

Making it Work: Creating a Professional Development System in Massachusetts for the Early Education and Care and Out-of-School Time Workforce

United Way of Massachusetts Bay
and the
Schott Foundation Fellowship in Early Care and Education

October 17, 2005



**United Way
of Massachusetts Bay**

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Dear Colleagues:

This report represents the dedicated efforts of many individuals who understand and value the critical connection between a diverse, well-educated and compensated workforce and ensuring that children and their families benefit from high-quality care and learning experiences. The creation of the new Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care marks a significant milestone in the Commonwealth's history, one that was enabled by many years of advocacy efforts. It provides a long-awaited opportunity to create a statewide professional development system.

We had a unique opportunity to invite the many professionals across age groups and sectors and the many stakeholders – policymakers, funders, higher education and advocates – to share in a common dialogue and to create a common vision for change. Over 100 of our colleagues joined in this conversation. We realized that developing an effective, sustainable and systemic approach to workforce development continues to be the enduring challenge of our field. This work will take time and continued effort. If the attendance at the convening series that enabled this report is any indication, there is a high level of interest and anticipation in addressing a workforce development system statewide.

We wish to thank each of the meeting participants for their ongoing efforts and commitment and to their contributions to this report. We look forward with hope and anticipation to the unfolding of a new era for the children and families of our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,



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Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge and thank the members of the project team whose tireless efforts made this report possible: Gwen Morgan and Joan Costley for their wisdom, insight and wealth of knowledge that guided and informed our thinking; Stan Schwartz for his excellent project management skills that kept us all on track; and Danielle Lipes and Jane Feinberg for their invaluable contributions to the writing and editing of this report.

INTRODUCTION

In July 2004, the Massachusetts legislature, influenced by the Early Education for All campaign and the Early Education for All legislation, created a new public agency, the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). This entity is responsible for the coordination of standards and funding for all public and private early education and care programs in the Commonwealth. The law (Chapter 205 of the Acts of 2004) included a first-time mandate for a statewide workforce development plan for early education and out-of-school time practitioners; this mandate would unite the fields and include those who work with infants and toddlers as well as family child care. This effort has the important benefit of establishing *one field*¹, rather than multiple fields, for professional development for those serving children from birth through age 14, and their families. We also recognize the need to acknowledge and support the professional development of adults who work with children who fall outside of this definition, such as youth workers and those who work with children in residential settings. Because research has consistently shown that staff qualifications are linked strongly and consistently to child outcomes, this specific mandate has enormous potential to promote positive child development and high-quality early learning.

This potential is what brought United Way of Massachusetts Bay (UWMB) and the Schott Foundation Fellowship in Early Care and Education into conversation: we recognize the unique opportunity to build and strengthen the legislative consensus for effective approaches to professional development. Both organizations are dedicated to supporting children and their families, and have long-standing commitments to education and to diverse, representative leadership development. Both recognize the importance of ensuring an effective design for implementation of a workforce development system. Moreover, each has strong relationships with both Early Education and Care and Out of School Time professionals. These relationships enable us to play a vital convening role with all the stakeholders concerned with meeting the needs of the field. UWMB and Schott wanted to engage stakeholders in a dialogue through which the most current thinking would emerge in response to two critical questions:

- What are the most important needs and issues of the workforce that inform the design and implementation of a workforce plan?
- What would be the most effective approach to a workforce development system?

To address these questions, UWMB and Schott convened three meetings, which included representatives from direct services, resource and referral, public policy, public and private funders, and higher education. The three meetings were clearly designed to achieve three outcomes:

- To engage key stakeholders in our effort to recommend the best system;

¹ Throughout this report, the “field” refers to all who work with infants, toddlers, preschool-age children, and school-age children (birth through age 14) in all settings in Massachusetts.

- To increase understanding and support from within the field for a *systemic* approach; and
- To collaboratively produce this report to EEC, supporting the mandate to create a plan by summarizing and presenting our collective recommended next steps.

To achieve these outcomes, we sought to build upon, not reinvent, what Massachusetts had already accomplished. Our goal was to bring together all stakeholders in the field – as well as the research from other states’ efforts – to help the new Department chart the course in the months and years ahead.

This report is the result of our field’s collaborative work. In it, we include:

- A review of the status and needs of workforce development for the early education and care and out of school time field in Massachusetts and nationally;
- An explanation of the thinking and planning process that shaped the meeting series;
- The findings that emerged from the meeting series; and
- Recommendations for action based on those findings.

This report is also an expression of the core values that should guide our collective work. These values derive from a larger American value that is held dear, almost sacrosanct, by the general public: that every citizen is entitled to educational opportunity and that education makes a real and substantial difference in the quality of human life. Flowing from this, we believe that the workforce development system we need to create should represent and be responsive to the diversity of populations residing in our state. We believe that the system must support professionals who work in all sectors and roles of the field, serving children and families of all ages, in a variety of settings. We also believe that compensation should be tied to qualifications and experience. While we recognize that the various stakeholders in the field have specific interests, we believe that adhering to this set of core values will hold all of the players in the system together. These values will keep us focused on our larger mission to serve children and their families, and will keep us moving forward with a sense of purpose and unity.

FACING THE CHALLENGES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Why have workforce issues emerged as one of the most important dilemmas facing children and their families in Massachusetts? Who comprises the workforce in our state? And, where should we focus our strategies for change? We begin by addressing each of these three questions.

Why Is There An Emphasis on Workforce Development?

Trends in family life, developmental research, and the demands of both schooling and our global economy combine to fuel interest and action in both early care and education and

school age child care. As these trends accelerate, so does the need for children to receive quality education and care both before they enter school and outside the formal school day.

