

Texas Rising Star (TRS)
Work Session for Workgroup Members
November 20, 2013

TAB 1 – Welcome, Roll-Call and Overview of the Agenda (Attachment 1)

TAB 2 – Approval of November 7, 2013 Meeting Notes (Attachment 2)

TAB 3 – Final Review of Recommended Qualifications for Mentors and Evaluators
▪ Update with Nov 7 Workgroup Comments (Attachment 3)

TAB 4 – Overview of Early Learning Council Recommendations (Attachment 4)

TAB 5 – Discussion on Assessments (Attachment 5)

TAB 6 – Subcommittee Reports: Work Scope, Work Plan, Parking Lot
Director & Staff Qualifications and Training – Elaine Zweig, Ph.D.
Caregiver-Child Interactions – Mary Clare Munger, M.Ed.
Curriculum/Physical and Social Activities – Dr. John Gasko
Parent Involvement and Education – Pat Smith

TAB 7 – Informational Items

- Approved Structure and Scoring Methodology (Attachment 9)

- Early Learning Council – Resource Materials
 - Texas Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
<http://earlylearningtexas.org/media/24507/qris%20recommendations.pdf>

 - Little Texans, Big Futures: Infant and Toddler Guidelines
<http://earlylearningtexas.org/media/20496/texas%20infant%20toddler%20and%20three-year-old%20early%20learning%20guidelines.pdf>

 - Texas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners and Administrators
<http://www.earlylearningtexas.org/media/19198/texascorecompetencies-pract-admin.pdf>

TAB 8 – Discussions on Next Meetings

- Updated Calendar –
- Child Care Licensing Impact on TRS – December 19

Upcoming Agenda items;
Grandfathering and/or assessing National Accreditation and Military Operations
Assessors separate from Mentors/TA

Recommendations for the Hybrid Structure and Scoring Methodology Framework

Note on Terminology:

Current TRS Guidelines use "Criterion" to denote a specific topic area (e.g. Director Qualifications, Staff Training, etc.) and use "measure" to denote a quality indicator (e.g. "the provider has a written training plan," "caregivers use positive guidance techniques).

It is recommended that the TRS Workgroup retain the current terminology for "measure" to denote a particular quality indicator. It is also recommended that the TRS Workgroup adopt the term "Category" to define a group of measures under a particular topic area (e.g. Director and Staff Qualifications and Training, Parent Involvement and Education, etc.).

Background

The TRS Workgroup is primarily in favor of a Hybrid structure for TRS. In a traditional Hybrid system:

- the first levels are building blocks in which all measures must be met; while
- the higher levels are earned through a point system.

As expressed by a Workgroup member; "The structure should have start at a basic place that centers will want to participate, while also giving those at the highest levels a meaningful reason to participate and stay involved."

Additionally, the Early Learning Council (ELC) recommended that the Texas QRIS be organized in a two-tier fashion that focuses on

- structural measures at the initial levels; and
- process measures at the higher levels.

Structural measures can be documented and reported by providers (e.g. the existence of a lunch menu, a daily activity plan, caregiver credentials), while process measures should be assessed through on-site observations.

Finally, several members of the TRS Workgroup have expressed concerns about the current "Met/Not Met" methodology for scoring TRS measures. The concern is that the scoring methodology does not adequately allow for recognizing a provider's efforts to improve the quality of the program.

Recommendations

The TRS structure should adopt the framework established by the ELC and consist of structural measures at the 2-star level and process measures at the 3- and 4-star levels.

2-Star Measures and Scoring

The work of the subcommittees should focus on selecting the appropriate 2-star measures based on the following principles:

- To encourage greater participation in the TRS program, the 2-star structural measures should include elements that exceed licensing requirements, but are viewed by providers as achievable and easy to document.

- As stated by the ELC, the structural factors should be succinct, manageable, and linked to evidence that they support positive child outcomes. As such, the measures should be selected based on evidence of child outcomes, and should be scored using a 'Met/Not Met' methodology.
- In order to set the foundation for the TRS measures, as in a traditional "Hybrid" model, all the measures for the 2-star level must be met in order for the provider to be certified as a two-star and must continue to be met as the provider works to move up the star levels.

3-4-Star Measures and Scoring

The process measures selected for the higher levels should focus on the quality of instructional practices and interactions between adults and children. Additionally, the measures should be based on higher levels of quality for the delivery of caregiver training and professional development; as well as higher levels of quality parent involvement and education activities.

Each measure could be given range of 0- 3 points (e.g. "0 - not met/not observed," "1- fair," "2- good," "3-excellent"). Note: there is a difference between 'not meeting' and 'not observed' that may need to be addressed.

The total number of points the provider scores will determine the star level for each category (e.g. Director/Staff Qualifications and Training; Caregiver-Child Interactions; Curriculum and Activities; and Parent Involvement and Education).

However, each subcommittee may elect to require selected measures to achieve a minimum number of points in order to be certified at a particular star level.

Finally, in order to ensure that the provider meets a certain level of quality across all categories, the overall provider star level will be based on the category of the lowest star level achieved.

ASSESSMENT COMPARISON SUMMARY

Assessment Type:	Assessment Elements:				
	Description:	Applicable Ages:	Scoring:	Areas measured:	Usage in Other States/Programs:
ECERS-R (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale Revised)	Developed by University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, by Harms, Clifford, Cryer and colleagues	2 through 5 years of age	Each of the Environment Rating Scales consists of items and indicators that can be observed and scored in the classroom or program that is appropriate for the age group being assessed. The indicators are grouped under four levels of quality (or scores) as defined by the scales' authors: 1 = Inadequate – practices that may be harmful to children 3 = Minimal – practices that meet minimal standards 5 = Good – developmentally appropriate practices 7 = Excellent – practices that promote optimal child development Each item is cumulative, which means that the four levels of quality build on each other as the item is scored. An observer begins the assessment with the indicators under Level 1 and determines whether a classroom “passes” the indicators. If a classroom does not pass all of the indicators at Level 1, the observer scores a 1 for the item. In contrast, if all of the indicators under Level 1 are passed, the observer moves on to Level 3.	Total scale consists of 43 items, which assess features such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ materials, ▪ activities; ▪ routines, ▪ provisions for health and safety, and ▪ interactions that influence children’s experiences in the setting. 	23 of 26 QRS use the ECERS-R and ITERS-R*
ITERS-R (Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised)	Developed by University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill,	Birth to 2 ½ years of age	<i>Same as above</i>	Total scale consists of 39 items which assess features such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Space and Furnishings ▪ Personal Care Routines ▪ Listening and Talking ▪ Activities ▪ Interaction ▪ Program Structure ▪ Parents and Staff 	<i>Same as above</i>

