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Early Childhood Education Funders Coalition

Agenda to Achieve Learning Readiness by 2020

Presentation to the Early Childhood
Finance & Policy Committee

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January 7, 2010

Coalition Members

- Blandin Foundation
- Greater Twin Cities United Way
- Grotto Foundation
- McKnight Foundation
- Minneapolis Foundation
- Sheltering Arms Foundation
- Social Venture Partners
- Women's Foundation of Minnesota

Note: This coalition list represents a starting point – our goal is to expand to include as many other philanthropic organizations as possible.

Introduction and Overarching Policy

As members of the philanthropic community providing leadership and funding for early childhood efforts, we believe every child in Minnesota needs to be ready for kindergarten by 2020

Why are the Funders Doing this Work?

- We care deeply about helping our State to build a system that delivers successful outcomes for all kids.
- We have a unique perspective that we can bring to the table
- We want to use our cash and our cache to make a difference
- We want our to align our grantmaking and investments with a clear action plan, accountability, and outcomes

Our Process

- Extensive review of research on ECCE in Minnesota produced since 2000; literature review, numerous group discussions, 175 interviews
- Identified a long list of critical ECCE needs
- Determined that before addressing needs, Minnesota would benefit by developing a **framework** within which to base ECCE decisions

Our Conclusion

To ensure that every child is ready for kindergarten by 2020, Minnesota needs:

- A comprehensive approach to early childhood care and education
- Accountability for measurable and sustained progress
- Three key elements to be successful: leadership, accountability and funding

Building on Minnesota's Early Childhood Strengths, Our Proposal:

- Endorses and builds on many of the programs and efforts currently underway
- Relies on a collaborative approach
- Honors and supports the role of parents

Our Proposed Policy Agenda

- Leadership
- Accountability
- Funding

Leadership

Recommendation 1: Create a cabinet-level agency focused on ECCE

- A Minnesota Office of Early Learning (or state agency with same focus/role)
- Accountable for ensuring the quality of the ECCE system and assessing state progress towards 2020 the goal
- Operational by FY 2012

Leadership

Recommendation 2: Sustained and Coordinated Leadership from Key Groups

High-level policy and funding leadership:

- The Minnesota Legislature
- The Executive Branch of State Government

Supportive leadership:

- Minnesota Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC)
- The Philanthropic Community
- Advocacy Groups
- Business Community

Accountability

Recommendation 1: Adopt Accountability Principles

1. 100% of children (ages 0-5) must be ready for school by 2020 (establish annual milestones)
2. Align state budget allocations with the policy goal
3. Formally adopt the five domains of school readiness
4. Develop culturally appropriate mechanisms for screening and assessment
5. Formally adopt a “whole-child” approach

Accountability

Recommendation 2: Implement Accountability Measures

Minnesota must implement three critical accountability initiatives:

- A statewide report card
- Screening and assessment of all children
- Consistent quality rating system

Accountability – Statewide Report Card

- Provides the accountability framework for ECCE in Minnesota
- Annually reports the progress of all levels of the state's ECCE system
- A guide in decision-making for funding, regulatory policies and training

Accountability – Quality Rating and Improvement Sytem (QRIS)

- Minnesota needs a consistent Quality Rating and Improvement System with meeting standards aligned with results
- Build on strengths of Parent Aware QRIS

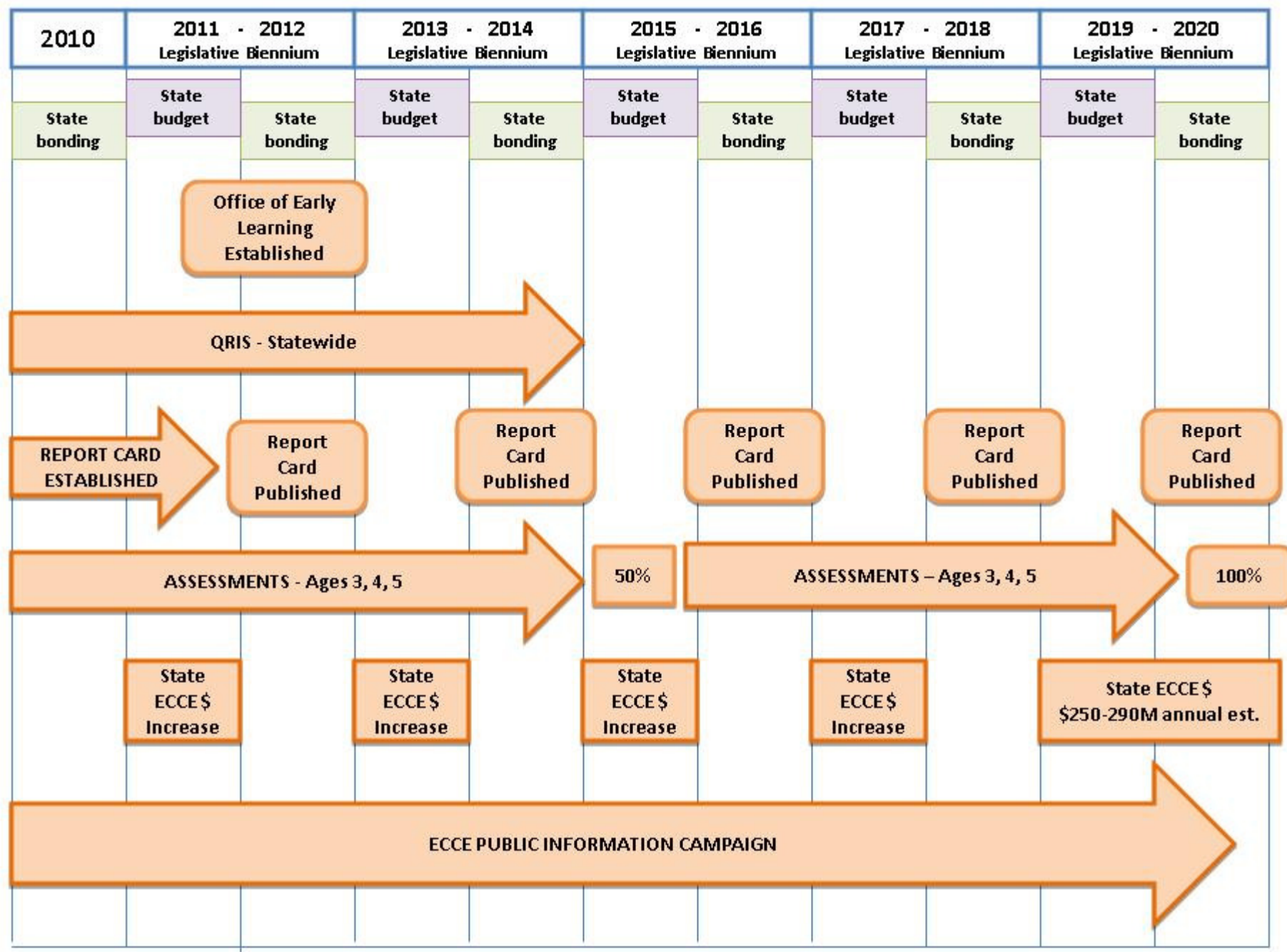
Accountability – Screening and Assessment of All Children

ALL Minnesota children, starting at age 3, must be assessed for progress toward school readiness by 2020, with a milestone goal of screening and assessment of 50% of children by the year 2015

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Sequencing and Funding

Achieving all children ready to learn by 2020



Conclusion

To accomplish Minnesota's 2020 goal of having all children fully ready to learn when they start kindergarten will be challenging. It is doable if we all join in the task and begin now