHS Data Warehouse to match relevant DHS data to RIDE's SLDS in order to provide information on children's participation in the child care subsidy program, and 2) Expanding the capability of DHS' Eligibility System to include information on program quality, based on TQRIS rating, for every licensed child care program.



EARLY LEARNING DATA SYSTEM: GENERAL TASKS

- ❖ Meet with key stakeholders to gather system requirements
- ❖ Develop data security and privacy policies to be used across state agencies and by intermediaries and programs
- ❖ Create system design from business requirements
- ❖ Build database structure and application interface
- ❖ Test application
- ❖ Train end user
- ❖ Deploy application
- ❖ Finalize end user documentation

Early Learning Data System Development: Timeline

Task	Agency Responsible	2012				2013	2014	2015
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Expand RIDE's SLDS and build a strong link to KIDSNET								
Deploy Program Domain for early learning in SLDS	RIDE							
Deploy Teacher Domain for early learning in SLDS	RIDE							
Deploy Student Domain for early learning in SLDS	RIDE							
Expand KIDSNET to link to RIDE's SLDS and to track developmental screening data.								
Deploy new functionality in KIDSNET to track developmental screening data	DOH							
Deploy KIDSNET interface with RIDE	DOH, RIDE							
Develop interface between RIDE's State Longitudinal Data System and DCYF's RICHIST								
Deploy new functionality in RICHIST	DCYF							
Deploy RICHIST interface with RIDE	DCYF, RIDE							



GRANT MANAGEMENT: KEY GOALS AND COMMITMENTS

- ❖ Oversee the management of technical tasks for the SOW.
- ❖ Develop effective communication and engagement strategies.
- ❖ Develop performance management systems and conduct progress monitoring of the SOW.
- ❖ Oversee the budgeting and fiscal accounting for the grant funds.

Grant Management: Scope of Work

Task	Agency Responsible	2012				2013	2014	2015
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
Manage Implementation of technical tasks								
Manage implementation of grant through inter-departmental coordination team (IC).	Dept. Directors/ICT/SOW/RIDE Lead Staff							
Work with federal grant officers on federal requirements and TA opportunities.	ICT/RIDE Lead Staff							
Effective Communication and Outreach								
Develop effective communication and outreach strategies.	ICT/Early Learning Council Staff Lead							
Evaluate effectiveness of communications and engagement.	ICT/Early Learning Council Staff Lead							
Progress Monitoring and Performance								
Establish and implement progress monitoring and review process.	Project team lead and select Early Learning Council Work Team member.							
Establish and implement performance review process.	RIDE Lead Staff							
Budget and Finance								
Establish and apply fiscal controls and accounting procedures for program funds.	ICT/RIDE Lead Staff							
Prepare and complete federal reporting requirements relating to Early Learning Council.	ICT/RIDE Lead Staff							

EARLY LEARNING COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN



Rationale/Vision for Strategic Plan

- ❖ As a recipient of State Advisory Council funding from the Administration for Children and Families, the Council is required to create a strategic plan by June 2012.
- ❖ The plan will articulate the Council's vision for what it plans to accomplish over the next five years:
- ❖ The plan will be a tool for communicating the Council's vision and plan to our stakeholders.



Scope of the Plan

- The strategic plan will integrate all of the Council's work to date into a single, comprehensive plan:
 - ❖ State Early Learning Council ARRA application
 - ❖ Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Application
 - ❖ Early Learning Council Access Recommendations
 - ❖ Early Learning Council Kindergarten Assessment Recommendations
 - ❖ Early Learning Council Data Team Recommendations
- ❖ It should be overarching enough to provide a collaborative roadmap for early learning in Rhode Island and that the Council's plan and the plans and priorities of our state agency partners align and work well together.



