



Rhode Island's Early Learning and School-Age Professional Development System Plan

Submitted to the Rhode Island Early Learning Council

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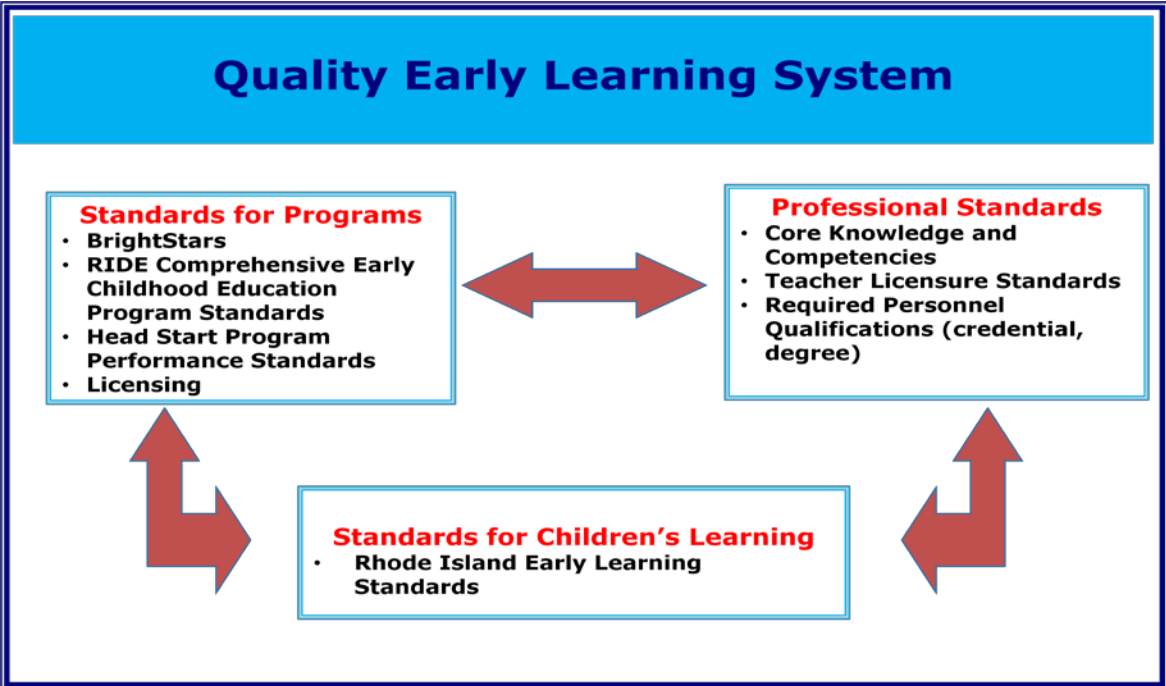
This report was prepared by Rhode Island AEYC/BrightStars through the RI Child Care Resource and Referral Center contract funded by the RI Department of Human Services and corporate partners. We thank the following partners: RI Early Learning Council and Professional Development Systems Planning Work Team, RI Department of Human Services, RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, RI Department of Children, Youth & Families, RI Department of Health, and Anne Mitchell at Early Childhood Policy Research. We also thank the many educators, administrators, policymakers, and advocates that contributed their time and ideas to this report.

Rhode Island's professional development system supports the adults who educate and nurture infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families, and those who work with school-age children in out-of-school time programs. Through guidance and high quality opportunities for learning, it supports professionals to advance their skills and knowledge, to develop sustainable careers and ultimately improves child outcomes.

Introduction

Professional development (PD) is defined in this document as the continuum of learning opportunities that prepares an adult to work with young children and their families in all settings and sectors and with school-age children in out-of-school settings. PD also includes the learning opportunities that enhance and improve one's skill, knowledge and competence as a professional over time. Thus, PD is both initial and ongoing; it is both training and education.

Professional standards are one of the three essential sets of standards that, together with standards for programs and standards for children's learning, are the foundation of a strong early learning system.



Rhode Island has established the RI Early Learning Standards (RIELS) for preschoolers and learning standards for children ages birth to three are scheduled to be developed. BrightStars is Rhode Island’s primary framework for quality program standards¹; its criteria include RIELS and professional qualifications, modeling optimal interaction among standards. Professional, program, and children’s learning standards are most effective when they are aligned, mutually supportive, and well-implemented. Offering quality improvement supports for practitioners that are grounded in standards is essential to produce improved learning and development outcomes for children.