ASSESSMENT COMPARISON SUMMARY

<p>SACERS (School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale)</p>	<p>Developed by University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill</p>	<p>5 to 12 years of age</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Same as above</i></p>	<p>Total scale consists of 49 items which assess features such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical Environment; ▪ Basic Care; ▪ Curriculum; ▪ Interaction; ▪ Schedule and Program Structure; ▪ Parent and Staff Education 	<p>13 of 26 QRS use SACERS*</p>
<p>FCCERS-R (Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition)</p>	<p>Developed by University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill</p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Same as above</i></p>	<p>Scale consists of 37 items which assess features such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Space and Furnishings ▪ Personal Care Routines ▪ Listening and Talking ▪ Activities ▪ Interaction ▪ Program Structure ▪ Parents and Provider 	<p>19 of 26 QRS use the FCCERS-R *</p>
<p>CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System)</p>	<p>Teachstone</p>	<p>Toddler, Pre-K</p>	<p>Scale is based on interactions between teachers and children in the classroom. CLASS does not evaluate the presence of materials, the physical environment or safety, or the adoption of specific curricula.</p>	<p>Toddlers: Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, Regard for Child Perspectives, Behavior Guidance Pre-K: Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, Regard for Student Perspectives Behavior Management, Productivity, Instructional Learning Formats</p> <p>Additionally, Engaged Support (toddlers) and Instructional Support (pre-K) is assessed.</p>	<p>The Office of Head Start, Minnesota, Georgia and Virginia**</p> <p>Virginia uses the CLASS in preschool-aged center-based classrooms in addition to the ECERS-R*</p>

ASSESSMENT COMPARISON SUMMARY

<p>Teaching Strategies Gold</p>	<p>Teaching Strategies</p>	<p>Focus birth to 5 yrs., with shift towards birth to 8 yrs.)</p> <p>Developmental Age segments: Birth – 1, 1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 years, 4 years, Kinder</p>	<p>Focuses more on child assessment, which addresses the needs of dual language learners and children with disabilities.</p> <p>Widely held expectation report categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exceed ▪ Meet ▪ Below <p>Additionally, based on assessments the following profiles are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Class ▪ Individual child ▪ Snapshot, ▪ Development and Learning Report (for parents) 	<p>The 38 objectives in 10 areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social/Emotional Development ▪ Physical Development ▪ Language Development ▪ Cognitive Development ▪ Literacy ▪ Mathematics ▪ Science/Technology ▪ Social Studies ▪ The Arts ▪ English Language Acquisition 	<p>-WA: GOLD is part of State’s QRIS</p> <p>-Adopted in 13 states plus all branches of military (At pre-k or kinder entry)</p> <p>-Kinder entry use in 4 states (3 piloting)</p> <p>-LA: Every child assessed for kindergarten readiness regardless of whether the child attends HS, public or private licensed (center) home care</p> <p>Pilot this year – statewide next year.</p>
<p>TBRS (Teacher Behavior Rating Scale)</p>	<p>Children’s Learning Institute</p>	<p>Preschool</p>	<p>63 items across 13 separate content areas – all process related. Most items utilize both a 3-point scale to evaluate the <i>quantity</i> of the observed behavior and a 4-point scale to evaluate the <i>quality</i> of the observed behavior.**</p>	<p>Unpublished scale that measures the implementation of best practices and nurturing interactions with children including teacher sensitivity, language and early literacy aspects of instruction, and available classroom materials.**</p>	<p>TBRS is used with the TSR! Project</p>

Sources:

*Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (April, 2010). *Compendium of Quality Rating Systems and Evaluations*. Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/cc/childcare_quality/compendium_qrs/qrs_compendium_final.pdf

** Texas Early Learning Council (June, 2011). *Where Do We Go From Here? Designing a Quality Rating and Improvement System in Texas*. Retrieved from http://earlylearningtexas.org/media/1996/telc_gris_working_paper.pdf

DRAFT DISCUSSION POINTS: TRS Facility Assessments and Child Assessments

TRS Facility Assessments

TRS Facility Assessment: The process and tools for assessing a licensed or registered child care facility for TRS program certification using the TRS program criteria. This includes assessing caregiver-child interactions and assessments of caregiver/teacher instruction methods. It also includes a review of the facility's compliance with minimum licensing requirements **for TRS assessment**.

TRS Facility Monitoring: The process conducted between TRS assessment periods which may consist of one or both of the following; a review of compliance with the TRS requirements for minimum licensing deficiencies and/or a review of documentation requirements of TRS structural measures.

Process for Application - Points for Discussion:

- Should applicants be required to attend an orientation or watch a video for a TRS overview?
- Should applicants be required to complete a TRS Self-Assessment tool as part of the application process?
- Should there be a maximum number of DFPS deficiencies that would preclude application for TRS? [note: scheduled for future discussion]
- Should certain licensing deficiencies preclude a provider from application for TRS? [note: scheduled for future discussion]

Process for Facility Assessment – Points for Discussion:

The following points of discussion were taken from the Early Learning Council (ELC) Strategic Plan for a Statewide QRIS.

ELC Strategic Plan Points for Discussion:

- How often should programs be assessed/re-assessed?
- How often should programs be monitored (for TRS criteria and/or TRS required licensing requirements)?
- Should the assessment/monitoring process include provider self-reports?
- What procedures should be considered for self-reports?
- How many classrooms are assessed at each site?
- What are norms for inter-rater reliability?
- Should random visits be used as part of the process?
- Should penalties exist for programs not maintaining their star level?
- How should the assessment tools be selected or approved?

ELC Strategic Plan Proposal: Texas QRIS should consider a portfolio of tools to assess its standards, relying on availability of current evidence to inform its selection of measures. Given available evidence and QRIS practice across the country, options might include the:

- *ECERS*
- *CLASS*
- *TBRS (Teacher Behavior Rating Scale)*
- *PAS/BAS (Program Administrator Scale/Business Administration Scale), and*
- *Family Strengthening Checklist.*

Child Assessments

Child Assessment: The process and tools used for the caregiver/teacher at a facility to assess a child's needs and progress toward stated outcomes for the child.

