



# Illinois Early Learning Council

Executive Committee

December 7, 2020



# Agenda

1. Welcome & Review of Racial Equity Definition & Priorities
2. Follow-up from November Early Learning Council Meeting
3. Illinois' Human Services Response to the Pandemic
4. ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot
5. 5-Minute Break
6. ECEC Agenda
7. Prioritization of Unobligated Funding
8. PDG B-5 Financial Report
9. ELC Membership/Governance Update
10. Public Comments & Announcements
11. Adjourn

# **Follow-up from November Full Early Learning Council Meeting**

Phyllis Glink & Jesse Ruiz

# Family Engagement (including Home Visiting)

- Family voice needs to be included at the program, policy, and state level. It is critical to gain an understanding of families' experiences in navigating the system and to incorporate their preferences for engagement and services.
- Family engagement staff are vitally important; they serve as a lifeline to families during the pandemic.
- The pandemic has taken a toll on the physical and mental well-being of both families and staff; increased access to Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and other mental health supports is needed.
- While virtual platforms have increased engagement among some families (including teen parents), the digital divide presents a significant barrier to others (in both urban and rural communities). Access to free internet services and training for families and staff could help close the technology gap.

# Learning & Education Disruptions Due to COVID

- Address disparities in resources and opportunities.
  - Revise funding formulas for equitable distribution of resources across school districts and across child care programs.
  - Restructure the school year to recoup time.
- Provide better supports for teachers.
  - Increase social-emotional support for teachers and children. This is a crisis.
  - Increase professional learning opportunities including discussion/mutual support groups and communities of practice. Don't leave teachers on their own.
- Provide equitable supports for families.
  - Build community systems so families can access housing support, social services, and mental health resources.
  - Provide more resources to address the digital divide.

# Financing of IL's ECCE Systems

## (especially Child Care)

- We've confirmed how dangerous it is for settings to operate on such low margins.
- We need a strong communications loop with families to hear directly from them what they need, especially those in underserved areas.
- We need to address how parents will pay for care given the economy and unemployment, as well as their long-term recovery needs.
- We already know what to do in the long term with regards to finance, especially with the Commission. We need to act on these things.
- In the ELC, we need to be unified in our message that financing is critical, and we need to elevate the role of community infrastructure to support financing. We need to treat ECCE as a public good, not as a for-profit model.
- We need to move away from an enrollment-based structure of the ECCE system (e.g. funding, data, etc.).

# Workforce Preparation & PD

- **Parents are experts** when it comes to educating children, but parents need support, and the workforce needs to bring expertise in scaffolding the learning and supports.
- **Opportunities for collaboration** (parents, teachers, and therapists) needs to continue.
  - Need more of a focus on the needs of English Learners and children with special needs/diverse learners.
- **Need trauma PD** to prepare staff to handle trauma and to understand how it shows up in the classroom/visits; this is even more important now – self-care, compassion fatigue, secondary trauma.
  - Support for the teachers and home visitors with workforce supports that teachers/education staff can resemble the families we serve in programs (paid time leave, juggling remote learning, and working from home).
- **Compensation** is urgent -- retaining the existing workforce, making sure they have supports they need to support kids and families through this crisis, and making the workforce attractive to recruit more staff.
  - Increase awareness about pathways for current workforce to credentials and degrees - and with compensation tied to those increases!
- **We need to build up** (invest in infrastructure, equity) before we can build better.
- ELC should guide how to use scarce resources to drive more equity into the system and to address how to hold children and families at the center.

# Discussion Questions:

- What are next steps?
- Where do they sit within the ELC committee structure?
- How can we ensure next steps align with the work of the Commission, PN3, PDG B-5 Strategic Plan, and the ELC racial equity work?