This plan for Rhode Island’s Early Learning and School-Age Professional Development System is the work of the Professional Development System Planning Work Team² of Rhode Island’s Early Learning Council (ELC). The Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children (RIAEYC)/BrightStars, through its work as the RI Child Care Resource and Referral Center managed the project. The Work Team was charged with supporting the work of the RI Early Learning Council and the RI Child Care Resource and Referral Center. The Work Team’s purpose was to develop an executable plan for RI’s professional development system for the child care, early education and school-age workforce.

The Work Team was guided by the expectations set forth in the scope of work for the Resource Center and informed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s (NAEYC) *Workforce Designs, A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems* and the National Child Care Information Center’s *Elements of a Professional Development System for Early Care and Education*. NAEYC’s plan, created in 2008 by Sarah LeMoine, states that “an integrated early childhood professional development system is a comprehensive system of preparation and ongoing development and support for all early childhood education professionals working with and on behalf of young children.”

The Resource Center expectations from their contracted deliverables are clear: “Create a sequenced system of evidence-based, culturally appropriate, and sequential professional development opportunities that are explicitly tied to recognized and emerging standards for Professionals, Programs, and/or Children...and that address the needs of the full range of diverse practitioners working with children of all ages, in every setting, and at every career level”. It is the intention of the redesigned PD System not to only provide training, but to deliver

¹ The foundation for BrightStars is the RI Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) child care licensing standards. BrightStars also includes elements of the RI Department of Education (RIDE) Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program Standards, Head Start Program Performance Standards and national accreditation.

² For a list Work Team members, see the Appendix.

support for continuous improvement for both professionals and programs that is evidence-based and guided by state and national standards; in short, a collaborative and comprehensive professional development system.

Delivering effective professional development that improves child outcomes requires a well-organized system that uses resources efficiently in support of all who work with Rhode Island's young children. The features of effective professional development that are associated with positive impact (Fixsen, D. L., & Blase, K. A., 2009; Joyce and Showers, 2002) are:

- Content and sequence
- Intensity and duration
- Follow-up support and technical assistance from a high-quality consultant
- Competence demonstrated in the classroom or program
- Program leadership and supervision

Essential Policy Areas and System Elements

Guidance and information from *Workforce Designs* and *Elements* are integrated and summarized below:

① Professional Standards

- Required and preferred qualifications, initial preparation and continuing development in each/all sectors of the profession are specified.
- Core knowledge base and/or core competencies underlie all standards in all sectors.

② Career Pathways

- Accessible routes for continuous progress of professionals, usually illustrated by a career lattice, show connections among and requirements for various roles in all settings.
- Professional development advising, individual professional development plans.
- Workforce registry contains data on all practitioners for system use and for each practitioner to track own progress.

③ Articulation

- Transfer of professional development credentials, courses, credits, degrees, and student performance-based competencies from one program or institution to another without loss of credit, i.e., via articulation agreements at the program, institution, and/or statewide levels.

④ *Advisory Structure*

- Coordinated oversight, at the state level, with authority itself or direct link to authority in state governance.

⑤ *Data*

- Data for accountability, quality assurance, system impact and system improvement.

⑥ *Financing*

- For professionals to access preparation and continuing education, e.g., scholarships.
- For workplaces to facilitate on-the-job preparation and continuing professional development and support compensation parity.
- For the infrastructure of the system to ensure its stability, quality and effectiveness.

To support the above framework, *Workforce Designs* offers four key principles for policymaking to build an integrated professional development system and guide its outcomes. These principles are:

- *Integration*: The system works across sectors (e.g. child care, Head Start and Pre-K), unifies the profession, and aligns with the program standards, (e.g., BrightStars and child learning standards, i.e., RIELS).
- *Quality assurance*: Every element of the system meets high standards and improves effectiveness of the system.
- *Diversity, inclusion, and access*: Policy and practice support inclusion and access among diverse groups, e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, language, ability, sexual orientation, socio-economic status; and among the sectors, e.g., homes, schools, centers.
- *Compensation parity*: Progress is demonstrated toward achieving parity among equivalently qualified practitioners in different sectors.

