

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

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

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

Virtual Meeting: WebEx

Working Group Members Present: Lydia Boerboom, Oriane Casale, Cyndi Cunningham, Pat Ives, Ann McCully, Jenny Moses, Krystal Shatek, Senator Melissa Wiklund

Working Group Members Absent: Nicole Blissenbach, Meghan Caine, Nancy Hafner, Debbie Hewitt, Michele Trelsted

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 the equity statement and workforce study recommendation following Task Force feedback, a follow-up discussion of compensation framework following a Working Group survey. The agenda also included revisiting the Power to the Profession Unifying Framework and Transforming Minnesota’s Early Childhood Workforce Report, as well as

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.

Equity Statement and Workforce Study Recommendation

Working Group members reviewed slides 11-12, which include the feedback from Task Force members on the draft equity statement and workforce study recommendation, and draft edits based on feedback received. No further edits were recommended, and the Working Group is comfortable with this recommendation being brought for a vote at the September 27 Task Force meeting.

Compensation Framework

Working Group members reviewed slides 14 and 15, which include a reminder of the already-approved financial compensation recommendations and previous discussion themes, as well as slides 16-18 which include the draft versions they received via survey prior to this meeting. Slide 19 contains an example of regional variation to consider. With that context, members reviewed slides 20-26, which contain Working Group feedback and an updated draft compensation framework based on feedback.

Discussion themes included:

- The connection between the funding mechanisms on the affordability side and the guaranteed minimum wage needs to be communicated clearly.
- There could be discomfort with the word “guaranteed” for providers, though regional variation and increased funding should help counter that.
- The incentivized wages should be communicated in a separate chart or pulled out in some way to reduce confusion.
- Administrators and directors should be able to place themselves on this wage scale even when not explicitly called out as a role, as they likely are in the Lead II category or able to be higher. Not every job position needs to be specifically included.
- Does this scale need to be aligned with licensing requirements? Likely not, as they are separate requirements.
- If this were implemented in a fully funded system, which is the connected recommendation from the affordability side, it could be a broad vision that helps all members of the workforce.
- It is important that FCCs are included in the proposal, and the current version is a good landing spot based on previous discussions.
- The Task Force was charged with developing a compensation framework that gets the workforce to pay parity with elementary teachers. This proposal is the result of months of discussion from this Working Group, and is our best response to that charge.

Members will bring an edited draft proposal, based on this discussion, to the full Task Force for consideration.

Revisiting Transforming the Workforce Report

Establishing legislation directs the Task Force to “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”. Working Group members reviewed the Transforming

Minnesota’s Early Childhood Workforce project report in advance of this meeting, and reviewed slides 29-33, which include a crosswalk of the Task Force recommendations with the report.

Discussion themes included:

- Overall alignment and a comprehensive summary of Task Force work compared to the report is good to see.
- A question around previous Task Force recommendation of “Align licensing qualification standards between PELSB and DHS. Expand the adoption of MN’s Knowledge and Competency Framework in all ECE higher education programming as a way to support standardized understanding of competencies”, and what that means in terms of licensing alignment:
 - Intent was to encourage alignment so pathways are not confusing. The recommendation was not meant to say DHS licensing standards should equal PELSB standards, rather that the organizations should work to find ways to align for ease of navigation from the workforce.

Revisiting the Power to the Profession Unifying Framework

This Working Group has previously discussed the Power to the Profession Unifying Framework, including in previous discussions around compensation. Following the August meeting, the Unifying Framework ECE designations were pulled out from the compensation framework, as members identified that it wasn’t working to keep them embedded. Instead, the group is considering a potential endorsement of the Unifying Framework as a separate recommendation. Members reviewed the Framework prior to the meeting, and reviewed slide 34, which includes information about the initiative. Slide 35 includes draft recommendation language for consideration.

Discussion themes included:

- Some Task Force members represent organizations who have endorsed the Unifying Framework, and believe it is the right next step to lift up the field as a profession.
- Some Task Force members represent organizations who are opposed to the Unifying Framework. Some family child care provider organization are opposed to the suggested educational requirements of a BA, not accounting for other methods of gaining competencies.
- The Framework includes statements that no educational requirements should be in place until and unless supports for achieving them are in place. The end goals are aspirational, and include moving towards a unified and professionalized field.
- More Task Force members should weigh in on this and bring their perspectives.

Members did not come to consensus as a group, and will bring the topic to the full Task Force for consideration and discussion.

Supported Workforce

Working Group members reviewed slide 37, which includes previous Working Group thoughts on what would make a supported workforce, and slide 38, which includes draft supported workforce recommendations for consideration.

Discussion themes included:

- These factors are important to highlight, but it may be tricky to make these more actionable. The language is valuable, but may be too vague for implementation. Should it be a statement of support?

- Consider connections to licensing modernization work. All providers should be supported in receiving the services and supports they need including those related to mental health. Cross reference licensing standards to understand any intersections. This is similar to the previous Task Force recommendation around establishing a substitute pool.
- There are current programs that support mental health of students in care and others that provide support for providers. These programs are especially helpful, and endorsement of their continuation could be included in this proposal.

Members will bring an edited draft proposal, based on this discussion, to the full Task Force for consideration.

Next Steps and Close Out

Someone from the Working Group will report out at the September 27 Task Force meeting. Based on discussions and the need to revisit draft recommendations following Task Force feedback, an October meeting will be added for Wednesday, October 19.

Next Working Group Meeting: October 19, 2022, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.