



Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force

Working Group Meeting #9: Workforce Compensation and Supports

Welcome!

Here are our virtual meeting protocols



- **Please be on video** as much as possible to help with overall engagement
- **Mute self** when not speaking
- Use **Chat feature** or **“raise hand” button** for questions or comments
- Technical issues can happen to anyone – **chat privately to Hannah Quinn for any needs**
- If you are experiencing an unstable connection - **switch to phone call or close other applications**
- Members of the **public can submit written feedback to** greatstart.taskforce.mmb@state.mn.us

Our Equity Commitments

In all our conversations, we will strive to:

- **Center children and families**
- Pay **particular focus to the needs and priorities** of historically disenfranchised children and families and their communities
- Specifically contemplate **how our decisions may benefit or harm** historically disenfranchised children and families and their communities
- Seek the **expertise and input from stakeholders** already doing the work in historically disenfranchised communities
- Where possible, consider **data that provides insight** into the relative impact on historically disenfranchised children and families and their communities

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 of color 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>

Welcome & Agenda

Today's Goals



Finalize October Voting Items



Revisit discussions on Compensation Framework and Unifying Framework



Celebrate our work together!

Working Group Meeting #9 Agenda – 2 hours

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 6:00 – 6:05 p.m. | Welcome and Logistics |
| 6:05 – 6:15 p.m. | Finalize Supported Workforce recommendations |
| 6:15 – 7:15 p.m. | Revisit draft compensation framework recommendations |
| 7:15 – 7:45 p.m. | Review feedback on Unifying Framework |
| 7:45 – 8:00 p.m. | Next Steps and Celebration! |

Our Working Group Charge

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



What We Must Consider

Per the Legislation

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

Supported

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

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

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

Finalize October Voting Item | Supported Workforce

Feedback: Supported Workforce

- **Need to clarify the intent of the language:**
 - Note: The draft recommendation language is not asking for these suggestions to be enforced, rather, it includes best practices and suggestions, as well as endorsement for continuation of existing programs.
- **Difference in provider types:**
 - This may be difficult to figure how to implement in an FCC setting.
- **Importance of mental health:**
 - *"Mental health is important, and I like the suggestion that it be on-site for employees at times."*
 - Suggestion to *"include "affordable" in the recommendation for including mental health and wellness through insurance benefits. When these are included often times they are far too expensive for an ECE teacher to afford."*

Out of 22 total survey respondents:

- "I really like it - I'm fully convinced": 7
- "I like it/good enough!": 10
- "I will support it until I learn more": 3
- "Mixed feelings": 2
- "I prefer something different": 0
- "I just don't like it": 0



Next
Meeting

DRAFT Supported Workforce Recommendations

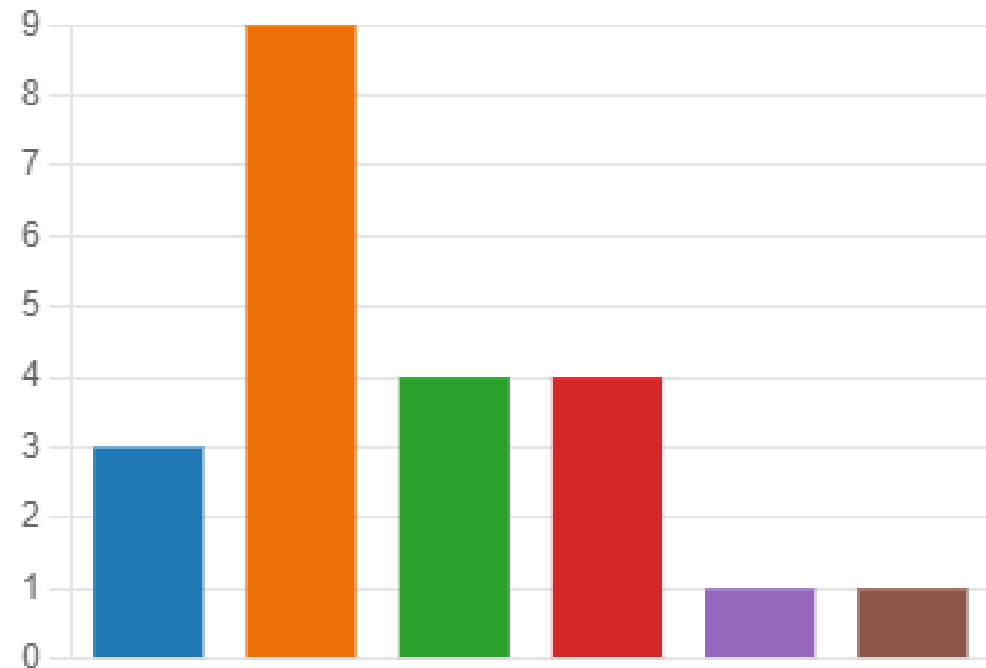
1. Access to mental health and wellness resources for all ECE staff should be strengthened and expanded, including but not limited to, through the following methods:
 - Providing time off for staff to pursue therapeutic services *connected to Time Off recommendations
 - Bringing wellness services on-site
 - Providing subsidies for individuals to pay for needed services
 - Ensuring health care benefits include **affordable** 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).