Current TRS guidelines do not include measures related to child assessments or measuring child outcomes. Also, the ELC Strategic Plan for a Statewide QRIS did not include proposals or recommendations related to child assessments or child outcomes.

However, several public comments at the October 9, 2013 TRS Workgroup meeting included the need to have child outcomes and child assessments as part of the TRS certification system. The comments focused on the need to have programs use child assessments in order to measure child progress toward desired outcomes. The comments also stated that child assessments are important to assist teachers in developing teaching strategies to assist in achieving improved child outcomes.

Child Assessments – Points for Discussion:

- Should TRS certification include measures related to provider child assessments?
- If so, should TRS require the use of specific child assessment tools (i.e. a menu or portfolio of child assessment tools)?
- How should the assessment tools be selected or approved?
- How would the child assessment measures be integrated into the TRS structure?



Members in Attendance in Person

- Reagan Miller – Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
- Michelle Adams – Department of Family and Protective Services
- Patricia Smith – Little Dudes Learning Center
- Sharon Davis – North East Texas Workforce Solutions
- Sul Ross – Gulf Coast Workforce Solutions

Members in Attendance by Phone

- Dr. Elaine Zweig – Collin County Community College
- Doug Watson – Healy-Murphy Child Development Center
- Sandra Solis – Lower Rio Workforce Solutions
- Mary Clare Munger – Amarillo College Child Development Lab
- Rebecca Latimer – Just Kidding Around
- Dr. John Gasko – Texas Early Learning Council, QRIS Subcommittee
- Pattie Herbert – Infants 123

Members not in Attendance

- Howard Morrison – Texas Education Agency

Additional Attendees

Texas Workforce Commission:

- Laurie Biscoe – Deputy Director, Workforce Development Division
- Patricia A. Gonzalez – Director Workforce Policy
- Phil Warner – Child Care Policy and Program Supervisor
- Regan Dobbs – Child Care Policy and Program Analyst
- Anjali Barnes – Child Care Policy and Program Analyst
- Kimberly Flores – Child Care Policy and Program Analyst
- Adela Esquivel – Child Care Policy and Program Analyst
- Sue Flores – Child Care Policy and Program Analyst
- Kimberly Berry – Governmental Relations
- Katherine Farrell – Chairman Alcantar Staff
- Isabel Casas – Senator Zaffirini Staff

Meeting Summary

Welcome, Roll Call of Workgroup and Overview of Agenda

Reagan Miller, the presiding officer, provided a brief overview of the overall agenda and took roll of the workgroup.

Approval of October 9, 2013 Meeting Notes

Doug Watson moved to approve the minutes as drafted; Michele Adams seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved with no objection.



The approved October 9 meeting notes will be posted on the TWC HB376 TRS Workgroup website.

Discussion/Recommendation on Qualifications for Mentors and Evaluators

Reagan Miller briefly reviewed the "DRAFT Recommended Qualifications for TRS Assessors and Mentors" and asked for feedback.

Agreed to revisions included:

- adding Family and Consumer Sciences under Bachelor's Degree;
- replacing "major work" with 18 credit hours in the general education requirement;
- remove preference for Master's degree; and
- adding specific related fields (special education, child psychology, educational psychology or elementary education) under Bachelor's Degree.

Discussion:

There may be issues finding qualified staff in rural areas. Waivers should be granted for areas that can't find individuals who meet the minimum requirements.

If compensation is in line with the qualifications, there will may not be an issue with finding qualified individuals.

Sul Ross moved to present the recommendations to the Commission as drafted; Patricia Smith seconded the motion. All agreed.

Workgroup Topics and Structure

Ms. Miller reviewed the "TRS Workgroup Structure and Topics"; the following items will be discussed during future meetings:

- Considering the maximum number of licensing deficiencies a facility can have and be eligible or remain eligible for TRS certification (current pre-screening and re-certification)
- Grandfathering and/or assessing national accreditation and military operations
- Transferring of eligibility for facilities that move
- Adding a 5th Star Level
- Promoting the use of training and mentoring as incentives above the reimbursement rates
- Considering Long term financing
- Building on TRS criteria and framework for statewide QRIS
- Considering Structural/Process Criteria

Ms. Miller asked Mr. Ross to review the items for consideration that he submitted to the workgroup.

Discussion/Questions:



Ms. Miller asked the subcommittee leads if they were considering the ELC Recommendations. Some groups are considering the recommendations and others are not. Ms. Miller requested that individuals contact her to request a hard copy of the ELC recommendations, if they did not have one. The ELC Recommendations are also posted on the TWC website.

There will not be enough funding to include all ELC Recommendations; however, if additional funding becomes available, we will have recommendations to present to the Commission.

Ms. Miller suggested that the workgroup may need to review each of the recommendations at the next meeting.

Additionally, the need for training resources and consultation services was stressed. This was not addressed in the ELC Recommendations. Training and consultation can be addressed at a future meeting.

Structure/Process:

The ELC recommendations included structural processes for lower levels, process higher levels.

A Hybrid model is preferred by the workgroup, lower levels - block /higher levels - point structure. Additionally, the group agreed that:

- Structural: (practice of confirming compliance by providing copies of documents/policies in place) would be part of the lower TRS levels
- Process: (practice of confirming compliance through on-site observation) would be part of the higher TRS levels.

The meaning of measure and criteria were defined as:

- Measures – are the listing of items for compliance
- Criteria – is how we score compliance

Mentoring:

Will everyone be assigned a mentor?

Several workgroup members indicated that everyone should have a mentor.

However, if structural indicators are used, 2 star facilities may not need an observation.

Facilities would need to provide proof (documentation) of structural indicators they comply with.

Would mentoring be needed?

Mentoring is costly. Self-attestation based on structural indicators is less expensive. A random sample (example: 10% of providers) could be pulled to perform monitoring.



Orientation is needed for providers interested in obtaining TRS status. The assessor or mentor could provide an initial overview of the program. When a facility is accepted into TRS, mentoring services could be contracted out. This could assist in the development of a growth plan and the next steps. An orientation could be provided on-line along with other resources. All facilities should be visited at least once a year.

Methodology for Scoring and Rating Measures:

Assigning star levels to homes:

Currently, homes are not star level based. Phil Warner provided information regarding current home-based certification. Currently, homes are assigned one of two certification levels: provisionally and fully certified. Some Boards give two ratings to homes – 3 and 4 stars.

