IMPACT WORK GROUP

PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANT
NEEDS ASSESSMENT & STRATEGIC PLAN

MAY 22, 2019
MEETING DATES & SCOPE

IMPACT WORK GROUP, 9:30-12:00

March 19, 2019
- Orientation, Review of Research Plan, Definitions, SWOC Analysis

April 17, 2019
- Review of Findings, Emerging Themes, Goal Areas

May 22, 2019
- Reflect on Findings, Refine Goals and Strategies, Plan for Retreat

June 7, 2019, 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.
- School Readiness Committee Retreat
AGENDA

IMPACT WORK GROUP

- Project Update
- Synopsis of Focus Groups and Interviews
- Principles for Strategic Plan
- Emerging Goals and Strategies
- Discussion and Prioritization
- Action Steps
- Preparation for School Readiness Council Retreat
UPDATE

IMPACT WORK GROUP

COMPLETE

Needs Assessment

☑ Data Scan
☑ Review of Virginia Reports, 2014-2019
☑ Focus groups of educators
☑ Interviews with caretakers and local community leaders
☑ Research on Facilities and Financing

Strategic Plan

☑ Mixed Delivery Focus Group
☑ Environmental Scans
☑ Synopsis of Smart Beginnings Plans
☑ Statewide stakeholder interviews

UNDERWAY

☒ Writing of Needs Assessment Report and Strategic Plan
FINDINGS & THEMES

Synthesis of Primary Research
Intent: Gather diverse perspectives from Virginia families, community, leaders, and educators on early childhood care and education

- **Methods**
  - Collaboration with 11 Smart Beginnings areas for recruitment
  - 46 phone interviews with families & community leaders
  - 6 focus groups (half urban, half rural)
    - Center Directors
    - Teachers
    - Family Day Home Subsidy Providers
Topics Addressed
- Personal and community strengths
- Arrangements for children, 0-5
  - Access points
  - Strengths and weaknesses
- Broader family supports
- Perceptions of quality of care

Limitations
- Convenience sample and potential biases
- Small sample size
 SELF-REPORTED DEMOGRAPHICS

- **26 Families Interviewed**
  - 9 Head Start
  - 3 VPI
  - 6 Other programs (family, private, nonprofit)
  - 8 no formal program

- **Child’s Race/Ethnicity**
  - 9 White/Caucasian
  - 11 Black/African-American
  - 3 Biracial
  - 1 Hispanic
  - 2 Unknown

- **Geography**
  - 17 Urban
  - 9 Rural
FINDINGS & THEMES

Families’ Perceptions of ECCE and Other Public Services
FINDINGS AND THEMES

FAMILY SUPPORT NEEDS/INCOME

Time Away from Home for Work or School
- About half reported 40+ hours
- About half reported less than 40 hours away, either due to working part-time or not working

Family Support Needs
- 23 report using public assistance (e.g., Medicaid, WIC, SNAP)
- When asked to describe a time when they needed assistance:
  - About half reported getting help from family or friends
  - About half reported getting government assistance
- Educators commonly approached to assist with families’ basic needs

Income
- 22 below $50,000
- 3 approximately $50,000
- 1 above $50,000
FINDINGS AND THEMES

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY STRENGTHS

- Families value **social connections within their families**
  - Love/closeness
  - Understanding and supporting each other
  - Spending time together
  - Having good morals and instilling these values in their children
All but one family heard about ECCE or other public programs from a peer (e.g., friend or family member)

A large majority were also linked to public programs/services via the Department of Social Services or Health Department

Less than half accessed services through nonprofit organizations, such as the United Way or Partnership for Families

A number of community leaders spoke about how their organizations disseminate information to connect people to services
Families enrolled in ECCE programs generally spoke positively about them:
- Dedicated, caring teachers
- Creative or enriching activities
- Academic and cognitive learning
- Seeing tangible results in their children
ECCE WORKFORCE STRENGTHS

FINDINGS AND THEMES

- Passion and dedication
  - “Loving children as if they are your own”
- Resourceful
  - Many hats - training, collaboration, substitute bus driver, help parents
  - Engaging with and assisting students and families on a personal level
- Teaching social and life skills
- Promoting learning and a love for learning
- Providing a predictable and safe environment
FINDINGS AND THEMES

IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR "QUALITY"

