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To:	Mackenzi Christenson
Subject:	Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five First Quarter Update
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This is a message from the California Department of Education (CDE), Early Learning and Care Division (ELCD).

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Preschool Development Grant Birth Through Five First Quarter Update

The CDE is now in the second quarter of implementing the federal Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five Initiative (PDG). Launching the federal grant has taken some time given its scope, but several key activities are now underway. Further information and resources, including an enhanced California PDG website at https://capdg.wested.org/, are anticipated in the coming weeks.

The PDG Core Team and State Stewardship Team (SST) have been established to ensure engagement from key state offices and agencies serving young children and their families, and the State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care (SAC) and the public has been engaged in initial planning. Attached you will find the PDG organizational chart for further information. Additional opportunities for stakeholder engagement are also forthcoming.

Background

The PDG is intended to support states in assessing their early learning and care (ELC) systems and developing actionable plans for improvements that will result in more low-income and disadvantaged infants, toddlers, and young children entering kindergarten prepared.

In December 2018, California was awarded $10,620,000 to accomplish several objectives within a 12-month grant period:

1. Completing a comprehensive needs assessment and analysis of the state's current ELC system, including unmet need for services

2. Building on previous and current planning efforts to develop an actionable PDG Strategic Plan for improving the system

3. Launching or enhancing projects that will help lay the foundation for systems improvements, including:

    - Building Local Planning Council (LPC) capacity for a more consistent, robust

data collection and needs assessment process
- Expanding parental knowledge of child development through Parent Cafés
- Establishing a Parent Committee (PC) to inform the SAC and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) Transition Team on Early Learning and Care
- Strengthening and streamlining Quality Counts California (QCC)
- Establishing an integrated online professional learning platform
- Supporting higher education in the development of online courses with technologically supported practice-based components

The PDG cannot be utilized to directly fund ELC services, however California designed its grant with the clear vision of laying the groundwork for an improved, expanded ELC system that effectively and impactfully serves children age birth to five, their families, and communities through a mixed delivery system.

Recent Activities and Progress

On May 6, 2019 the SAC took part in an extensive work session to provide feedback on the development of the PDG Strategic Plan and Needs Assessment. The PDG Strategic Plan is intended to align with the PDG Needs Assessment and will build on previous state plans and recommendations to reflect current ELC priorities and systems building efforts, including the recently released report by the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education. Both the PDG Strategic Plan and Needs Assessment will be submitted for federal review by late August 2019.

During the strategic planning segment of the SAC meeting, WestEd presented an initial framework for organizing key ELC topic areas and existing recommendations from previous state planning efforts into goals, objectives, metrics, strategies and actions where they existed. During an interactive exercise, 90+ meeting participants and SAC members had the opportunity to react to these topic areas and pose critical questions to further understanding of core objectives and how they might be operationalized and implemented.

Key high-level takeaways from the working session include:

- The SAC members and stakeholders provided fruitful guidance on the “how", the strategies and actions for achieving ELC goals and objectives. Further comments emphasized the need for the PDG Strategic Plan to not just reiterate existing recommendations but provide detailed, actionable steps to drive implementation of these recommendations so that it will be valuable to policymakers, agencies and the early learning field.

- The SAC members suggested the plan prioritize drilling deeply into the cross-cutting areas that must be solved in order to effectively address quality, access, and equity. Suggested priority areas included: data, financing, workforce compensation, and management/administration. The SAC suggested the PDG

Strategic Plan could offer value by articulating options for addressing these critical areas and where to start in terms of implementing them, including suggestions for who would be responsible for key steps and potential sequencing of actions.

- Financing the ELC system to ensure systems changes, as well as access to quality ELC for all eligible children, came up as a key foundational concern, as did the need for consistent but select data to better understand state and local needs and address barriers more effectively and equitably. Shared definitions and common state standards with some local flexibility to ensure effective implementation was also noted as critical. There was also an emphasis on ensuring parents and families are included in the planning process and designing a system that places their needs front and center, as well utilizing equity as a fundamental lens for planning and implementation.

- Similar themes were prioritized at the recent SSPI Transition Team on Early Learning and Care meeting on May 2, 2019. Through an interactive discussion and polling process, ELC providers, administrators and other stakeholders engaged in conversations around four main themes: access to high quality care, workforce barriers, data concerns, and administrative burdens.

During the SAC meeting, the American Institutes of Research (AIR) also presented an update on their work to complete the PDG Needs Assessment, including a review of prior needs assessments related to access quality and workforce. Also, AIR presented their plan to:

1. Administer a statewide survey of a representative sample of subsidized providers; key questions will focus on an unduplicated count of enrollment; interest in facilities expansion and challenges faced; and barriers to offering full-day, summer and non-traditional hours of care

2. Conduct a survey of all 58 LPC coordinators with questions focused on whether there are centralized or multiple waiting lists for subsidized programs, and how frequently they are updated; county status of facilities expansion, and barriers to such expansion; and requests for local data related to ELC for children with special needs, children under protective service supervision, and homeless children

3. Conduct 45 Stakeholder interviews, including with LPC and R&R leaders in 14 counties and others representing all regions of the state, including those with the largest rural areas and largest Native American populations, major provider associations, counties with child-level data systems, and SST members

4. Collaborate with UC Berkeley on conducting targeted interviews on facility successes and challenges in four counties

Finally, the AIR presented an update on their progress in updating their estimate of unmet need for subsidized ELC based on the American Community Survey estimates for the number of subsidy-eligible children; enrollment in Title 5, the Alternative Payment Program, and CalWORKs Stage 2 and 3, and the DSS data on CalWORKs Stage 1.

Upcoming Activities

The CDE anticipates several activities to move forward before the end the second quarter of the PDG and 2018-2019 fiscal year, including:

1. PDG Needs Assessment
    - Finalize data compilation, conduct provider and LPC surveys, conduct qualitative interviews to inform needs assessment
2. PDG Strategic Plan
    - Launch expert and stakeholder process, draft initial outputs for feedback from Core Team and SST
3. Additional PDG Activities
    - Contracts finalized with partners and core projects started, including establishing the PC to advise the SAC and the SSPI Transition Team on Early Learning and Care
    - Informational resources released and the PDG website enhanced to inform the public, garner feedback and archive progress

For questions regarding this subject, please contact the PDG team at CAPDG@cde.ca.gov.

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