



**Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force  
Workforce Compensation and Supports Working Group Meeting**

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting: WebEx

**Working Group Members Present:** Nicole Blissenbach, Lydia Boerboom, Meghan Caine, Oriane Casale, Cyndi Cunningham, Nancy Hafner, Debbie Hewitt, Pat Ives, Ann McCully, Jenny Moses, Krystal Shatek, Michelle Trelstad

**Working Group Members Absent:** Adriana Lopez, Senator Melissa Wiklund

**Task Force Consultants Present:** Ellen Johnson, Afton Partners; Gerald Liu, Afton Partners

**Welcome and Agenda**

Working Group members reviewed virtual meeting protocols, Task Force Guiding Principles, and went over the agenda for the meeting. The agenda included finalizing qualified workforce package recommendations based on Task Force feedback, as well as a discussion of compensation framework in alignment with qualification recommendations. The agenda also included a discussion of a draft recommendation around increasing diversity and equity in the early care and education workforce, valuing cultural competency and multilingualism.

**Review**

Members reviewed the Working Group Charge:

Define what a “qualified, diverse, supported, and equitably compensated” ECE workforce in Minnesota looks like and how it can be achieved.

Legislation determines that the Task Force must consider the following factors under the areas of the charge:

**Qualified**

- Develop affordable, accessible, and aligned pathways to support early childhood educators' career and educational advancement.

**Diverse**

- Increase racial and ethnic equity and diversity in the early care and education workforce and recognize the value of cultural competency and multilingualism.

**Supported**

- Consider the need for and development of a mechanism that ties childcare reimbursement rates to employee compensation.

**Equitably Compensated**

- Include a compensation framework that supports recruitment and retention of a qualified workforce in every early care and education setting.
- Set compensation for early childhood educators by reference to compensation for elementary school teachers.

The group must also:

- Consider the recommendations from previous work including the Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce project and other statewide reports on systemic issues in early care and education.

### **Qualified Workforce Recommendations**

Working Group members reviewed slides 11-15, which include the draft qualified workforce recommendations, feedback from Task Force members on these recommendations, and draft edits based on feedback received.

Discussion themes included:

- Mentorship is particularly valuable when it comes from peers, so the recommendation around professional development through a paid mentorship program (slide 12) should be edited to add the word “peer”.
- The recommendation around the current ECE career lattice is confusing and may be redundant (slide 12).
- On the sixth recommendation around systems (slide 15), it would be helpful to tease out training systems from higher education systems. Adding a seventh recommendation for training infrastructure would make things clearer.
- Members are comfortable with the revised recommendations, incorporating their additional feedback, being brought forward for a vote at the August 30 Task Force meeting.

### **Compensation Framework**

Working Group members reviewed slide 17, which include a reminder of the already-approved financial compensation recommendations. With that context, members reviewed slides 18-20, which include next steps for financial compensation recommendations, including a first draft of an edited wage scale that works to incorporate experience-based competencies and additional draft recommendations around assessing competencies and setting a base wage floor for family child care providers. Discussion themes and remaining questions included:

- It is important to not discount other ways of gaining competencies, while we still want to encourage formal education. Alternative pathways can be a way to get into higher education, not always instead of higher education.
- It is important for all providers to see themselves in our framework. Given their unique considerations, should there be a separate framework for family child care providers?
- Tying wages to competencies/education is likely unenforceable and may be too prescriptive for businesses.
- The wage scale should indicate the wages are a minimum, to make it clear this is a base and recommendations should not repress wages. The funding or enforcement mechanism also needs to be clear.
- More work is needed around labeling of the steps of the scale. The original wage scale was based on the Power to the Profession Unifying Framework, and the proposed edits are not aligned with the framework. It may be trying to fit too much in one chart, and this group should revisit the framework.
  - One of the ideas within the Unifying Framework is that your individual designation carries with you between jobs and settings.
- The career lattice in Achieve could be a helpful tool when re-evaluating this draft proposal.

- How can we make sure current members of the workforce receive equitable compensation?
- Should the proposed “equivalency requirements” be sunset at some point?
- How can we incentivize education without delaying workforce growth?

Members will have additional discussions on this topic before bringing a draft proposal to the full Task Force.

### **Diverse Workforce**

Establishing legislation requires that the Task Force develop strategies to “Increase racial and ethnic equity and diversity in the early care and education workforce and recognize the value of cultural competency and multilingualism”. Members reviewed slides 23-25, which include context about the current demographics of the ECE workforce, as well as national recommendations in this area, and a comparison of the current recommendations from the Task Force. A draft recommendation is on slide 26:

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 and increased educational support and access to recruit, develop, and retain people of color and indigenous people into advanced roles within the profession.

**Draft 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 women of color and increasing representation of women 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.

Discussion themes included:

- Though current demographics show the field is majority women, that is itself a diversity issue and men should be included in this recommendation. “Women of color” should be changed to “people of color”.
- Another thing worth thinking about is the importance of more culturally responsive workforce, respecting different cultures, providing time off for specific practices, and increasing cultural competency amongst administration and staff. That may be covered through the already-passed access recommendations, but we could make that connection.
- The three year timeline seems right for the proposed workforce study, as it allows time to process and look at results, then start the next study.

### **Next Steps and Close Out**

Michelle Trelstad will report out from this meeting at the next Task Force meeting on August 30. There is one remaining Working Group meeting scheduled, with the potential of adding another meeting in October as needed.

**Next Working Group Meeting: September 14, 2022, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**