We recognize that increasing numbers of families depend on non-relative care. Both the economic and social realities of family life changed dramatically in the twentieth century. Parents are working more hours than ever before, and single-parent homes and two-parent homes in which two incomes are needed have become the norm. Increased geographic mobility has pulled extended families apart, making it impossible for many families to depend on relatives to care for children. As a result, too many children experience a patchwork of discontinuous care as they move to and from various settings in the course of their day.

These trends in family life are occurring as *research evidence strongly demonstrates the importance of high-quality developmental experiences for children.* According to neuroscientists, cognitive abilities develop hand in hand with early social experiences – namely, the relationships children form with the adults in their lives. Secure, trusting relationships with adults pave the way for positive development – socially, emotionally, and academically – and have long-lasting impact.

A convergence of national, state and local policies *emphasizes that children must enter school ready to learn.* During the last fifteen years, national research has demonstrated that quality of education and care is directly linked to positive child development. The quality of children’s experiences in education and care has a major impact on their language development, learning, self-esteem, self-confidence, and social skills.

This need for quality education in the hours outside of the formal school day becomes especially important as we consider the modern world in which we live. *Our competitive, high-stakes global economy requires workers to be highly educated* if they are to succeed. More than any previous historical period, our era’s economy requires all children to attain the highest levels of achievement that were once thought to be appropriate only for a small, elite minority.

All of these facts indicate that the staff who are spending many hours a day with children must be equipped to be important educational and developmental influencers. A critical component to ensuring the high quality of those experiences is the development and stability of a well-educated, well-compensated, workforce whose knowledge, skills, and experience has effectively prepared them to meet the needs of children, including those with special needs, and their families from diverse cultural, ethnic and income backgrounds.

The Massachusetts Opportunity: New Legislation and a New Department

The creation of the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) marks a significant milestone in Massachusetts history, one that is enabled by many years of advocacy

efforts. Overarching concern for children and their families by many parties resulted in the partial merger of existing state bureaucracies to create the Department of Early Education and Care.

These changes set the stage to achieve one of the key mandates of the new law; that is, to construct a workforce development plan that will serve professionals who work in a variety of settings, and with children and their families across the age span. While a professional development system has long existed for those who teach in traditional school settings, there is currently no parallel system in Massachusetts for those who play a major societal role in educating and caring for children before kindergarten entry or outside of the formal school day.

Who Comprises the Workforce?

One of the persistent barriers to change has been a lack of detailed understanding about who currently comprises this field, what qualifications these workers have and under what conditions they are working. Fortunately, new studies are emerging that shed some light on the characteristics of the Massachusetts workforce serving children and their families outside of the traditional classroom.

The Early Education Workforce

How many workers are there? The National Economic Development and Law Center's 2004 study, *The Economic Impact of the Child Care and Early Education Industry in Massachusetts*, reported that the child care and early education industry, inclusive of those working in licensed out-of-school time programs or in formal, license-exempt school-age programs, supplies an estimated 29,555 full-time equivalent jobs in Massachusetts. However, the total number of people working in the industry is likely higher because so many education and care professionals work part-time. As reported in the study, this figure is comparable to the number of people employed in the telecommunications (25,929) and the security and commodity investment (29,709) industries in Massachusetts.

How much do they earn? In 2005, the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women published its *Massachusetts Capacity Study: Characteristics of the Current Early Education and Care Workforce Serving 3-5-year-olds*. The study found that many practitioners outside the public school system receive very low salaries and few or no benefits and many lack higher education. The average salary of a center-based preschool teacher is \$22,640, 40 percent less than the average kindergarten teacher's salary. Preschool teachers with a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education earn less than half the hourly wages of public school preschool teachers, an average of \$11.91 per hour compared with the average hourly rate of \$35.00 per hour for public school preschool teachers. The lowest public school preschool hourly wage is \$28.00 per hour. Between one-half and two-thirds of teachers and administrators at community-based centers have

employer-provided health insurance. However, part-time staff are less likely to be covered by health insurance.

Putting this information in context, as reported in the National Economic Development and Law Center's economic impact study, the wage necessary to meet all basic needs for just one parent with one child ranges from \$29,744 in the South Berkshires to \$49,762 in the western metro area. It is clear that current wages do not fully support individuals working in the field.

Further, a recent multi-year national study, *Losing Ground in Massachusetts Early Childhood Education: Declining Workforce Qualifications in an Expanding Industry, 1980-2004*, indicates that Massachusetts has suffered a decline in the number of early childhood educators who hold a four-year college degree, with most of this loss occurring during the 1990s. The study reported that in Massachusetts only 26 percent of the current workforce is degreed as compared to 45 percent in the 1980s. Median pay for center-based educators has also fallen from 76 percent (1983-87) of wages of all Massachusetts workers to 66 percent (2000-2004).

Appendix A includes a detailed breakdown of the characteristics of the Massachusetts workforce as reported in a study conducted by the Massachusetts Child Care and Referral Network for the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) in 2000. This information is based on data collected from a survey sent by OCCS to every licensed early education center and school age program in Massachusetts. Approximately 56 percent of early education centers and 46 percent of school age programs responded, providing OCCS with a total of 1310 surveys from early education centers (representing 14,960 staff) and 404 surveys from school age programs (representing 3088 staff). For more information on the characteristics of the early education and care and out-of-school time workforce please see the Massachusetts Capacity Study Research Briefs at <http://www.wcwonline.org/earlycare/index.html>).

A Focus for Change: Fragmentation and Lack of a System

The data on the workforce illustrates the array of qualifications and roles that are held by staff in the field. The big picture that emerges is one of great fragmentation characterized by the lack of a systemic approach to the workforce. While a professional development infrastructure support system has long existed for public school teachers, there has not been statewide infrastructure support for roles in private agencies that provide such vital services to children and their families.

Without doubt, there have been exemplary efforts to address this issue in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. However, these efforts have come in the form of new programs and initiatives, rather than as a comprehensive system. Or, they have introduced a systemic approach for only one particular age group, program or geographic area.

