



Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force

Meeting #11

September 27, 2022

Welcome & Agenda

Welcome from our Co-Chairs



Shakira Bradshaw

Parent of Children under 5



Jenny Moses

Children's Cabinet



Sandy Simar

Early Educator

The Task Force is supported by:

- **Children's Cabinet Staff:** Erin Bailey, Hannah Quinn
- **Facilitation Team:** Afton Partners and Children's Funding Project

Develop a plan and implementation timeline that **ensures all families have access to affordable, high-quality early care and education that enriches, nurtures, and supports children and their families.**



Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles reflect the Task Force's values and beliefs, guide how it operates, and lay a foundation for decision-making

Promote Equity	Prioritize Family Perspectives, Needs, and Choices	Support the Power of Local Communities	Build Upon our Solid Foundation	Uplift and Diversify the ECE Workforce	Recognize Implementation Realities	Expect High Quality & Effectiveness	Design for Stability, Sustainability, and Positive Impact
<p>We will prioritize a system that promotes equitable outcomes, with a specific focus on children from the POCI community and building cultural competency in ECE classrooms.</p>	<p>We will prioritize families' perspectives, needs, and choices as we make data driven and evidence informed recommendations , recognizing that all provider types and settings provide value to the system.</p>	<p>We will ensure local communities are able to define their own priorities and are supported to build the system that meets their children and families' needs.</p>	<p>We will build upon the successes of Minnesota's past and current system, lessons from other states, and the expertise and research in the field.</p>	<p>We will invest in our dedicated and capable early childhood professionals so that they have the opportunity to thrive and grow, and we will build and support a racially diverse workforce.</p>	<p>We will recognize inherent system constraints while remaining responsive to local, state, and federal landscape changes.</p>	<p>We will endeavor to create a high quality and effective ECE system that meets the needs of all of Minnesota's children and families, regardless of circumstance, knowing that the state's future workforce, economy, and resident welfare is dependent upon it</p>	<p>We will work to support funding stability for providers, educators, and staff across mixed delivery settings to ensure better service for families.</p>

Today's Goals



Vote on recommendations for Long-term Family Affordability Plan, Family Affordability Standard, and the Workforce Equity Statement and Study



Discuss updates from our Working Groups on Provider Pay Mechanism Improvements, Compensation Framework, and the Effectiveness Improvement Recommendations Package



Review a draft package of Effectiveness recommendations to support our vision

Meeting #11 Discussion – 2 hours

- 6:00 – 6:05 p.m.** Welcome, agenda, Meeting 10 minutes approval
- 6:05 – 6:15 p.m.** Formal votes on:
- Long-term Family Affordability Plan
 - Family Affordability Standard
 - Equity Statement and Workforce Study Recommendation
- 6:15 – 7:00 p.m.** Workforce working group discussion
- 7:00 – 7:15 p.m.** Affordability working group discussion
- 7:15 – 7:45 p.m.** Review a draft package of Effectiveness recommendations to support our vision
- 7:45 – 7:55 p.m.** Discuss deliverables development process
- 7:55 – 8:00 p.m.** Close out and next steps

Reminder: Procedures



Open meeting law requires public bodies to **record and maintain votes** of its members. Virtual meetings require a vote by roll call.



Formal votes will include only voting members and formal votes will be held for items such as a statement on vision, or value or a recommendation to be included in the Task Force Plan.



Informal voting (ex. thumbs up) may be used to engage all Task Force members on items such as a matter of process, or an item necessary to get to a vision statement or recommendation.

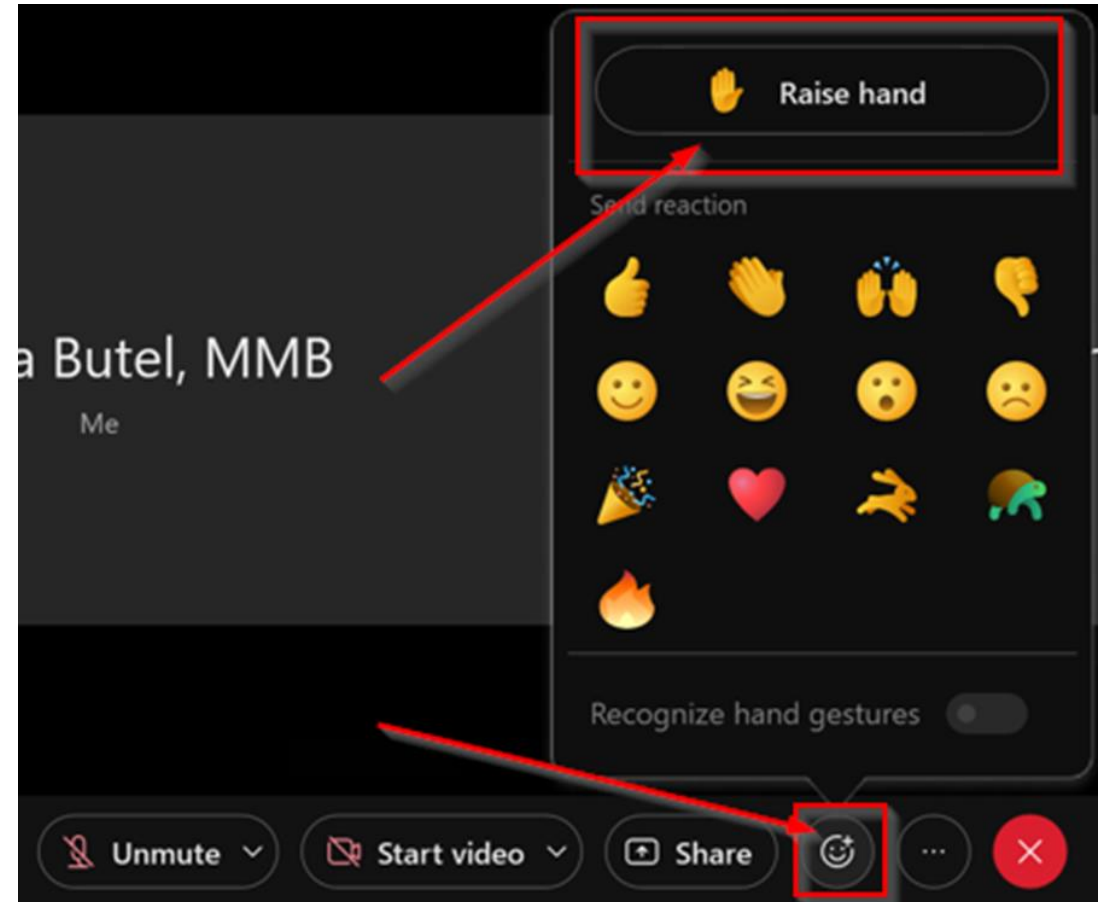


Quorum is defined as a majority of voting members.