# **Illinois' Human Services Response to the Pandemic**

Lizzy Whitehorn

# **ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot**

Tom Layman & Anita Rummage

# ExceleRate Goals and Pilot

December 2020



Governor's Office of  
Early Childhood Development

# ExceleRate success

- Cross-sector definition of quality for school-based and center-based programs, and licensed child care homes
- Common program assessment system across ISBE, DHS and City of Chicago
- Valid, reliable recognition of quality, confirmed by Frank Porter Graham Institute Validation Study
- Programs take pride in achieving the Gold Circle of Quality

# Challenges

- Child care centers cannot meet staffing requirements
- Quality often drops between assessments (every 3 – 5 years)

# Quality ladder not working for child care

Child care centers	2017	2018	2019
Total centers	3,091	2,964	3,159
Number at Gold	532	476	456
Percentage at Gold	17%	16%	14%
Schools			
Total schools	1,062	1,176	1,071
Number at Gold	775	846	854
Percentage at Gold	73%	72%	80%

# System Improvement Goals

# 1. Funders support adequate staffing

- Fund staffing first – then expect quality
- Define staffing patterns based on program performance requirements
- Fund child care classroom staff through line-item contracts, as ECBG and Head Start do

# 2. Program staff owns continuous improvement

- Use program assessment results as baseline information for staff teams. No high-stakes cut scores with funding ramifications
- Plan as a team for improvement, on a regular schedule
- Learn as a team through job-embedded professional learning
- Test new approaches: small steps, short cycles

### **3. Supports align with standards**

- Standards will include continuous improvement practices at each level
- Training, consultation and coaching can be aligned to the standards

### **4. Aggregate data informs policy & funding**

- Program assessment scores can be aggregated to answer questions about system effectiveness, and as baseline data for system improvement



# ExceleRate Child Care Pilot

# Pilot design

Testing proposed changes at the Bronze level. All licensed child care centers in CCAP Group 2 (rural) counties are eligible to participate if they serve at least 40% CCAP children. 38 out of 50 have opted in.

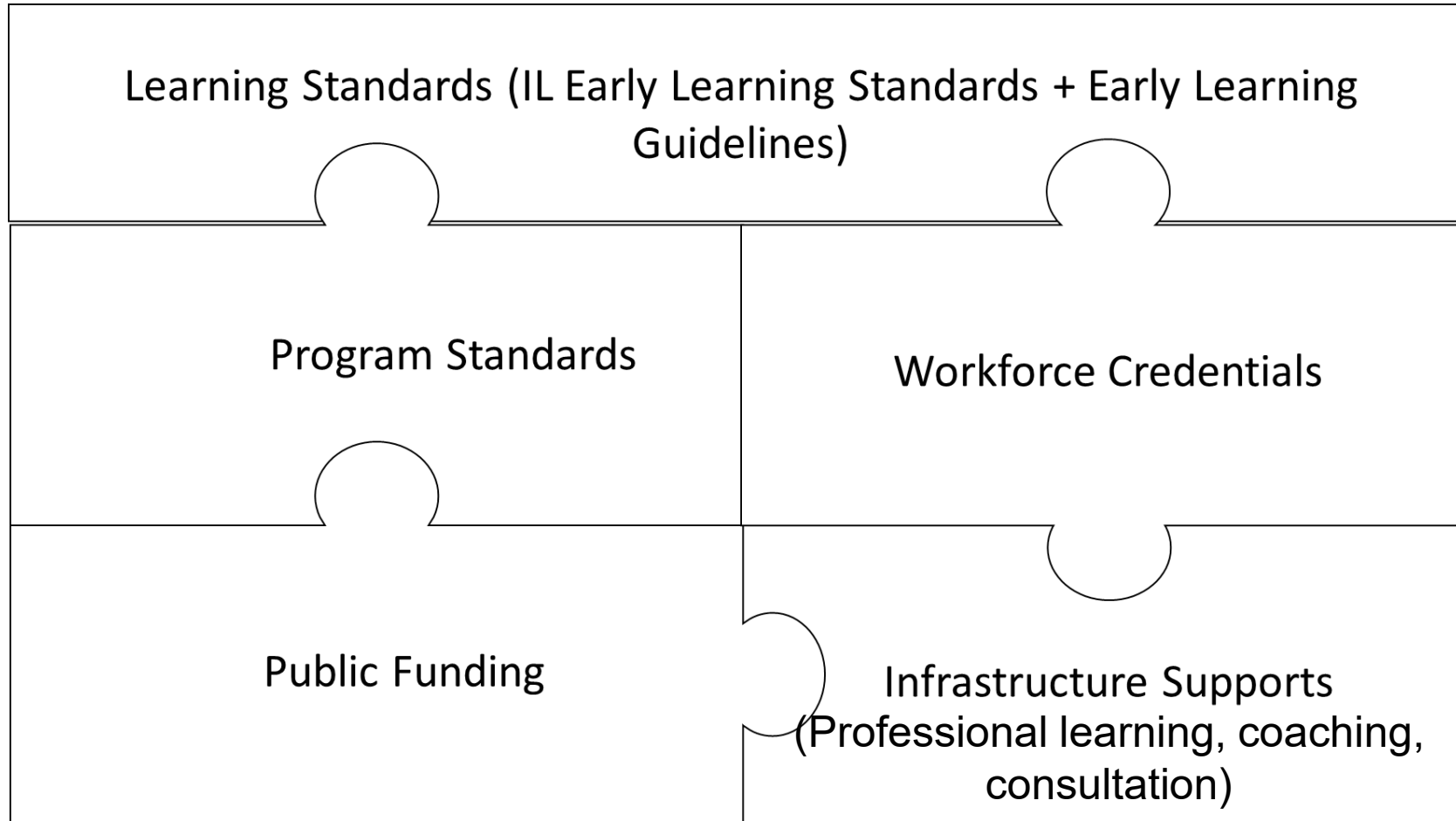
- **Entry standards**
  - Licensing standards for staffing are met throughout the day. Limited combining of groups at beginning and end of day (no regrouping during COVID).
- **Performance requirements**
  - Raise wages to Pilot scale (incremental amount is funded)
  - Improve staffing pattern to new Bronze level (funded)
  - Implement new Bronze-level activities including continuous improvement practices

