

Working Group on Early Childhood Governance
November 30, 1:00PM EST
DOA Conference Room 2A
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI, 02908

Approved 2/9/22

Members in Attendance

- EOHHS/Children’s Cabinet Chair: Secretary Novais
- RIDOH: Kristine Campagna
- RIDE: Lisa Odom-Villella
- DOA: Director Thorsen
- DHS: Ron Racine
- OPC: Commissioner Shannon Gilkey
- RI Kids Count: Leanne Barrett

Welcome & Overview

- Attendees introduced themselves and their organizations around the table

Vote on Adoption of Minutes

- The Working Group on Early Childhood Governance voted on adopting the minutes from the October 25, 2023 meeting
 - First: Commissioner Gilkey
 - Second: Kristine Campagna
 - Voting in Favor: Secretary Novais, Kristine Campagna, Lisa Odom-Villella, Director Thorsen, Commissioner Gilkey, and Leanne Barrett
 - There were no votes in opposition or abstentions.

Discussion of Working Group Mission and Scope

- Kayla Rosen summarized the feedback from the October meeting regarding the proposed mission state and scope for the working group and presented an updated proposed draft for review
- Working Group members provided line edits and feedback on the proposed draft. Key feedback included:
 - Add context to the importance of achieving third grade reading proficiency
 - Include language to ensure that the analysis addresses both systems and structures
 - Consider whether to add language to the bullet points around the legislative language or keep as is – decision to keep as is, discussion included:
 - Ensure that review of effectiveness and performance is part of the scope of this analysis
 - Support the Working Group in coming to a strong conclusion about the structure and understand how to best invest resources to achieve outcomes
 - Need to ensure that goals, targets, and performance is revisited on a regular basis
 - Pay attention to outcomes, but also consider how efficiency and effectiveness is understood across the system as a whole

- Need to address the scope of what “early childhood” means and define more specifically. Discussion of to what extent is the focus early childhood education versus health versus development.
 - In the mission statement, point to the scope specifically to clarify the boundaries
- Scope edits included: added family home visiting and included a list of the enabling systems that are more defined
 - Licensing and CECE are standards managed by the state, but QRIS and Workforce Knowledge and Competencies is missing here – incorporate it within the enabling systems
 - Statutory and other implications for any recommendations should be addressed
- The goal of this work is to develop a set of recommendations about what system, structure, or organization approach will support the state’s ability to achieve the goals for the system. There is no pre-determined outcome for this work. Regardless of outcome, there will always be a need for coordination and collaboration, because no one agency can address the whole child.
- Some consideration of the intent behind the work, which appears to be education focused. However, since that was not written directly into this legislation it is up to us to say what is in scope.
- Commissioner Gilkey provided an update on the Governor’s Workforce Board working group on early childhood educator workforce pathways. That report, due in April, will inform the governance systems analysis.

Proposed Updated Mission Statement and Scope

Mission

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

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

Scope of Analysis:

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

- **Child care licensing (DHS)**

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

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

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

Vote on Adoption of Mission and Scope:

Motion: To accept the mission statement and scope for this group as proposed, with the edits.

- First: Secretary Novais
- Second: Kristine Campagna
 - Voting in Favor: Secretary Novais, Kristine Campagna, Lisa Odom-Villella, Director Thorsen, Commissioner Gilkey, and Leanne Barrett
 - There were no votes in opposition or abstentions.

Process Overview

- Focus on defining the problem as the first step to ensure that all recommendations are addressing the core, defined problem
- Draft document in summer for review and feedback
- Final document in September, 2023 ahead of October deadline

Public Comment

- No public comments

Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 1:59PM EST