2012 TIMELINE

	F	M	A	M	J
Council strategies to-date cross-walked with plans and priorities of state agencies.	X				
ELCWG reviews crosswalk for alignment with other state agency plans and priorities.	X			X	
Plan drafted.		X	X		
Designer hired to visually lay out the plan/products for publishing.			X		
Final revisions made to draft plan.				X	
Draft plan reviewed by Council.					X
Plan revised and finalized.					X
Plan developed for creating awareness and buy-in among key stakeholders and the general public.				X	X

PUBLIC COMMENT



NEXT STEPS

- ❖ **Next ELCWG Meeting:** May 17, 2012 9:30-11:30 a.m. (CCRI)
- ❖ **Next ELC Meeting:** June 13, 2012 1:00-3:00 p.m. (Save the Bay)

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

Thursday, March 22, 2012 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Community College of Rhode Island – Knight Campus, Room 4090
400 East Avenue, Warwick, RI

Council Members In Attendance: Elizabeth Burke Bryant (Co-Chair), Deborah Gist (Co-Chair), Brenda Almeida (attending for Janice DeFrances), Leanne Barrett, Blythe Berger (attending for Michael Fine), Jim Berson, Tammy Camillo, Deborah Buffi (attending for Sandra Powell), Colleen Dorian, Regina Costa, Susan Dickstein, Maryann Finamore-Allmark, Leslie Gell, Kristen Greene, Cindy Larson, Khadija Lewis Khan, Aimee Mitchell, Charlotte Moretti, Michelle Palermo, Larry Pucciarelli, Susan Warford

Council Work Group Members in Attendance: Brenda Almeida, Chris Amirault, Leanne Barrett, Karen Beese, Blythe Berger, Tammy Camillo, Susan Dickstein, Colleen Dorian, Brenda Duhamel, Rhonda Farrell, Maryann Finamore-Allmark, Ruth Gallucci, Leslie Gell, Kristen Greene, Jerry Hatfield, Cindy Larson, Khadija Lewis Khan, Mindy Mertz, Joseph Morra, Susan Orban, Michelle Palermo, Larry Pucciarelli, Joyce Ruppell (attending for Terry Curtin), Leslie Sevey, Melinda Smith, Susan Warford

Other Participants: Clark Green, Indira Prado, Carla Swanson, Mary Anne Deslauriers, Sue Washburn, Sheila Skiffington, Maura Pearce, Allison Seperack, Kate Pearson, Lisa Hildebrand, Jaime Dice, Kimberly Ash, Kate Begin, Patrick McGuigan, Lynn Luddy, Marin Tauras, Bethany Carpenter, Adam Bush, Kerri Pacheco, Christine Chiacu-Forsythe

Facilitator: Kristin Lehoullier

Welcome/Meeting Overview

The Rhode Island Early Learning Council and Early Learning Council Work Group Meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Co-chairs Deborah Gist and Elizabeth Burke Bryant. Deborah and Elizabeth reviewed the agenda and officially welcomed the following new Council members:

- Jim Berson, Chair of the ICC for Early Intervention
- Regina Costa, State Child Advocate
- Susan Dickstein, President of the RI Association for Infant Mental Health
- Deborah Grossman-Garber, Associate Commissioner, RI Office of Higher Education
- Charlotte Moretti, Chair of the RI Child Care Directors' Association
- Abby Swinton, Policy & Legislative Analyst, Office of Governor Chafee

Elizabeth celebrated the achievements of Nuris Ynoa, the owner and director of Nuris' Home Day Care in Providence, for becoming the first family child care provider in the state to achieve a 5-Star BrightStars Quality Rating.

Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Implementation

Deborah outlined the way the work of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant will be organized. There are seven projects and each project has a Scope of Work (SOW) document that will be approved by the federal government and includes a budget, staff, activities, milestones and

deliverables. The SOWs are based on the projects that were included in the application. The projects include:

- Early Learning Workforce Development
- Program Quality Improvement
- Program Quality Standards, Alignment, and Measurement
- Early Learning and Development Standards
- Child Assessment
- Early Learning Data System
- Grant Management

Deborah also went over the roles and responsibilities for the RTT-ELC grant implementation as follows:

Group	Role
Core Project Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out the work in the SOW. • Seek input and feedback and regularly report out to the corresponding Council Subcommittee(s). • Will include representative from Council Subcommittee. • Will include local and national experts and state staff.
Corresponding Council Sub-Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead efforts to seek stakeholder and public input. • Provide feedback and guidance to Core Project Team
Early Learning Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and oversight to the grant implementation. • Facilitating overarching policy decisions. • Review final products. • Ensure public updates on the progress • Send Council representatives to meet with key stakeholders.
Early Council Work Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide input for projects and policies related to the grant and ensure integration across project areas

Elizabeth shared a handout that outlined how the RTT-ELC work will be carried out. She noted that the implementation work for RTT-ELC is highly aligned with the current Early Learning Council structure. This was intentional - the RTT-ELC application was designed at a federal level to align with the work of Early Learning Councils. One of Rhode Island’s biggest assets for this application was that we have a high functioning Council comprised of both public and private leaders and we were able to readily demonstrate that we already have the partnerships and leadership that we need at the table.