There are several unfortunate results of the fragmented, non-systemic approach. One result is that advocates for different age groups have competed with each other for limited funding that has been available periodically. Another result is the difficulty in getting multiple state agencies, higher education and provider agencies to collaborate effectively. Also, there are serious gaps in available data. Thus, many people who work with children do not have the tools, resources and support they need to understand child development and deliver the kind of care children require in our modern families, academic settings and economy.

It has become clear that single programs and initiatives, however excellent, cannot address the systemic, deep-rooted issues faced by the workforce. A systemic approach to workforce development is the most effective way to address these issues in a field as diverse as this, with its mixture of program types, settings, and diversity of children, families and providers. Through the law and budgeting process, EEC has been charged with creating a plan for a comprehensive workforce development system and the Board has been charged with considering fourteen specific facets of a potential system (see Appendix B). This has set the stage for the creation of a permanent system that can successfully and equitably serve the children of the Commonwealth and their families. By uniting nearly all of the funding for the education and care of Massachusetts children under one umbrella, we now have the opportunity, for the first time in Massachusetts history, to break a decades-long stalemate.

PLANNING THE UNITED WAY-SCHOTT FOUNDATION SERIES OF MEETINGS

To capitalize on this opportunity, Peg Sprague of United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Valora Washington of the Schott Foundation Fellowship wanted to build broad stakeholder consensus on how a system could be built in Massachusetts. With their respective organizations' backing and the support of an anonymous foundation, they sought additional expertise to help plan and organize the series of meetings. Nationally known scholars, consultants and educators Gwen Morgan and Joan Costley, both Massachusetts residents, were also engaged to work on this effort. Both were natural choices given their key roles in helping other states build professional development systems. Also, Stan Schwartz of United Way Massachusetts Bay contributed considerable organizational skill to this endeavor.

Following much dialogue, the planning team agreed that the convening series would consist of three meetings:

- An initial convening of Boston-area planners, funders, and advocates;
- A statewide meeting of higher education representatives from public and private Associate, Bachelor and graduate degree programs, and representatives of resource and referral agencies that were integrally involved in major professional development initiatives; and

- A statewide meeting of representatives of all stakeholder groups, including participants of the first two meetings.

We built the meeting series around several key ideas:

- Testing with Massachusetts stakeholders the idea of a systemic approach to workforce development;
- Identifying core values that needed to shape the planning of any workforce development system;
- Sharing with stakeholders the experiences and learnings of other states that had already implemented career development systems;
- Asking stakeholders to identify the strengths and resources as well as the gaps in past and current workforce development efforts; and
- Commitment that our report to EEC would reflect the collective vision of the stakeholders.

Our meeting series was deeply rooted in a strong focus on creating a systemic approach to workforce development. Based on the literature, the experiences of other states, and best practices, we determined early in our deliberations that we would focus on presenting, and seeking consensus related to, the need for a systemic approach. It is quite apparent that issues such as compensation, quality, or accessibility are systemic problems that cannot be resolved except within the context of their relationship to each other.

FINDINGS

Four findings emerged from the rich dialogue that took place in the three meetings among over 100 Massachusetts leaders (see Appendix C for a list of the meeting series participants). These findings are consistent with other recent or ongoing work, including *the Report of the Early Education and Care Advisory Committee* (2004). Participants agreed:

- The time is right for a systemic approach to professional development in Massachusetts.
- Our system must be framed by shared values.
- We must and can willingly learn from what other states have accomplished.
- We must build upon our own experiences in Massachusetts.

Finding #1: The Time is Right for a Systemic Approach to Professional Development in Massachusetts.

Our meetings confirmed this hypothesis: participants across fields and disciplines agreed that one system for all ages was not only possible but also necessary.

In presenting the idea of a systemic approach to the group, we presented several key elements that comprise a well-functioning system:

- A mission or operating philosophy (why does the system exist, and what is it intended to do?);
- An ongoing planning process;
- A set of goals and objectives derived from the planning process;
- A set of strategies to achieve goals and objectives; and
- A way to evaluate its success and a method for self-correction (responsiveness to feedback).

The overall outcomes of a well-functioning system are:

- An efficient and effective use of resources;
- Responsiveness to the needs of those it serves; and
- A clear, coherent and known set of operating procedures that can be accessed and used by anyone in the “community” that it serves.

Lessons from Other States about Systems

The benefits of implementing a workforce development system have been documented in numerous states.² In fact, the following outcomes have been documented in ALL states that have developed systemic approaches to career and professional development in early care and education and school-age care:

- Increased participation in training across the workforce, beyond licensing requirements;
- Increased number of early care and education professionals earning credentials and degrees;
- Increased number of practitioners from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds, including recent immigrants and those whose first language is not English, participating in training and earning credentials and degrees;
- Growth in the number and percentage of early care and education centers, family child care providers, and out-of-school time programs earning national accreditation;
- Coordinated planning of use of training funds;
- More efficient use of training funds, resulting in reduced duplication of offerings, broader range of available topics, training available at more levels, and training targeted to high-need areas and populations;
- Increase in private sources and contributions to training funds because of coordinated planning mechanism; and
- Creation of pathways with bridges that enable practitioners to move from one level of training or credential to the next one over time.

² Morgan, Gwen and Costley, Joan. *Taking the Temperature of Career Development*. Center for Children, Families, and Public Policy, Lesley University and Wheelock College, 2004. Boston, MA and Cambridge, MA.

Where we are in Massachusetts

Working independently, out-of-school time (OST), early care and education (ECE), infant/toddler, and family child care professionals have long grappled with issues of the workforce, and have tried to shape the existing infrastructure supports to respond to their particular needs. Recently, discussions have begun across these segments. More such discussion can provide a framework for creating one comprehensive integrated system addressing the needs of professionals who work with children from birth through school age. In addition, recent collaborative work of the Department of Education (DOE), Office of Child Care Services, and Department of Public Health (DPH) has created a shared definition of the basic core knowledge these workers need to possess. Professional associations and policy advocacy groups have also had many discussions of professional development systems, based on the large amount of literature and the learnings and experiences of other states.