Approval of Meeting #10 Minutes

Please indicate your approval of the minutes from meeting #10 by using the '**Raise Hand**' icon/button in WebEx.

To do this, click on the 'smiley face' icon at the bottom of WebEx. After the dialog box opens, please click on the '**Raise Hand**' icon/button if you want to approve the minutes from meeting #10.



Consensus in Recommendations

- This Task Force is a **broad coalition** and we do not expect to reach 100% agreement on all of our recommendations
- We do want to **reach consensus and buy-in** from members on our recommendations
- In order to reach consensus, we need to hear from all task force members – your ideas, your questions, and your concerns are all valuable!



Gradients of Agreement Scale adapted by Pierre Omidyar

Formal votes and anticipated vote timeline



Long-term Family Affordability Plan Recommendation (Slide 1 of 2)

- **All Minnesota families should have affordable access to high-quality early care and education (ECE) services.** Our vision is that the state moves toward a system where no family is paying more than 7% of their yearly income on ECE. We propose the following long-term affordability framework to achieve that vision by July 2031.
- **A new family benefits system (for example, "Great Start MN Program") is built to center the child and brain development.** Existing state and federal resources and necessary new contributions are combined to form the new program, which is fully funded to cover the full cost of quality care for the true demand in the system. This means there should be enough money in the system to provide coverage based on eligibility guidelines and established family contribution schedules. With this level of funding, there would be no systemic waitlists (though program-specific waitlists may still exist) and all eligible families would have access to benefits.
- **Federal investments are maximized to minimize costs to the state.** This means if federal limitations on eligibility increase, the state increases its eligibility accordingly over the phase-in timeline and maintains its investment efforts as federal appropriations increase. As federal investments increase, the state should opt-in to all available funding. Upon commencement, eligibility immediately increases to the federal level in place.
- **Early care and education is affordable for lower- and middle- income families in the new system ("affordability standard").** This is done in four ways:
 - Expanding income eligibility levels for existing programs at the beginning of the implementation timeline for program participation to percentage of state median income (SMI) allowed under federal law (*in alignment with short-term recommendations, as of today this is 85% SMI*)
 - Expanding income eligibility for the new program to all families by the end of the implementation timeline, in accordance with the state's clear goal to make early care and education affordable to families.
 - Eliminating contributions for lower-income families – families below 75% SMI should not be required to pay a family contribution.
 - Reducing family contributions for middle-income families – families should contribute an increasing amount of income, but no more than 7% of gross income.



Long-term Family Affordability Plan Recommendation (Slide 2 of 2)

- **The system is structured to promote access to quality.** Quality measures used by the state must be clear and navigable, and the benefit of quality care and education to child brain development should be communicated. Families must have support in finding a quality program that meets their needs. The benefit program must cover the cost of quality programs, through a combination of public contribution and family contribution, and give families no financial (or other) disincentive to choose quality care.
- **The new system is structured to promote family choice among provider and program types that best meet family needs.** Families have the information necessary to make informed decisions about program/provider types, and can easily find the choices available to them that meet their needs and preferences. Between a combination of public contribution and family contribution, the program amount covers the cost of each provider/program type, and there must be no financial (or other) disincentive to attend the program type of family choice.
- **The program is easily accessible for families, given the opportunity for positive impact on child development.** It does this by making participation affordable, but also by removing barriers to participation, including: reduce administrative complexity, increase access points, streamlined communications, create clear connections to other social programs, and minimize stigma.



Recommended affordability standard, and its ramifications (slide 1 of 2)

From establishing legislation: "The plan must include an affordability standard that clearly identifies the maximum percentage of income that a family must pay for early care and education. "

- Affordability Standard:

- Families earning less than 75% of SMI should pay no contribution.
- Families earning between 75-100% of SMI should pay a contribution between 0-2% of income.
- Families earning between 100-125% of SMI should pay a contribution between 2-4% of income.
- Families earning between 125- 250% of SMI should pay a contribution between 4-7% of income.
- Families earning more than 250% of SMI should pay a contribution of 7% of income.
- If the price of their chosen ECE program amounts to less than the affordability standard, ~~7% of a family's income~~, they will be responsible for paying for the full amount.

- Eligibility for the future state benefits program should be in line with this affordability standard by the end of the implementation timeline for our plan (July 2031).



Recommended affordability standard, and its ramifications (slide 2 of 2)

The affordability standard must be re-evaluated periodically, no less than every two years, to assess the impact of changes in:

- **Family Incomes**, including understanding family income in comparison to inflation and cost of living
- **Costs of care**, including levels of quality and increasing compensation, which may make the full cost of care more challenging for even higher income families to cover
- **Federal landscape** – including both federal funding changes and changing requirements – which could dramatically alter costs to the State and families

A cost study must be done alongside the periodic re-evaluation of the affordability standard to understand 1) true cost of care including varying levels of quality across provider types, 2) geographic differences in costs of care, and 3) total costs to the state. This study must also include an assessment of full system take rates and demand, in order to understand total costs to the state.

The state should conduct an evaluation of progress of plan implementation from 2025-2031, including family demand, ability to build up the provider and workforce base, and impact of scale on quality.



Equity Statement and Workforce Study Recommendation

Equity Statement: The Task Force recognizes that in order to recruit, retain, and support a diverse workforce, racial inequities within the profession need to be addressed. We believe our best levers to impact these inequities are through compensation reform, increased access to benefits, and increased educational support and access to recruit, develop, and retain people of color and indigenous people into advanced roles within the profession.

Workforce Study Recommendation: A study should be administered every three years to better understand the current state of Minnesota's early childhood education workforce across the mixed delivery system in terms of demographic composition, compensation, and education. Tangible outcome metrics should also be established for decreasing current wage disparities for people of color and increasing representation of people of color in advanced roles within the field. Administered every three years, the study would allow the state to measure progress towards these outcomes and make necessary adjustments to help support, develop, and retain a diverse workforce.

