

**From:** Holcombe, Rebecca [Rebecca.Holcombe@vermont.gov]

**Sent:** Saturday, July 02, 2016 7:18 AM

**To:** Pepper, James

**Subject:** Fw: Update on ad hoc PreK Teacher Capacity work group

**Attachments:** FINAL Sept2015Doc\_StrategicPlan7-6-15 (2).pdf; FINAL July 1 2016 update.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up

**Flag Status:** Completed

james,

Who does Julie Cadwallader Smith work for now? She does not use letterhead for the communications and her email signature includes the BBF link. Is she now a BBF employee housed at Waterbury? I had thought she was at the Gov's office.

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Julie Cadwallader Staub, MSW  
Grant Director, Early Learning Challenge  
On behalf of the PreK Teacher Capacity Workgroup

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To: Secretary Holcombe  
From: Eddie Gale, on behalf of the PreK Capacity Work Group  
Re: Letter of Commitment to Track and Support Implementation of Short-, Mid-, and Long-Term Solutions  
Date: July 3, 2015

This document serves to identify those solutions, which have been initiated by various members of the PreK Capacity Work Group and are already underway, along with those solutions that the PreK Capacity Work Group is making a commitment to support and track in the mid- and long-term.

**Strategic Plan for Assuring there is an Adequate Number of Licensed Early Education Teachers in Private Early Childhood Programs in Vermont to Fully Implement Act 166 and Provide Families with a Variety of Options for Pre-K (July 3, 2015)**

*Problem Statement:* The success of Act 166 relies, in large part, on a sufficient number of qualified programs to deliver Pre-K services in a variety of program settings and locations. The limiting factor for many programs to qualify is access to a licensed early education teacher. According to Vermont Agency of Education data, current totals for endorsed, licensed teachers across all licensure categories (Emergency, Provisional, Retired, Level I and Level II) are 308 (ECSE) and 1086 (ECE). For a variety of reasons related to pay scale, geography, personal choices and other opportunities, we know that a number of these 1,396 are not choosing to work with the Pre-K population in private settings.

Below are a number of short, mid term and longer term strategies to expand the number of ECE endorsed licensed teachers to meet the needs of implementing Act 166.

**Short Term Strategies:**

**PROVISIONAL LICENSES**

A process is currently in place for School Superintendents to request provisional licenses for qualified early educators under their oversight. However, for a variety of reasons, it is not practical for Superintendents to provide the intense oversight necessary to issue a provisional license, especially if the early educator is working in a private setting that is not under direct supervision of the superintendent.

The VT Agency of Education has proposed to have qualified mentors from around the state provide provisionally licensed Early Educators the guidance necessary to achieve a Professional Educators License with an Early Childhood or Early Childhood Special Ed Endorsement (Level 1) within two years.

*Action:* Vermont Birth to Five, a program of the Permanent Fund for Vermont's Children, is currently surveying all child care programs in the state to determine their licensed teacher needs and the ability of unlicensed staff to qualify for a provisional license. Vermont Birth to Five has agreed to develop, administer and oversee this mentoring system including recruitment and supervision of mentors who will support qualified early education provisional license holders in private prekindergarten education settings to achieve a Professional Educators License with EC/ECSE Endorsement within two years. In fall 2015, there will be a cohort of up to 25 provisional licensees,

with a second cohort of up to 25 provisional licensees starting in fall 2016. The Permanent Fund will seek funding support for this project from its partner funders.

The Vermont Agency of Education will guide the provisional license program through the approval process of the Vermont Professional Standards Board.

The Vermont Agency of Education and Vermont Birth to Five will jointly develop an application selection process, an evaluation strategy and a set of program outcome benchmarks – see draft document *“Mentoring System of Early Childhood Educators in Private Prekindergarten Education Programs who Hold a Provisional License.”*

Responsible parties:

- Melissa Riegel Garrett, Vermont Agency of Education
- Becky Gonyea, Vermont Birth To Five
- Sherry Carlson, Vermont Birth to Five, VCPC Project

### LICENSE RECIPROCITY

Early Educators who hold teaching licenses from states other than Vermont have challenges meeting the requirements for Vermont Early Education Teacher licensure.