## Cost

- Adds approximately \$18,000 per classroom per year. Federal funding is projected through December 2022.

# Next Steps for System Improvement

# The early care & education system



# Next steps – Program Standards

Program Standards – [GOECD](#) and [ExceleRate Subcommittee](#). Use Pilot results to inform revised ExceleRate framework

- Pilot will answer:
  - Can centers implement the Pilot Bronze standards for staffing and CQI? What changes are indicated?
  - Does program quality improve?

*From Strategic Plan:* Modify standards and strengthen support systems so that programs move to higher levels of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (ExceleRate) and children achieve kindergarten readiness.

# Next steps – Funding

Funding – [GOECD](#), [DHS](#), and [Funding Commission](#) . Use Pilot results to help shape new funding system.

- Pilot will answer:
  - Do contracts work to reduce turnover?
  - Does the Pilot contract structure increase staff credential levels?
  - Can DHS administer this type of contract? What are the obstacles?

*From Strategic Plan:* Implement a funding mechanism that is timely, transparent, and sustainable that service providers can access to deliver high-quality ECCE, meet evidence-based performance standards, and provide adequate compensation to all ECCE staff.

*From PN-3: Tiered Funding for QRIS.* Establish a tiered funding ladder for ExceleRate Illinois that reflects the cost of delivering services at each circle of quality.

*From PN-3: CCAP Contracts.* Expand use of contracts in the Child Care Assistance Program to ensure dedicated slots and adequate funding for high-quality infant-toddler care.

# Next steps – Workforce

## Workforce – [GOECD](#)

- Expand college cohorts, job-embedded coursework, and credit for prior learning.
- Review credentialing and higher education supports and obstacles with an equity lens. Support the PN-3 policy agenda and PDG B-5 goal that the workforce will reflect the children and communities served.

*From Strategic Plan:* Provide the higher education supports necessary to produce a qualified, competent, diverse, and representative ECCE workforce, including the development of a competency-based preparation and qualifications system and higher education supports for educator candidates.

*From PN-3, Representative Workforce:* Develop a well-qualified workforce representative of the children served, including a focus on the bilingual/bicultural workforce, where the greatest disparities exist.

*From November ELC meeting (Build back better):* Rebuild teacher supply; ensure equity.

# Next steps –Infrastructure

## Infrastructure – [ExceleRate Subcommittee](#) and [Interagency Team \(IAT\)](#)

- Develop a cross-sector approach to training, consultation, and coaching aligned with ExceleRate standards, including continuous improvement practices.