For Center Directors
- Curriculum & facilitating learning
- Quality teachers and good teacher/child interactions
- Balanced schedule and routine
- Clean environment with safe and accessible equipment, materials
- Encouragement of positive behaviors (age-appropriate)
- Understanding of children’s health and mental health needs

For Teachers
- Providing opportunity for children to develop and grow
  - Formal and ongoing training, plus learning through experience
  - Developmentally appropriate materials and activities
- Positive, trusting relationships between teachers and children

For Family Day Home Providers
- Love for children
- One-on-one care and attention
- Comfortable, clean, safe environment
- Healthy meals
FINDINGS AND THEMES

SUPPORTS TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE “QUALITY”

For Center Directors
- Training and technical assistance (Smart Beginnings)
- Community Partnerships
- Peers
- Virginia Quality

For Teachers
- Dedicated, committed administrators and classroom staff
- Classroom materials
- Trainings

For Family Day Home Providers
- Little discussion
FINDINGS AND THEMES

Childcare Subsidy Program

Provider Entry Points
- Peer or colleague
- DSS

Family Access Points
- DSS
- Child care provider
- Peers

Strengths
- Helps families
- Business opportunity for providers
- Allows providers to access trainings and resources

Weaknesses
- Administrative burden for providers
- Payment and reimbursement issues for providers
- Child support requirement a barrier for families to participate
- Lack of awareness of program among families
BARRIERS TO QUALITY ECCE

FINDINGS AND THEMES

- Cost
- Funding (slots, staff, materials)
- Availability
  - Infant/Toddler Care and After Care
  - Lack of Slots, Waitlist
- Getting to and from
  - Transportation
  - Convenience
  - Schedule
- Need for Broader Support
- Family Engagement (incl. language barriers)
- Staffing Challenges (turnover, unprepared)
EMERGING GOALS AND STRATEGIES
GOAL ONE: Expand the accessibility, availability, and inclusivity of quality early childhood care and education to reach all vulnerable children.

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<td>- Action Steps</td>
<td>- Timeframe</td>
<td>- Outcome</td>
<td>- Responsible Lead</td>
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**What?**
- Strategy

**How?**
- Action Steps

**By When?**
- Timeframe

**Measure of Success?**
- Outcome

**Who?**
- Responsible Lead
Discussion of Principles for Strategic Plan

References from the Field

National Academy of Sciences

BUILD Initiative

Early Learning Collaborative
We envision a Commonwealth where all children have quality early care and education that is affordable and delivered by a skilled and diverse workforce in safe and nurturing environments, and where families have the information and resources to support each child’s healthy development and improve children’s readiness for school.
DRAFT PRINCIPLES
SUCCESS IN 2023 (JULY 2020-2023)

Virginia’s early childhood care and education system will have:

1. Equitable access to the support, information, and early care children and families need, regardless of age, income, ethnicity, race, ability, or language spoken at home
2. Schools, centers, and homes that welcome socio-economic and racial diversity and accommodate children with special needs
3. Families and guardians who are engaged in leading and informing the practice and delivery of early care and education
4. Support for children’s health, development, education, and learning in safe and positive environments
5. Information about children’s experiences and progress in early childhood care and education over time through accessible and meaningful data
6. True coordination of funding, data, information, policies, and practices among state and local programs and departments serving children 0-4 and their families
7. Accountability for children’s success in early care and education shared between families, public schools, and public and private providers
8. An early education workforce that can afford to live in their communities and have access to affordable and quality professional development
9. Financing that reflects the true costs of care, incentivizes quality among public and private providers, and supports children’s access to care regardless of family income or work status
INSTRUCTIONS

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

1. Walk around the room to review the vision and each principle.
2. Underline with a pen or pencil those phrases that resonate with you.
3. Put a question mark (?) next to those that are not clear to you.
4. Put a minus (-) next to those words or phrases that you do not agree with or would like to change.
COMMUNITAS PROCESS

- Review and synthesize Impact Work Group Small Group Recommendations (3/19, 4/17)
- Validate/refine/revisit in light of:
  - Focus group and interviews
  - Environmental scans
  - Stakeholder interviews
  - Secondary reports
  - Documented needs and capacity
- Write goals with measurable success in mind
- Refine for May 22 and June 7 discussions
DRAFT GOALS AND STRATEGIES

1. ACCESS & AVAILABILITY
2. FAMILY SUPPORT
3. QUALITY
4. COORDINATION
5. WORKFORCE
GOAL ONE

1. Expand the accessibility, availability, and inclusivity of quality early childhood care and education to reach all vulnerable children.