Elizabeth shared that the 24/7 style work that needs to be done to carry out the work will be done by the core project management team. This team will be responsible for carrying out the work in the SOW.

Each will be led by the state-agency staff designated in the SOW, and will include a representative from the corresponding Early Learning Council Subcommittee. Each Core Project Management Team will also include local and national experts for policy guidance as needed and state staff to carry out activities in the SOW. They will seek input and feedback from, and regularly report out, to the corresponding Council Subcommittee(s).

The corresponding Early Learning Council Subcommittees will take the lead on providing stakeholder and public input to the Core Project Management Teams as they embark upon their work, and in providing feedback and guidance throughout.

And, per the grant application, the RI Early Learning Council will provide leadership and oversight to the grant implementation to ensure the development of cross-sector and cross-departmental systems and programs. The Council is also charged with facilitating overarching policy decisions to help ensure the effective implementation of the grant. Council Subcommittee Co-Chairs will report out at the quarterly Council meetings. Final products/policies will be reviewed by the Early Learning Council.

Throughout the grant, at the direction of the Co-Chairs, the Early Learning Council will ensure public updates on the progress of the grant and send representatives of the Council to periodically meet with important groups and associations.

Finally, the Early Learning Council Work Group will provide input on projects and policies related to the grant and ensure integration across project areas.

Several discussion points and questions were raised on the presentation:

- How were lead agencies assigned to the work? It would be helpful to know the titles of the people assigned to different roles so that it is clear who they will be accountable too.
- Is the TEACH Advisory Committee becoming a standalone committee that will no longer be a work team of the Council? If so, why?
- We need to leverage the Council's ability to catalyze participation. We need to have a clear public relations plan that will help get the word out and keep the work coordinated. The Council can also play a role in helping to influence policy changes.
- Who is responsible for communication?
- Is this duplicative? It seems that there will be two corresponding teams thinking about the same issues.
- How will we ensure the cross pollination between the core projects? How will information be shared between the groups?
- How will people be appointed to these committees?
- This is a huge amount of work and an incredible project that so many people have a stake in. Based on what we know now, this structure looks good. But things will evolve as we get experience and it might make sense for the Council treat this as a living document and continue to review it periodically to see if we are achieving the right balance of communication and collaboration.
- Will the subcommittees have resources and staffing?
- There is a precedent in Rhode Island for successful public and private work groups. This should make us feel confident that we can do this.

Elizabeth explained that the state agency with the most grant resources under their control for a particular project is the most logical agency to lead that project. Clark Greene added that it would be helpful to add in titles to the chart so that people can see what roles state staff is playing. He noted that Ed Giroux is responsible for the entire data system within RIDE and that the RTT-ELC Grant Officer will be positioned within the Commissioner's office. RIDE has applied the lessons learned from the first Race to the Top grant as these plans were developed, keeping in mind that the RTT-ELC grant is different because it an inter-departmental grant and not a RIDE only grant.

Elizabeth noted that the structure was designed with the goal of moving a significant amount of work forward while ensuring that the Early Learning Council is positioned to provide the leadership and oversight that we said it would in the grant. The chairs of the Council are responsible for communication with the goal of engagement and transparency. Depending on the stage of the work the co-chairs of the Council will decide what level of communication is needed. Leanne added that the co-chairs of the Council Subcommittees (which include the leader of the core project management team) will be responsible for ensuring communication and coordination between the core project management team and the Council Subcommittees. The core project management team staff lead and the Council subcommittee co-chairs are also members of the Council Work Group which will be responsible for ensuring integration and cross-pollination between projects.

Elizabeth shared that before the committees are formed, the RTT-ELC Coordinating Team wanted to get overall feedback on the structure. The next step will be to send information to the Council and Work Group on how to sign up for subcommittees. She also noted that there is limited staffing for the Council, but she anticipates that as additional state employees are hired there will be additional capacity to support the work. Clark added that the Coordinating Team is thinking about that and how they can stretch available resources to make sure there is adequate support for the Council.