A workgroup member commented that most states include star levels for home based facilities; however, some of the criteria might be exactly the same. It was suggested that TRS should have star levels in homes. Workgroup members agreed that home based centers should also be assigned a star level to align the certification process to center based facilities. Consistency is needed for parents to readily identify TRS status throughout all provider types.

Ms. Miller suggested that scoring might be split based on TRS Certification level, such as for:

- 2 star level – (Met/not met based on documents submitted)
- 3 and 4 star level (Point system based on on-site observation)

Should other scoring methods be considered, such as:

- Point ranges
- Met, partially met, not met

Mr. Warner discussed the current scoring range:

- current TRS scoring is considered on a met/not met basis; and
- points are attributed to met/not met (points are associated accordingly)

Ms. Miller added that there would have to be a scale to assess the range of compliance (example: Range of 0 – 4 points).

A workgroup member commented that this would provide a better idea of where improvement is needed.

Ms. Miller clarified that structure based would be for the 2-star level star only and that point based methods would be applied to the higher TRS star levels.



There would have to be a clear definition of what we expect for the point system. There should be items that must be met. A group member agreed, as it is important, especially in home based care and supervision practices.

Inter-rater reliability is a must.

Funding:

A group member asked if TWC was beholden to the rate increase percentages stated in the bill. Ms. Miller responded that the bill outlined how TRS enhanced rates would be calculated; however, the group can make recommendations for the future.

Ms. Miller will send a summary this discussion for the subcommittees to use as a guide in their recommendations.

If a provided wanted mentoring services, could they pay for them?

A group member was going to check with Capital Area Board, to see what the costs associated with mentoring are. Potentially, you could allow centers in more affluent areas to pay for mentoring services.

Assessments:

Need to clarify if we were going to address facility or child assessments. Additionally the level of assessment needs to be addressed, the group will consider:

- Child – caregiver interaction
- Child assessments
- Child Care Licensing

Will the group recommend a list of allowable assessments? Does the group want to establish a new subcommittee to consider assessment recommendations? Are assessment and monitoring the same thing? Would monitoring for structural components (licensing compliance) require an onsite visit, or be completed online?

A workgroup member commented that this subject crosses workgroups and suggested that the workgroup discuss this issue as a whole.

Ms. Miller asked if the workgroup should be given time to consider recommendations.

A workgroup member suggested that this issue could be handled like the mentor/assessor qualifications and then discuss.

Another workgroup member added that this is a complex topic and that we will need to also pull some information for us to consider and provide feedback on. A separate conference call should be arranged to discuss assessments in more detail.

Discussion: Can subsidy require TRS status?

Laurie Biscoe discussed the response citing both Federal and State guidance.



Federal perspective- States can require participation in quality program, if there is wide range of child care options.

State Statute- It does assume that there are TRS and Non TRS providers, as the TRS program is voluntary.

Discussion/Questions:

Self-arranged care (relative care) should not be an option for families.

Ms. Miller stated that Federal law allows relative care, however, there have been restrictions put in place in Texas, to limit those cases to those that truly need this arrangement.

Currently, care provided by relatives is less than 3 percent.

Certification needs to be more attractive for all providers to increase participation.

When centers apply for TRS, is there a requirement to have a certain percentage of children participating in CCDF?

Ms. Miller responded that there is not a requirement to have a certain percentage of children participating in CCDF. It was suggested that the group want to focus on those that are serving more CCDF children. Several workgroup members commented that it would be difficult to require a certain percentage of CCDF children, as children come in and out of care.

Subcommittee Reports: Work Scope, Work Plan, Parking Lot

Director & Staff Qualifications and Training – Elaine Zweig, Ph.D.

The group has broken off into subgroups:

- Director Qualifications;
- Caregiver Qualifications;
- Staff Orientation; and
- Training

During the last conference call, the group discussed:

- Director Qualifications (concluded that this includes formal education, career lattice, career development, experience and professional development)
- Minimum criteria that each level should have (outlined what credentials, specified college credits courses and suggested that the career lattice be added to the criteria)
- Annual training (of which 30 hours of training should be required for directors)
- TRS Introductory course (required for those applying for TRS certification)

A group member suggested that TRS Introductory course could be on-line. Another group member asked if this would include homes. Dr. Zweig stated that the intent is to include homes.



Will there be funding for professional development – quality improvement support? Is there reimbursement for formal education?

It was suggested providers could qualify for more dollars at the lower star levels. Lower performing facilities would need more quality dollars to get where they need to be. The higher levels could be covered under enhanced rates. Ms. Miller clarified that the 2 percent quality funding would not cover all formal education costs.

A workgroup member commented that if we are not going to provide mentoring services, some facilities may never be certified or get to higher level.

Another member added that home providers have fewer resources available to them or may not know how to access them.

Dr. Zweig will send out a chart with recommendations. She briefly discussed the MSA (Marketable Skills Award – worth 9 hours) that her college offers. CCL does look at that for a means to become director certified.

Caregiver-Child Interactions – Mary Clare Munger, M.Ed.

The group has broken off into subgroups:

- Ratio/group size;
- Child/caregiver interaction; and
- Block/point set-up

During the last conference call, the group discussed:

- Defining the level that we are providing quality for children
- Addressing the challenge of where to start and need to ensure that people are encouraged to participate
- Stressing measures be backed by science, evidence, reliability

Curriculum/Physical and Social Activities – Dr. John Gasko

The group has broken off into subgroups:

- Curriculum;
- Health/Nutrition; and
- Indoor/Outdoor Environments

Curriculum (Dr. Gasko):

During the last conference call, the group discussed:

- Aligned measures I/T and Pre-K Guidelines
- Suggested revisions to Activities (specifically, have providers be more intentional in curriculum planning)
- Recommended three point rating system (points can be differential relating to curriculum practices)



- Recommended requiring the same curriculum for home care (however, we need to be mindful of the differences between centers and homes)
- Assigning new curriculum measure for (0-5 years) and (6 years plus)

Health/Nutrition (Reagan Miller):

During the last conference call, the group discussed:

- Recommended removing health and safety as it is currently aligned to current CCL minimum standards
- Looked at other accreditation standards
 1. DSHS-look at exercise/general well-being of children.
 2. Nemours Best Practices – information on grant.