Building Toward Meeting Our Charge

- Not Started
- In Progress
- Completed

Goals (all equity-led)

Plan Development

Supporting Concepts / Processes

Foundation

The Task Force Charge

Affordable

Accessible

Effective

Supported Workforce

Task Force Discussions

Workforce Compensation and Supports Working Group

Parent and Provider Affordability Working Group

Disenfranchised Groups and Equity Definition

Equity Accountability Process

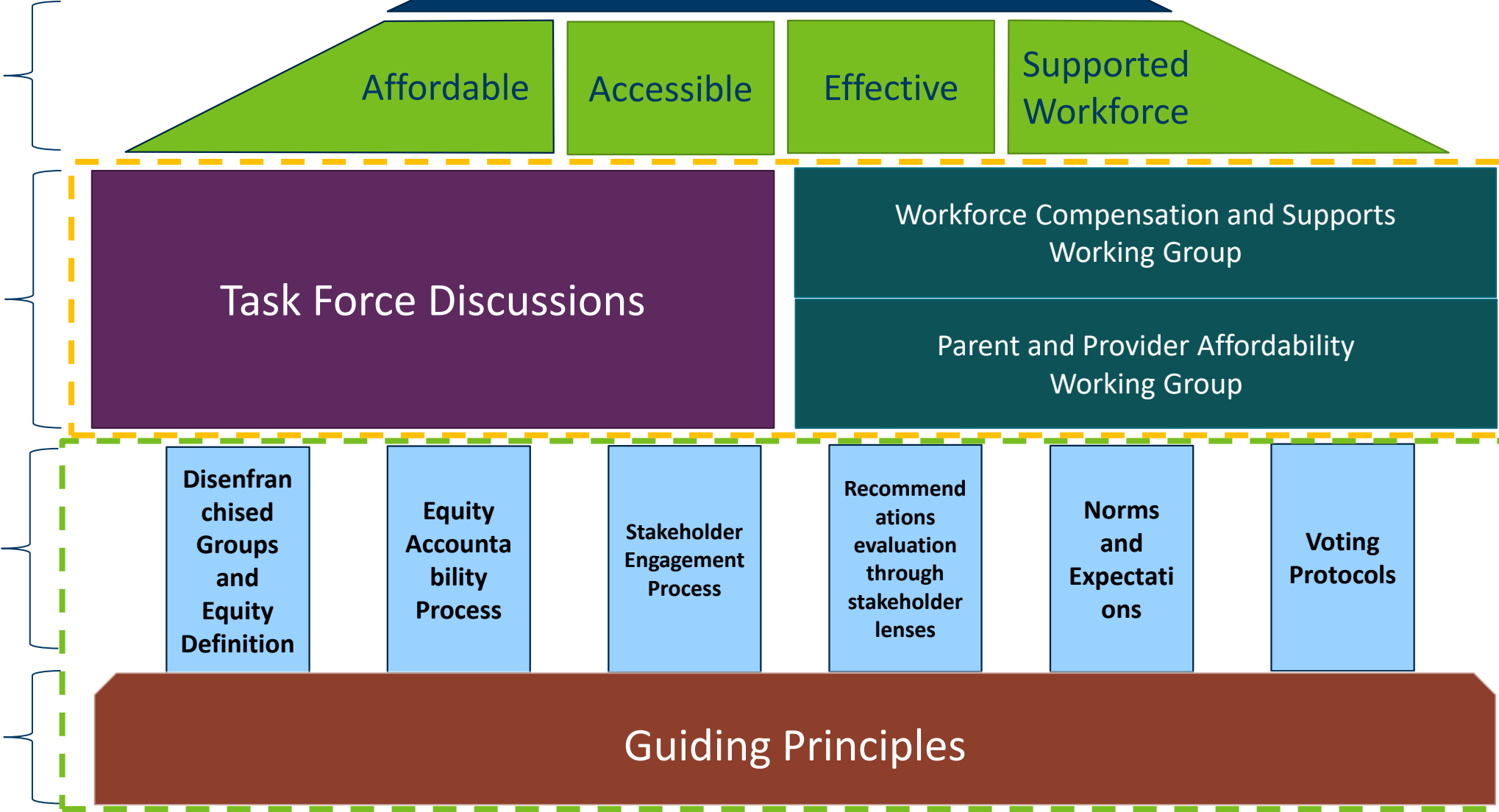
Stakeholder Engagement Process

Recommendations evaluation through stakeholder lenses

Norms and Expectations

Voting Protocols

Guiding Principles



Vote Sequencing

Month	Affordability	Workforce	Effectiveness	Implementation
This meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Affordability Standard Long-term Family Benefits Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring a "Diverse" Workforce 		
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider Pay Mechanism Improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensation Framework "Supported" Workforce Recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness Improvement Recommendations Package 	
November	<i>Hold for review of draft plan; votes only for essential changes or open items</i>			
December	<i>Hold for final review of draft plan; votes only for essential changes or open items</i>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliverables: Plan and Implementation Timeline (informal)
January	<i>Votes on edits for final plan and timeline</i>			

Working Group Share-outs and Discussion

Task Force & Working Group Structure

Endorses charge, guiding principles, deliverables, and timeline

Establishes, advises, and sets priorities for Working Groups

Reviews, adjusts, and formally approves recommendations for incorporation into a Task Force Report

Task Force

Working Groups

Take direction from Task Force

Research, analyze, and bring proposals to Task Force

- Regarding key topics/questions posed by the Task Force
- Stemming from the Charge, and
- In alignment with guiding principles

Workforce Compensation and Supports Working Group

GOAL: What do we mean by a “qualified, diverse, supported and equitably compensated” workforce, and how do we get there?