Applying these four principles as system measures can help determine the effectiveness of policies and system elements. For example, are the professional standards constructed and communicated in a manner to unify the profession? Is the content of the professional standards in harmony with the RI Early Learning Standards and with program quality standards? Do periodic workforce data reports show increasing parity in compensation among sectors such as child care, Head Start and state-funded pre-K?

The Professional Development System plan is presented using the above policy areas and elements as its framework. In each policy area, the Work Team considered the current status and unique opportunities in Rhode Island as well as the characteristics of an optimal system.

This plan addresses the diverse workforce in every setting, first by examining the requirements and opportunities in each sector. The sectors addressed in this plan correspond to the major regulatory and/or public funding sources for early care and education and out-of-school time programs. The sectors considered are: child care (both centers and family child care homes), Early Head Start/Head Start, Early Intervention, early childhood special education, prekindergarten (state-funded) and school-age care. Each policy area is discussed in turn.

Characteristics of an Optimal Professional Development System

This section presents the elements of an effective early learning and school-age professional development system and discusses the current status of these elements in Rhode Island.

Professional Standards: Characteristics of Optimal System

- ★ Credentials, degree programs, and certifications are recognized across sectors.
- ★ Licensing regulations, state education and other agencies require professionals to meet state standards specific to child age/development and role.
- ★ Teacher licensure is available for early care and education professionals, recognizing the specific skills and knowledge early childhood educators need to be effective.
- ★ Leadership preparation and development programs include early childhood content.

Professional Standards in Rhode Island

Required qualifications. The range of acceptable qualifications is wide and variable, as the following examples illustrate:

- A high school diploma and three years of supervised teaching qualifies an adult to be a teacher assistant in a licensed child care center (a teacher assistant may be in charge of a group of children as the lead classroom teacher).
- Family child care providers licensed after 2007 must have a high school diploma or equivalency and completion of a pre-service orientation course.
- Qualified professionals in Early Intervention must have at least a Master's Degree relevant to early intervention, at least four 3-credit courses relevant to early intervention, and at least one year of experience working in the early intervention field or with infants and toddlers with special needs.
- Preschool special education teachers must have a Special Educator Early Childhood Teaching Certificate (which requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree). If the classroom also includes typically developing children, the classroom must also have a teacher with

a general Early Childhood Teaching Certificate (may be two teachers or one who holds both certificates).

- Head Start teacher qualification requirements have been increasing over time; the current minimum is an associate's degree in early childhood and soon will be a bachelor's degree.
- A teacher in a state-funded Pre-K program must have a bachelor's degree and an Early Childhood Teaching Certificate.

Core knowledge and competencies. The status of RI's core knowledge and competencies (CKCs) can be described as "in progress". Much work has been done over many years to develop and update core competencies. A comprehensive approach addressing settings for children from birth to age sixteen was undertaken during the last decade through a contract managed by the RI Department of Human Services. Reports were written but recommendations were not implemented due to the detail in the report and a change in contracting. Rhode Island decided to revisit the draft competencies and develop three sets of CKCs for each sector of the child care field: center-based staff, family child care providers and school-age professionals. The School-Age CKCs were finalized and released in 2009. Between 2009 and 2011, the Center Teacher and Teacher Assistant CKCs were drafted by a work group convened by the RI Department of Education using funds provided by the RI Department of Human Services. CKCs for family child care providers, special educators, program administrators, and professional development providers are planned to be developed. Core knowledge and competencies already exist for Early Intervention, although dated, and CKCs were recently developed for the Infant/Toddler Consulting Professional through the RI Department of Health's Child Care Support Network. A summary of each of the existing CKCs is included in the Appendix.

Career Pathways: Characteristics of Optimal System

- * Career lattice or ladder guides professionals in their careers.
- * PD advising is accessible and well-used.
- * Continual improvement and/or individual PD planning is the norm.
- * Mentoring programs and initiatives support professionals.
- * Compensation and rewards accompany career advancement.

