



Great Start for All Minnesota Children Task Force

Working Group Meeting #6: 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 short-term financial relief and benefits package recommendations based on 6/28 Taskforce meeting feedback



Align on recommendations for developing affordable, accessible, and aligned pathways for the ECE workforce

Working Group Meeting #6 Agenda – 2 hours

- 6:00 – 6:10 p.m.** Welcome and Logistics
- 6:10 – 6:20 p.m.** Finalize short-term financial relief and benefits package recommendations
- 6:20 – 7:50 p.m.** Align on recommendations for developing affordable, accessible, and aligned pathways for the ECE workforce
- 7:50 – 8:00 p.m.** Next Steps

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

Short-Term Financial Relief Strategies & Benefits Recommendations

Reminder: Financial Compensation Recommendations

- 1. Develop and adopt a tiered wage scale** that reflects regional variations in the living wage. The ECE I 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.

Reminder: Draft Fiscal Impact Recommendation

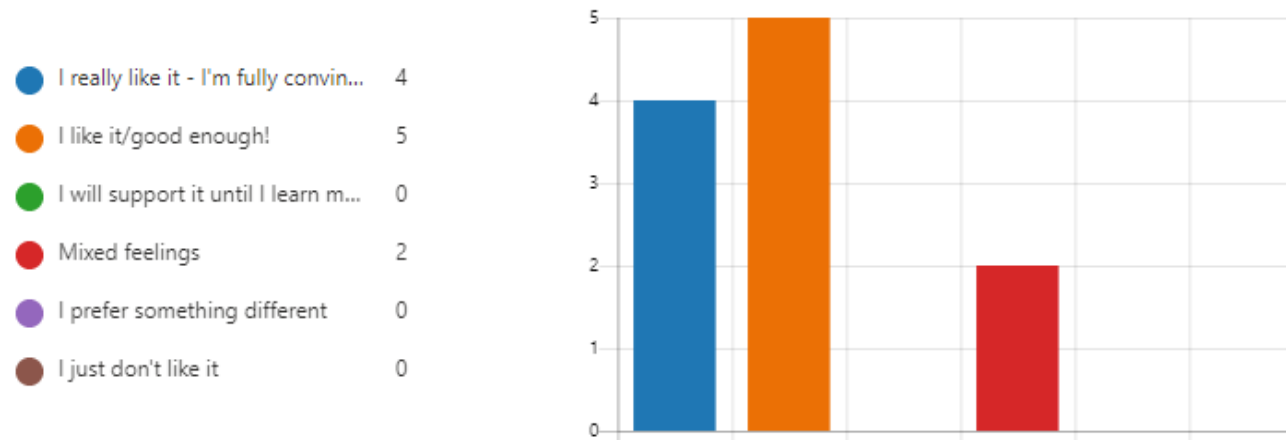
Though the Task Force establishing legislation does not address the fiscal impact of our charge, we recognize that our recommendations would have significant implications. To fully understand these implications, we have developed a draft recommendation:

Draft Recommendation: The legislature should support a comprehensive fiscal analysis of each budget-related recommendation included in the plan and implementation timeline. Considerations should include child and family outcomes, economic impacts including potential savings, and cost to taxpayers.

Feedback: Financial Relief Strategies

Generally, members support the direction outlined in these draft recommendations.

- Thoughts on bonuses as a recruitment strategy:
 - *"Bonuses will not keep people in the workforce"*
 - *"I like the bonuses, but worry that those amounts may not be enough to matter. Hopefully they will, it is a good start."*
 - *"I think the bonuses are a great idea, but I worry about that cost being put on parents with a tuition increase or something to fund it."*
- Further clarity on the barriers to the REETAIN application process is needed.
 - *"Do folks think the application process itself is cumbersome, or are they referring to the fact that not everyone can be funded due to limited dollars?"*
- Concerns around funding/how to ensure costs aren't passed to families. **connection to affordability working group and draft fiscal impact recommendation*





DRAFT Recommendations: Financial Relief Strategies

Short term financial relief strategies must be adopted alongside longer-term compensation reform as the recommendations of the Task Force are phased in.