*Action:* The Vermont Agency of Education will review interpretation of Vermont’s Early Care and Education Standards for greater alignment with other key states. The review will be complete by September, 2015.

Responsible Party

- Patrick Halladay, Vermont Agency of Education

### **Mid Term Strategies:**

#### PATHWAY FROM ASSOCIATE’S DEGREE TO BACHELOR’S DEGREE WITH TEACHER LICENSURE

There currently is not a clear pathway for obtaining Early Education teacher licensure for early educators with an Associate’s Degree who are currently working in the early childhood field.

*Action:* Lyndon State College will develop a pathway for teacher licensure to serve the needs of current early educators with Associates Degrees in early childhood working in childcare settings. Lyndon State College will develop necessary course work and curriculum, coordinate with the external degree program at Johnson State College, other Vermont State Colleges, and other Vermont Institutes of Higher Education. Program development work will be funded by Lyndon State College and a pending grant to the A.D. Henderson Foundation.

Responsible Parties:

- Eden Haywood-Bird, Lyndon State College
- Yasmine Ziesler, Vermont State Colleges
- Eddie Gale, Henderson Foundation

## **Long Term Strategies:**

### **ENSURE THAT ALL HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR TRADITIONAL AND NON TRADITIONAL STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE TEACHER LICENSURE**

*Action:* The Higher Education-Early Childhood Workgroup is an essential part of the comprehensive efforts funded by Vermont's Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge Grant to improve systems for young children in Vermont. The goals of the Workgroup are to:

- Establish a smooth pathway from the AA to the BA for early childhood educators
- Support educators in becoming licensed to teach in Vermont with an Early Childhood Endorsement
- Ensure that coursework is updated to include the most recent knowledge about brain development, child and family development, and appropriate pedagogy

Responsibility Party:

- Cheryl Mitchell, Vermont Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge

### **CREATE AN OVERSIGHT GROUP TO HOLD EFFORTS ACCOUNTABLE TO EXPANDING THE NUMBERS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD LICENSED TEACHERS IN VERMONT**

Currently an ad hoc group of stakeholders has convened to explore strategies to create more opportunities for early educators to obtain their teacher licenses.

*Action:* Create a clear charge for the Pre-K Capacity Work Group to make sure individual strategies for short-, mid-, and long-term solutions are moving forward, that barriers are problem-solved, and that new promising ideas become strategies that are implemented. The Pre-K Capacity Work Group will consist of members of the Governor's Office, Agency of Education, Child Development Division, Vermont State Colleges and other higher education providers, the Permanent Fund and other affiliated private funders, and other stakeholders deemed necessary for the success of the project.

Responsible Parties:

- Aly Richards, Governor's Office
- Julie Cadwallader-Staub, Vermont Race to the Top/ Early Learning Challenge
- Susan Titterton, Consultant, Vermont Birth to Five

## **Long Term Plan for Retention of Licensed Teachers in Private Child Care Settings**

Private child care providers are often not able to offer equitable salary and benefits for licensed teachers in comparison to public school districts. This inequity is in part due to private childcare providers being compensated by school districts for ten hours per week for 35 weeks of prekindergarten education, while child care providers have to care for the same children 40+ hours per week, 52 weeks per year.

## STRENGTHENING CHILD CARE PROGRAMS' CAPACITY TO COMPENSATE THEIR TEACHERS

The Vermont Community Preschool Collaborative (VCPC), a project of the Permanent Fund's Vermont Birth to Five program, has a ten plus year history of supporting community based private childcare providers to qualify for public funds for preschool. To date, support has been in the form of technical assistance to build public/private partnerships between school districts and childcare providers, and implementation grants to build quality and deliver services while children were initially being counted on the school census. In addition, VB5 has implemented highly successful quality improvement efforts including mentoring, Professional Development (TS GOLD, Strengthening Families), STARS outreach, and supporting sustainable business practices (Shared Services).

*Action:* VB5 will continue to provide mentoring, training, and technical assistance and quality enhancement grants to private childcare programs to help them develop business models and strategies to more adequately compensate licensed teachers.