Elizabeth noted that while the Access Team is not directly connected to the RTT-ELC work, it does have an important role to play in supporting the Council's work to increase access to high quality early learning programs, particularly for children with high needs. So this team will continue its work in the same way that it has been working.

In response to the question about the TEACH Advisory Committee, Leanne explained that originally the Council had a Professional Development Team and a Higher Education Team with separate leadership. However, to more effectively align the Council's subcommittees with RTT-ELC, those teams are being combined to become a more expansively focused workforce subcommittee led by Karen Beese and Khadija Lewis-Khan, which would include, but would be much broader than the expansion of TEACH. Since the TEACH project requires an advisory committee as part of its national charter and that advisory committee must be led by the implementing agency (R2LP), the TEACH advisory committee will need to continue separately as part of the TEACH project. However, we expect that there would be a number of the same people on both the TEACH committee and the Workforce team and that we will need to make sure that both of those groups stay informed and connected.

Discussion/Feedback: RTT-ELC Scopes of Work

Clark explained that the scopes of work for the RTT-ELC grant are required by the Federal government and are due by the end of March. The scopes of work documents are essentially the checklist of what we need to do for this grant. Once is it approved the federal government will be using it to monitor our work. If we want to make changes, we will need to contact our federal liaison and propose the changes. There is then a process that we would have to go through to get approval.

Elizabeth noted that the scopes of work were built right from the application so if there are any areas that Council members do not think align, then it is important to raise that up as feedback.

Early Learning Workforce Development

Elizabeth asked Karen Beese to speak first about the early learning workforce development project (see presentation for more detail):

The following questions were raised on Karen's presentation:

- To what extent will RTT-ELC grant address some of the barriers that are preventing people from accessing higher education? We need to be sure that we don't just change the standards without making sure that people have access to the training they need to meet the standards.
- Is the bi-lingual advisor for CCRI still in this plan?

Elizabeth noted that making sure that we are both improving the standards and increasing access to higher education is a good example of the work that the Council and Work Group need to do to ensure the cross-pollination of this project.

Karen explained that there is a lot in the plan about making sure that professional development is accessible. Addressing barriers to higher education is on the state's radar through TEACH and other initiatives. She also noted that funding to have a bi-lingual advisor and ESL support for students at CCRI on the Level 1 career pathway is definitely included in the plan and the budget.

Program Quality Improvement

Leanne Barrett spoke next about Program Quality Improvement and emphasized that the Scopes of Work Team worked hard to develop a plan that has resources aligned and going out to programs before the end of 2012 (see presentation for more detail). The team recognizes that our targets are aggressive and if programs don't get early access to funds to help them improve the quality of their programs it will be hard to meet the targets.

The following questions were raised on Leanne's presentation:

- Who is the statewide technical assistance vendor?
- Would it make sense to put a BrightStars application in with the licensing renewal packet?
- Has a final decision been made about whether a program will automatically have one star when they get licensed? There is a great deal of misinformation going on in the field about this particular issue. We need to clarify it as soon as possible.

Karen explained that technical assistance and training will continue to go on as it does right now in 2012. The plan is to identify gaps and improve alignment of technical assistance. There will also be RFP put out to identify a technical assistance vendor to help fill those gaps and help to coordinate existing technical assistance and ensure that it is all aligned with the QRIS quality benchmarks.

Brenda noted that there is a plan to send out a letter from DCYF and DHS to providers to explain the plan to maximize enrollment in BrightStars and clarify the application process to get in BrightStars. We need to figure out the specifics of how it will work but we want to do everything we can to reduce the confusion. We do have to be careful about how this is rolled out. We need to have the capacity within BrightStars before we bring everyone into BrightStars. For right now we are relying on people to come forward on their own to apply to BrightStars.

Program Quality Standards, Alignment, and Measurement

Brenda spoke next about Program Quality Standards, Alignment and Measurement and emphasized that the realignment process will engage key stakeholders throughout. She noted that the goal is for Bright Stars to be the “arch” that brings us all together. She also explained that DCYF will not be changing the timeline for family child care home license renewals. The change will be that DCYF will do a licensing inspection every year instead of every 2 years.