Revisiting the Compensation Framework

Feedback: Compensation Framework

Out of 22 total survey respondents:

- "I really like it - I'm fully convinced": 3
- "I like it/good enough!": 9
- "I will support it until I learn more": 4
- "Mixed feelings": 4
- "I prefer something different": 1
- "I just don't like it": 1



Qualitative Feedback: Compensation Framework

- **Overall sense of confusion: need to clarify the intent of the language, what the framework is saying and what it isn't. There is not broad understanding of this proposal:**
 - Need to be clear about what is meant to be a transitional approach, and what we are asking eventually be required.
 - Need to be clear about what is enforceable and what is a suggestion. What do we mean by incentives?
 - Development of comparable competencies and experience guidelines needed, or reference to suggested decision-makers.
 - Does this achieve parity with elementary teachers?
- **Lack of agreement with the approach to set a "minimum wage" for the ECE sector:**
 - The state already has a minimum wage, as does the federal government and, in some cases, localities. Are there other fields that have a mandated minimum wage?
 - *"This feels like overreach."*
 - *"Guaranteed minimum wage is a very bad idea."*
 - *"It is sticky to mandate private organizations do something beyond what law in this area requires, and I don't see it going over well."*
- **Regional Differences:**
 - People in Greater Minnesota spend more on fuel, food, utilities, and mortgages than some assume. If regional differences in pay are recommended, will Greater Minnesota continue to face high turnover and instability in care?
- **Connection to Benefits and Time Off recommendations.**

UPDATED Draft: Compensation Framework (1 of 4)

1. Currently, **employers in the early care and education field are required to meet state and local minimum wage**. This Task Force believes current hourly minimum wages are not adequate for workers in the ECE field, and current median wages for early educators reflect an undervaluing and under-compensation of a critical workforce whose work is highly demanded, supports the broader Minnesota economy, and supports the future of Minnesota's youngest learners.
2. Minnesota believes that early care and education workers should be paid fair and appropriate wages that allow them to support themselves and their families; however, this Task Force respects the needs and rights of businesses to make their own business decisions. Therefore, we recommend a phased in **recommended base wage for ECE employees**. The base wage recommendation is based on the DEED Cost of Living tool at the individual level and will be supported by additional funding to cover the additional costs of wages paid.

The recommended base wage will:

- Serve as a recommended floor for all early care and education staff
- Reflect the local geographies' individual living wage
- Reflect an appropriate wage for an entry level role in the ECE field
- Be updated on a biannual basis based on the DEED Cost of Living tool, at the individual cost of living wage.

Minnesota recognizes that achieving substantial and sustained improvements in the education and experience levels of early care and education staff requires investments aimed at reducing inequities in pay. To support ECE programs in attracting, retaining, and supporting a qualified workforce, the state will implement **a workforce compensation grant that provides financial resources to providers paying staff wages at the recommended base level**. As programs opt into publicly funded compensation grants, documentation and submission of compliance would be required for accountability.

UPDATED Draft: Compensation Framework (2 of 4)

- 3. In addition to the recommended base wage, the recommended wage scale* includes wages above and beyond the base wage.** These higher wage recommendations are associated with higher levels of education and experience. The recommended wage scale should be included in cost modeling efforts (per this Task Force’s cost modeling recommendation).