Responsible Party:

- Becky Gonyea, Vermont Birth to Five
- Sherry Carlson, Vermont Birth to Five, VCPC Project

## BUILDING SUPPORT FOR MORE PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Financing High Quality, Affordable Childcare was recently created by the legislature for the purpose of making recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor related to the most effective use of existing public funding and other opportunities for high quality early care and education. Among the Commissions charges are to:

- Determine the total costs of providing equal access to voluntary, high quality, early care and education for all Vermont children, ages birth through five (to meet a variety of families' needs.)
- Work in coordination with the ongoing efforts of Vermont's Early Learning Challenge – Race to the Top grant, Vermont's PreK Expansion Grant, and Vermont's implementation of 166.
- Review and identify all potentially available funding for high quality, affordable early care and education.
- Explore possible funding sources for equal access to voluntary, high quality, early care and education for all of Vermont children, ages birth through five.

*Action:* The Permanent Fund and partner funders, Let' Grow Kids and other stakeholders will advocate to the Commission for more equitable funding for early care and education.

Responsible Parties:

- Rick Davis, Permanent Fund
- Robyn Freedner-Maguire, Let's Grow Kids

July 1, 2016

Dear Secretary Holcombe,

At your request, in July of 2015 the ad hoc PreK Teacher Capacity Workgroup sent a strategic plan to you to describe the comprehensive approach that is underway to address the shortage of licensed preK teachers in private settings, in order to fully implement Act 166. Having licensed early childhood teachers in every early childhood setting is a critical component of achieving our shared goal of giving Vermont's young children every opportunity to succeed at school and in life.

This memo is to update you on our progress to date in implementing this strategic plan, as well as to point out areas that may impede full implementation of Act 166. As you know, several members of your staff have been generous with their time and expertise, participating in these meetings and facilitating progress within the Agency as well as helping to guide the direction of our work.

The updates below refer to the sections of our original plan, which we have attached. Highlights of this first year include:

Short Term Strategies:

- Twenty three early childhood professionals in private settings received provisional licenses. Of these, three have already attained full licensure, and twenty are on track to complete the requirements for full licensure by June of 2017.
- Twenty six of fifty nine applicants for the second cohort of provisional licensure have passed AOE's initial review.

Mid Term Strategies:

- At Lyndon State College, Eden Haywood-Bird developed a new AA to BA with licensure program, including a new model for meeting student teaching requirements. This new program has received approval at all levels and will begin in the fall of 2016, the first new program of its kind in recent memory. This program helps to address the wide gap between AA and BA programs, and will provide additional access to further education and licensure for early childhood professionals throughout the state.

Long Term Strategies:

- The PreK Teacher Capacity Workgroup collaborates closely with Early Childhood Higher Education Work Group, under the facilitation of Cheryl Mitchell. All of the colleges and universities that offer early childhood programs are represented in the work group. Participation has been robust, including the involvement of college and university Deans.
- The longer range goals of equitable wages is currently being met by the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission, research on the W.A.G.E.S. program, and the public engagement efforts of Let's Grow Kids.

For more detail on progress to date and upcoming work, please review the next few pages.

Thank you for your ongoing support of early childhood,



Julie Cadwallader Staub, MSW  
Grant Director, Early Learning Challenge  
On behalf of the PreK Teacher Capacity Workgroup

### Short Term Strategies:

#### PROVISIONAL LICENSES—FIRST COHORT

*AOE initiated the application process and selected the first cohort in fall 2015. 23 participants began the process in December 2015:*

- *14 plan to achieve licensure using the Peer Review Process*
- *3 used the License to License process as well as Peer review to add the endorsement*
- *1 enrolled in the Early Childhood Higher Education Collaboration (HEC) ECE program and will also use Peer Review to complete.*
- *2 using the License to License process only*
- *2 people found employment in a public school (provisional licensure ended) and*
- *1 went to work for a Child Care Support Agency. (Provisional licensure ended.)*

*As of April 2016, this is the progress of the above participants:*

- *Of the 14 using the peer review process only:*
  - *4 participants submitted Peer Review portfolios to AOE and were waiting for their interviews/decisions;*
  - *1 completed the Peer Review portfolio but wasn't able to pass the math portion of Praxis Core despite having taken the test several times, that person is working with a tutor;*
  - *the remaining 9 are on track to submit their portfolios in the Fall of 2016.*
- *Of the 3 using license to license followed by peer review:*
  - *2 completed the license to license process with Peer Review on track for a late Fall 2016 submission*
  - *1 is still completing the license to license process*

