



## Working Group on Early Childhood Governance – Meeting 5

July 27, 2023

RHODE  
ISLAND

# Agenda

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- Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements
- Vote on Adoption of Minutes
- Discussion on Draft Landscape Analysis – Foresight Law + Policy / Watershed Advisors
- Public Comment
- Adjournment

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

## Overview of Budget Article

### FY23 Budget Requirements

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

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

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

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

# Working Group Mission & Scope – Adopted 11/30/22

## Mission

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

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

## Scope of Analysis:

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

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

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

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

# Rhode Island Working Group on Early Childhood Governance

July 27, 2023

# Agenda

- Review upcoming schedule
- Discussion: Landscape analysis

# Upcoming Schedule



# Upcoming Schedule (1 of 2)

Date	Action
July 27	Working group reviews initial landscape analysis and provides feedback
July 28 - August 11	FLP and Watershed continue to solicit feedback from stakeholders on current state and will update the landscape analysis
Late August	FLP and Watershed will begin developing draft recommendations
August 22	Working group considers updated landscape analysis and gets initial update on national best practices
<b>Date TBD</b> <b>End of August</b>	Conduct virtual open session for feedback (topic: emerging ideas)

# Upcoming Schedule (2 of 2)

Date	Action
Sept 22	Share draft recommendations publicly on website (including cost analysis of different governance options)
September 27-28	Foresight and Watershed in Rhode Island for Early Learning Council and Working Group meetings Working group reviews draft recommendations and provides feedback
October 1	Submit comprehensive interim draft to legislature for review
Month of October	Solicit additional feedback from 1:1 interviews and public sessions
<b>Date TBD</b>	FLP and Watershed will present final report findings in person
<b>Date TBD</b>	FLP and Watershed will finalize report Final draft complete

# Landscape Analysis: Overview

# Landscape Analysis Outline

## Executive Summary

### An Overview of the Governance and Systems Analysis Process

- The Scope of the Governance and Systems Analysis
- The Process for the Systems Analysis

### An Overview of the Current Governance Landscape

#### Key Elements of the State's Administration

- Gubernatorial Leadership
- Legislative Connections
- Agency Capacity
- Interagency Collaboration
- Local Collaboration

#### Specific Policy Issues

- Workforce development
- Professional Development and Technical Assistance
- Quality Evaluation and Improvement
- Data Systems
- Early Learning Council Conversation
- Additional Observations

# Landscape Analysis Engagement

To develop its landscape analysis, the Foresight/Watershed team spoke to more than 70 people:

- Many individual interviews with state agency employees including EOHHS, DHS, RIDE, and RIDOH
- Some group sessions, including open sessions, a session for child care providers, a session for home visitors, and a session for parent and caregivers
- Meetings with the Early Learning Council

In the report we listed everybody we spoke to, but the conclusions are ours.

# Landscape Analysis Scope

The Scope of the Governance and Systems Analysis:

- Looking at how to advance Rhode Island's vision
- Building on work to date
- Led by the Working Group – includes EOHHS, DHS, RIDE, RIDOH, OPC, DOA, and RI KIDS COUNT
- Focused on the early childhood programs in the Working Group scope
- Staffed by Foresight and Watershed
- Fiscal analysis by Afton Partners (will be incorporated in September report)

# Landscape Analysis Takeaways

# Landscape Analysis: Key Takeaways

- There isn't actually an overarching state vision for early childhood services that guides the day-to-day work of state agencies.
- Rhode Island's current governance structure leverages agency expertise, and the agencies have strong relationships.
- But the full-time early childhood staff in each agency are not always empowered to be leaders, and the senior leaders who are empowered have many other demands on their time.
- Rhode Island's small size leads to deep engagement between the state and providers, which has built strong relationship – but the lack of local infrastructure means that providers are not insulated from fragmented state government.
- There is real concern that changing governance structures will not actually make things better.



# Landscape Analysis: State Administration

## Key Elements of the State's Administration

- **Gubernatorial Leadership**
  - The transition in governors created staff turnover that has been hard to navigate
  - Strong leadership will be needed from the governor to strengthen the system
- **Legislative Connections**
  - To date the administration has not had a coherent early childhood agenda with the legislature
  - Advocates have helped spearhead important changes, but also may have room for growth
- **Agency Capacity**
  - Agencies have struggled to hire staff
  - Numerous agencies use contractors – but those have also been fragmented

# Landscape Analysis: State Administration

## Key Elements of the State's Administration

- Interagency Collaboration
  - The Children's Cabinet has been a useful information-sharing venue but is not charged with driving an agenda
  - The early childhood staff collaborate and work well together
  - Their collaboration is seen as being on specific issues and projects, rather than on a broader agenda
  - Outside partners still experience state government as operating in silos
- Local Collaboration
  - There are no real structures for regional or local collaboration
  - The relationship between state agencies and providers is much closer than in many larger states
  - Many school districts are not actively engaged in early childhood work

# Landscape Analysis: Specific Policy Issues

## Specific Policy Issues

- **Workforce development**
  - Like every state, Rhode Island is struggling to attract and retain early childhood professionals
  - There is no overarching state vision for addressing this issue
  - Some talent leaves for K-12
- **Professional Development and Technical Assistance**
  - The Center for Early Learning Professionals provides TA under two separate contracts, which creates some discontinuity in implementation
  - To date the higher education system has not been actively engaged in professional development
- **Quality Evaluation and Improvement**
  - The BrightStars system is seen as having improved in recent years
  - But it still may not be fully aligned with pre-k
- **Data Systems**
  - There are a number of promising initiatives to integrate data and approve analytics – but even these efforts are siloed
  - The underlying data infrastructure in early education and care is weak in many respects

# Landscape Analysis: Specific Policy Issues

## Specific Policy Issues

- Early Council Conversation
  - The Early Learning Council has discussed a number of potential priorities, although it has not finalized its recommendations. Topics discussed to date include:
    - Workforce development
    - Improving screening – and inclusion – for children with special needs
    - Integrating the mixed delivery system
    - Supporting home-based providers
    - Engagement
    - Integrating data systems
- Additional Observations
  - Governance changes typically are designed to shift burdens off of providers and families and onto state government – so it is understandable that state government leaders are concerned about that, especially given recent turnover and current capacity challenges
  - Pre-k and child care are always at the heart of these conversations, and at the moment neither RIDE nor DHS is attempting to take over leadership of the entire system

# Next Steps

- Foresight and Watershed will collect feedback and reflections on the landscape analysis.
- Foresight and Watershed will then begin drafting recommendations in August.

# Public Comment