The basic knowledge needed for school-age programs, early education and care, infant/toddler care, family child care and early intervention (the field) are linked by the base of child development theory and practice. At the same time, each of these segments has its own particular skills and knowledge relating to the age and development of the children and families served: the general characteristics of the age group, special needs they may have, the ways in which children learn, how to read their behavior, involving families, and skills in group development and relationships.

As the Report of the Early Education and Care Advisory Committee emphasized, we need to develop a coherent set of professional development pathways that enable practitioners to master the knowledge and skills they need as they move from one level of academic achievement to the next.

Finding #2: Our System Must Be Framed By Shared Values

A workforce development system is a model for the *structure* that will be used to identify needs and distribute resources. It is the core values of the system that determine *how* the system will operate, informing its policies, goals, and priorities. Given the importance of values to our work, it seemed essential to try to articulate the thinking of the field in Massachusetts. In the meeting series, we presented the concept of core values as integral and essential to the development and long-term sustainability of a professional development system, and solicited feedback and input from meeting participants.

We found there was strong consensus on the need for and importance of a values-based system, and that there was broad agreement on several key values:

- The system we are creating has to put the needs of children and their families first.

- Professional support and education for a diverse workforce is needed. Our approach acknowledges the increasing diversity not only of the workforce but also of the children and families of Massachusetts.
- We need to provide a coherent set of pathways that enable practitioners to build on their prior learning and experience, enter professional development programs at a level appropriate to their needs, and be able to move smoothly through various levels of courses and degrees. This implies systemic linkages between and among colleges and degree programs; mechanisms for credit for prior learning; and the availability of academic support and career advisement, as well as opportunities for learning in languages other than English.

These, of course, are not the only core values that provide the glue for a workforce development system, but they are the beginning of an articulation of such values that can be built upon by the new Department. It is important to note that these values have merit beyond the field; they are what will draw policymakers and the general public into the conversation. Too often, well-intentioned professionals become mired in the minutia and jargon of the field and are unable to translate the importance of their work to a broader audience. A set of core values keep the public discussion grounded in the larger themes that have resonance and relevance to cherished American ideals.

Finding #3: We Can and Must Learn From Other States

At the final meeting of the series, participants heard and engaged in dialogue with representatives of career development systems in other states: Darlene Ragozzine, Executive Director of Connecticut Charts-a-Course, Susan Reed, Executive Director of *Maine Roads to Quality*, and Sue Russell, from North Carolina, Executive Director of T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood®. These discussions provided insight on how other states have successfully developed a systemic approach to professional development and identified lessons learned that could be useful to Massachusetts. Summaries on the following pages highlight the key components of each state’s system and lessons learned.

Based on the work of Connecticut, Maine and North Carolina in developing and implementing a statewide system to support and advance professional development the following “lessons learned” have application to Massachusetts:

- A system to collect and track data about the workforce is essential.
- The system needs to be anchored in a core base of knowledge aligned with the various roles in the profession.
- Involvement of higher education stakeholders is key to aligning the core knowledge base to higher education; articulation between two- and four-year colleges (public and private); linking non-credit to credit-bearing training, and to effective workforce system design.
- Linking increased compensation to progress in achieving identified milestones in professional development can result in reduced turnover and sustained participation in professional development, particularly for a low-paid workforce.

- A mix of public and private funding provides flexibility and helps ensure sustainability of the system.
- Establishing an effective statewide professional development system takes time and requires the active participation of all key stakeholders.

Connecticut: Connecticut Charts-A-Course

Connecticut Charts-A-Course (CCAC) is a statewide career development system for Connecticut's early education and school-age care professionals that was initiated in 1994 and is jointly supported by Connecticut's Departments of Social Services and Education and Connecticut Community Colleges. *CCAC* seeks to improve outcomes for the state's children by promoting a well-trained, skilled professional workforce to teach and care for them. The system is funded with combination of state, federal, and private funds.

Key components and results:

- A progressive career lattice that:
 1. Identifies core competencies for all training content and levels
 2. Defines recognition levels for non-credit training
 3. Provides for transformation of approved non-credit training (120 hours or more) for college credit applicable toward degrees.
- Links non-credit training to the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.
- Statewide agreement that all colleges would offer college credit for completion of approved non-credit training program and credits would count toward college degree requirements.
- Has achieved statewide multi-level articulation agreement (from non-credit to CDA to Associate's degree to Bachelor's degree) with participation from entire public higher education system and many private colleges.
- The twelve community colleges in the state have the same course numbers for all early childhood courses, with 80 percent consistent content of syllabi and programs.
- *CCAC* is working with state colleges to develop a school-age credential and online courses.
- Two agencies, in New Haven and Hartford, offer training in Spanish for the entire 180-hour curriculum. The Pathways test (for transformation to credit) is offered in Spanish as well as English, along with study materials. *CCAC* also administers a HELP grant to support a Hispanic/higher education partnership to support Spanish-speakers in earning degrees.
- *CCAC*'s flexible career lattice allows professionals to enter the field at several possible levels, opening up access to training to everyone who wishes to enhance their credentials and allowing them to work their way up through the system toward any level of degree.
- Associate degree programs are held in higher esteem in Connecticut as a result of a statewide program approval process organized by *CCAC*, which encouraged and enabled Associate degree programs to complete a self-assessment and statewide review process using NAEYC standards.

For more information, please see <http://www.ctcharts-a-course.org/>.