To support *recruitment* of new talent to the ECE field:

1. A one-time incentive/bonus to individuals who enter the field, with awards provided after the first 6 months of employment.
 - Building on the lessons learned from the Workforce Development Grants project, a bonus (starting at \$500, evaluated yearly to account for inflation) for new staff who complete training and start a job in a child care and early education program
 - A bonus (starting at \$1,000, evaluated yearly to account for inflation) for new staff who have earned an AA, BS, and/or BA degree in early care and education, complete initial training and orientation, and start a job in an early care and education program.

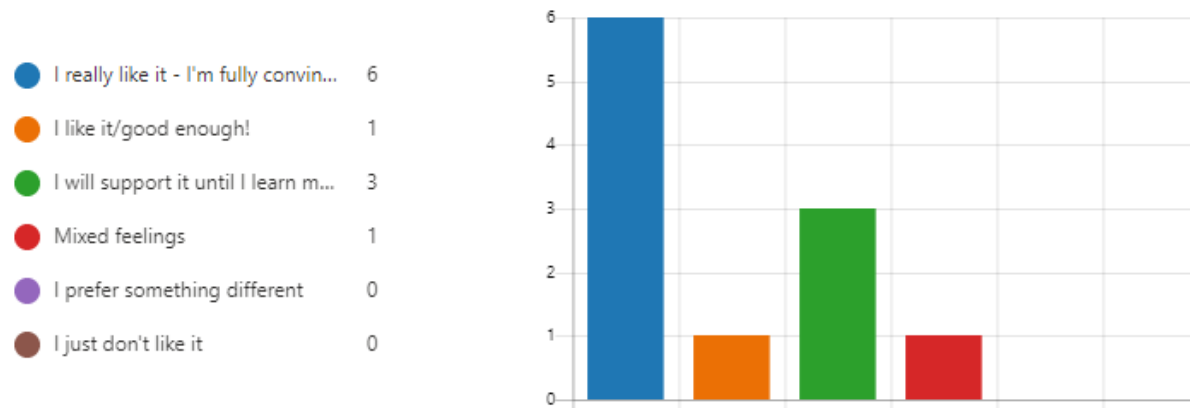
To support *retention* of talent in the ECE field:

1. Pending further study, tax benefits should be put in place to ensure ECE educators across the mixed delivery system are not unfairly penalized by earning increased wages that would disqualify them from government benefits OR a separate eligibility category should be created for the ECE workforce.
2. Expand REETAIN awards so that ECE workforce members from *all* early care and education settings are eligible to receive one. Revise the application process **by increasing the amount of time the application window is open** for REETAIN bonuses to make it easier for eligible staff to take advantage of the opportunity.
3. Based on successes of and lessons learned from the Childcare Stabilization Base Grant program, plan for on-going funding to programs for the stabilization of their ECE workforce. Ensure there is a mechanism in place to enforce the continued requirement that 70% of grant awards be used for increased compensation and/or benefits. **connection to access factor 1 – stabilization grants support supply of*

Feedback: Benefits

Generally, members support the direction outlined in these draft recommendations.

- These recommendations won't work well for workers unless wages are higher (compensation recommendations in place).
 - *"Offering a cheap plan can be worse than offering no plan at all. With no plan, many workers will qualify for much better public benefits. If a plan is offered, workers no longer qualify for public benefits."*
- Health insurance considerations:
 - Need to run health insurance recommendations by experts, consult outside of this Task Force
 - Considerations for federally recognized American Indians who can receive health services from the Indian Health Service, and how these proposed benefits could offer better coverage or fill gaps in locations where no IHS exists
- Concerns around funding/how to ensure costs aren't passed to families. **connection to affordability working group and draft fiscal impact recommendation*