*From Strategic Plan:* Modify standards and strengthen support systems so that programs move to higher levels of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (ExceleRate) and children achieve kindergarten readiness.

*From November ELC meeting (Build back better):* Build a support system for teachers.



# Next steps – Summary

## Program Standards – [ExceleRate Subcommittee](#)

- Use Pilot results to inform revised ExceleRate framework including CQI.

## Funding – [GOECD](#), [DHS](#), and [Funding Commission](#)

- Use Pilot results to help shape new funding system.

## Workforce – [GOECD](#)

- Expand college cohorts, job-embedded coursework, and credit for prior learning, to develop a workforce that represents the families served.

## Infrastructure – [ExceleRate Subcommittee](#) and [Interagency Team \(IAT\)](#)

- Develop a cross-sector approach to training, consultation, and coaching

# For discussion

Is the work assigned to the proper committee or team?

Do you have additional directions for any of the committees?

# 5-Minute Break

Please stay logged into the Webex on mute  
with your cameras off.

# ECEC Agenda

Theresa Hawley

# Our (Updated) ECEC Agenda

- Restoring, Sustaining, and Expanding Equitable Access to High-Quality ECEC
- Refining and Redesigning Standards, Funding Streams, and Infrastructure Supports—System Transformation
- Growing a Highly-Qualified ECEC Workforce

*Strategic Plan: Access, Quality/Coordination, Workforce*

# First Priority: Sustaining Our System Through the Pandemic

- Our nation-leading approach to sustaining our child care and early education infrastructure has been effective thus far
  - Child Care Restoration Grants
  - CCAP policy accommodations
  - Licensing accommodations
- We urgently need additional federal assistance to be able to continue this level of support for child care. We estimate we need:
  - \$50 million per month through June
  - An average of about \$30 million per month for SFY22 to taper off relief as the industry recovers
- Where else will we need to invest our federal relief funding? How much \$ needed?
  - Early Intervention and EC Special Education: “Catch up” funding?
  - Summer learning experiences for children who missed out on pre-k?
  - Enhanced outreach funding to restore the “pipelines” of referrals for home visiting, etc.?

# PDG B-5 Funding Priorities

- Reminder: “Carry Forward” funding can only be spent on things that were, broadly speaking, part of our grant application, and must be fully spent April-Dec 2021
- Governor’s priorities for these funds:
  - Moving forward the transformation work coming out of the Funding Commission
  - Investing in the workforce
  - Data system improvements and metrics for tracking progress
- Early Childhood Leadership Team (DHS, DCFS, ISBE) meeting biweekly to move this work forward

# Prioritization of Unobligated Funding

Jamilah R. Jor'dan

# PDG B-5 Financial Report

PhuongY Nguyen



# Summary

Award/ Budget Amount	\$13,414,500.00
Year-to-Date Expenditures	\$3,911,469.15
Balance	\$9,503,030.85
% of Year-to-Date Expenditures	29.16%

- 9.5M is the underspend as of November 30, 2020. It does not reflect expenditures for November and December that have not yet been billed or reported. We project the final underspend will be between 6-7M. These funds are accounted for until we have the final numbers in March.

# Close Out Dates

Vendor Final Invoices and/or Expenditures Report	Due to ISBE January 30, 2021
Federal Financial Report SF425 - 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Due to HHS January 30, 2021
Pay Out and De-obligate Balances of Contracts	To be done by ISBE by February 26, 2021
Federal Financial Report SF425 – Annual/Final	Due to HHS March 30, 2021
Carryover Request	Due to HHS March 30, 2021

# **ELC Membership/Governance Update**

Phyllis Glink

# Update

- ELC Membership/Governance Workgroup met monthly in August, September, October & November 2020
- Revised and refined the Early Learning Council Governing Principles
  - Our national BUILD consultants are supporting the development of the Guiding Principles to ensure we hold a race/ethnicity equity lens
  - Goal: Completed draft to legal early 2021
- Amended Membership Recommendations
  - Last round was sent back with a request to increase diversity in recommendations in race/ethnicity, geography, and portfolios of work
  - Goal: Send new list of recommendations to the Governor for consideration early 2021

# Public Comments & Announcements

**Adjourn**