Maine: Maine Roads to Quality

Maine has developed a statewide system for supporting childcare professionals in attaining higher education and quality training. *Maine Roads to Quality (Maine Roads)* was launched in the mid-1990s as a statewide career development system that was planned by a statewide group of stakeholders from all sectors. It is funded through the State Department of Human Services, as well as through federal and private grants. It was developed with the purpose of providing all of Maine's children with quality learning environments by promoting and supporting professionalism in the early care and education field. School-age providers may also access and benefit from many of *Maine Roads'* programs.

Key Components and results:

- *Career Lattice*: allows providers to move upward through determined levels of qualification, education and experience. Once they have completed the 180-hour Core Knowledge Training, practitioners can choose to specialize in one of four areas to achieve a credential in social services, direct care, training, or administration and management.
- *Professional Registry*: A professional registry is a voluntary confidential recognition system that tracks practitioners' employment, education and training history. The Registry is mandatory for Early Care and Education and Out of School Time practitioners who use the services of *Maine Roads* (e.g. scholarships, participation in training programs, accreditation programs, and those who are employed by programs funded by State Department of Human Services). Providers can store ongoing education and training records in their personal career development Registry record. Registry members are eligible to receive career counseling pertaining to their professional goals.
- *Core Knowledge Training Program*: *Maine Roads* offers a training program that provides new and experienced early care and education and school-age care practitioners 180 hours of approved training. Practitioners can apply training to college credit, the Child Development Associate credential, a Certificate of Completion, or to meet minimum licensing requirements.
- *Child Care Leadership Institute*: *Maine Roads* provides 30-hour trainings to childcare workers in human resource management, financial management, administration and supervision, and leadership. The five-day training program is designed for directors and administrators of child care centers and focuses on the theory and legal issues relating to operating a child care center and practical skills of staff hiring and supervision, family communication, professionalism and survival skills for administering early childhood centers.

Key points about *Maine Roads* include:

- Achieved articulation between the 180-hour core curriculum and CDA credential and almost all Associate degree programs in the state.
- Has stimulated growth of Associate degree programs in early childhood education from one to eight community colleges in Maine.

For more information, please see <http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/maineroads/>.

North Carolina: T.E.A.C.H. ® Early Childhood

The *T.E.A.C.H. ® Early Childhood* model scholarship program was initiated in 1990 in North Carolina to address the statewide issues of high staff turnover, low compensation and poorly educated and trained early childhood teachers. It has since been adopted by more than twenty states.

The model:

- *T.E.A.C.H. ® Early Childhood* is based on a concept of shared responsibility among three partners. (1) A centralized statewide Fund, with a mix of public and private money offers college scholarships to cover tuition costs for individuals working in child and youth education and care programs, to enable them to advance their qualifications. The entity administering the Fund, usually a public/private organization, collects data and issues reports on the outcomes of the scholarship program. (2) The employer of the individual receiving the scholarship agrees to contribute to the extent feasible for the cost of books, travel, and often paid release time. The employer further agrees to provide a salary increase or bonus linked to the attainment of a certain number of credits and/or a degree. (3) The individual receiving a *T.E.A.C.H. ® Early Childhood* scholarship agrees to continue employment with the sponsoring employer for an agreed-upon period of time after completion of a specified number of courses, credit, or a degree. (4) Since the Fund is a large purchaser of higher education, a fourth partner has become the colleges themselves. Any four-year college that wishes to participate in *T.E.A.C.H. ® Early Childhood* is required to sign an articulation agreement with a community college.

Other features of *T.E.A.C.H. ® Early Childhood* North Carolina:

- It relies on a technology-based system to effectively collect, track and analyze workforce data and the impact of *T.E.A.C.H. ® Early Childhood* on the workforce's increased education and compensation and reduced turnover.
- All scholarship recipients now receive career counseling, and academic supports.
- The scholarships are available to licensed school-age programs, infant/toddler programs, and child care centers, and efforts are underway to get all public school based programs licensed by 2006.
- All early childhood courses in public higher education in NC are now available through distance learning. All early childhood practitioners in NC are eligible to apply for a *T.E.A.C.H. ® Early Childhood* scholarship.
- *T.E.A.C.H. ® Early Childhood* also provides health insurance supplements, which are currently privately funded.

Results: significant improvements in North Carolina's early education and care system.

- Teachers participating in the Associate degree scholarship program completed an average of 14 semester hours per contract (typically an academic year) saw their compensation improve by over 13 percent annually and left their centers at a rate of less than 9 percent per year.
- Overall, the statewide turnover among early care and education workers in North Carolina has dropped from 42 percent to 24 percent.
- The average level of education of the workforce is increasing; from 2001 to 2003, there was a 27 percent increase in North Carolina teachers with degrees.

For more information, please see <http://www.childcareservices.org/teach/project.html>.

Finding #4: We can build on our own experiences: Building Blocks for a system in Massachusetts

The following items are assets identified by stakeholders as strategies, models, and efforts that can be building blocks in the construction of a professional development system:

State and legislative mandates:

- Require that the workforce development plan must include and address the needs of practitioners working with infants and toddlers, preschool (3-5-year-olds) and out-of-school time in all settings
- Outline 14 specific considerations that provide guidance for the development of the workforce development plan
- a line item in the state budget for workforce development planning

Existing National Professional Standards and Credentials:

- NCATE/NAEYC accreditation standards for Associate, Bachelor, and advanced degree programs
- U.S. Dept of Labor Early Childhood Specialist credential/Apprenticeship Program
- Early Childhood Council for Professional Recognition Child Development Associate Credential
- National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation
- Head Start and Early Head Start Performance Standards
- NAEYC Program Accreditation Standards

Existing Massachusetts State and Professional Standards and Credentials:

- State licensing standards for programs serving children from birth to age 14 in a variety of settings
- Massachusetts Early Childhood Program Standards
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health Early Intervention credential
- Massachusetts Department of Education Early Childhood Teacher Certification standards