Career Pathways in Rhode Island

Access. Practitioners in Rhode Island can turn to many sources for professional development; for details, see the report *An Overview of Existing Professional Development Opportunities for Early-Care Educators in Rhode Island* compiled by Ready to Learn Providence. PD opportunities are offered by institutions of higher education, state agencies, community organizations, professional associations and in the workplace. Each of the state's public colleges (University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College and Community College of Rhode Island) offer early childhood courses and degrees.

Another aspect of access is information. While colleges typically do not alter their degree program offerings frequently, other sources of PD often do. Each sector may have its own listing of training and other PD opportunities. Having a comprehensive, up-to-date, easily accessible calendar of all PD offerings in the state and across sectors is one way to support practitioners' access. RIAEYC/BrightStars has developed an online training calendar, integrating information from other agencies. The concept of a central calendar is new; a systematic approach to reviewing content and updating it is being developed. To increase its usefulness to both professionals seeking PD and those who offer PD, the calendar itself must be widely promoted.

Career advising. Career advice can be provided in the workplace as part of the staff supervision process, through membership in a professional association, within higher education and in other ways. An individual professional development plan (IPDP) is a concrete example of a workplace policy that supports professional development and career advancement. Currently IPDPs are included in the standards and criteria of BrightStars and the RIDE Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Program; IPDPs are also used in Head Start programs. BrightStars staff currently provide practitioners and programs with PD advising that relates to their program quality improvement plans in support of an increased star rating.

Career lattice and career pathways. A comprehensive career lattice showing the connections among professional roles and work settings has not been developed in Rhode Island. Several career lattices exist in Rhode Island, including drafts for center teachers and teacher assistants and a school-age professional level assessment. Rhode Island's PD System will use these lattices and others as they are developed to advise child care providers in their careers.

Articulation: Characteristics of Optimal System

- ★ Professional development advising and counseling available to all.
- ★ Articulation of career education into certificate programs, associate degree programs, and bachelor degree programs.
- ★ Program to program agreements and institution to institution agreements with common core content and numbering.
- ★ College and university early childhood teacher preparation programs accredited.

Articulation in Rhode Island

Ready to Learn Providence (R2LP) operates the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Rhode Island scholarship program and has formal interaction with institutions of higher education. R2LP is represented on both the RI Early Learning Council's PD Work Team and Higher Education Work Team. Several meetings were held in 2011-2012 with representation from Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), Rhode Island College (RIC), and the University of Rhode Island (URI); discussion centered on several higher education issues, including articulation.

The current status of articulation between the RI Early Childhood Education and Training Project at CCRI (which offers the credit-bearing Early Childhood Specialist program) and bachelor degree programs at URI is somewhat favorable. Under certain conditions, all credits transfer course by course (a 60:60 transfer) whereby the CCRI graduate enters URI as a junior. This is possible only when a student entering CCRI declares their intent to transfer during their first semester and receives accurate advising at CCRI. At present URI is revising degree requirements which may result in the loss of transferability of 6 credits (a 60:54 credit transfer).

The status of articulation between CCRI and RIC is less favorable; generally fewer than 30 credits are transferable. RIC is developing a new content major for Early Childhood Education within its education department, which may result in more transferability. The early childhood teacher preparation programs at both URI and RIC are nationally accredited. The degree program at CCRI is not currently accredited, but the college will pursue NAEYC Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation in the near future.

Other articulation issues are the transferability of community-based training credits into higher education, the possibility of program to program articulation (instead of course by course), the time-limit on the value of credits (currently some credits expire after 10 years), and the desire for a credit-bearing school-age certificate program.

Advisory Structure: Characteristics of Optimal System

- ★ Communication and coordination policies or agreements, including common nomenclature, are in place across departments and sectors.
- ★ Task forces focusing on PD systems work with the state Early Learning Council.
- ★ The PD advisory structure includes representatives from the various early childhood education sectors, across agencies and quality initiatives.
- ★ Vision and mission statements and guiding principles demonstrate commitment to implement policy that promotes cross-sector integration; assures quality; supports diversity, inclusion and access; and achieves compensation parity.