Family Child Care providers should plan to pay themselves a recommended base annual wage (profit) equivalent to a lead role on the wage scale, to reflect their dual responsibilities as directors *and* providers of care and education. FCC providers who employ additional staff should be follow the recommendations for employers, including the recommended wage scale.

Increased per child rates for the increased costs associated with education and qualifications needed for higher quality programs would be provided through cost modeling. Employers hiring or retaining staff with the recommended levels of education and/or experience in order to provide quality care and education will be incentivized to pay those workers higher wages in alignment with the recommended wage scale. The wages at the highest level of the wage scale are commensurate with elementary school teacher salaries. Documentation of compliance would be required at the levels required for funding received. Rules for this implementation would need to be determined through the future program administrative agency.

*The **Proposed MN ECE Professional Wage Scale** has been used as a starting point for the recommended wage scale, 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.

Further updates are needed to:

- Reflect regional variation, in alignment with regional cost modeling.
- Fill in the comparable competencies and experience guidelines.

UPDATED Draft: Compensation Framework (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 will be able to implement wage increases in alignment with additional funding.
- Throughout the phased-in implementation timeline, employers will be incentivized to pay workers at wages commensurate with both experience and education, and to hire workers who meet educational and/or competency guidelines.
- By the end of the implementation timeline, all members of the workforce whose employers opt-in to the compensation grant will be paid a base wage equal to or above the DEED cost of living. At this point, it should be re-evaluated whether to continue with the corresponding competencies and experience guidelines for wage incentives.

UPDATED DRAFT: Compensation Framework (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
Recommended base wage for all members of the workforce by 2031*	\$16.21	\$33,717	Individual Cost of Living (DEED)

	Educational Guidelines for Role <i>Aligned with MN Achieve Career Lattice</i> OR Comparable Competency and Experience Guidelines for Role <i>through at least 2031</i>	Role <i>Employees must meet statutory requirements</i>	Hourly Wage (2021 numbers)	Annual Wage (2021 numbers)	Based On	
Wage Incentivized	CDA Certificate <i>Steps 6-7</i>	<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 (DEED)
Wage Incentivized	Early Childhood-related Associate Degree <i>Steps 8-9</i>	<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 <i>Steps 10-12</i>	<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.

Discussion Questions: Compensation Framework

Competencies and Experience

- The current language under "implementation" reads: *By the end of the implementation timeline, all members of the workforce whose employers opt-in to the compensation grant will be paid a base wage equal to or above the DEED cost of living.*
 - *At this point, it should be re-evaluated whether to continue with the corresponding competencies and experience guidelines for wage incentives. Is this the right approach?*
 - Who should develop the list of comparable competencies and experience guidelines?

Tying Child Care Reimbursement Rates to Compensation and Wage Parity

- Legislation tells us to: *"consider the need for and development of a mechanism that ties child care reimbursement rates to employee compensation" and "set compensation for early childhood educators by reference to compensation for elementary school teachers".*
 - Does this compensation framework accomplish those goals?

Regional Differences in Cost of Living

- We have heard from Task Force members that people in Greater Minnesota spend more on fuel, food, utilities, and mortgages than some assume. Many may work multiple jobs due to lower wages in these regions.
 - What are the consequences of including regional variation in the wage scale?
 - Should regional differences be recommended based on economic and cost of living studies?

Revisiting the Power to the Profession Unifying Framework

Feedback In Favor of Unifying Framework Recommendations

Out of 22 total survey respondents:

- 11 members thought we should bring the draft recommendation to a vote
- 9 members thought we should not bring the draft recommendation to a vote
- 2 members wrote in commentary they were not decided

Sample of feedback **in favor** of bringing recommendation forward:

- *"I am a big supporter of this framework and hope that we can incorporate it into the plans in some way. Having a guide that is already established, and endorsed by so many respected organizations, will really strengthen our recommendations as they leave our hands and go through to the next step in this process."*
- *"I'm not sure that the draft option is the exact recommendation that should be brought forward. But I have strong concerns about not having some kind of vision for implementing the unifying framework related to: (1) the burden of having two paths (competency based and education based) which will make it confusing for people entering the field and is costly in terms of time and development work to have both paths, (2) not having a unifying framework could create barriers for some providers to be seen as the professionals they are because of the use of multiple definitions of roles, this could have a negative impact on their compensation over time."*
- *"I think it needs more work, and my not be perfect, but I also feel we need to move in this direction."*
- *"I disagree with the statement that 'the Unifying Framework does not recognize competencies gained outside of formal education'. There has been much discussion about development and expansion of credit for prior learning, for instance, which would provide opportunities for credit for other ways that early educators have gained knowledge and experience... Power to the profession is embedded in both the overall Transforming the ECE workforce effort, generally and the Transforming the Financing report explicitly. We at least must address it in some way."*
 - Note: 2 members made the point that credit for prior learning does recognize competencies gained outside of formal education and disagreed with that categorization from the discussion themes.

Feedback Against Unifying Framework Recommendation

Out of 22 total survey respondents:

- 11 members thought we should bring the draft recommendation to a vote
- 9 members thought we should not bring the draft recommendation to a vote
- 2 members wrote in commentary they were not decided

Sample of feedback **against** bringing recommendation forward:

- *"Although I agree with the principles of the Power to the Profession Unifying Framework, I think adding it in at this stage of the Task Force may be detrimental to the Task Force progress achieved over these past months. Although we have referred to national information, most of our focus has been on Minnesota data and reports."*
- *"This is work outside of this group's work... The Power to the Profession was not written under a lens that the Great Start is using. We do not need a national platform to support providers in MN... Family Child Care does not support this effort, so to move forward is a slap in the face to our profession in the platform of "mixed delivery".*
- *"I do not think we should hold a formal vote on the PTP framework. I just don't see the need. It's already baked into the Transforming the Workforce work that was used to inform the Force."*
- *"I think additional thought needs to go into the educational requirements aspect of this framework in particular. I do not think we should include this in our recommendations."*
- *"We need to listen to the voices of the independent childcare providers on this topic. It is not nearly ready for a vote."*
- *"I have issues with Power to the Profession from an equity standpoint, particularly from the standpoint of requiring formalized education, knowing that access can be limited to communities of color and other marginalized communities due to structural barriers. I'm curious to know how many other states have formally adopted it, and am wondering if doing so would truly result in national alignment if it's not utilized in many states."*

Suggested Alternatives to a Unified Framework Recommendation

Suggested alternatives from feedback:

- *"I would recommend that we call out connections to the Power to the Profession Unifying Framework where we can in existing recommendations. For example, supports to higher education so those who choose to further education can do so more easily."*
- *"If we could identify language that would allow us to continue to consider, study, align with the power to the profession in Minnesota, etc. I think it would be worth looking for something that might provide at least a placeholder to keep the door open for the future."*
- *"This seems like an important piece to have some sort of language on in the final report - maybe just language on further exploration?"*
- *"If people don't want to vote on making a commitment to it, is there a way to vote on a recommendation that it be examined in a way that allows people to explore the value in committing to it and the costs if we do not commit to it?"*
- *"I think this needs to be reworded so that it doesn't close the door on the discussion."*

Draft Alternative Approach

- Due to lack of consensus from Task Force members on the draft recommendation, a formal vote on that language should not occur.
- Many members expressed interest in finding a way to reference the Unifying Framework without endorsing it fully or formally recommending a full implementation.
- Rather than include a formal recommendation within the Task Force plan document, reference areas of existing alignment with the Unifying Framework when referencing the Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce plan, which Task Force establishing legislation directs us to reference. This would not be an endorsement or rejection of the framework, but a reference to existing alignment.

Draft alternative language:

- "The Task Force was directed by statute to consider the recommendations and the strategies included in the Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce plan. After considering those recommendations during plan development, we found there is significant alignment between that report and our work. The Transforming Minnesota's Early Childhood Workforce group relied on the Power to the Profession Unifying Framework in development of their plan."

Discussion

- Do you like this draft language, and this proposed approach?
- What would you like to change/add/clarify?

Next Steps and Close Out

Strong work! THANK YOU!



Something you are proud of



Something you learned



Something you will do



Next Steps

- We will reach out about a volunteer to present an update for our group at the next taskforce meeting on 10/25