Work on Core Knowledge/Framework Conceptualization:

- Core knowledge/competency framework developed by the Massachusetts Department of Education/Department of Public Health/Office of Child Care Services working group
- Massachusetts School Age Coalition (MSAC) school-age core competencies and Achieve Boston blueprint
- Recommendations of the Higher Education Afterschool and Youth Work Roundtable
- Conceptualization of a Youth Development Associate credential

Previous and Current models for Professional Development for current Practitioners:

- Advancing the Field – prior Department of Education model for comprehensive approach to supporting practitioners to earn college degrees
- Project Ideal – Lowell community-wide career track model including college articulation agreements, career advising, and college study
- T.O.P.S. – Greater Lawrence community-wide career track model
- University of Massachusetts University Without Walls Program
- Career advising programs offered by resource and referral agencies (Child Care Resource Center, Child Care Circuit, and Preschool Enrichment Team)

Higher Education strategies:

- Participation/collaboration in Advancing the Field, Building Careers, and local models cited above
- Development of Early Childhood Compact addressing articulation leading to Department of Education Early Childhood Teacher Licensure.

Data resources:

- Office of Child Care Services (now EEC) licensing database on individual practitioner qualifications
- Board of Higher Education database tracking college enrollment, retention, and rates of degree completion
- Workforce and service data from community planning councils

All of these efforts and examples are important. The chief difference between these efforts and a systemic approach is that they are limited to professionals who work with a particular age group or to a certain geographic area rather than to the entire spectrum of practitioners who work with children from birth through school-age, statewide.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Synthesizing discussion from over 100 stakeholders, we offer one overarching goal, with five specific recommendations, for workforce and professional development for our field:

Build on and connect existing resources and models, and add resources and strategies where needed, to create a statewide integrated system of professional development to meet the needs of practitioners in all roles and settings in the field.³

To ensure that this system will be able to achieve the goals suggested by the passage of the Early Education for All legislation and the establishment of the new Department of Early Education and Care, we identify specific recommended tasks that will be crucial to effective design and implementation of this professional development system.

Recommendation 1: ESTABLISH DATA SYSTEMS TO INFORM DECISION-MAKING AND TRACK PROGRESS

Rationale:

Information networks are a crucial component of a system. The collection of relevant data allows:

- Policy makers and funders to assess conditions in the field, determine progress over time and make funding decisions;
- Individuals to track their career development over time; and
- Planning and priority setting by higher education institutions, community based agencies, organizations and state administrators.

Action Steps and Responsible Party:

- A. Identify existing databases, including those kept by the Board of Higher Education, and determine workforce data components⁴ including amount of dollars and geographic distribution by age groups, language and ethnicity, workforce educational attainment and higher education capacity. (EEC)
- B. Expand the existing licensing registry into a professional personnel registry that enables practitioners to access and continually update their education and work history. (EEC)
- C. Require all personnel to register. (Legislature)
- D. Prepare baseline public report on current conditions. (EEC)

³ Throughout this report, the “field” refers to all who work with infants, toddlers, preschool-age children, and school-age children (birth through age 14) in all settings in Massachusetts.

⁴ For example: the Massachusetts Cost Quality Studies and Head Start Program Information Reports.

Expected Results:

Massachusetts would have:

- A high-speed, accessible information network that supports the data and knowledge needs of the workforce development system; and
- An individual registration and professional development support system.

Recommendation 2: ADDRESS DIVERSITY BY PROMOTING CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN THE WORKFORCE AND BY MEETING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF A DIVERSE WORKFORCE.

Rationale:

Our workforce and the children they serve include a wide range of cultures, educational experiences, languages, and ages, among other characteristics. Given our values, Massachusetts must work intentionally to be sure that the professional development needs of a diverse workforce are met. Moreover, *all* members of the workforce must be prepared to teach and learn in diverse environments.

Currently there are no requirements regarding cultural competency in the EEC licensing regulations for working with children birth through age 12.

Action Steps and Responsible party⁵:

- A. Group and School Age regulations require annual, pre-approved training designed to strengthen practitioners' cultural competence. This training should be 10 percent of the annual requirements. (EEC)
- B. Family Child Care regulations require at least two hours each renewal period of pre-approved training designed to strengthen the provider's cultural competence. (EEC)
- C. Guidelines are developed which outline both the content of approved courses and the appropriate trainer qualifications. (EEC)
- D. Increase course offerings in languages other than English. (Higher Education)
- E. Increase diversity of faculty in higher education. Track annual progress. (Higher Education, community stakeholders, and EEC)

Expected result:

A more culturally competent workforce will be better able to respond to the needs of the children and families they serve. The Commonwealth will be able to build upon and maintain a diverse workforce.

⁵ These recommendations are drawn from the Schott Foundation Fellowship in Early Care and Education, 2005.

Recommendation 3: BUILD A SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING ROOTED IN A BASE OF CORE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Rationale:

- Since broad-based planning for professional development is now mandated for the first time in Massachusetts, it is time to address the need for the entire field to have a systemic definition of required skills and knowledge for all roles and levels of responsibility.
- Agreement about required skills and knowledge forms the basis to develop a career lattice.
- A career lattice can provide two important anchors for the field: a clear definition of the level of knowledge and skill needed to effectively fill specific roles, as well as a clear illustration of the opportunities for professional growth and movement.
- A career lattice can ensure that:
 1. The field's core competencies are based on research in child and youth development, brain development and pedagogical principles in learning;
 2. The knowledge base acknowledges and expands understanding of children and adults from diverse cultures, languages and learning styles; and
 3. An agreed-upon set of competencies provides the basis for credentials and degrees.