DRAFT Recommendations: Benefits

Healthcare Coverage

- **Centers, Head Start & Schools: All employees should have access to health care coverage** via subsidies, reimbursements, or paid upfront costs.
- **FCC:** An FCC health benefits program should be created that would subsidize the cost of premiums for FCC providers. Include funding for health care navigators that specialize in serving child care providers.
 - If eligible, providers would enroll in Medicaid or Minnesota Care, with any premiums reimbursed
 - If not eligible, providers would purchase health care through MNsure (state health insurance marketplace), with premiums reimbursed

Retirement Savings

- **Centers, Head Start & Schools: All employees should have access to a retirement savings** plan (e.g., 401K or IRA) that includes an employer contribution and an option for employee contributions.

Availability of additional benefits via a “cafeteria plan”

- **Centers, Head Start & Schools: A negotiable package equivalent to 10 percent of an employee’s salary should be made available for benefits** such as: child care for employee’s own children; family member health coverage; short- and long-term disability insurance; dental insurance; optical insurance; and life insurance.
- **FCC:** Employees working more than 20 hours per week on a regular basis should have the following **benefits prorated** for the number of hours worked: health care coverage, paid sick and vacation leave, paid holidays, paid planning time, and a professional development fund.

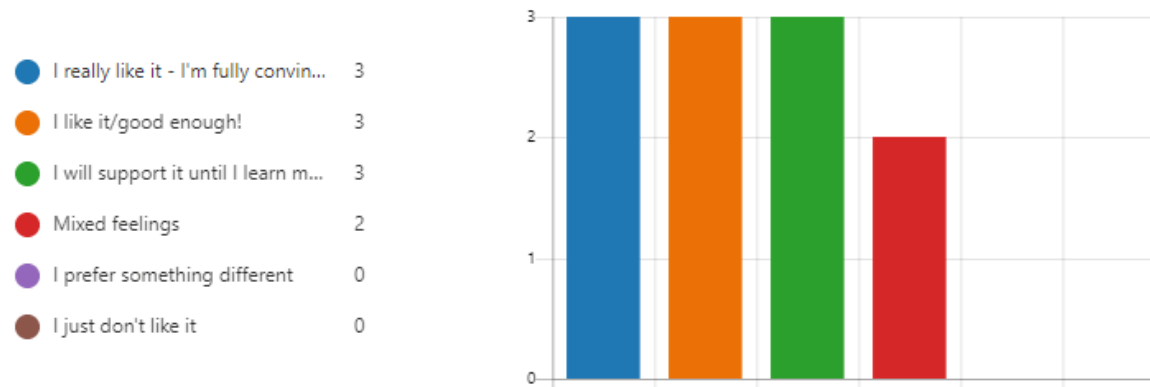
Access to child-care subsidies for own children

- **All providers should have access to childcare subsidies for their own children** through the raising of eligibility rates.

Feedback: Time Off

Generally, members support the direction outlined in these draft recommendations

- *"Time off is essential to the physical and mental well-being of all providers and educators. When they better care for themselves, they better care for young children."*
- Number of days off from best practice guidance:
 - *"I think 8 holidays is a bit much. It's hard for parents that have to work on holidays to find someone to watch their kids if centers are closed during all of the major holidays. I would support paying more for holiday coverage."*
 - *"The 5 days PTO in the first year doesn't seem enough, nor does the sick time of 5 days given ECE workers proximity to COVID & unvaccinated little one. Centers can shut down multiple times a year if COVID is being passed around & we need to account for that. We also don't offer hazard pay which should be considered as these folks work with the highest risk of carriers & unvaccinated."*
 - *"The first bullet under Best Practice Guidance - should include modifications for part/year staff."*
- Concerns around funding/how to ensure costs aren't passed to families. **connection to affordability working group and draft fiscal impact recommendation*





DRAFT Recommendations: Time Off

Time Off

- After further study of specific models, like that in Washington state, regional substitute pools should be created so that ECE staff are able to pursue professional development and utilize paid time off.
- Any cost modeling study completed to estimate the expense of substitute providers should assume a minimum of 5 paid days off per year per full-time ECE worker.
- All ECE providers across the mixed delivery system should be provided with and encouraged to use the best practice guidance (below) when developing time off policies.