Next steps: Deciding the structural and process procedures

What are other groups considering? (Cross-over)

Is curriculum covering nutritional practices, physical activity, breast feeding, providing breastfeeding information to families?

A group member commented that they didn't believe that addressing breast feeding is a need in home care. Another group member clarified that it is required (through CCL) that facilities provide a place for breast feeding.

Indoor/Outdoor Environments (Michele Adams):

During the last conference call, the group discussed:

- Criteria (wanted to know what should be covered as they do not want to overlap the efforts of other groups)
- Accreditation Standards (reviewed NAEYC and a document from Capital Area that provides further clarification as to what to look for during assessment.)

Parent Involvement and Education – Pat Smith

During the last conference call, the group discussed:

- Discussed adding a measure for parent orientation.
- Recommended parent involvement - complaint procedure, conflict resolution and providing an annual parent survey. (How is this information taken into consideration?)
- Adding measure to make education material available to the parents
- Refining measure to provide clarity-(Example Methods of communication for parents, what is required)
- Discussed adding an explanation to parents what school readiness is, what schools expect when children start school (the purpose, how the facility will support the child – to ensure school readiness)

Presentation; TRS Data, Rate Information and Board Survey Results



Mr. Warner provided an overview of spreadsheet provided to the workgroup that included number of providers by Board area with active agreements as of October 2012. There were no providers certified at the 2 star level. He also provided a brief overview of the Market Rate Survey, conducted late 2012. The survey considers rates for all providers, not just subsidized providers.

A work group member commented that it would be interesting to look at market versus facility costs.

Mr. Warner continued to provide an overview of the Board Survey Results, which included:

- frequency of re-certifications;
- frequency of compliance reviews;
- entity conducting certifications/re-certifications; and
- technical assistance/mentoring

Some Boards are conducting re-certifications on a more frequent basis.

Mr. Warner also discussed the responses to provider barriers and understood by the local boards. These included:

1. Director/Staff Qualifications - difficult to attain
2. Lose certification due to staff turnover
3. Cost to attain credentials

Future Workgroup meetings:

- The suggested November 22 meeting time will not work for all members; instead a meeting was scheduled for November 20 from 11am-1pm
- A full workgroup meeting has been added in January
- All meetings will be extended to 3 hours, except for the Meeting on November 20
- Which workgroup meetings should be public?
Potentially, the January meeting could be open to the subcommittee participants. (Either in person or participation by phone)
Discuss at the next meeting which meeting(s) could be open to the general public and how public testimony will be collected.

Upcoming Agenda items

Child Care Licensing Impact on TRS
Assessments

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:05 pm.

DRAFT-TRS Workgroup Recommended Qualifications for TRS Assessors and Mentors

Note: Qualifications are presented for both assessors and mentors, without distinction between the roles.

Minimum Education:

- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited four-year college or university in early childhood education, child development, early childhood education, special education, child psychology, educational psychology, elementary education, or family consumer science ~~or related field from an accredited college or university~~; or
- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited four-year college or university with major work at least 18 credit hours in child development, early childhood education, special education, child psychology, educational psychology, ~~or~~ elementary education, or family consumer science with at least 12 credit hours in child development; or
- Associate degree in early childhood education or related field with two years' experience as a director in an early childhood program.

~~Experience/Education Substitution: four years of early childhood classroom experience may substitute for a Bachelor's Degree.~~

A Local Workforce Development Board (Board) may request the Texas Workforce Commission to waive the minimum education requirements if the Board can demonstrate that no applicants in the workforce area met the minimum education requirements.

Additional Minimum Work Experience:

- Four (4) years of full-time early childhood classroom experience

Preferred ~~Education, and Experience:~~

~~Master's Degree in related field;~~

- Experience in training, mentoring or coaching in a child-focused program

Demonstrated Knowledge:

- Knowledge of best practices in early childhood education.
- Demonstrate an understanding of early childhood evaluations, observations and assessments for both teachers and children.
- Knowledge of ITERS, ECERS-R, FCERS, TBRS, CLASS or other assessment tools

Other Preferred Knowledge

- Knowledge and understanding of TRS certification guidelines and the minimum standards of Texas Childcare Licensing.
- Bilingual English and Spanish Speaker
- Ability to relate to individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Knowledge of Microsoft Word, Excel, Internet access, and be comfortable using e-mail and entering data on a PC tablet.
- Detail-oriented with strong oral and written communication
- Basic administrative skills, including recordkeeping and use of a computer for data management and professional communication.

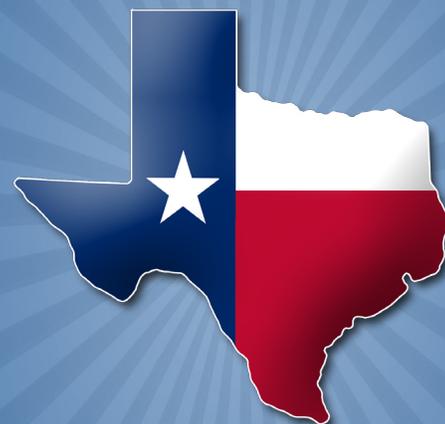
Required Continuing Education and Professional Development:

- Must participate in annual professional development and continuing education requirements consistent with child care licensing minimum training requirements for a center director.

Texas Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Recommendations
to Governor Rick Perry

September 2013



T E X A S
EARLY LEARNING
C O U N C I L



The Texas Early Learning Council is an 18-member, governor-appointed advisory council on early childhood education and care. In 2010, the Council began an ambitious three-year federal grant to improve school readiness in Texas.