Action Steps and Responsible Party:

- A. Disseminate a draft of core workforce competencies to the field and to the Higher Education Task Force (see Recommendation 4) for review, comment and consensus building. (EEC in collaboration with key stakeholder groups including higher education.)
- B. Develop a career lattice that includes all roles in the field. (EEC in collaboration with key stakeholder groups including higher education.)
- C. Use core knowledge and career lattice as the basis for all credentialing, building on existing national and state credentials. (EEC in collaboration with key stakeholder groups including higher education.)

Expected result:

Massachusetts will have defined the knowledge and skills required for all roles and levels of responsibility in the field and established a career lattice that includes the full range of roles in the field and illustrates the qualifications needed for each role.

Recommendation 4: LINK SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED STAFFING TO ACCESSIBLE HIGHER EDUCATION CREDENTIALS.

Rationale:

Higher education plays three important roles in a professional development system. It:

- Transmits core knowledge and mentors skill development with safeguards and standards;
- Recognizes progress and achievement through the award of credit and degrees, providing a framework for linking tiered compensation to levels of educational attainment; and
- Provides opportunities for individuals and groups to receive college credit based on the use of standards and assessments. National standards and models for the assessment of individual prior learning have existed for more than 30 years and are in widespread use by more than half of the colleges in the United States. Standards for awarding credit to community- or college-based non-credit training programs have also been developed and implemented in more than 30 states during the past 15 years as part of the creation of professional development systems.

Action Steps:

- A. Convene a higher education task force to design strategies for changes in public and private higher education programs to meet the professional development needs of practitioners in the field, specifically to address (EEC or its designee):
- Aligning core knowledge and career lattice with the content and requirement of courses and degree programs at all levels;
 - Achieving full articulation of courses and degree programs within and among colleges;
 - Ensuring the availability and accessibility of courses and degree programs needed by the field;
 - Ensuring that the content of courses and degrees meets the need of the full range of roles and settings that comprise the field;
 - Collaborating with community agencies to establish a framework of content and quality standards for awarding college credit to high-quality non-credit training programs; and
 - Provide widespread options for the assessment of individuals for college credit applicable toward degrees by adopting and implementing existing national standards of the Council of Adult Experiential Learning or creating Massachusetts standards.

- B. Establish a statewide system of individual career advising and academic support – an inclusive process that involves public, private, two-year, and four-year colleges as well as community based and professional organizations. (EEC or its designee)
- C. Mandate that Massachusetts colleges offering Associate and Bachelor degree programs in early education and care apply for and achieve NCATE/NAEYC Accreditation. (MA Board of Higher Education)

Expected result:

Massachusetts will have a coherent, accessible career development and professional education system.

Recommendation 5: FUND THE SYSTEM

Rationale:

As previously stated, isolated project-specific funding to support professional development and to address the compensation gap have not been effective or sustainable. Significant funding will be needed to establish the requisite infrastructure to support a system as well as to provide scholarships and increased compensation. Some vital steps can be taken immediately, while others are so systemic and complex as to require a planned and specific phasing-in.

Massachusetts cannot fund the system with state money alone. Consistent public-private partnerships that enable pooling of resources and funding can be an effective and efficient strategy to help build the system.⁶

Action Steps:

- A. Mobilize public and private resources to fund a statewide individual scholarship fund administered by a non-governmental entity and charged with reporting annually to EEC and the legislature. (EEC and key stakeholders)
- B. Link increased compensation to advancement in achieving professional qualifications and/or degrees. (EEC and key stakeholders)
- C. Use the career lattice to develop recommended guidelines for salaries aligned with roles in the field. (EEC or its designee with key stakeholders)
- D. Develop a phased-in approach that provides salary incentives and benefit enhancements that are earmarked within reimbursement rates and grants. (EEC and key stakeholders)
- E. Fund the critical new infrastructure of the system, including a unified data system, expansion of the licensing database into a professional development registry, the work of the Higher Education Task Force, and the development of the core

⁶ Examples of effective public-private partnership models include support for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships in states such as North Carolina, Illinois, and Indiana, and the Connecticut and Maine statewide systems.

knowledge framework and a career lattice. (EEC, Higher Education Task Force, and key stakeholders)

Expected Results:

Massachusetts will leverage new funds to support a viable professional development system. The Commonwealth will strengthen the link between compensation and higher education and, over time, equalize compensation across sectors.

CONCLUSION

This is the first time that Massachusetts has created a legislative mandate for statewide planning and implementation for professional development for the early childhood and out-of-school time workforce. Although our state has had a history of short-term and local innovation in meeting the needs of this workforce, we have yet to achieve the “tipping point” that will bring us to a viable and sustainable *system*. Through the meeting series we sought to answer two questions:

- What are the most important needs and issues of the workforce that should inform the design and implementation of a workforce plan; and
- What would be the most effective approach to a workforce development system?

We have concluded that the most important workforce needs and issues that must be addressed as Massachusetts develops a workforce development plan are:

- Ensuring that all professional development programs meet content and quality standards for the field;
- Building a fully articulated network of non-credit training and college degree programs that meets the needs of practitioners working in all settings and roles in the field;
- Addresses diversity by building cultural competence in the workforce and meeting the needs of the diverse workforce; and
- Increased compensation linked to professional development.

We believe the most effective approach to creating an effective strategy for workforce development in Massachusetts is one that builds a system that:

- Leverages resources;
- Builds on what already works;
- Addresses gaps in resources and strategies;
- Expands and fully links the higher education resources for the field;
- Addresses diversity;
- Establishes ongoing data gathering and analysis tools to meet planning and documentation needs for the system and information needs for individual practitioners; and
- Establishes systemic approaches to the improvement of compensation linked to the attainment of credentials and degrees.

Through the meeting series we also learned that there is eagerness and impatience among practitioners, private funders, higher education as well as policy makers to move forward with this work. There is also skepticism that, as in the past, best efforts will be made, but true success will not be achieved. This work will require new thinking, relinquishment of certain long-held assumptions and beliefs, the willingness to take some risks, and a continued commitment among those leading this work to ensure all voices are heard.