Advisory Structure in Rhode Island

Rhode Island's Early Learning Council (ELC) is the state governance structure currently charged with oversight, planning and direction for early learning. The ELC has three levels: the Council whose members are appointed by the Governor; the Council Work Group established by the Council to help the ELC accomplish its goals; and eight work teams designed to address specific elements of the ELC's charge and goals. As of April 2012, the work teams were re-structured as Council Subcommittees and were aligned with the state's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge projects. For major policy issues, such as approval of this plan for RI's PD System, the ultimate decision-making body is the Council since it is composed of the heads of state agencies and other key policymakers and reports to the Governor.

The PD Work Team has worked well and efficiently to develop this plan in the span of about six months. The members gave thoughtful consideration to the efficient deployment of Rhode Island's early childhood expertise and the need to represent a range of sectors and constituencies for an effective advisory structure. Representation includes practitioner sectors, e.g., family child care, centers, Head Start, Early Intervention, and after school programs; and PD delivery sectors, e.g. higher education, professional associations, community-based organizations with PD as a primary focus, as well as major funders of PD such as state agencies.

The PD System will need ongoing oversight. The goals for a PD advisory structure are that it be sufficiently representative to benefit from multiple viewpoints, small enough to be efficient, and well-connected to authority so as to get the right decisions to the right levels for effective action. Further, the advisory body needs to be trustworthy, meaning professionals believe that it is making correct decisions; this requires transparency and clear communication.

Data: Characteristics of Optimal System

- ★ A unique identifier is assigned to each practitioner.
- ★ Data system has capacity to verify, record, update, and track individuals' demographic characteristics, experience in the field, educational attainment, qualifications and ongoing development.
- ★ Data is collected on the location and distribution of training offerings, PD providers, and higher education institutions.
- ★ Data on staff retention, compensation, and turnover rates (by reason, geographical area, role, and other factors) is collected and used.
- ★ Data is collected cross-sector, disaggregated appropriately, and analyzed and reported regularly to stakeholders, funders and the public.
- ★ Data is used to improve the PD system and track progress toward its goals.

Data in Rhode Island

Interoperable data systems. The ELC established the Early Learning Data System Work Team which has focused primarily on child and program data. The ELC's Data System Work Team has significant member overlap with the PD System Work Team. The Data System Team has been actively meeting and has arrived at a set of priorities and action steps presented to the ELC in June 2011 (Early Learning Data System Recommendations, Early Learning Council, June 2011). Their report offers policy questions to guide design of RI's data system including several related to program quality and the workforce:

- What percentage/how many of the early childhood workforce is qualified, by meeting specific established standards, to prepare children to succeed at school entry (e.g. core competencies, career lattice education levels)?
- What are workforce characteristics and patterns (turnover, compensation, diversity, education, etc.)?
- What percentage/how many early care and education programs are high-quality?
- Does program quality improve over time?

The PD System Work Team offers an additional question: What percent/how many PD specialists (consultants, trainers) are qualified to deliver effective PD/technical assistance, e.g., have credentials related to content and to adult learning?

Through the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge, Rhode Island will develop and build an early learning data system. In terms of workforce data, the ELC recommends that the state

establish a central storage place for data on Rhode Island’s early learning workforce. This work should build on data collected and systems in place at DCYF, BrightStars, RIDE, and R2LP (T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood RI) and consider using licensing data as the foundation by requiring programs applying for and renewing a DCYF license to enter/update workforce data in a registry where they can also track annual professional development.

The PD System Work Team believes that child care programs are also a customer for RI’s data system(s) and would benefit if such systems can streamline/automate documentation of compliance with program standards that have practitioner elements, e.g., Head Start, Pre-K, national accreditation and BrightStars. Practitioners are best positioned to provide the data that are then connected (via a unique program identifier) to the program in which they work, thus facilitating the data system to create a staff profile by workplace.

Workforce registry: Recognizing that workforce data is essential to a well-functioning PD System, DHS included in the Resource Center contract a deliverable related to a registry for trainers, or more broadly, professional development specialists/consultants for the purposes of quality assurance. Currently, 31 other states do have early childhood/school-age workforce registries of some kind and several other states are in the design phase.³ The National Registry Alliance (TNRA) is a membership organization of these state registries and is a repository of useful information on registry design, construction and best practices.⁴ TNRA does offer guidance on how to build registries and may be able to offer some assistance to Rhode Island. The federal Offices of Child Care and Head Start are jointly funding a new National Technical Assistance Center on Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives, which may also be able to help.

