



AGENDA ITEM: 8

DATE OF MEETING: January 28, 2009

ACTION: X

INFORMATION: _____

EARLY LEARNING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUMMARY

At the October 5, 2005 Commission meeting, the State Commission authorized up to \$10 million for five years for quality enhancement funding for the Power of Preschool (PoP) Program. These funds are used for technical assistance, workforce development, and research. Staff requests that, beginning in February 2009, a one-time contribution of up to \$1 million of the quality enhancement funds be allocated to support an Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) and the authorization for use of these funds be extended through June 30, 2011. This Advisory Committee, established as a result of Senate Bill 1629 (Steinberg), is charged with developing the policy and implementation plan for a statewide Early Learning Quality Improvement System. The Advisory Committee will provide an interim report to the Legislature and Governor by the end of 2009 on its findings, with a final plan at the end of 2010. The statutory authorization for the Advisory Committee ends on June 30, 2011.

This new, 13-member committee will consist of directors, chairpersons, and/or their designees from the offices of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Secretary of Education, President pro Tempore of the Senate, Speaker of the Assembly, Department of Finance, Department of Social Services, the Governor's Office, and the First 5 California Children and Families Commission, which will be represented by Executive Director Kris Perry.

BACKGROUND

Power of Preschool Program

Compelling national and state research clearly indicates the importance of quality preschool for young children. When children attend quality preschool, they develop better emotional, intellectual and social skills that benefit them throughout their lives. In light of this, in 2003, the First 5 California Commission authorized a substantial investment to promote preschool opportunities and established demonstration programs for California's children with the goal of providing voluntary, free and high-quality preschool for three- and four-year old children. The Power of Preschool (PoP) Demonstration Programs emerged from the First 5 California Commission's investment in quality preschool.

PoP provides the blueprint for making high-quality preschool universally accessible to all preschoolers, including children with special needs and English Language Learners. PoP focuses on developing free programs in underserved and low performing school¹ communities at a system-wide level. Its design builds on and integrates with existing public and private preschool providers, including family child care homes.

Working as partners, the state and county commissions just concluded the third year (2007-08) of the PoP Demonstration operations. Over this three-year period, nine participating counties served 14,329 children. The high quality and success of the PoP Programs is highlighted in a study conducted by RAND, the PoP Progress Report and the PoP Meta-Analysis Report.

Support of SB 1629 and Partnering with the California Department of Education

In March 2008, First 5 California formally took a support position on Senate Bill 1629 (Steinberg) Chapter 307, Statutes of 2008. This legislation establishes the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Committee (Committee) to develop a framework for improving quality preschool pursuant to sections 8300-8303 of the Education Code. The provisions of the bill require the Advisory Committee to analyze the existing early care and education infrastructure and identify the strengths, gaps and barriers to achieving higher levels of quality. The bill further requires the Committee to develop a quality rating scale for improving the quality of early learning (0 to 5) programs, including a graduated funding model to help existing and future programs reach and maintain higher levels of program quality.

To move forward as advocates of children 0 to 5 in the midst of a state budget crisis, the Legislature asked First 5 California to partner with the Department of Education's Child Development Division (CDD) to support and assist in the establishment of this Advisory Committee to develop a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The work of the QRIS Advisory Committee is a natural next step in implementing the vision of PoP by taking the quality focus statewide. It also aligns with several First 5 California goals, including the California Children and Families Act, the First 5 California Strategic Plan, and the PoP Demonstration Program.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of up to \$1 million of the previously approved \$10 million from the PoP quality funds to support the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Committee. The \$1 million allocation represents the maximum amount of First 5 California funds authorized for this purpose and does not include funds from other sources or partners for this project. The period of authorization for this funding is from February 1, 2009, to June 30, 2011.

¹ Low performing schools are defined as having Academic Performance Index rankings in deciles of 1 through 5.

DISCUSSION

In June 2008, a RAND Study entitled, *Prepared to Learn: The Nature and Quality of Early Care and Education of Preschool-Age Children in California*, identified findings related specifically to the PoP Demonstration Programs in San Francisco and San Mateo counties. One of the findings is that “. . . attention to quality can pay off.”² The RAND study found further that “. . . improvements are possible when quality is emphasized, the technical support needed to get to the highest quality level is supplied, and a financial reward (through higher reimbursement rates) for achieving higher quality is available.”³

Rand also reported that while Georgetown University’s evaluation of a nationally recognized Pre-K program in Oklahoma showed significant gains for children in early reading and math skills (student outcomes), the San Mateo and San Francisco programs excelled in *Quality*, exceeding the quality level of the Oklahoma program.