Best Practice Guidance | From “*Model Work Standards*” report produced by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment

Centers, Head Start & Schools

- **Full time employees accrue paid vacation time based on longevity in their program:** minimally five days per year during the first year of employment; 10 days per year during years two through four; and 15 days per year with five or more years of employment. Part-time employees earn paid time off on a prorated basis.
- **A minimum of eight holidays are paid each year for FTEs.**
- **Full time employees receive at least 5 paid sick/personal days per year,** which can be taken to care for sick family members, as well.

FCC

- **The provider sets aside between five and 10 vacation days per year,** which are paid in full by families enrolled in the program. Additional unpaid vacation leave may be negotiated with parents in the contract.
- **The provider receives a minimum of eight holidays per year,** which are paid in full by families whose contracted hours fall on these days.
- **The provider sets aside a minimum of two paid sick/personal days per year,** which can be taken to care for sick family members, as well.

“Qualified” Workforce

What We Must Consider

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Qualified

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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

Minnesota's Knowledge and Competency Framework for Early Childhood Professionals

Content Areas:

1. Child Development and Learning
2. Developmentally Appropriate Learning Experiences
3. Relationships with Families
4. Assessment, Evaluation and Individualization
5. Historical and Contemporary Development of Early Childhood Education
6. Professionalism
7. Health, Safety and Nutrition
8. Application through Clinical Experiences
9. Trauma Informed Care and Practice
10. Working with Multilingual Children and Families

**Cultural Responsibility and Practice is embedded throughout*

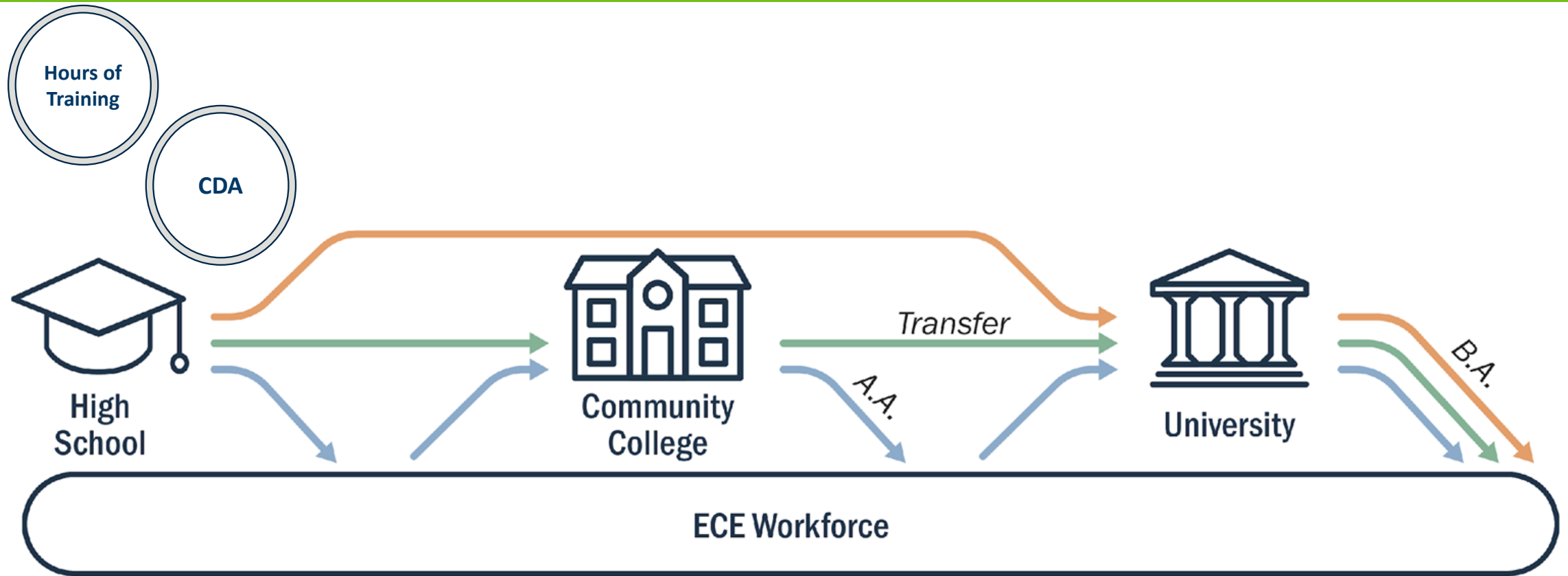
The framework is intended to:

- Promote early childhood as a profession with a recognized body of knowledge
- Identify key concepts and skills for professional development (PD)
- Plan learning objectives for PD offerings
- Coordinate and design PD content to facilitate transfer and articulation agreements
- Create job descriptions and inform staff evaluations

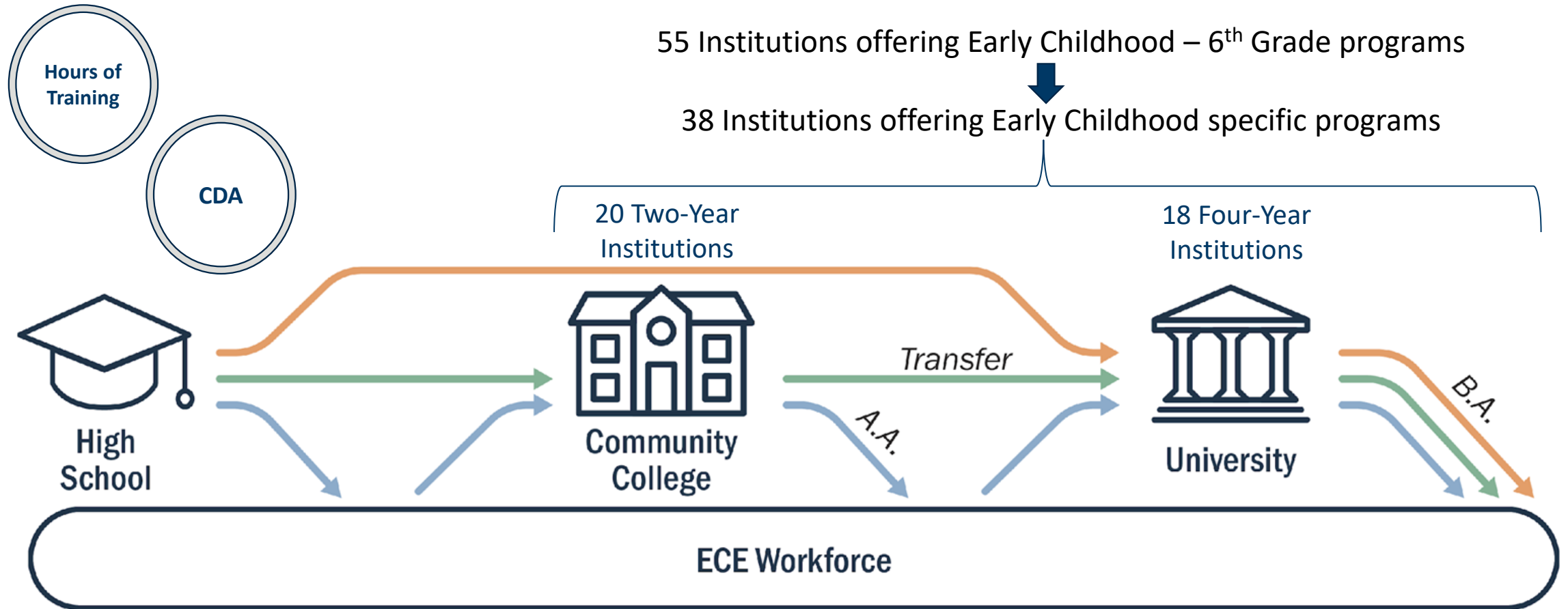
Three versions:

- Working with Infants and Toddlers
- Working with Family Childcare
- Working with Preschool Aged Children in Center and School Programs

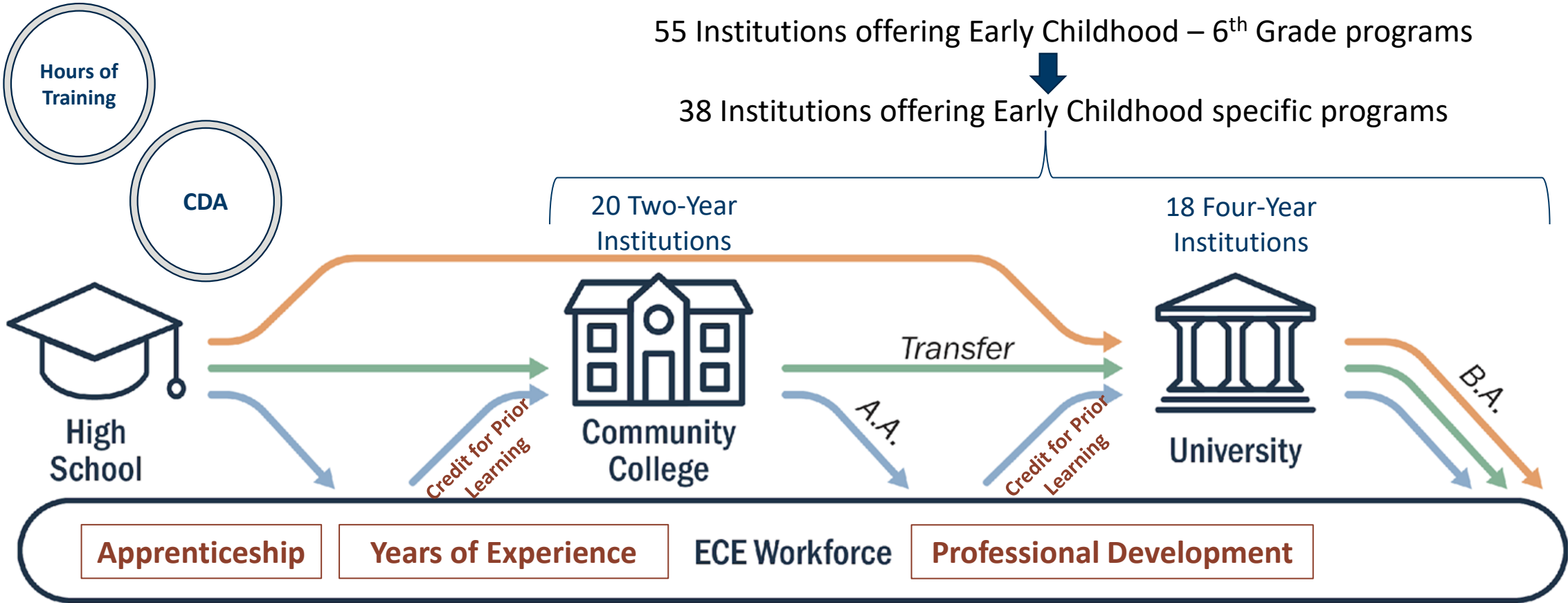
There is no one path to a career in ECE



What does the more traditional, educational “pathway” look like in Minnesota?



How do additional pathways fit in?



How do we account for “years of service” in this pathway model?

Credit for Prior Learning

Academic credit is awarded for *demonstrated* college- and university-level learning gained through experiences outside the college or university classroom, such as military, workplace and community-based training and experiences.

How is credit for prior learning awarded?