Voting Members	Non-Voting Members
Meghan Caine, Early Childhood Educator - Public school-based	Nicole Blissenbach, MN Dept of Labor and Industry
Pat Ives, Director of Licensed Child Care	Lydia Boerboom, Kids Count on Us Representative
Adriana Lopez, Early Childhood Educator - Licensed Center	Oriane Casale, Department of Employment and Economic Development
Jenny Moses, Children’s Cabinet	Cyndi Cunningham, MN Child Care Provider Information Network
Krystal Shatek, Director of Licensed Child Care	Nancy Hafner, Faculty Representative
Senator Melissa Wiklund	Debbie Hewitt, Minnesota Department of Education
	Ann McCully, Child Care Aware of Minnesota
	Michelle Trelsted, MN Community Education Association

Reminder: Financial Compensation Framework Recommendations Approved by voting members on June 26

- 1. Develop and adopt a tiered wage scale** that reflects regional variations in the living wage. The Base starting wage would serve as the floor and would reflect the local geographies' living wage. Subsequent wage increases would be structured to move towards pay parity with that of elementary school teachers as ECE III status is achieved.
 - The Proposed MN ECE Professional Wage Scale will be used as a starting point, with edits made to:
 - Adjust wages based on current cost of living
 - Expand competencies to include additional pathways (*pending discussion and future recommendations on qualified workforce*)
- 2. The adopted wage scale should be updated on an annual basis** by DLI to reflect cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and/or other regional fluctuations in the labor market that impact wages.
- 3. For FCC owners, a wage floor should be established**, with a shared understanding of how this wage may be impacted by variation in enrollment, that reflects their dual responsibilities as directors *and* providers of care and education. Additional staff should be compensated according to the adopted wage scale. This wage floor would reflect what FCC owners should be paid as a wage, not including funds received that they use to run their businesses.
- 4. The adopted wage scale should be used to estimate staffing costs in any cost modeling study** that may be done to inform provider and program pay.

Discussion themes: Wage Scale & Qualifications

We want:

- To incentivize education without delaying workforce growth
- To encourage formal education while not discounting other ways of gaining competencies
- To ensure current members of the workforce receive equitable compensation
- All providers to see themselves in our framework
- To be cognizant that tying wages to competencies/education is likely unenforceable and may be too prescriptive for businesses



UPDATED Draft: Financial Compensation Framework Recommendations (1 of 4)

1. **After a phased-in implementation period, adopt a guaranteed minimum wage and an incentivized wage scale** ~~Develop and adopt a tiered wage scale~~ that reflects regional variations in the living wage. The ~~ECE+~~ minimum wage for all members of the workforce would serve as the floor, ~~and~~ would reflect the local geographies' individual living wage, and would reflect an appropriate wage for an entry level role. Subsequent wage increases along the wage scale would be incentivized, and structured to move towards pay parity with that of elementary school teachers as ~~ECE-III~~ Lead II status is achieved. The base wage for all members of the workforce will be a requirement for employers opting into public funds, including a future family benefits program and future ongoing base funding program. As programs opt in to increasing public funds, documentation and submission of compliance would be required.

 - The Proposed MN ECE Professional Wage Scale ~~will be~~ has been used as a starting point, with edits made to:
 - Adjust wages based on current cost of living
 - Take out references to the ECE I, II, and III levels
 - Align with the Achieve career lattice and include comparable competencies for the phased-in implementation period. ~~Expand competencies to include additional pathways (pending discussion and future recommendations on qualified workforce)~~
 - Further updates are needed to:
 - Reflect regional variation, in alignment with regional cost modeling.
 - Fill in the comparable competencies and experience guidelines.
2. With a shared understanding of how this wage may be impacted by variation in enrollment, Family Child Care providers should plan to pay themselves a base annual wage equivalent to a lead role on the wage scale, ~~For FCC owners, a wage floor should be established, with a shared understanding of how this wage may be impacted by variation in enrollment,~~ to reflect their dual responsibilities as directors *and* providers of care and education. Additional staff should be compensated according to the adopted wage scale. ~~This wage floor would reflect what FCC owners should be paid as a wage, not including funds received that they use to run their businesses.~~



UPDATED Draft: Financial Compensation Framework Recommendations (2 of 4)

3. The ~~adopted wage scale~~ **minimum wage** should be updated on a **biannual** basis by **DEED** and **DLI** to reflect cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) and/or other regional fluctuations in the labor market that impact wages. **DLI** would serve as the enforcement agency for the minimum wage.
4. All ECE providers, regardless of setting, shall be provided with an updated wage scale biannually. Employers will be incentivized to compensate staff above the base rate, using the hourly wage rate tied to each role, and incentivized to hire staff in alignment with education guidelines.
5. The ~~adopted~~ wage scale should be **used to estimate staffing costs in any cost modeling study** that may be done to inform provider and program pay.



UPDATED Draft: Minimum wage + incentivized wage scale (3 of 4)

Implementation:

- Over the implementation timeline, as funding to providers increases through our long-term affordability recommendations, wages should be increased for the existing workforce and new members of the field. As programs opt-in to these systems of funding, they would be required to implement yearly cost of living increases for all employees.
- Throughout the phased-in implementation timeline, employers will be incentivized to pay workers at wages commensurate with experience and education, and to hire workers who meet educational and competency guidelines.
- By the end of the implementation timeline, all members of the workforce will be paid a base wage equal to or above the DEED cost of living. Employers will be incentivized to pay workers at wages commensurate with education, in alignment with the wage scale, and to hire workers who meet educational guidelines.



Next Meeting

UPDATED DRAFT: Minimum wage + incentivized wage scale (4 of 4)

These numbers reflect statewide median data. Per the recommendation, regional data would be used for implementation.

	Hourly Wage (2021 numbers)	Annual Wage (2021 numbers)	Based On
Guaranteed Wage for all members of the workforce by 2031*	\$16.21	\$33,717	Individual Cost of Living (DEED)

	Educational Guidelines for Role Aligned with MN Achieve Career Lattice OR Comparable Competency and Experience Guidelines for Role through 2031	Role <i>Employees must meet statutory requirements</i>	Hourly Wage (2021 numbers)	Annual Wage (2021 numbers)	Based On	
Wage Incentivized	CDA Certificate Steps 6-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified apprenticeship program OR X hours of professional training AND X years of experience AND corresponding competencies 	Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Educator in 0 – 5 settings 	\$19.40	\$40,352	Family Living Wage
Wage Incentivized	Early Childhood-related Associate Degree Steps 8-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified apprenticeship program OR X hours of professional training AND X years of experience AND corresponding competencies 	Lead I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Educator in 0 – 5 settings Guide Support Roles FCC enrolling fewer than 10 children 	\$24.25	\$50,440	125% of Support
Wage Incentivized	Early Childhood Ed BA Steps 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> X hours of professional training AND X years of experience and corresponding competencies 	Lead II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead Educator in 0 – 5 settings Guide Support and Lead I Roles FCC enrolling 10 or more children 	\$30.31	\$63,050	Parity with Elementary Teachers (125% of Lead I)

*appropriate wage for an entry level role

One Example of Regional Variation

DEED Planning Region	Guaranteed Hourly Wage (2021 numbers)	Guaranteed Annual Wage (2021 numbers)	Based On
Statewide Median Base Rate	\$16.21	\$33,717	Individual Cost of Living (DEED)
Central Minnesota	\$16.10	\$33,488	
Northeast Minnesota	\$14.07	\$29,266	
Northwest Minnesota	\$13.79	\$28,683	
Seven County Mpls – St. Paul, MN	\$17.57	\$36,546	
Southeast Minnesota	\$14.29	\$29,723	
Southwest Minnesota	\$13.56	\$28,205	

DEED planning regions are just one way to determine regional data, and are shown here as an example. Determining regional minimum wage and corresponding wage scales should be done in conjunction with cost modeling efforts to ensure alignment.