The following questions were raised on Brenda’s presentation:

- What is the relationship between the BrightStars revision work that has been done over the last year and the RTT-ELC work to realign the standards? How do they fit together?
- Is it realistic to expect to draft three new sets of standards (DCYF licensing, BrightStars and RIDE pre-school approval) in nine months?
- How will the revisions be implemented and what is the timetable?
- It would be helpful to sort this work by year so that we can more effectively evaluate whether it is doable or not.
- It is very unclear to providers what changes will be required as a part of the standards realignment and revision. There have been a lot of changes over the last few years without supporting resources and providers are very concerned that there will be more changes without the financial help to make them. This could make or break the ability of a center to continue to provide services, particularly for the more expensive facilities requirements.

Elizabeth explained that states were strongly encouraged through the RTT-ELC competition to ramp up their quality efforts by having 100% participation in the state’s tiered quality rating system. Other states are doing this as well. The plan set forth under the Early Learning Challenge is to bring all licensed programs that are not already participating in BrightStars into BrightStars. Programs can move up in BrightStars through the BrightStars application and assessment process by documenting that they meet higher quality benchmarks. Quality improvement resources will be made available through RTT-ELC. Clark added that there will be opportunities for input from key stakeholders through the Early Learning Council.

Brenda and Leanne explained that it is important for more programs to start participating in BrightStars as soon as possible in 2012 -- before it becomes mandatory late in 2013. Through BrightStars, programs can already gain support and guidance to make quality improvements and achieve a higher quality designation.

Tammy explained that BrightStars was scheduled for a 3-year update in 2011, so work has already begun to review national best practices and gather local feedback and input. Maryann Finamore, Khadija Lewis Khan, and Christine Chiacu-Forsythe have been working closely with Tammy to get this work started. Because of the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge and the interest in embarking upon a system-wide revision and re-alignment process (licensing, RIDE preschool approval, and BrightStars), the scheduled update of BrightStars was delayed until 2012. The process to update and align these systems will happen in 2012 through Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge with guidance from the Rhode Island Early Learning Council's Program Standards Alignment Committee.

Elizabeth noted that it would not be possible to do the realignment and revision work in nine months if we were not building on the existing BrightStars system. Fortunately, we do not need to start a TQRIS

development process from scratch. Karen added that we will be able to hire national experts which will accelerate our ability to do the work quickly. Brenda added that the work with the National Association of Regulatory Administration (NARA) is already underway. Rhode Island has always ranked high on the quality of our regulations; we have lagged behind on our monitoring and enforcement of those regulations.

Deborah Buffi, an administrator with DHS representing Director Powell, explained that as the revisions are made, all agencies will be looking at rules and regulations, noting changes that need to be made, and using the administrative process to make those changes. Deb also announced that DHS was engaged in a national search for a full-time State Child Care Administrator.

Clark added that as the application was developed the team did their best to make sure that Rhode Island was proposing plans that worked within the existing parameters. He also noted that the Scopes of Work team did a lot of work to make sure that the work was achievable year by year. They found as they looked at the work by year that the application had front-loaded a lot of things in year 1, so they adjusted this and moved some of the dates back.

Leanne explained that one of the key steps in the Quality Improvement project will be looking at the financial impact of quality so that the team can make sure that the financial supports available to programs will be sufficient to help them achieve and sustain the quality changes they need to make. The current plan is to try and make quality improvement grants available this year.

Early Learning and Development Standards

Michele spoke next about Early Learning and Development Standards.

The following questions were raised on Michele's presentation:

- Who will be assembled to do this work?
- How will this connect to the work of the professional development team?
- If these summary charts are used as a communication tool, you should make it clear where there will be opportunities for community input.

Michele explained that, with good guidance from the federal government, Rhode Island's application was very detailed about the expertise that would be assembled for the Early Learning Standards core project management team. Elizabeth added that the Council Subcommittee for Early Learning Standards Development would include individuals with the expertise to help shape the work.

Michele noted that the Early Learning Standards Development work will be connected and aligned with the work of the Professional Development team but they will not duplicate each other.

Clark said that gathering and incorporating community input is part of every project. We will work to make sure that this comes across in key documents.

Child Assessment

Blythe spoke next about Child Assessment. There were no questions raised on Blythe's presentation.