The time is now to build on our own prior successes, and to learn from the experiences of other states in building a long-term, statewide systemic approach to professional

development. We look forward with hope and anticipation to the unfolding of a new era for the children and families of our Commonwealth.

Appendix A: Characteristics of the Early Education and Out-of-School Time Workforce

Source: Massachusetts Child Care Center & School Age Program Salary and Benefits Report, 2000

Study conducted by the Massachusetts Child Care Resource and Referral Network for the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services

Child Care Centers					School Age Workforce					
	Assistant Teacher	Teacher	Lead Teacher	Director		Assistant Leader	Group Leader	Site Coordinator	Single Site Prog. Administrator	Multi Site Prog. Administrator
Teacher Characteristics					Teacher Characteristics (reported in total numbers)					
Employment Status					Employment Status					
Employed Part-Time	2299	1538	650	240	Employed Part-Time	799	1019	187	44	13
Employed Full-Time	1713	4866	2341	1313	Employed Full-Time	28	304	326	172	196
Gender					Gender					
Female	3843	6198	2922	1494	Female	649	1007	400	188	171
Male	158	129	44	41	Male	199	310	87	31	32
Age (reported in terms of total numbers)					Age (reported in terms of total numbers)					
Under 21 years of age	1211	319	N/A	N/A	Between 16 and 18 years	377	NA	NA	NA	NA
Between 21 and 39 years	1953	4075	1671	587	Between 19 and 20 years	132	NA	NA	NA	NA
Between 40 and 54 years	668	1699	1083	765	Under 21 years	NA	273	12	NA	NA
55 years and over	146	279	213	177	Between 21 and 39	275	882	374	111	146
					Between 40 and 54	43	151	91	94	57
					55 years and over	12	39	13	11	5
Education Levels (reported in terms of total numbers)					Education Levels (reported in terms of total numbers)					
Less than GED or high school diploma	576	N/A	N/A	N/A	Less than GED or high school diploma	24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
					Currently enrolled	341	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
GED or high school diploma	1262	N/A	N/A	N/A	GED or high school diploma	176	257	28	8	3
Some college courses in child development or related field	1404	2893	554	154	Some college courses in child development or related field	185	576	126	26	14
					Management or administrative courses	-	-	-	11	4
Child Dev. Associate (CDA) credential	50	334	201	50	Distance learning or other higher education	2	40	7	2	0
					APEX credential	0	6	17	1	2

Appendix B

GENERAL LAWS OF MASSACHUSETTS

**PART I.
ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**TITLE II.
EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH**

CHAPTER 15D. DEPARTMENT OF EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE

Chapter 15D: Section 5 Workforce development system; implementation plan

[Text of section added by 2004, 205, Sec. 1 effective March 1, 2005. See 2004, 205, Sec. 2.]

Section 5. The board shall develop and annually update an implementation plan for a workforce development system designed to support the education, training and compensation of the early education and care workforce, including all center, family child care, infant, toddler, preschool and school-age providers. The board shall solicit input from organizations and agencies that represent a diverse spectrum of expertise, knowledge and understanding of broader workforce development issues and of the professional development needs of the early childhood and care workforce. In order to inform the plan, the board shall conduct:

- (1) an inventory and assessment of the current resources and strategies available for workforce and professional development in the commonwealth, including but not limited to Head Start trainings, community-based trainings, higher education programs, child care resource and referral agency trainings, state and federally funded workforce development trainings/programs, public school system trainings/credentialing, and other trainings that address the needs of those who work with children and make recommendations for coordinating the use of those existing resources and strategies;
- (2) analyses using current data on the status of the early education and care workforce, including work experience, certifications, education, training opportunities, salaries, benefits and workplace standards; and
- (3) an assessment of the workforce capacity necessary to meet the state's early education and care needs in the future.

In the development of the plan, the board shall consider:

- (1) core competencies, a common and shared body of knowledge, for all those working in the early education and care fields;

- (2) streamlined and coordinated state certification, credentialing, and licensing within the early education and care fields including teacher and provider certification and licensing, the Child Development Associate, public school teacher certification, and other program standards as appropriate for director, teacher and provider credentialing requirements;
 - (3) a mandatory and regularly updated professional development and qualification registry;
 - (4) agreements among higher education institutions for an articulated system of education, training, and professional development in early education and care;
 - (5) approval of early education and care training programs and academic coursework, incentives for Associate and Bachelor degree programs to meet best practices and to modify curricula to reflect current child development research, and certification of trainers and teachers;
 - (6) coordination of existing workforce resources among public agencies, including establishing regional workforce support resources in coordination with child care resource and referral agencies;
 - (7) a range of professional development and educational opportunities that provide appropriate coursework and degree pathways for family child care as well as center-based providers at all levels of the career ladder that are available in locations, days, and times that are accessible;
 - (8) credit for prior learning experiences, development of equivalencies to 2 and 4 year degrees, and the inclusion of strategies for multiple pathways for entry into the field of early education and care;
 - (9) recruitment and retention of individuals into the early education and care workforce who reflect the ethnic, racial, linguistic, and cultural diversity of Massachusetts families based on the current census data;
 - (10) incentives and supports for early education and care professionals to seek additional training and education, such as scholarships, stipends, loan forgiveness connected to a term of service in the field, career counseling and mentoring, release time and substitutes;
 - (11) guidelines for a career ladder or career lattice representing salaries and benefits that suitably compensate professionals for increases in educational attainment and with incentives for advancement, including a salary enhancement program;
 - (12) public and private resources to support the workforce development system;
 - (13) a data collection and evaluation system to determine whether the workforce and professional development activities established pursuant to this chapter are achieving recruitment, retention and quality of the workforce goals; and
 - (14) ways to recognize and honor advancements in educational attainment among early education and care professionals.
-

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