The child-development literature looks at quality through multiple dimensions, and can be broadly classified into structural and process domains. *Structural quality* includes the environmental setting such as group size, child-staff ratios, teacher education and training, curriculum, and health and safety practices. *Process quality* refers to the types of activities engaged in by children, relationships between staff-to-child and staff-to-staff, and classroom and time management, as well as approaches to fostering learning and healthy development.

The work of the QRIS Advisory Committee is a natural next step in implementing the PoP vision by taking the quality focus statewide. It also aligns with several First 5 California goals, including the California Children and Families Act, the First 5 California Strategic Plan, and the PoP Demonstration Program.

The vision of PoP is to raise preschool standards throughout California. Proposition 10 and its implementing legislation specifically assign powers and duties that require First 5 California to:

1. Disseminate public information to develop appropriate awareness and knowledge regarding the promotion, support and improvement of early childhood development.
2. Adopt guidelines to enhance the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of children 0 to 5.
3. Adopt guidelines to address high quality child care including an emphasis on education, training and qualifications of the early learning workforce.
4. Provide for independent research and evaluation to identify best standards and practices to monitor demonstration projects.

²Lynn A. Karoly, Bonnie Ghosh-Dastidar, Gail L. Zellman, Michal Perlman, Lynda Fernyhough, *Prepared to Learn: The Nature and Quality of Early Care and Education for Preschool-Age Children in California* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), 152.

³Ibid. 1, 147

5. Solicit input, facilitate the exchange of information and assist in the coordination of services to provide more effective early childhood development services.
6. Make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature for changes in state laws, regulations and services necessary to carry out an integrated and comprehensive early childhood development program in an effective and cost-efficient manner.

Support of the development of a QRIS plan also furthers the following goals and priorities of First 5 California's Strategic Plan:

Strategy 1.4 – Early Care and Educational Development – Facilitate and support early care and educational development for all children 0 to 5.

Objective 1.4.2 – Participate as a partner in a statewide effort to increase quality, access and/or availability of early care and education, such as preschool, infant/toddler care, or school readiness programs.

In addition, several next steps identified in the *PoP Progress Report Fiscal Years 2005-06 through 2007-08* support the development of a QRIS plan:

1. Define program recommendations for statewide policy development.
2. Explore how to use these nine demonstration programs as models to replicate throughout the state.
3. Investigate strategies to secure partnerships that effectively support and enhance preschool program quality.

Finally, support of the QRIS plan not only builds upon the quality work of the PoP Program - it also fits with the pending federal landscape. President Obama, who recognizes the need for quality in early learning programs, has expressed his support of Early Learning Councils for each state and pledges to increase funding for early learning programs, including Early Head Start and Head Start.

FISCAL HISTORY

At the October 2005 Commission meeting, The State Commission authorized up to \$10 million of the PoP funding for quality enhancement, including efforts to improve quality of preschool programs and services.

PROPOSAL IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

First 5 California's commitment would be up to \$1 million from February 2, 2009 through June 30, 2011. This amount would cover personnel costs to the CDE staff, and the establishment of and meeting expenses for the Advisory Committee, subcommittees established at the direction of the Advisory Committee, required statewide public hearings,

and publishing and dissemination of both the interim and final reports as mandated by the Legislature.

The costs associated with the development of the Advisory Committee and its responsibility to develop a policy and implementation plan for a QRIS in California reflect the fact that the Legislature has pre-determined which agencies and/or entities will be members of the Advisory Committee, as well as the different sectors of the early childhood care and education community that must be solicited for their input (for a list of the different members to be represented on the Committee and the entities that should be contacted see Attachment A page 2).

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REVIEW

This Agenda Item was reviewed by the State Commission's Program Committee, composed of commissioners Carla Dartis and Molly Munger, on January 8, 2009. The Program Committee members supported the item and recommended that it come before the Commission.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Description of Alternative 1

Do not fund the Early Learning QRIS Advisory Committee

Pros

This would retain the \$1 million dollars to fund quality enhancement of the PoP programs through technical assistance, workforce development, and other research.