Through the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge, a new statewide early learning data system will be created to include key data on the workforce and will incorporate key data elements recommended by TRNA. The PD System Work Team believes the parameters of RI’s registry design should be comprehensive, matching the full range of roles and levels of the CKCs.

To support the use of IPDPs, the registry needs to be accessible to individuals to set up and check their own records, and use the data to plan their own PD pathway. A tangible benefit of a registry is having a central location and dedicated expertise in transcript review using standard

³ <http://www.registryalliance.org/about-the-alliance/registry-map>

⁴ See *State of Early Childhood and School-Age Workforce Registries 2009* at <http://www.registryalliance.org/resources-briefs/alliance-resources>

protocols. This can support and align with the state's regulatory functions and any other system that needs practitioner data. One concern with a voluntary registry is having sufficient provider participation to report confidently on the state's early childhood/school-age workforce. Registry participation can be a condition of public funding, e.g., Pre-K, BrightStars, and/or can be a licensing requirement. Once the registry has been piloted, consideration can begin of how and whether to require participation.

The registry needs to be able to export data in the form of staff profiles of qualification levels and the status of continuing education by workplace for use by licensors (the state regulatory function), BrightStars, RIDE, a program's application for national accreditation, and perhaps Head Start grantees reporting requirements. Conversely, agencies that hold data on practitioners, e.g., RIDE (teacher licenses) or DHS (EI staff credentials), will need to import data to the registry. These relationships need to be formal, clear and regularly reviewed to ensure efficiency and appropriate levels of confidentiality. Such interagency agreements will benefit from the support of the ELC.

Data on professional development capacity: Essentially the common calendar, augmented by comprehensive information on credential, certificate and degree programs in higher education, is the starting point for a database of training/PD offerings. Coupled with information on assessment of PD needs, the capacity and directions for expansion can be planned.

Data on professional development needs: While aggregated data on PD needs is a goal for the future, currently each sector has identified needs for PD for its workforce based on practitioner input, program monitoring and professional judgment of administrators and others involved in delivering PD. For example, analysis of BrightStars data indicates the need for professional development on global quality improvement (structural and process) targeted to centers serving infants/toddlers and for family child care providers, especially those who speak Spanish as a primary language. It may be beneficial to the state to use national research to identify effective PD models in areas of high need.

Looking across the sectors of early childhood special education, early intervention and child care in Rhode Island, there are several areas of common need, which include the following:

- child development (appropriate expectations)
- behavior management/discipline (positive guidance and prevention of negative behaviors)
- differentiated teaching and learning

- developmentally appropriate and effective practice, activities and curriculum, including appropriate materials and equipment
- child assessment (in general), using assessment to inform practice, and communicating assessment information to families
- program and classroom assessment tools, e.g., the Environment Rating Scales, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System

Finance: Characteristics of Optimal System

- ★ Financial support is available for early childhood professionals to obtain education and ongoing development, based on need.
- ★ Explicit rewards are paid for attainment of additional education and development leading to compensation parity.
- ★ Financial support is available for programs/workplaces that facilitate professional development through resources for release time and substitute staff, teacher mentors and coaches, purchase of materials and equipment, and other supports.
- ★ Financing of the professional development system infrastructure is linked and/or embedded in the state's larger early childhood system. Infrastructure pieces that require financing may include the advisory body, data systems, support to higher education institutions and training systems and quality assurance processes.
- ★ All potential funding sources, public and private, federal, state and local are explored to support the PD system. Co-funding partnerships are encouraged.

Finance in Rhode Island

Currently the majority of the funding for PD in Rhode Island is federal, coming from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and the Head Start/Early Head Start program as well as the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs. With the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge award in 2012, funding for PD will be dramatically expanded. The RI Department of Human Services, with federal CCDF quality set-aside funding, supports the Community College of Rhode Island's Early Childhood Education and Training Project, the Resource Center, BrightStars, LISC Rhode Island's Child Care Facilities Fund, the RI Early Learning Standards project through the RI Department of Education and the Child Care Support Network, which is jointly funded by the RI Department of Health with federal Maternal and Child Health funds. The ELC has allocated some of its federal funds to support the launch of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood RI, devoting \$150,000 to the program over three years.

