



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

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

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

Virtual Meeting: WebEx

Working Group Members Present: Nicole Blissenbach, Lydia Boerboom, Oriane Casale, Cyndi Cunningham, Nancy Hafner, Pat Ives, Ann McCully, Jenny Moses, Laurena Schlottach-Ratcliff, Krystal Shatek, Michelle Trelstad, Melissa Wiklund

Working Group Members Absent: Adriana Lopez

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 a discussion of draft compensation recommendations (including wage and non-wage benefits) and a discussion of a qualified workforce.

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.

Financial Compensation

Working Group members reviewed slides 13-18. These slides include the draft compensation recommendations, feedback from Task Force members on these recommendations, and draft edits based on feedback received.

Discussion themes included:

- What the group wants to see and what will eventually be possible is equal pay for teachers, but if that is achieved now, PreK would be significantly more expensive. There is concern that some of what the group is suggesting is unaffordable.
- When determining wage floors for family child care providers, has work been done around the differences in tax breaks/credits that family child care owners use?
- Concern that there is no master's degree level in the existing proposed wage scale. There are educators that should be represented who have earned a master's degree.
 - The floor is going to be where people go, which is why laying out a master's degree is important. If we set BA and MA at the same level, the wage floor may match.
- Further work should be done to compare to K12 pay scales. It may be helpful to look at the steps and lanes model.
- Members are comfortable with the revised recommendations being brought forward for a vote at the June 28 Task Force meeting.

Financial Compensation Discussion

The Working Group reviewed slides 20-23, which a review of financial relief strategies and draft benefits recommendation to bring back to the full Task Force.

Discussion themes included:

- Recruitment and retention are important. There needs to be a pathway to get in and then stay in the profession.
- The REETAIN bonus can be difficult to obtain due to the limited availability to apply. We should explore ways to make it more accessible, including adding the time for people to apply for it.
- Equal doesn't necessarily mean fair. Increased benefits need to be for all employees, not just full-time staff. Increased benefits can be used for recruitment, hiring bonuses, and other things.
- There must be an accountability mechanism whenever we have a flow of money, to ensure the money is going to workers.
- It is important to make sure current staff is included, and money should be clearly designated for use in recruitment or retention.
- The retirement account recommendation is a goal to work towards – the workforce would benefit, but there's no money to put into it currently.
- Health insurance is an important benefit for workers.
- A navigator for FCCs should support providers beyond health insurance related issues, serving a more holistic purpose..
- A training system could be helpful in the time-off recommendations.

- Suggest modifying the timing of time off per year, clarify rolling over of days
 - The best practices serve as a model and not something we're bringing as our own recommendations.
- Having a substitute pool to choose from is critical for mobility and retention, but special consideration needs to be taken by licensing regulations to ensure all providers can access.

There was general consensus that the working group is comfortable with these draft recommendations, including the potential changes, and ready to bring them forward to the full Task Force for review at the June 28 meeting.

Qualified Workforce

Working Group reviewed slides 24-30 to discuss workforce qualifications, including professional standards and competencies (national and state), and pathways to obtaining knowledge and competencies.

Discussion themes included:

- There is a lot of movement around apprenticeship programs as a workforce training too. There is an upcoming pilot program for states to participate in.
- There is also interest in the field in a "Grow Your Own" model.
- Growing the workforce through multiple different models and approaches could help expand the way we bring people into the field.
- Another model to look to is a professional learning model, which allows people a day off to attend meetings.
- Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) options have general support, as they allow for flexibility.
- The time that learnings are offered is often a barrier. The classes may be offered, but not at a time that works for members of the profession.
 - Longer sessions/multiple sessions allow teachers to engage in more reflective practice.
- Meaningful professional development needs to be integrated, and there needs to be a balance between quality and retention.

Next Steps and Close Out

A volunteer is needed to report out from this meeting at the next full Task Force meeting. Future meetings will occur on the second Wednesday of each month (listed below), from 6pm-8pm.

- Wednesday, July 13
- Wednesday, August 10
- Wednesday, September 14
- *October TBD*

Next Working Group Meeting: July 13, 2022, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.