- Increase funding for and facilitate innovative financing mechanisms for early childhood care and education to ensure that no community goes without high quality, accessible care.
- Target allocation of public resources for increasing the supply of quality early childhood education and care in centers, homes, and schools to underserved localities.
- Increase timely identification, enrollment, and retention of children with disabilities who would benefit from early assistance in publicly-supported programs.
- Expand the availability of affordable and quality after care and infant/toddler care for working parents.
- Increase the number of quality private centers and homes accepting public subsidies.
GOAL TWO

Increase availability and coordinated access to support services for parents and guardians of children ages 0-4 to increase family stability and use of quality care.

- Support innovative means of helping families *navigate ECCE opportunities*, understand eligibility guidelines, and connect with necessary family support.
- Engage evidence-based *home visiting programs* to help connect families with quality early education and care, and support the *well-being and development of children*.
- Increase *awareness about subsidies to eligible families* through existing and informal communication channels and networks.
- Support parental employment by *offsetting the impact of federal eligibility requirements* which reduce family support benefits based on increased income.
- Provide parents and guardians with *reliable information on the quality and scope of early care and education resources in their area*. 
Incentivize and reward continuous improvements in the quality of early care and education that provide a safe and nurturing learning environment for children.

- Enhance understanding of all domains of school readiness among families, educators, care providers, and leaders.
- Expand **statewide QRIS supports and incentives** to increase the number of children enrolled in quality homes and centers.
- Implement supports and incentives for regional QRIS coordinators and state administrators to **increase participation of programs** serving vulnerable populations in Virginia Quality.
- Expand and integrate **successful elements early education and care into classrooms**, such as curricular requirements, enhanced teacher development and coaching, QRIS participation, comprehensive services and family engagement.
- Adopt **unified statewide measures** that assess multiple dimensions of children’s development and quality care.
- Tie **reimbursements to higher levels of quality** while providing technical assistance for programs to meet expectations.
Champion a coordinated, accessible, high quality early childhood care and education system within and across state and local public agencies serving young children.

- Create a coordinated pathway for caretakers and providers to access and understand state ECCE opportunities for children, 0-5.
- Develop a means to capture meaningful data for Virginia’s children in early childhood care over time to better target interventions and measure improvements.
- Increase efficient use of federal, state, and local funds by streamlining state and local requirements and aligning funding streams for services.
- Support and incentivize public K-12 leaders to share accountability with public ECCE programs for success and facilitate a smooth kindergarten entry for children in public and private programs.
Increase and sustain a skilled and diverse early care and education workforce who support the optimum development of young children.

- Employ incentives and tax credits to increase the wages for early care teachers and directors providing quality care in publicly-subsidized programs.
- Make participation in training and professional development opportunities affordable and accessible for current and incoming child care professionals.
- Create performance-based contracts with early care centers and homes receiving public subsidies to reward improvements in the quality of their workforce.
BREAKOUT SESSION
BREAKOUT SESSION

INSTRUCTIONS TO SMALL GROUPS

- Assign a scribe
- Prioritize strategies on your own, rating 1 as the most important
- Address questions raised in large group
- Recommend revisions to draft goals and strategies
- If time,
  - Generate 2-3 priority action steps to achieve for each strategy
VA’s ECCE System Will Have

SUCCESS IN 2023 (JULY 2020-2023)

1. **Equitable access** to high quality schools, centers, and homes that welcome socio-economic and racial diversity, accommodate children with special needs, and support children’s health and development in safe and positive environments.

2. Policies and practices that are **guided by** and **responsive** to the needs of children and their families and caregivers.

3. **Shared accountability** through accessible and meaningful data.

   * Inclusive of general support staff

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1. True coordination of funding, information, policies, and practices among state and local, and community programs.

2. A workforce* that is equipped to provide high quality programs and receives competitive wages.

3. Financing for the true costs of care and incentives for quality among public and private providers.

4. Innovation -- incubation, testing, and scaling of successful policies and practices.
June 7, 2019:
- Welcome and Introductions
- Findings to Date
- Principles
- Discussion of Goals and Recommendations
- Small Group Refinement and Prioritization
- Next Steps
NEXT STEPS
DISCUSSION