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that Part C (for 0-3 year olds) and Part B, Section 619 (for 3-5 year olds) each have a comprehensive system of personnel development that is consistent with the other. Professional development designed to address the provision of special education may be opened to others. Federal special education (IDEA Part B, Section 619) funds managed by RIDE provide training for early childhood preschool special educators and support staff and consultants at RIDE to design and coordinate this PD. PD for Early Intervention professionals is supported by IDEA Part C via a contract with Rhode Island College through the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities. The focus is largely on providing technical assistance to provider agencies in meeting the federal and state requirements of IDEA as well as on providing support to the clinical supervisors within the programs to be able to provide effective and reflective supervision.

Training for Head Start staff is supported by federal Head Start and Early Head Start funds awarded to each grantee (these are referred to as PA 20 and PA 26 funds, respectively). Grantees may choose to invite staff from other types of programs to their training events. Additional federal funds support the Rhode Island State Head Start Training and Technical Assistance contract that is currently awarded to Education Development Center, Inc. Training opportunities can be offered to the larger early childhood community; onsite TA is limited to Head Start programs and their contracted child care partners.

Some synergy among federal funding is possible. Rhode Island is creatively and efficiently using funds cross-sector in support of PD. One example is the Child Care Support Network (CCSN), which works to improve child care programs via onsite consultation with staff (job-embedded PD). CCSN is co-funded by the RI Department of Health with federal Maternal and Child Health funds and the RI Department of Human Services with federal CCDF quality set-aside funds. Rhode Island could do more cooperative funding of PD, e.g., connecting Early Intervention and preschool special education funding, jointly funding PD for child care centers/family child care with Head Start grantees. Indeed, this kind of cooperation among state agencies is welcomed by federal agencies, who are also interested in synergy and efficiency. While flexibility and cost-sharing is possible, there are certain restrictions on the use of federal funds for PD, as noted above.

A moderate amount of private philanthropic funds support PD and other aspects of system development in RI. The United Way of Rhode Island, in addition to program grants to individual early childhood programs, has made system grants to support program quality improvement,

including BrightStars. The Rhode Island Foundation has played a critical role in providing funding to implement T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood RI.

Rhode Island is similar to nearly all states: the most common funding sources for PD are CCDF, IDEA Part C and B, and Head Start. Other federal funding sources such as Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and several titles within Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) might be used for PD, but each is quite restrictive in terms of target population. A few states have used TANF Title IV-B and IV-E (child protection funds) to train providers who serve abused and neglected children. Maternal and Child Health funding, especially the new home visiting initiatives under the federal Health Care Act, may be an option for supporting training to child care providers on developmental screening and referral.

A comprehensive PD system cannot be supported solely with federal funding. A few states have appropriated state general revenue funds to PD initiatives and supports as well as to the system of higher education in the state (Alaska is one example). A few states have dedicated funding sources based on tobacco taxes which support broad early childhood initiatives that include funding for PD; Arizona and California are examples.

As in Rhode Island, state and local United Way organizations along with private foundations and other philanthropy provide support for PD. North Carolina and Vermont are examples of states where there has been consistent support for professional development initiatives from the private sector. Another source of support, though very modest, is fees charged to participants in otherwise publicly-funded training. Many states charge a nominal fee (\$5-\$25) for non-credit bearing PD.

Ultimately, Rhode Island can bring state agency and other funders together to explore how available funds can be used even more effectively to match PD needs. For example, can special education PD funds pay for RIELS training for special educators, using CCDF funding for other groups? Can Head Start funds be creatively combined to reach more practitioners? Are there as yet untapped federal funds for PD, such as Title I or the new home visiting initiative? What is a reasonable investment share for the state in support of a comprehensive PD system?

Moving Ahead

The RI Child Care Resource and Referral Center currently offers high quality and effective professional development of different delivery methods (e.g. credit-bearing courses; series-based training; on-site technical assistance, mentoring and coaching; communities of practice; and peer networks) that are linked to competencies and standards, that are based on identified need, and are informed by provider professional development plans. The Resource Center communicates opportunities to providers in various ways including the BrightStars website, a print calendar, email and mailings. Professional development is available in various locations throughout the state and in the primary language of the participant.