Cons

An opportunity to be collaborative, to strengthen partnerships, to build statewide support, and to have a single quality rating system would be missed. This project cannot be accomplished by any one specific organization or agency. We would miss an opportunity to support and be part of developing a plan that would create an emphasis on, and support of quality for all early learning programs in California. We would also lose an opportunity to take our PoP vision and lessons learned statewide.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: SB 1629, Chapter 307, Statutes of 2008
- Attachment B: Overview of a Quality Rating and Improvement System

FUNDING REQUEST FISCAL DETAIL

Title of Request:	Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Program Disbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Special Disbursement	
Amount of Current Agreement:	Up to	\$ N/A	Expenditures to Date:	\$ N/A		
Current Term of Agreement:	N/A	Through	N/A			
		Fiscal Year Detail				
		FY 08-09	FY 09-10	FY 10-11	FY __-__	
New Amount Requested:	Up to	\$1,000,000	\$209,345	\$484,520	\$306,135	
Total Amount of Agreement:	Up to	\$1,000,000	\$209,345	\$484,520	\$306,135	
Year End 6/30/08 Fund Balance Affected by Agreement		.004%	.01%	.01%		
Proposed Funding Term:	2/2/09	Through	6/30/11			
First 5 California Account Name:	Child Care	Account Number	0636	Fund Availability Confirmed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes By: _____	
Statutory Purpose: Health and Safety Code 130105(a)(1)(C)	Three percent shall be deposited in a Child Care Account for expenditures to ensure that children are ready to enter school and for programs relating to child care, including, but not limited to, the education and training of child care providers, the development of education materials, and guidelines for child care workers, and other areas described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 130125 which reads "The availability and provision of high quality, accessible and affordable child care, both in-home and at child care facilities, that emphasizes education, training and qualifications of care providers, increased availability and access to child care facilities, resources and referral services, technical assistance for caregivers, and financial and other assistance to ensure appropriate child care for all households."					
Do our funds leverage others?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (explain) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Commission Funds	Leveraged Funds	Total Funds		
Explanation:						
Key Deliverable Descriptions						Deliverable Date
Interim report to the Legislature and the Governor						12/31/09
Policy and Implementation Plan for an Early Learning Quality Improvement System.						12/31/10
Final Report to the Legislature and the Governor						12/31/10

Senate Bill No. 1629

CHAPTER 307

An act to add and repeal Article 14.5 (commencing with Section 8300) of Chapter 2 of Part 6 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education Code, relating to state preschool programs.

[Approved by Governor September 26, 2008. Filed with Secretary of State September 26, 2008.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1629, Steinberg. State preschool programs: Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee.

Existing law requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to administer state preschool programs, including part-day and preschool appropriate programs for prekindergarten children 3 to 5 years of age, inclusive, in educational development, health services, social services, nutritional services, parent education and participation, evaluation, and staff development.

This bill would establish the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee, which would consist of 13 members. The advisory committee would be required to develop the policy and implementation plan for an Early Learning Quality Improvement System, and would be required to submit an interim report on its recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor by December 31, 2009, and a final report by December 31, 2010. The bill would require the Superintendent to apply to the California Children and Families Commission for funding to cover costs. The bill's provisions would become inoperative on July 1, 2011, and would be repealed on January 1, 2012. The bill would become operative only if AB 2759 of the 2007-08 Regular Session of the Legislature is enacted and becomes effective on or before January 1, 2009.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Article 14.5 (commencing with Section 8300) is added to Chapter 2 of Part 6 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Education Code, to read:

Article 14.5. Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee

8300. (a) The Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee is hereby established in the state government. The advisory committee shall consist of 13 members as follows:

- (1) The Superintendent of Public Instruction or his or her designee.
- (2) The Secretary of Education or his or her designee.
- (3) The President pro Tempore of the Senate or his or her designee.
- (4) The Speaker of the Assembly or his or her designee.
- (5) The Director of the Department of Finance or his or her designee.
- (6) The Director of the Department of Social Services or his or her designee.
- (7) The Governor shall appoint two representatives.
- (8) The Chairperson of the California Children and Families Commission or his or her designee.
- (9) The Senate Committee on Rules shall appoint two representatives from the early care and education community, one who is a program administrator of a child development program funded by the department, and another who is a caregiver for infants and toddlers.
- (10) The Speaker of the Assembly shall appoint two representatives, one from the early care and education community who has experience with English learners, and one who is a local educational agency teacher who teaches kindergarten.

(b) The Superintendent and the Secretary for Education or their designees shall be cochairpersons of the committee.

(c) The advisory committee shall seek input through the establishment of subcommittees or other methods from persons with expertise in the following areas: early learning quality improvement systems in use nationwide; early care and education, including representatives from the higher education segments, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and administrators, caregivers, and teachers from both the public and private sectors; K-12 public school teachers; English language development, including primary and secondary language acquisition; education and care of children with exceptional needs and disabilities; infant and toddler care; consumer education; parent and guardian engagement; workforce development; facilities development; technical assistance; and program accreditation.