Texas Early Learning Council
7000 Fannin Street | Suite 1920
Houston, Texas | 77030
(713) 500-3738
www.earlylearningtexas.org

Texas Quality Rating and Improvement System Recommendations

Table of Contents

Texas Early Learning Council Members	4
Letter from the Chair	5
Executive Summary	7
Introduction	11
QRIS Scope Recommendations	13
QRIS Functionality Recommendations	15
Technical Recommendations	20
Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendations	23
Quality Criteria Recommendations	24
QRIS Promotion Recommendations	27
Budget and Timeline Recommendations	28
HB 376 Considerations	31



Texas Early Learning Council Members

LaShonda Y. Brown, Chair

Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office
Missouri City

Michele Adams

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
Austin

Michael Berry

Texas Education Agency
Austin

Mary Capello

Teaching and Mentoring Communities
Laredo

Deborah Cody

Mount Pleasant Independent School District
Mount Pleasant

Gina S. Day

Texas Education Agency
Kyle

Ana De Hoyos O'Connor

San Antonio College
San Antonio

Blanca Enriquez

Education Service Center - Region 19
El Paso

John W. Gasko

Children's Learning Institute
Houston

Angela Hobbs - Lopez

Texas Department of State Health Services
Round Rock

Elsa Cárdenas - Hagan

University of Houston
Houston

Jonel Huggins

Austin

Reagan Miller

Texas Workforce Commission
Austin

Rhonda Paver

Stepping Stone School
Austin

Bobby Ott

Temple Independent School District
Austin

Elaine Shiver

Mental Health America of Texas
Dallas

Kim Wedel

Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative
Services
Austin

John A. Whitcamp

Fort Worth

Former Members

Denise Brady

Texas Health and Human Services Commission
Austin

Dorothy Goodman

University of Texas at Austin - University Charter
School
Austin

Sasha Rasco

Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative
Services
Austin

Quincy White

City of Lubbock
Lubbock

Letter from the Chair



Dear Governor Perry and fellow Texans,

Our state has the largest and fastest growing child population in the nation, and many of these children are cared for and educated by early childhood professionals across Texas in a variety of settings, from child care centers and homes to Head Start and public school pre-kindergarten programs. Research consistently shows that children who attend high quality early childhood programs are more prepared for school and beyond. Unfortunately, many families are not able to identify quality programs in their communities. How can Texas identify high quality early childhood programs and share this information with families? Also, how can early childhood programs make improvements to improve the quality of care and education provided for children?

In recent years, several states have adopted Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), systems designed to rate early childhood programs, so that families can identify higher quality programs, and provide opportunities for these programs to improve. In our state, the Texas Rising Star program, currently open to child care centers and homes, is an example of a QRIS. Additionally, several localities in Texas also operate systems to rate early childhood programs. The following recommendations are designed to work within the dynamic early childhood system in Texas.

The Texas QRIS Recommendations are the culmination of nearly three years of hard work. Before embarking on this important work, the Council spent over a year researching QRIS and devising a strategy to speak with stakeholders in Texas about QRIS. Over the course of many months, we met with stakeholders and refined our vision of the system that is described in these recommendations. Looking to the future, my fellow Council Members and I hope that our state finds these recommendations helpful when discussing and considering QRIS. In fact, we included a section in this document that details the relationship between our recommendations and provisions in HB376, legislation that will transform the Texas Rising Star program over the next year. We hope that the workgroup dedicated to this undertaking will utilize these recommendations towards their efforts.

On behalf of my fellow Council Members, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Texas Early Learning Council. We are honored to have been a part of this important work around improving quality in early childhood programs and to provide these recommendations to our state.

Sincerely,
LaShonda Y. Brown
Chair, Texas Early Learning Council

Executive Summary

Texas Quality Rating and Improvement System

Appointed by Governor Perry to improve school readiness in Texas, the Texas Early Learning Council embarked on a three-year federal grant in 2010. One of the Council's primary initiatives is to provide recommendations for the development of a statewide, cross-sector Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for Texas. These recommendations should be read along with the Council's two previous publications on QRIS, our foundational paper on the subject, *Where Do We Go from Here: Designing a Quality Rating and Improvement System in Texas* and our strategic plan, *Where Do We Go from Here: Charting Next Steps*.

These recommendations are organized into seven categories: QRIS Scope Recommendations, QRIS Functionality Recommendations, Technical Recommendations, Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendations, Quality Criteria Recommendations, QRIS Promotion Recommendations, and Budget and Timeline Recommendations. The recommendations were developed by the Texas Early Learning Council through extensive research and stakeholder feedback.

Texas QRIS Recommendations

QRIS Scope Recommendations

The QRIS Scope Recommendations detail the Council's recommendations for the scope and reach of a Texas QRIS. The QRIS Scope Recommendations begin on page 15.

Scope Recommendation #1: Begin with a QRIS system mandated for the child care sector.

Scope Recommendation #2: The QRIS should be a five tiered system.

Scope Recommendation #3: The QRIS should be under the auspices of the Texas Workforce Commission.

Scope Recommendation #4: The QRIS should be a decentralized system.

Scope Recommendation #5: The QRIS should serve as an expansion of Texas Rising Star.

Scope Recommendation #6: Funding for the QRIS should be provided.

Scope Recommendation #7: A mechanism for private financing of the QRIS should be created.

QRIS Functionality Recommendations

The QRIS Functionality Recommendations detail the recommendations for how the Texas QRIS will drive improved quality in early childhood programs and reach the Council's desired goal for the system to improve child outcomes in Texas. The QRIS Functionality Recommendations begin on page 17.

Functionality Recommendation #1: Include “structural” and “process” quality measures in the QRIS.

Functionality Recommendation #2: Select reliable and valid process measures for all age groups and train staff on the tools.

Functionality Recommendation #3: Design and administer quality improvement efforts locally.

Functionality Recommendation #4: Provide technical assistance in a two tiered fashion.

Functionality Recommendation #5: Incentivize success in the QRIS.

Technical Recommendations

The Technical Recommendations outline the Council's recommendations for the system's technical aspects, including data capture, enrollment, and technical assistance policies and procedures. The Technical Recommendations begin on page 22.

Technical Recommendation #1: Employ a new or adapted data system to manage QRIS data, classroom progress, and other administrative needs.

Technical Recommendation #2: Implement a year-round open enrollment system.

Technical Recommendation #3: Provide technical assistance locally, through contracts with skilled organizations.

Technical Recommendation #4: Develop procedures and policies to ensure accountability in the QRIS.

Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendations

The Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendations detail the Council's recommendations for a pilot study and regular evaluation of the Texas QRIS. The Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendations begin on page 25.

Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendation #1: Conduct a pilot study.

Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendation #2: Conduct a regional system evaluation every five years.

Quality Criteria Recommendations

The Quality Criteria Recommendations outline the recommendations for the selection of quality criteria measures that will be used to evaluate and rate programs enrolled in the Texas QRIS. The Quality Criteria Recommendations begin on page 26.

Quality Criteria Recommendation #1: Develop and implement a quality criteria selection process.

Quality Criteria Recommendation #2: Provide time and discussion in the development of quality criteria.

QRIS Promotion Recommendations

The QRIS Promotion Recommendations detail the Council's recommendations for marketing and promotion of the system to parents and early childhood programs in Texas. The QRIS Promotion Recommendations begin on page 29.