As key elements of this plan are developed (e.g. CKCs, trainer and workforce registry, data system), PD content will continue to embed program, professional, and learning standards and be data-driven and responsive to the needs of the field.

The draft version of *Rhode Island's Early Learning and School-Age Professional Development System Plan* was integrated almost completely into Rhode Island's successful Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant application. The Professional Development Systems Work Team is pleased to present this plan and the following recommendations to the Rhode Island Early Learning Council and the early care and education community and looks forward to collaborative work on Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge and other state quality initiatives.

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Recommendations

Professional Standards

- Support the release of the draft Core Knowledge and Competency documents for Center Teachers and Teacher Assistants, and develop CKCs and Career Lattices for Preschool Special Education, for Directors/Administrators, for Family Child Care providers and for providers of Professional Development.
- PD offerings should consist of a consistent set of proven, evidence-based and data-informed opportunities for all child care and school-age providers that build core competencies and incorporate adult learning strategies.
- Only PD that meets the above requirements should be included in program standards, such as licensing.

Career Pathways

- Develop one clear resource (website/calendar) for access to information – PD information, registration, CKCs, career lattice, career advising, etc.
- Incorporate strategies to support the transfer of skills and knowledge gained through PD to actual practice in programs (e.g. require teams of teachers to attend training together with program administrators).
- Consider alternate pathways to teacher certification.

Articulation

- Continue to support articulation agreements and policies and procedures among higher education institutions that are formal, transparent, active and easily accessible to students.
- Work with organizations who offer PD to connect community-based PD to higher education.

Advisory Structure

- Create an advisory structure that is sufficiently representative to benefit from multiple viewpoints, small enough to be efficient, and well-connected to authority so as to get the right decisions to the right levels for effective action.

Data

- Support the development of a state-wide comprehensive Early Learning Data System.
- Develop a Trainer and Workforce Registry.
- Use national research to identify effective PD models in areas of high need identified through data system, registry and workforce study.
- Develop systems to evaluate and assess learning outcomes for participants.

Financing

- Work cross-sector to provide PD opportunities and to combine funding streams to more effectively match PD needs.
- Identify resources to support staff participation in comprehensive PD (e.g. scholarships, funds for substitutes to cover staff release time, stipends for staff to attend training on weekends or at night).
- Develop staff retention incentives to ensure a high-quality, stable workforce for early care and school-age care settings.

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Appendix I

Rhode Island Early Learning Council Professional Development Systems Planning Work Team

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Appendix II

Summary of Existing Core Knowledge and Competencies across Sectors

Domain/ Category	1. EARLY INTERVENTION	2. AFTERSCHOOL/ YOUTH DEVELOPMENT	3. CENTER-BASED TEACHERS; TEACHER ASSISTANTS	4. THE INFANT/TODDLER CONSULTING PROFESSIONAL
FAMILIES	Family Owned IFSPs and Intervention	Family, School and Community Relationships	Family, Community & Relationships	Relationship-Based Practice
HEALTH AND SAFETY		Health, Safety and Wellness	Health, Safety & Wellness	Systems, Sectors, and Settings for Infant and Toddlers
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT		Creating the Learning Environment		
EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT	Evaluation and Assessment		Observation and Assessment	Infant/Toddler Developmental Screening & Assessment
CROSS-SECTOR	Service Coordination			
DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC		Youth Development, Curriculum & Program Design	Curriculum	
INDIVIDUALIZATION	Service Delivery Domains		Child Development & Learning	Infant/Toddler Curriculum and Individualization
MANAGEMENT		Administrator Competencies		
PROFESSIONALISM		Professional Growth and Leadership	Professionalism	The Consulting Professional

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2. Rhode Island Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Afterschool and Youth Development Professionals, <http://afterschoolri.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/RI-ASYD-Core-Competencies-document-FINAL.pdf>
3. Core Competencies for Rhode Island Early Childhood Teachers – DRAFT, http://www.ride.ri.gov/OSCAS/earlychild/pdf/DRAFT_Rhode_Island_Core_Competencies_7_15_11.pdf
4. A Guide to Effective Consultation with Settings Serving Infants, Toddlers, and their Families: Core Knowledge, Competencies, and Dispositions, http://transition.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/2011_effective_consultation.pdf