Revisiting the Unifying Framework

Unifying Framework

The Power to the Profession Unifying Framework is an initiative led by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), joined by 14 other national organizations, to define and develop the early childhood education profession. The framework includes these steps for professionalization of the ECE field:

- Define three professional designations with distinct roles and responsibilities: Early Childhood Educator (ECE) I, II and III, and they correspond to a Child Development Associate credential, an associate degree and a bachelor's degree.
- Align professional preparation pathways and specializations.
- Ensure adequate compensation that is comparable across care settings and to public school salaries for comparable qualifications, experience, and job responsibilities.

Discussion Themes: Power to the Profession Unifying Framework

- Supporting Factors:
 - Opportunity for national alignment and support, with one framework recognized throughout the country.
 - Support from national advocacy organizations.
 - Professionalization of the field and ability to easily transfer skills.
- Potential Challenges:
 - Lack of awareness of the framework or buy-in from members of the workforce.
 - The current workforce is not at, and may not be able to reach, the educational guidelines in the framework.

DRAFT Option to Consider

In order to achieve a unified vision across the workforce, professionalize the field, and allow all ECE educators to see themselves as part of a broad system, Minnesota should work to implement the Power to the Profession Unifying Framework. This will allow for:

- Definition of professional designations with distinct roles and responsibilities.
- Aligned professional preparation pathways and specializations.
- Adequate compensation that is comparable across care settings and to public school salaries for comparable qualifications, experience, and job responsibilities.
**The Task Force is recommending this be accomplished by implementing Task Force compensation framework recommendations*

“Supported” Workforce Recommendations



“Supported” Workforce Recommendations

1. Access to mental health and wellness resources for all ECE staff should be strengthened and expanded, including but not limited to, through the following methods:
 - Providing time off for staff to pursue therapeutic services *connected to Time Off recommendations
 - Bringing wellness services on-site
 - Providing subsidies for individuals to pay for needed services
 - Ensuring health care benefits include coverage for mental health and wellness activities *connected to Benefits recommendations
2. To allow for the voices of frontline ECE staff to be both heard and valued, providers employing multiple staff should ensure dedicated time for reflective supervision and regularly collect and incorporate employee feedback and input into administrative operations, curriculum design, and other programmatic improvements.
3. The state should continue and expand successful programs in the areas of supporting ECE staff and students:
 - Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC). This program partners with mental health professionals to provide evidence-informed mental health consultation to Parent Aware enrolled early care and education providers.
 - Providing grant funding for programs in the ECE system, including the Center for Inclusive Childcare (CICC), which provides free relationship-based professional development to early childhood educators.
 - Early Childhood Mental Health Grants, which provides mental health services to children ages zero to five eligible for Medical Assistance (MA).

Reflection on Workforce Working Group



What concerns or questions do you have?



What would you like this WG to keep in mind as they wrap up their final conversations?

Please submit feedback by Monday, 10/10, to support working group discussions

Family and Provider Affordability Working Group

GOAL: What does it mean to have an affordable system that works for families and that providers want to be a part of? How do we get there?

Voting Members	Non-Voting Members
Representative Liz Boldon	Janell Bentz, Minnesota Department of Revenue
Shakira Bradshaw, Parent Children Under 5	Summer Bursch, Minnesota Association of Child Care Professionals (MACCP)
Kath Church, Family Child Care Program	Deb Fitzpatrick, Statewide Advocacy Organization
Brook LaFloe, Tribal Representative	Missy Okeson, Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFs)
Jayne Whiteford, Parent Children Under 5	Clare Sanford, Minnesota Child Care Association
	Tonia Villegas, Minnesota Association of County Social Services Administrators
	Cindi Yang, Department of Human Services

Reminder: What do we mean by “Program Funding”?

- The funding that flows from the state to programs/providers across the mixed delivery system in order to fund them for the services they provide for children and families.
- There are two key questions to address in program funding:
 - ✓ **Is the funding level (how much money flows to providers) appropriate?** If not, what should it be and how do we get there?
 - **Is the funding mechanism (how money flows to providers) appropriate?** If not, what should it be and how do we get there?

Challenges we have identified with existing program funding

Funding Level

- ✓ Not enough funding
- ✓ Inequitable funding (particularly across geographies)
- ✓ Inability of families to afford co-pays

Funding Mechanisms

- Cash flow challenges from reimbursements-based funding
- Instability and unpredictability in revenues from family mobility, enrollment challenges
- Complicated and inconsistent billing and payment policies and practices across counties and administrators



Program funding mechanisms: Attributes for the future system

Funding is stable

The funding
process is
transparent

Administration is
simple and
consistent

Funding is
equitably
accessible across
settings

There is
accountability for
use of funding



Program funding mechanisms: *Draft Recommendations*

To make funding stable:

- Public funding should be based on **enrollment rather than attendance (pay for absent days)**
 - This covers sick days, vacation days, and professional development days
- Public funding should be paid **in advance of services, rather than reimbursed**
 - Ideally this is for a full month to allow for planning and preparing their services over a longer time horizon.
- **Once eligibility is established, it should remain in place for at least one year** under most circumstances, resulting in continuity of state funding for enrolled children
- Public funding should be provided through both per child rates and **base operational funding amounts** that provide stable funding for fixed cost structures essential to effective services
 - Providers need a base funding level that allows them to plan long-term
 - Base operational funding minimizes revenue loss/provider risk caused by enrollment & eligibility changes, allowing programs to cover fixed operational costs.
 - This also supports the State's goals for increasing stability as we build toward a system of increased access and quality

QUESTIONS:

- **What questions or concerns do you have about these recommendations?**
- **What would you add or change?**



Program funding mechanisms: *Draft Recommendations*

To make the funding process transparent:

- The state's calculation methods for public funding (i.e. cost model inputs) must be **clearly communicated to the public and the field**; Any changes to public funding mechanisms and/or amounts are done with ample, appropriate notice by the state
- The state must have **publicly-available, clear policies and procedures** in place for how funding is to be determined

QUESTIONS:

- What questions or concerns do you have about these recommendations?
- What would you add or change?