QRIS Promotion Recommendation #1: Designate funding for communication and promotion.

QRIS Promotion Recommendation #2: Engage providers locally on QRIS.

QRIS Promotion Recommendation #3: Utilize web-based communications.

Budget and Timeline Recommendations

The Budget and Timeline Recommendations outline the recommendations for a five-year implementation timeline and five-year budget. This section also features the Council's major considerations when preparing the cost estimation and considerations regarding HB 376, signed into law in 2013. The Budget and Timeline Recommendations begin on page 30.

Budget and Timeline Recommendation #1: Provide adequate funding.

Budget and Timeline Recommendation #2: Follow a 5 year development and launch plan.

Texas QRIS Implementation Costs

The estimated five-year cost for the implementation of the Texas QRIS is **\$115,990,310**. View a five-year budget for a Texas QRIS on page 34.

Introduction

The Texas Early Learning Council is an 18 member advisory council established by Governor Rick Perry in 2009. The Texas Early Learning Council serves as Texas' State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, as required by the *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*. The Council aims to improve school readiness in Texas through targeted strategies stemming from the Council's four priority areas:

- **Parental Outreach and Communications**
- **Early Childhood Workforce and Professional Development**
- **Collaborations and Standards**
- **Data Systems and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems**

As part of the Council application for *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* funding, the Council committed to developing recommendations for a Texas Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). This document, in conjunction with two prior publications on QRIS, represents the Council's recommendations for a Texas QRIS. To access the Council's other work on the topic, including our foundational paper on the subject, *Where Do We Go from Here: Designing a Quality Rating and Improvement System in Texas* and our strategic plan, *Where Do We Go from Here: Charting Next Steps* visit www.earlylearningtexas.org/qris.

As a critical component of the Council's Data and QRIS Subcommittee, the Council set out to investigate and produce recommendations related to establishing a QRIS for the State of Texas. The Council's Data and QRIS Subcommittee included the following members:

John A. Whitcamp, Subcommittee Chair
Mary Capello, *Teaching and Mentoring Communities*
Elsa Cárdenas-Hagan, Ed.D. *University of Houston*
Gina S. Day, *Texas Education Agency*
John W. Gasko, Ph.D., *Children's Learning Institute*
Reagan Miller, *Texas Workforce Commission*

The National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center defines QRIS as a systematic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-aged care and education programs." In response to an ongoing proliferation in early childhood programs, funding, and interventions, as well as an emphasis on these systems at the federal level more and more states are implementing QRIS.

In order to appreciate the specific needs in Texas and the specific context in which a QRIS would operate in Texas, the Council took important steps to build knowledge and focus decision making. For example, the Council began this process by publishing a

working paper on QRIS in the state: “Where do we go from here: Designing a Quality Rating and Improvement System in Texas.” The paper details the early childhood landscape and poses critical questions the state must answer in order to implement a functional and effective system. After the paper was published, the Council conducted dozens of interviews with important QRIS stakeholders, which were followed by 3 statewide surveys and 3 large stakeholder meetings. Based on research conducted by others states and the information collected through our stakeholder engagement efforts, the Council’s talented Consultants on the project—ICF international and the Goffin Strategy Group—produced a final strategic plan, which offers a series of proposals and strategies the state should consider in implementing a QRIS. From these artifacts and through recurring discussion and deliberation, the Council has created these recommendations. The Council sincerely hopes that they offer policymakers, advocates, and stakeholders support and guidance as our state continues to work towards creating the highest quality early childhood programs possible.

It is important to note that these recommendations were created in a context in which Texas Legislators developed and passed legislation relevant to the idea of a Texas QRIS. House Bill 376 of the 83rd Texas Legislature, revises the Texas Rising Star system, and it creates tiered reimbursements for child care providers serving subsidized children while meeting higher levels of distinction within the Texas Rising Star system. Texas Rising Star is a quality improvement program for subsidized child care providers, which is administered by the Texas Workforce Commission but managed locally through Local Workforce Development Boards. House Bill 376 requires the creation of a workgroup to propose revisions to Texas Rising Star. As the Council worked through the creation of these recommendations, HB 376 was present in their considerations. The Council hopes the Texas Rising Star workgroup finds these recommendations useful. In the hopes of making this document as relevant to HB 376 as possible, the Council has included a section that details specific Council recommendations and considerations for the HB 376, Texas Rising Star workgroup.

These recommendations are organized into nine sections:

1. QRIS Scope
2. QRIS Functionality
3. QRIS Technical Requirements
4. QRIS Evaluation and Piloting
5. QRIS Quality Criteria
6. QRIS Promotion
7. QRIS Budget and Timeline
8. HB 376 Texas Rising Star Workgroup Considerations

This document is another step in the ongoing work by so many, locally and statewide, to integrate early childhood systems in our state in a manner that provides high quality care and education to the young children who attend those programs. The Council is extremely grateful for all the stakeholders that contributed to this effort and others aimed at improving early childhood education for our youngest Texans.

QRIS Scope Recommendations

The Texas Early Learning Council understands that in order for a QRIS to be successful in our state, stakeholders, policymakers, and administrators must have a clear understanding of the reach and the scope of the system. The Council made some key decisions early in the process that specified many limits to the system. Below are the full QRIS scope recommendations.

Scope Recommendation #1:

Begin with a QRIS system mandated for the child care sector.

The QRIS should be inclusive of child care programs serving children 0-5 years of age. With regards to the child care sector, the Council recommends that the QRIS be inclusive of Licensed Child Care Centers, Licensed Child Care Homes, and Registered Child Care Homes. Programs from others sectors, including Head Start*, Early Head Start*, and Public Pre-Kindergarten, should be encouraged to join the QRIS on a voluntary basis.

Scope Recommendation #2:

The QRIS should be a five tiered system.

Basic state licensure and being in good standing with the Department of Family and Protective Service Child Care Licensing Program should serve as Tier 1. The implication of this is that all programs operating as licensed or registered programs in Texas would be rated with one star. To move up in the star system, programs would be required to apply, be evaluated, and so forth.

Scope Recommendation #3:

The QRIS should be under the auspices of the Texas Workforce Commission .

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) should manage and administer the QRIS development process, implementing the system, and administering the system. TWC is the administrator of the Texas Child Care and Development Fund and operates Texas Rising Star in the State, a close approximation of a QRIS.