8301. (a) The advisory committee shall develop the policy and implementation plan for an Early Learning Quality Improvement System for the state and shall submit, to the Legislature and the Governor, an interim report by December 31, 2009, and a final report by December 31, 2010, containing its recommendations for the creation of an Early Learning Quality Improvement System. The report shall address, but need not be limited to, the following four elements of a quality improvement system:

(1) An assessment and analysis of the existing early care and education infrastructure, including other state and local early learning quality improvement systems. The assessment shall identify and review existing quality rating systems in use and determine the features of those systems that are most effective in determining and improving quality.

(2) The development of an early learning quality rating scale for child development and care programs, including preschool, that serve children from birth to five years of age, inclusive, including preschool age children,

infants, and toddlers. The early learning quality rating scale shall reflect features of quality rating systems that most directly contribute to high-quality care, as identified in the assessment pursuant to paragraph (1). The advisory committee shall consider consumer awareness so that parents receive accurate information about the type of program in which their children are enrolled. The advisory committee also may consider, but need not be limited to, the following features of high-quality programs:

- (A) Developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate practices.
- (B) Staff qualifications and professional development and education needs.
- (C) Staff compensation and retention.
- (D) Group size and ratios.
- (E) Learning environment.
- (F) Statutory and regulatory compliance, including provisions of Title 5 and Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations relating to child care and development.
- (G) Articulation within systems of care for children from birth to five years of age, and with the K-12 public school system.
- (H) The inclusion of children with exceptional needs and children with disabilities.
- (I) English learner support.
- (J) Family involvement.
- (K) Comprehensive health and development screenings using standard tools.
- (L) Data collection and methods to support continuous quality improvement.
- (M) Program management and leadership.

(3) The development of a funding model aligned with the quality rating scale for child care and development programs that serve children from birth to five years of age, inclusive, including preschool.

(4) The advisory committee shall consider and make recommendations on how local, state, federal, and private resources, including resources available pursuant to the California Children and Families Act of 1998 (Division 108 (commencing with Section 130100) of the Health and Safety Code), can best be utilized to complement a statewide funding model as part of a comprehensive effort to improve the child care and development system of the state, including preschool.

(b) The advisory committee shall meet no less frequently than each quarter per year, at the call of the chairperson, at a time and location convenient to the public, as the chairperson deems appropriate. All meetings shall be open to the public in accordance with Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code. Once a draft report of the final report is complete, the advisory committee shall conduct no less than four public hearings in different parts of the state to ensure that the advisory committee obtains meaningful public input prior to submitting its report to the Governor and the Legislature.

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8302. No General Fund expenditures shall be required to fund the work of the advisory committee. The advisory committee shall be established only after the Superintendent applies to and obtains funds from the California Children and Families Commission or other sources. The Superintendent shall apply to the California Children and Families Commission for funding to cover committee costs, including, but not limited to, staff support and travel expenses.

8303. This article shall become inoperative on July 1, 2011, and, as of January 1, 2012, is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that becomes operative on or before January 1, 2012, deletes or extends the dates on which it becomes inoperative and is repealed.

SEC. 4. This act shall become operative only if Assembly Bill 2759 of the 2007-08 Regular Session of the Legislature is enacted and becomes effective on or before January 1, 2009.

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QRIS OVERVIEW

Having a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) creates a set of standards for measuring different levels of quality across the full continuum of early care and education programs. Quality Rating and Improvement Systems assess, monitor, improve and communicate the quality of all types of early childhood programs. A QRIS increases the effectiveness as well as integrates existing programs. States are commonly rated on standards, accountability, program and provider outreach and support. The programs are most commonly assessed by “star” or “tier” rating systems, not unlike those established for hotels and restaurants. QRIS ratings vary from state to state.

As of January 2008, seventeen states/districts are operating statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System: Colorado, District of Columbia, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Vermont. Eight states are piloting a QRIS. Most of the remaining states, including California, are either exploring or are in the process of designing their QRIS.

A QRIS not only benefits the children attending the rated facilities, it strengthens the rating continuity between facilities and holds them accountable for the quality of their programs. Reputable organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Child Care Information Center (NCCI), offer publications on how to develop and maintain a QRIS. Implementation of a QRIS in California would enable parents to make well informed decisions and choose high quality facilities and programs for their children.

In addition, QRISs contribute to the field of human development by improving the lives of child development professionals and families. Recognizing that staff qualities are the strongest predictor of program quality and child outcomes, having a QRIS in place would motivate child development administrators to contribute time and funding to further the education of child development specialists.

Higher qualifications of staff could translate to a higher rating of the facility. The facilities that rate higher could afford to increase their fees, and pay their staff higher wages. Higher wages would draw quality professionals to the field, increase employee retention, and increase overall job satisfaction. A directory of child development facilities can be created. Parents can reference the directory to make a choice most suitable for their individual situations.