Program funding mechanisms: *Draft Recommendations*

To make program administration simple and consistent:

- The state should blend and braid funding to ensure providers participating in the Great Start MN Program are effectively funded.
- The state should have **one payment system rather than multiple**, and **one administrative state agency** for the program.
- Local administrative entities **apply policies and procedures clearly and consistently**.
- **Simplify paperwork for families and providers** to reduce payment errors and deliver funding more effectively.
- Require that administrative entities offer **electronic processing** of state program billing and payment for providers

QUESTIONS:

- **What questions or concerns do you have about these recommendations?**
- **What would you add or change?**



Program funding mechanisms: *Draft Recommendations*

To make funding equitably accessible across programs

- The differences between schools, Head Start, centers (non-profit and for-profit), licensed family child care, and family friend and neighbor care are recognized, and funding is distributed to best support programs in their settings
- Funding that is not provided as a per child rate, such as base funding, must be equitable across settings based on their intended purpose
- Additional program funding (such as VPK, start up and incubation funding, etc.) should be equitably accessible to all settings who qualify to provide services
- Offer flexible provider grants that allow for innovation and specialization in child care services
 - For providers offering reasonable & valuable services that exceed quality components included in the cost model, offer provider grants to cover those additional costs, rather than passing on the cost to families (ex. Infant mental health services in an area with high rates of child trauma).

QUESTIONS:

- **What questions or concerns do you have about these recommendations?**
- **What would you add or change?**



Program funding mechanisms: *Draft Recommendations*

To have accountability for use of funding:

- This system **maintains family choice** as a priority, where a significant portion of funding follows the child, ensuring that families are the ultimate accountability lever for funding.
- The state has **clear, publicly-available expectations for use of public funding**.

QUESTIONS:

- What questions or concerns do you have about these recommendations?
- What would you add or change?



What concerns or questions do you have?



What would you like this WG to keep in mind as they wrap up their final conversations?

Please submit feedback by Monday, 10/10, to support working group discussions

Review a draft package of Effectiveness recommendations to support our vision

Vision for Effective ECE services Confirmed via formal vote in April Meeting (Meeting 6)

In addition to being affordable and accessible, an effective ECE experience centers **child and family well-being through a system of choice**. It does this by:

- Ensuring offerings address and advance the **social, emotional, psychological, cultural, physical, and intellectual needs** of each child, in a trauma-informed manner
- Providing **safe, healthy, stable, secure, consistent, nurturing, and enriching environments** for each child.
- Building **trusting relationships** founded on mutual respect between each family and their caregivers.
- Promoting **linguistically responsive and culturally relevant** environments with **diverse staff that reflect the families they serve and the whole state**.
- **Connecting families to resources and supports** *they* have identified will increase their family well-being



What will it take for providers/programs to offer an effective experience (per our vision)?

To achieve our vision of effectiveness across all providers in the mixed delivery system where all families have access to an effective early care and education environment in the location of their choice, **Minnesota's early care and education system needs significant investment and reinvigorated focus and alignment on its importance to a thriving Minnesota.** Our early care and education providers and workforce, as those closest to children and families, and in order to enable them to bring this Task Force's vision of effectiveness to reality for all children and families, Minnesota needs:

- Consistent and equitable standards and growth-oriented accountability systems,
- A healthy business environment and clear, **consistently applied**, regulations,
- Cohesive, high functioning infrastructure and ecosystem,
- Fair compensation and supports for staff, and
- More, consistent, and equitable funding, which enables many of the above.

Feedback: Effectiveness Package

- Out of 9 total survey respondents:
 - "I really like it - I'm fully convinced": 2
 - "I like it/good enough!": 6
 - "I will support it until I learn more": 0
 - "Mixed feelings": 1
 - "I prefer something different": 0
 - "I just don't like it": 0



Consistent and equitable standards and growth-oriented accountability systems

Why is this essential?

- We envision a culture of continuous improvement for our full ECE system.
- We know when given the option, families will choose high quality programs, with 68% of families with children under 5 receiving Child Care Assistance today choosing Parent Aware rated programs (only about 31% of all programs participate in Parent Aware). All families receiving Early Learning Scholarships are required to use Parent Aware Rated programs.
- Increasing quality must feel attainable for providers across the mixed delivery system. We must address and honor the unique nature of each program type, but also compel participation in the broader goals that are shared across all programs.

What does this look like?

- Consistent, clear, and equitable standards are applied equitably across program types and monitored consistently.
- Standards are culturally competent and promote inclusion of all ethnicities & cultures.
- Accountability systems promote and incentivize quality growth and attainment.
- Access to training and coaching on implementation of the standards in the context of effectiveness for different program types **at all rating levels.**

DRAFT Recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: **Formal support for Endorsement** of the ongoing continuous improvement efforts for Parent Aware, including the Racial Equity Action Plan and Equity Report, being implemented.
- Recommendation 2: The state should, in partnership with a diverse stakeholder body inclusive of providers of all types, complete an analysis of the option to include all licensed providers in Parent Aware, the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Under this structure, Parent Aware would be expanded to include a new entry standard of “licensed” (**such as, for example, the option to have all licensed programs meet a new definition of 1 Star, with the current 4 Star Parent Aware rating structure shifted up expanded to a 5 Star structure**). This option acknowledges that licensed programs are required to meet a certain level of basic standards and enables parents to more readily assess and compare programs through one rating system. **The analysis should account for any impacts to existing pathways.**



A healthy business environment and clear, consistently applied, regulations

Why is this essential?

- Child care businesses are stretched to manage the day-to-day needs of their business and the needs of children in their care. It is essential to minimize any unnecessary administrative and regulatory burden for child care business owners so that they can spend as much time as possible focused on providing effective environments for the children in their care.
- Many of Minnesota's child care providers are small businesses that contribute to the economic well-being of their local communities. When small businesses thrive, their communities benefit. A healthy operating environment enables this.