Options at Minnesota State

External Assessments* (Third Party Validation)

- Programs evaluated by college & university faculty
- Act as transfer credit; students need official proof of successful completion.
- Examples include:
 - College-Level Examination Program (CLEP)
 - Military Training & Occupations
 - Industry Certifications

Internal Assessments* (Faculty Led)

- Are developed by faculty to assess students’ informal learning experiences on the job or in the community, or through self-study.
- Act as “home” or resident credit in a degree program.
- Examples of assessment methods include:
 - Portfolio
 - Demonstration – hands-on display
 - Test out or challenge exam – credit by exam
 - Interview – Set of questions to assess skill and knowledge.

7/18/2022 *May fulfill general, technical, Minnesota Transfer Curriculum (MnTC), program/major/minor, and/or elective courses and can be applied in associate, bachelor or graduate programs

1. What are the **current challenges** with MN's ECE pathways?
2. What **current solutions** exist to make MN's ECE pathways more aligned, affordable, and accessible?
3. What **other solutions** might we consider?

National Recommendations

Provide financial and academic support to new and current early educators as they move up the career ladder.

Create a dedicated federal scholarship program to provide academic and financial support to ECE educators, which would supplement current need-based financial aid. This program could provide service scholarships that underwrite the cost of higher education for early educators who commit to working in subsidized programs for 2–4 years. Federal funds could also support the development of registered apprenticeship programs, a promising model for current and aspiring educators, leveraging funding from the Department of Labor. Since many students in ECE programs are nontraditional students returning to the classroom after many years, and many are English learners, the program could provide participants with academic assistance and advising to help navigate the higher education system.

Support institutions of higher education in developing strong ECE preparation programs.

Establish a new grant program to support ECE and child development programs at institutions of higher education. Grant funds could be used to improve degree programs at 2- and 4-year colleges as well as credentialing programs that are focused on preparing ECE educators for the classroom. The grant program could support practice-based learning by developing guided pathways and capacity building, such as hiring and training well-qualified, diverse faculty. Funds could also be used to support flexible scheduling and the provision of courses in alternative locations to make coursework accessible to more students. Finally, some portion of funds might be set aside for developing graduate programs in early learning to support the development of educators and instructional leaders with expertise in ECE.

Ensure access to coaching and other job-embedded supports for all ECE providers.

Coaching—direct observation paired with individualized feedback from a mentor—has been linked to improved child-teacher interactions, less teacher burnout, and increased teacher retention. Coaching is currently an allowable use of funds in CCDBG and is a particularly high-leverage strategy for quality improvement. Compared to other quality improvement activities, however, it is costly. The federal government could consider creating a set-aside within CCDBG dedicated to supporting high-quality coaching in all classrooms. Funding could go to programs that meet research-based program design standards, including for coaching frequency and coach qualifications.

Minnesota's B8 Workforce Core Team Plan | Priority Area Three

1. Develop a professional learning system for people in the early childhood field so that individuals **can identify where they are on a coherent career pathway and identify next steps for increasing their education.**
2. Create **alternative methods of demonstrating knowledge and competence** that allows for both flexibility and accountability.
3. **Offer financial supports** to individuals seeking to obtain further credentials and degrees so that financial barriers are reduced or eliminated for those interested in pursuing recognized credentials and degrees in early childhood.

Next Steps

Planned Sequencing of Discussions

Meeting Date	Topic
February	What do we mean by qualified, diverse, supported and equitably compensated?
March - May	Equitable Compensation & Qualified Workforce <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salary scale & wages• Benefits & Non-monetary compensation• Qualifications & credentialing
June - July	Qualifications and Credentialing & Attracting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce
August	Supporting the ECE workforce
September – October (TBD)	Finalize Recommendations

Anticipated Timeline



Monthly meetings February through September 2022

- August 10th | 6:00-8:00 PM
- September 14th | 6:00-8:00 PM
- *October TBD*

Next Steps

- Our next meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 10th from 6:00 - 8:00 pm
- Who can volunteer to present an update for our group at the next taskforce meeting on 7/26?

