

Early Childhood Quality Rating & Improvement System Framework Work Plan

Minnesota Department of Education and Minnesota Department of Human Services

February 2010

Background: A QRIS framework workgroup, made up of DHS and MDE staff, has been established to carry out legislative direction provided in Minnesota Statute 124D.142, which is intended to move Minnesota toward creation of a standards-based quality rating and improvement system. The legislation includes direction to use the results of the evaluation of Parent Aware to recommend how existing early care and education systems and programs in Minnesota can accomplish the six objectives listed below. Recommendations related to the six objectives will be presented to the legislature and the Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Committee (ECAC) in March, 2011.

Note: The departments are aware of other activity impacting its recommendations, including the Kellogg Foundation-funded Minnesota QRIS Scaling Options report released in November, 2009, and the work of the ECAC. In addition, efforts in other states will be examined as each of these objectives is addressed.

Objectives:

1. Develop scope and plan for work based on legislation.

| Tasks | Timeline/Task Completed | Uses ARRA Funding? |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------|
| A. Establish cross-agency workgroup and define key objectives and tasks for workplan | Aug 09 (completed) | No |
| B. Meet with Parent Aware evaluator to determine status of evaluation, including timing of availability of specific findings needed to inform workplan | Sept 09 (completed) | No |
| C. Complete draft workplan with specific objectives, tasks, and timelines | Oct 09 (completed) | No |

2. Create a common set of child outcomes.

| Tasks | Timeline | Uses ARRA Funding? |
|--|---|--------------------|
| <p>A. Define and agree to common set of child outcomes and describe their use <u>Child Outcome Standard (Early Learning Standard) Definition</u> A common set of developmentally appropriate expectations for young children within a context of shared responsibility and accountability for helping children meet these expectations.</p> | <p>Nov 09 – Mar 10 (completed)</p> | <p>No</p> |

3. Develop a plan to track progress toward the number of low-income children whose parents can access quality programs and progress toward increasing the number of children who are fully prepared for kindergarten.

| Tasks | Timeline | Uses ARRA Funding? |
|---|---------------|--------------------|
| <p>A. Consult with Early Childhood Advisory Council Access & Finance and Accountability Committees</p> | <p>Feb 10</p> | <p>No</p> |

4. Create a framework of a common set of program standards for a voluntary quality rating and improvement system.

| Tasks | Timeline | Uses ARRA Funding? |
|--|--|--------------------|
| <p>A. Establish a definition of 'program standards' <u>Program Standard Definition</u> Early childhood program standards identify the components and features of early childhood programs that, based on research, have been shown to ensure the conditions in which children are more likely to learn.</p> | <p>Nov 09 (completed)</p> | <p>No</p> |

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|---|--|---|
| <p>B. Using the 10 essential elements, create criteria for selecting the common set of standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a shared understanding of how the 10 essential elements are present in different types of early childhood programs in Minnesota. • Develop a crosswalk of the 10 Essential Elements with the School Readiness standards, Head Start performance standards, accreditation standards, child care center and family child care licensing standards, and the Parent Aware indicators to determine presence and absence of the 10 Essential Elements in the early childhood system. | <p>Nov 09 – Feb 10 (partially completed)</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p>C. Using the 10 essential elements, create and finalize the common program standards, including input by the public, national experts, the ECAC, the EC Caucus, preliminary findings from Parent Aware and a review of existing research and of other states with quality rating systems.</p> | <p>Dec 09 – Aug 10 (partially completed)</p> | <p>Yes – to facilitate public input and access national experts</p> |

5. Develop quality indicators for a voluntary statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System using the framework of common program standards

| Tasks | Timeline | Uses ARRA Funding? |
|---|--|---|
| <p>A. Draft indicators for the statewide quality rating and improvement system that will measure some or all of the common program standards using the results of the final Parent Aware evaluation and review of other states. Put out for review by the public, national experts, the ECAC, and the EC Caucus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize indicators given cost and feasibility, using Kellogg Foundation-funded MN QRIS Scaling Options report, as applicable | <p>Dec 09 – Oct 10 (partially completed)</p> | <p>Yes – to facilitate public input and access national experts</p> |
| <p>B. Meeting between the Departments of Education and Human Services to achieve consensus on draft set of QRIS categories and indicators</p> | <p>Oct 10</p> | <p>Yes – to facilitate meeting</p> |

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|--|--------------|--|
| C. Conduct public comment period and incorporate findings into QRIS categories and indicators | Oct – Nov 10 | Yes – to facilitate public input and develop communication materials |
| D. Finalize recommendations for QRIS indicators | Dec 10 | No |

6. Create a plan to link future funding to a voluntary QRIS framework.

| Tasks | Timeline | Uses ARRA Funding? |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify sources of funds with which the QRIS framework could align. Consult with EC Caucus and appropriate ECAC committees. | Feb - Mar 10 (partially completed) | No |
| A. Generate options for how links between QRIS and funding streams could be implemented within specific program areas and initiatives. | April - May 10 | No |

7. Create a plan for how the state will realign existing state and federal administrative resources to implement the voluntary QRIS framework.

| Tasks | Timeline | Uses ARRA Funding? |
|---|--------------|--------------------|
| A. Describe the range of resources needed to implement this framework. | June 10 | No |
| B. Describe available administrative resources | July 10 | No |
| C. Outline policy and program options for using administrative resources to implement framework | Aug – Nov 10 | No |