What does this look like?

- Creating a clearer and simpler system for providers. The state should focus on simplifying regulations where possible and where health and safety would not be impacted. Some specific opportunities to consider include:
 - Ensuring clear requirements and understanding the purpose of those requirements
 - Consistent messaging across the system
 - Making licensing processes more easily navigable and less intimidating by simplifying processes, reducing paperwork, and modernizing systems
 - Ensuring that licensors have the same understanding of regulations and rules throughout the entire state and that these are applied consistently
- Offering opportunities for providers to become stronger businesses. The state can:
 - Continue successful existing trainings, such as its partnership with First Children's Finance, which has seen strong participation in business acumen training.
 - Evaluate other opportunities across the country for successful impact

DRAFT Recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: ~~Formal support for~~ Endorsement of the ongoing Child Care Regulation Modernization projects conducted by the Department of Human Services (DHS), which may include alternative licensing models, abbreviated licensing inspections, and risk-based tiered violation systems. These projects are developing a report and proposed legislation to implement the new licensing tools and revised licensing standards, submitted by February 1, 2024.
- Recommendation 2: DHS should continue existing opportunities to improve business acumen, including knowledge of existing resources and programs for increased access to capital, among current and new small business providers; and explore options to increase opportunities including incentives for participation. The state should consider programs focused on developing business acumen for small business owners from historically disenfranchised communities and in areas with child care deserts where business development and expansion is most needed.



Cohesive, high functioning infrastructure and ecosystem

Why is this essential?

- Infrastructure, for this Task Force's purposes, is defined as the state and regional organizational structures, systems, and supports necessary for broad successful implementation and ongoing delivery of services in line with this Task Force's vision.
- Our recommendations presume high functioning infrastructure that can readily support decision-making and fast-paced growth in family participation and provider and workforce capacity.
- Systems and structures must be momentum-reinforcing for positive system growth, rather than burdensome and outdated.

What does this look like?

- An understanding of the strengths and challenges with existing infrastructure
- A clear plan for infrastructure improvement and expansion to meet the growth envisioned in this plan
- An understanding and prioritization of investments needed

DRAFT Recommendation:

- Recommendation 1: ~~The state must~~ To fully understand the infrastructure needs of the future ECE system, including technology, staffing, and programmatic changes **the state should utilize existing data and seek new information where necessary to inform planning, including for any changes to a formalized governance structure.** State agencies responsible for administering ECE programs should consult intermediary structures and providers when evaluating changes.

9/27/2022

Infrastructure includes but is not limited to:

- Intermediary structures (e.g., CCR&Rs, county administrators, etc.)
- Local community collaborations
- Workforce recruitment and development systems
- Workforce scholarships
- Data and information management systems
- Eligibility determination and family navigation systems
- Quality improvement and accountability systems
- Licensing and monitoring
- Building capacity improvements and expansion
- **Higher education and training**

Fair compensation and supports

Why is this essential?

- At the core of this Task Force's vision for effectiveness is ensuring children form healthy, stable relationships with their caregivers. An effective ECE system, therefore, relies on a stable, qualified workforce. We cannot have an effective ECE system without continuity of care for children.
- Today's system at large provides poor wages and benefits and minimal supports. This leads to high levels of turnover and instability and limits the ability to meet high quality standards.
- Nationally, ECE workers of color are over-represented in entry-level roles and therefore the ones most negatively impacted by wage disparities across the field.
- Providing fair compensation and supports acknowledges the importance of the ECE workforce, and leads to improved stability, retention, and growth.

What does this look like?

- Increasing wages **for all members of the workforce**, per this Task Force's compensation framework recommendations
- Providing benefits, per this Task Force's recommendations
- Having accessible professional pathways that enable career growth, per this Task Force's recommendations
- Providing clear and equitable professional standards
- Ensuring ECE workers have access to mental health services

Recommendations:

- *Provided through Workforce Compensation and Supports Working Group*

More, consistent, and equitable funding

Why is this essential?

- When we choose to not adequately invest as a State in the ECE system, costs to the State remain. For too long, these “hidden” costs of the early care and education system have been borne by:
 - Low wages for ECE workers
 - Public assistance to support ECE workers earning low wages
 - Lost workforce participation for families who leave the workforce to care for children due to high cost of ECE
 - Long-term cost to society **due to** insufficient ECE, including lower tax revenue, higher criminal justice costs, higher public assistance costs, higher public health costs, etc.
- Adequate funding is essential to provide an effective environment as described in this Task Force’s recommendations, notably including necessary funding for providers and fair compensation and benefits for the ECE workforce

What does this look like?

- Understanding the true cost of the system we want and that we are asking our ECE programs and workforce to provide
- Providing equitable funding to programs based on the actual cost of providing care and reflective of all costs associated with running a program across provider types, quality levels, and regions of the state
- Paying fair compensation and benefits to the ECE workforce, appropriately recognizing their contributions
- Investing in an increasingly cohesive and sustainable infrastructure

Recommendations:

- *Provided through the Family and Provider Affordability Working Group*

Deliverables Planning

Develop a **plan** and **implementation timeline** that ensures all families have access to affordable, high-quality early care and education that enriches, nurtures, and supports children and their families.

The implementation timeline must phase in the plan over a period of no more than six years, beginning in July 2025 and finishing no later than July 2031.

Reminders about our deliverables

What it is

What it is not

✓ Strategic blueprint and high-level timeline for the future system

✗ Detailed implementation project plan for the future system

✓ Detailed enough to inform a legislative package

✗ Specific Bill language

✓ Thoughtful on major implementation issues

✗ Detailed enough to become administrative rules

✓ Directional understanding of future administrative roles

✗ “Job descriptions” or specific responsibilities

Sub-Group: Draft Deliverable Review

As part of the next step in our process, we are looking for a small group (5-7) of Task Force members to volunteer to review and provide feedback on draft versions of our deliverables. The full Task Force will be able to review these draft documents, but we need a sub-group to provide dedicated extra time and feedback. These draft deliverables will be made up of items this Task Force has approved throughout our time together, as well as supporting information and points from Task Force and Working Group discussions.