*Overall, Early Childhood Education is by far the largest single endorsement being sought through AOE's Peer Review process. AOE's staff have been very responsive throughout the process. The level of communication across agencies and organizations to accomplish this provisional licensure program has been extraordinary, and resulted in rapid and positive change.*

#### PROVISIONAL LICENSES—SECOND COHORT

- *59 applications have been reviewed*
- *26 passed the initial review and are moving forward*

- 6 additional applicants passed the initial review and are on a waiting list

The Early Learning Challenge grant contributed funding to Vermont Birth to Five for experienced mentors to support the provisionally licensed early childhood professionals working in private settings. The Early Learning Challenge grant also provided funding to TEACH in order to support other needs of provisional licensees, such as fees for peer review, coursework, etc.

#### NEXT STEPS:

The first cohort experienced minor attrition, with five candidates leaving the program. The primary reason for losing candidates was that they chose to change work places (though staying in the field). A provisional license stays with the work place, not the candidate. This attrition may have resulted from a lack of knowledge among some candidates about the requirements of the program. This is being addressed as AOE and VB5 prepare for the second cohort.

Strategies to increase success going forward include:

- A longer time frame for the application process for the 2016-18 cohort.
- New commitment form for those selected for next cohort to fully explain expectations.
- Recruitment underway for Peer Review panelists to address delays in the interview process.
- Increased communication between VB5 and AOE.
- Analysis of recent, informal survey on recruiting and retaining licensed early childhood teachers in private settings, in order to better understand challenges.

#### LICENSE RECIPROCITY

AOE signed the Interstate NASDTEC agreement which means that, as of 9/1/15, any educator with a non-conditional/non-expired out of state educator license, from a state that has also signed the agreement, is eligible for initial licensure in VT to match the same/equivalent endorsement from the other state.

#### NEXT STEPS

New York State has not signed the agreement, which poses challenges for those relocating from New York to Vermont. The Early Childhood Higher Education Group (a project of the Early Learning Challenge grant) is reviewing current requirements for license to license to see what supports, if any, are needed for those pursuing this route, and what barriers, if any, need to be addressed.

#### Mid Term Strategies:

#### PATHWAY FROM ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE TO BACHELOR'S DEGREE WITH TEACHER LICENSURE

In May 2016, Lyndon State College (LSC) received approval from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges for its new Early Childhood Education Licensure program that helps move those with an Associate's degree to a Bachelor's degree with licensure, and those with a Bachelor's degree to licensure. This approval was the culmination of a long process that included receiving approval from the LSC faculty and ROPA approval from the AOE. LSC is now taking applications for the first group to begin in the fall 2016. The program will be completed 90% online, which will increase

*geographic access and access for working professionals. More information can be found at: <http://lyndonstate.edu/degree-programs/education/early-childhood-education/>.*

*The Lyndon State College Program is innovative in two important ways that meet the needs of early childhood professionals in private settings: it is mostly online, so it greatly increases access for early childhood professionals throughout the state; and the requirement for students teaching can be met in the place of employment, with approved supervision.*

*The A.D. Henderson Foundation is funding the startup costs until fall 2016, when tuition should cover program costs.*

#### **NEXT STEPS**

*The PreK Teacher Capacity group looks forward to seeing the level of interest in this program, the outcomes for participants, and what barriers may still exist once it is in place.*

#### **Long Term Strategies:**

#### **ENSURE THAT ALL EARLY CHILDHOOD HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR TRADITIONAL AND NON TRADITIONAL STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE TEACHER LICENSURE**

*All of Vermont's institutes of Early Childhood Higher Education (IHEs) that offer early childhood programs are engaged in the Early Childhood Higher Education Group under the facilitation of Cheryl Mitchell. All of the colleges and universities that offer early childhood programs are represented in the work group. Participation has been robust, including the involvement of college and university Deans. As part of their participation in the workgroup, all the IHEs will:*

- *review their programs*
- *consider adding a licensure component,*
- *review requirements for student teaching (which is often a barrier for private providers),*
- *review course articulation and alignment with other institutions of Early Childhood Higher Education*

*The PreK Teacher Capacity Workgroup works closely with the Early Childhood Higher Education Group.*