Early Learning Data System

Michele spoke next about the Early Learning Data System. The following questions were raised on Michele's presentation:

- Will the foster care data system be a part of this?
- The Providence Plan runs a data hub now for several state agencies; we should look at how it can support your needs.
- In addition to building databases and tools, it is critical that resources are allocated to training and educating users. This must be upfront and intentional. If you don't do that, then the system won't be used.
- We need to make sure that this is all understandable to the general public. This section, in particular, uses a lot of technical terms.
- The funding for user training that was included in the application is remarkably small.

Brenda noted that the data system that tracks foster care will not be included in this specific work to build an Early Learning Data System, however DCYF is working to ensure data about young children in the child welfare system is available to ensure these children have access and can participate in high-quality early learning programs. Elizabeth thanked everyone for their comments and noted that the data sub-committee would be responsible for looking at these issues further, particularly training for users.

Grant Management

Clark spoke next about Grant Management. The following questions were raised on Clark's presentation:

- There will be a lot of work for the Council subcommittees and it would be helpful to know the timing of the work so we can block out more time on our schedule.
- What is our plan for sustainability?

Clark agreed that it would be a good idea, once the subcommittees were up and running, to flag periods of time where the subcommittee work would be more intensive, so that people can schedule accordingly.

Elizabeth noted that we said in the application that we would maximize the use of existing resources and focus our Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge investments to create lasting improvements in state systems and in the quality of early learning and development programs serving Children with High Needs. She also said that the Rhode Island Early Learning Council would work to secure long-term financial support to sustain the increased level of financial incentives and supports available to programs after the Early Learning Challenge implementation period ends.

Early Learning Council Strategic Plan

Kristin gave a brief update on the Council's Strategic Plan:

- As a recipient of State Advisory Council funding from the Administration for Children and Families, the Council is required to create a strategic plan by June 2012.
- The plan will articulate the Council's vision for what it plans to accomplish over the next five years:
 - The plan will be a tool for communicating the Council's vision and plan to our stakeholders.

- The strategic plan will integrate all of the Council’s work to date into a single, comprehensive plan:
- State Early Learning Council ARRA application
 - Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Application
 - Early Learning Council Access Recommendations
 - Early Learning Council Kindergarten Assessment Recommendations
 - Early Learning Council Data Team Recommendations
- The goal is for the plan to be overarching enough to provide a collaborative roadmap for early learning in Rhode Island and that the Council’s plan and the plans and priorities of our state agency partners align and work well together.
- The Council Work Group has been working on cross-walking the strategies developed to date with other state agencies and plans to ensure that they are aligned and comprehensive. This has been a very useful exercise. Brenda Duhamel echoed that sentiment by briefly updating the Council on a recent ICC strategic planning meeting where they used the Council’s strategies to date as a resource for their planning efforts.
- We should have a plan drafted in late May.
- We anticipate using a designer to visually lay out the plan/products for publishing.
- The draft plan will be reviewed by the Council in June.
- The Council will also develop a plan for creating awareness and buy-in among key stakeholders and the general public.

Public Comment

- The Permanent Legislative Commission on Child Care is hosting a Child Care Awareness Day at the State House on April 12 from 3:00 to 4:30.
- Is BrightStars going to have to re-compete?
- Dana Mullen, from Children’s Friend, explained that the Child Welfare – Head Start partnership project is proceeding smoothly. She will share a summary of the project with the Council (by emailing to Leanne) and is interested in getting more input from the Council
- Rachel Flum, from the Economic Progress Institute (formerly the Poverty Institute), shared fact sheets on the Child Care Assistance Program and two pending bills that would expand low-income working family access to child care. She will email to Leanne to share with the Council.

Elizabeth and Clark explained that due to state purchasing rules it may be necessary to put the BrightStars QRIS contract out for competition. This particular grant requires a lot of hiring and a lot of sub-contracts with community partners so there are many state rules that we need to comply with.

Next Steps

Elizabeth reminded everyone of the following dates:

- **Early Learning Council Work Group Meeting:** May 17, 2012 9:30-11:30 a.m. (CCRI Warwick)
- **Early Learning Council/Work Group Meeting:** June 13, 2012 11:30-2:00 p.m. (Save the Bay)