- Our ask:
 - Read and provide feedback on initial draft versions of the Task Force Plan & Implementation Timeline (35-45 pages)
 - Meet once as a sub-group (review of feedback)
- We will be looking for feedback on:
 - Any additional recommendations which need to be developed by the Task Force
 - Framing of the key challenges and strategies
 - Specific feedback on content sections based on individual's subject matter expertise
 - Flow of the documents
- **Signing up for this review process can be done through survey response.**

Timeline to Final Deliverables

Week beginning	Task Force	Deliverable Review Sub-Group	Facilitation Team
September 26 th	Task Force Meeting - Request for Volunteers (Sept 27 th)		
October 10 th		Sub-Group Finalized	
October 24 th	Task Force Meeting (Oct 25 th)	Deliverable available for sub-group review	
November 7 th		Volunteers Submit Feedback	
November 14 th		Tentative: Deliverable Review Sub-Group Meeting Discuss Feedback Tentative: Send Draft Plan & Implementation Timeline to full Task Force for review	Revise Plan & Implementation Timeline - Based on Feedback
November 28 th	Task Force Meeting Discussing Draft Plan & Implementation Timeline (Nov 29 th)		Revise Plan & Implementation Timeline - Based on Feedback
December 12 th	Task Force Meeting Finalize Draft Plan & Implementation Timeline (NOTE: New Meeting Date - Dec 13th)		
	Submit Draft Plan & Implementation Timeline (Dec 15 th)		Revise Plan & Implementation Timeline - Based on Feedback
January 30 th	Task Force Meeting Review Final Plan & Implementation Timeline (Jan 31 st)		
	Submit Final Plan & Implementation Timeline (February 1st)		

Timeline & Next Steps

Remaining time from October - December



Where are we going next?

- ❑ Understanding the current state *Complete*
- ❑ Who does the system need to work for? How? *Complete*
- ❑ What is working in the system today? *Complete*
- ❑ Defining the future experience we want to see
 - ❑ What is equitable access? *Complete*
 - ❑ What is affordable? *Complete*
- ❑ What are the dimensions of a quality, effective experience? *In process*
- ❑ What is sustainable for providers? *Working Group*
- ❑ How should the workforce be compensated and supported? *Working Group*
- ❑ How will we administer the plan? *Implementation Timeline*
- ❑ How do we get to our goal, led by equity? *Implementation Timeline*

A call for written input

As Task Force staff maintains and updates our records of potential recommendations to include in our deliverables, we invite you to provide written input, outside of our regular Task Force meetings. Input should follow our normal meeting norms and procedures:

- Provide actionable ideas and potential solutions
- Apply your specific expertise
- Speak to the topics at hand for the work of the Task Force

Email ideas to GreatStart.TaskForce.MMB@state.mn.us

Task Force Meeting Dates

Draft and subject to change

Meetings will be held from **6 - 8pm** on the last Tuesday of each month, except when conflicting with anticipated holidays

- **October 25, 2022**
- November 29, 2022
- December 13, 2022 **UPDATED meeting date for December, last scheduled meeting before draft report*
- January 31, 2023





Anticipated Votes Next Meeting

Formal (Statement on vision or value, recommendation to be included in the Task Force Plan)

- Compensation Framework
- Supported Workforce Recommendations
- Program Funding Mechanism Improvements
- Effectiveness Improvement Recommendations Package
 - What will it take for providers/programs to offer an effective experience (per our vision)?
 - Consistent and equitable standards and growth-oriented accountability systems
 - A healthy business environment and clear, consistently applied, regulations
 - Cohesive, high functioning infrastructure and ecosystem

Informal (Matter of process, necessary to get to a vision statement or recommendation)

- Meeting 11 Minutes

Running list of voting Items and results

Date of Vote	Voting Item	Approved (Yes/No)?	Informal	Formal
December 21 st , 2021	November Meeting Minutes	Yes	X	
January 25 th , 2022	December Meeting Minutes	Yes	X	
February 22 nd , 2022	January Meeting Minutes	Yes	X	
	Factors of Equitable Access	Yes	X	
	Support of the Mixed Delivery System	Yes		X
	Adopting Equity Definition	Yes		X
March 29 th , 2022	February Meeting Minutes	Yes	X	
	Task Force Guiding Principles	Yes	X	
	Definition of Historically Disenfranchised Groups	Yes		X
April 26 th , 2022	March Meeting Minutes	Yes	X	
	Primary stakeholders in the ECE system	Yes		X
	Vision for effective ECE services	Yes		X
	Vision for equitable access to ECE services	Yes		X

(Continued) Running list of voting Items and results

Date of Vote	Voting Item	Approved (Yes/No)?	Informal	Formal
May 31st, 2022	April Meeting Minutes	Yes	X	
	Statement on Care is Education	Yes		X
June 28th, 2022	May Meeting Minutes	Yes	X	
	Short Term Recommendations for Family Affordability: Child Care Assistance	Yes		X
	Short-Term Recommendations for Family Affordability: Early Learning Scholarships	Yes		X
	Financial Compensation Recommendations	Yes		X
	Access Factor: Availability (schedule & hours) and accessibility (geography, location) of early care and education that meets the diversity of families' needs	Yes		X
	Access Factor: The role local communities should have in both determining access priorities for their communities and how to meet access needs	Yes		X
	Access Factor: Resources and ability of providers and programs to offer culturally responsive programming and environments	Yes		X
Access Factor: Transportation and other barriers, such as language barriers, affecting access to families' programs of choice	Yes		X	

(Continued) Running list of voting Items and results

Date of Vote	Voting Item	Approved (Yes/No)?	Informal	Formal
July 26th, 2022	June Meeting Minutes	Yes	X	
	Financial Relief Strategies Recommendations	Yes		X
	Time Off Recommendations	Yes		X
August 30th, 2022	July Meeting Minutes	Yes	X	
	Fiscal & economic impact studies	Yes		X
	Process to determine provider pay	Yes		X
	Qualified Workforce – Individuals	Yes		X
	Qualified Workforce – Higher Education System	Yes		X
Benefits	Yes		X	

Next Steps

Send any feedback to:

greatstart.taskforce.mmb@state.mn.us

Stakeholder Listening Session

- **Wednesday, November 2nd (6 – 7pm)**

Working Group meetings

- **Affordability:** Thursday, October 13th, 1-3pm
- **Workforce:** Wednesday, October 19th, 6-7pm

Next Task Force meeting is:

[Tuesday, October 25th, 6-8pm](#)