#### **NEXT STEPS**

*Given that the Early Childhood Higher Education Group shares several of the long term goals and strategies of the PreK Teacher Capacity Workgroup, we can envision a time when the PreK Teacher Capacity group, having achieved its short and medium term goals, disbands and joins with the Early Childhood Higher Education Group to fulfill relevant strategies.*

#### **CREATE AN OVERSIGHT GROUP TO HOLD EFFORTS ACCOUNTABLE TO EXPANDING THE NUMBERS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD LICENSED TEACHERS IN VERMONT**

*Aly Richards, who was the architect of the Early Learning Challenge grant and co-facilitator of the PreK Teacher Capacity Work Group, left the Governor's Office last August and is now CEO of the Permanent Fund. Despite no longer having the direct influence of the Governor's Office, the ad hoc PreK Teacher Capacity workgroup has made significant progress in achieving its short and medium*

*term goals through the involvement of representatives from relevant state agencies and non-profit organizations. The shared commitment to collaborative work means that we have been able to hold each other accountable.*

*Some of the concrete ways in which the PreK Teacher Capacity workgroup has provided oversight and accountability for the work include:*

- *Receiving regular updates on the progress of AOE/VB5's provisional license project, AOE's licensing changes, and LSC's AA to BA program, and offering feedback and suggesting course corrections as needed.*
- *Developing, disseminating, and analyzing a survey of the PreK work force to help determine the scope of the problem related to licensed PreK teachers in private settings.*
- *Preparing this update to hold ourselves accountable for progress.*

### STRENGTHENING CHILD CARE PROGRAMS' CAPACITY TO COMPENSATE THEIR TEACHERS

*Efforts are taking place across the early childhood system to address the issue of compensation. Many members of the PreK Teacher Capacity Workgroup are directly involved with these efforts, using their positions to emphasize the importance of this issue, and promoting coordination. These efforts include:*

- *The Child Development Division completed the Early Childhood Workforce Survey which helped call attention and clearly articulate wage disparities within the early childhood workforce, especially between those working in the public schools and those working in licensed centers or family child care homes. The summary states: "The overall median hourly wage for the respondents to the Early Childhood & Afterschool Survey (\$15.21) was \$2.18 lower than the Vermont median hourly wage for all occupations (\$17.39)...In contrast, the median hourly wage for Public School Survey respondents (\$25.48) was \$8.09 above the Vermont median hourly wage for all occupations." See the whole survey [here](#).*
- *The legislatively appointed Blue Ribbon Commission on Financing High Quality Affordable Child Care was created in part to address the cost of adequately compensating teachers in private settings. The BRC has selected a research firm and will issue recommendations in November on financing high quality early learning programs. In support of this effort, The Permanent Fund in collaboration with the Vermont Community Loan Fund has created cost modeling scenarios that compare current program costs to costs that include higher teacher compensation on par with that of the public schools.*
- *The Vermont Community Loan Fund provides early care and education program directors and owners with a wide range of business consulting and financial management training and support which improve their ability to compensate employees. For more information, visit: <http://www.investinvermont.org/borrowers/child-care/project-success>.*
- *The Building Bright Futures State Advisory Council formally asked their Early Learning and Development Committee to address the issue of fair compensation in the early childhood workforce.*

## NEXT STEPS

- *Members of the PreK Teacher Capacity Work Group actively participate in the Blue Ribbon Commission and monitor its progress.*
- *Later this year, the Work Group will consider the W.A.G.E.S model, and the feasibility of bringing it to Vermont in conjunction with the TEACH program.*

## BUILDING SUPPORT FOR MORE PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Let's Grow Kids is leading a statewide public engagement campaign to educate the wider public about the crucial importance of early brain development and the impact of high quality early learning and development programs. The campaign builds public will in order to generate support for increased, sustainable investments that give all children the chance to reach their full potential.*

*Let's Grow Kids also advocated for the creation of the Blue Ribbon Commission, which researches and makes recommendations about financing strategies that allow for substantial public investment in early childhood,*

*See more at <http://www.letsgrowkids.org/why-campaign>.*

*Members of the PreK Teacher Capacity Workgroup are working in partnership with Let's Grow Kids in outreach and research efforts in order to help move this critical work forward.*

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