

## Quality and Workforce Committee – Illinois Early Learning Council

Committee charge: Address the urgent need to develop, recruit and retain a qualified, diverse workforce representative of the communities served. Identify steps to mitigate the systemic workforce problems without compromising high standards, including accessible pathways and equitable compensation to stabilize the workforce and enhance the public's perception of early educators. Identify and support efforts to improve program quality using a racial equity lens.

### Agenda, March 16, 2023, 2:30 - 4:00 PM

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Minutes of January meeting (see attachment 2)
3. ExceleRate Illinois proposed framework (2:40 – 3:15)
  - Presentation of framework (see attachments 3 and 4)
  - Request to approve as a roadmap (not approval of every standard as written)
  - Comments for consideration by other committees and State agencies
4. Smart Start (3:15 – 3:35)

Report on Feb. 27 ELC meeting including compensation contracts and potential Quality & Workforce Committee roles
5. Check-in: Guiding principles discussed at previous meetings. Informal consensus? (3:35 – 3:50)
  - a) A systemic mechanism to fund compensation not dependent on special funding
  - b) Move to base compensation, not just salary supplements
  - c) Include benefits, not just wages
  - d) Salary and fringe benefit parity across sectors, including schools and child care programs, based on degrees and credentials
  - e) No positions pay less than living wage
  - f) Special attention to salaries of infant/toddler teachers and teachers with bilingual credentials
  - g) Salary steps for experience
  - h) Recommend that current compensation initiatives be expanded to cover family child care and home visiting
6. Next steps and next meeting
  - a) Fringe benefits. Some interesting approaches are being developed in other states. Should we seek a presentation from a national organization or a state, followed by discussion?
7. Public comment

We envision Illinois as a place where every young child – regardless of race, ethnicity, income, language, geography, ability, immigration status, or other circumstance – receives the strongest possible start to life so that they grow up safe, healthy, happy, ready to succeed, and eager to learn.

**Racial Equity Definition:** A racially equitable society values and embraces all racial/ethnic identities. In such a society, one's racial/ethnic identity (particularly Black, Latino, Indigenous, and Asian) is not a factor in an individual's ability to prosper. An early learning system that is racially equitable is driven by data and ensures that:

- Every young child and family regardless of race, ethnicity, and social circumstance has everything s/he/they need to develop optimally;
- Resources, opportunities, rewards, and burdens are fairly distributed across groups and communities so that those with the greatest challenges are adequately supported and not further disadvantaged; and
- Systems and policies are designed, reframed, or eliminated to promote greater justice for children and families.

**Racial Equity Priorities:**

- 1) Align and standardize race/ethnicity data collection and reporting;
- 2) Evaluate and identify whether processes for distributing resources exacerbate racial disparities, including agency contracting;
- 3) Address race/ethnicity disparities in terms of workforce compensation and advancement;
- 4) Eliminate racial/ethnic disparities for children participating in all programs that contribute to school readiness and life success by addressing racial disparities in enrollment in preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds and in prenatal to age 3 services.