* Note: Some Head Start and Early Head Start programs are licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child Care Licensing Program.

Scope Recommendation #4:

The QRIS should be a decentralized system.

The system should be a decentralized QRIS, in which the TWC provides clear criteria, guidance, and minimal oversight to local work force development boards and contracting agencies implementing QRIS locally.

Scope Recommendation #5:

The QRIS should serve as an expansion of Texas Rising Star.

The QRIS should expand upon the “Texas Rising Star” name and build upon that system’s infrastructure. Providers are familiar with the system, and the TWC currently maintains a working infrastructure around Texas Rising Star, including reporting mechanisms, governance, staffing, and local contracting. This infrastructure will support a QRIS and save resources.

Scope Recommendation #6:

Funding for a QRIS should be provided.

The Texas Legislature appropriate or direct funds towards the TWC for the creation, pilot, evaluation, improvement, and statewide launch of a QRIS (which includes promotional and marketing funds).

Scope Recommendation #7:

A mechanism for private financing of the QRIS should be created.

The Texas Legislature should create a new public account or strategy to enable localities to solicit private investments in their local QRIS to increase quality improvement efforts, recruitment, public education, and increased incentives for participating programs.

QRIS Functionality Recommendations

A QRIS must have a clear theory of change that drives its process and expectations. The Council decided early in its deliberations that a Texas QRIS should have improved child outcomes as key goal of the system. To support this pursuit, the Council investigated the research on early childhood quality improvement efforts. At the request of the Council, the project consultants conducted a literature review on 20 possible QRIS indicators and their associations with positive child outcomes. The Council's QRIS functionality recommendations are derived, in part, from this investigation of quality indicators. However, feasibility and experience contribute to these QRIS functionality recommendations, as well. Table 1 includes a summary of the consultants' literature review findings.

Table 1

Indicator	Activity	Population (who's undertaking the activity)	Evidence on Association with Child Outcomes
Accreditation			
National accreditation and SRCS	participation	programs, classrooms	Limited evidence
Assessment			
Assessment, observation, and service planning	written plan of strategies and tools to complete ongoing observation and assessments of children birth to 5	programs, administrators, practitioners	No evidence located
Screenings	implement health and developmental screenings	administrators, practitioners	Mixed evidence
Business and Administration Practices			
Capacity to serve children with special needs; provide an inclusive environment for all children	make programs accessible and accommodating; written inclusion plan, implemented with good faith	administrators	No evidence located
Detailed administrator assessment, consistent management practices, administrator training and qualifications	invest in ongoing improvement for leadership and management	programs, administrators	No evidence located
Family Engagement			
Parent involvement	parent involvement in curriculum, activities, conferences; parent trainings	programs, practitioners	Positive evidence

Table 1, continued.

Indicator	Activity	Population (who's undertaking the activity)	Evidence on Association with Child Outcomes
Process Quality *Refers to children's direct experiences with people and objects in the child care setting...Process quality concerns interactions among individuals (e.g., emotional and instructional)			
Nationally-recognized, research-based curriculum, or must be inclusive of ITELG and/or Pre-k Guidelines	implement and use	programs	Limited evidence
Standardized curriculum	implementation and observation	administrators/ programs	Limited evidence
Teacher behavior	score on ECERS, TBRs, CLASS	administrators, practitioners	Positive evidence
Teacher sensitivity	score on ECERS, TBRs, CLASS	administrators, practitioners	Positive evidence
Program Compliance and Administrative Practices			
No abuse and neglect findings	site visits, records	programs	No evidence located
Program compliance with rules and regulations	site visits, records	programs	No evidence located
Structural Quality "Concerns those aspects of programs that describe the caregiver's background, curriculum, or other easily observable or reported characteristics of the classroom or program. Structural features of programs are typically quite static...[and] are often viewed as necessary for creating the opportunity for the caregiver to create a high-quality preschool classroom..."			
Group size/ratios	establish reasonable staff-child ratios, by age group	programs	Mixed evidence
Learning environment (that support 5 domains)	create and maintain the environment	programs	Mixed evidence
Materials (that support the 5 domains)	maintain, implement and use	programs	Limited evidence
Nutrition & wellness	well-planned nutritious meals and activities; self-report	programs, practitioners	Limited evidence
Workforce Qualifications			
Continuing education	developing professional development plans with self-assessment	administrators, practitioners	Mixed evidence
Degreed and/or highly-trained teacher	go to school, maintain trainings	administrators, practitioners	Mixed evidence
Facility workforce experience, training, turnover	workforce retention report; staff records	administrators	No evidence located
Knowledge of child ages and stages of development	Received training or demonstrated understanding	administrators, practitioners	Mixed evidence

Functionality Recommendation #1:

Include “structural” and “process” quality measures in the QRIS.

Robert Pianta describes the distinctions between structure and process well in a recent paper: process quality concerns interactions among individuals (emotional and instructional); whereas structural quality concerns features of programs that do not directly involve interactions between teachers and children (e.g., teacher qualifications, materials and equipment, class size and ratios).

Tiers 1-3 of the QRIS should focus on structural quality elements (safety, class size, class ratio, curriculum selection, etc). This information should be collected through an online self report mechanism and confirmed through randomized monitoring visits to programs.

The scope of structural factors being evaluated should be succinct, manageable, and linked to evidence that they support positive child outcomes.

Specifically, the Council recommends the following structural elements be emphasized in the QRIS

- Reduced class sizes and reduced staff-to-child ratios
- Increasing parent involvement
- Implementation and usage of high-quality curricula and materials
- Staff participation in high-quality professional development activities based on the Core Competencies and lead by Texas Trainer Registry approved Trainers
- Staff participation in high-quality mentoring activities
- Staff attainment of increasingly higher levels on the career ladder

Tiers 4 and 5 of the QRIS focus on the quality of instructional practices and interactions between adults and children (process quality). This information should be collected through direct observation of teachers and administrators in the environment. Localities should receive guidance for what metrics they must use, what approved data collection method they must use, and what scoring criteria they must use.

Functionality Recommendation #2:

Select reliable and valid process measures for all age groups and train staff on the tools.

The TWC should select a process measure, or multiple measures, such that classroom instruction, teacher behavior, and demonstrated competencies are evaluated. The measures should include the ability to evaluate teachers of infants, toddlers, three-year-olds, and pre-kindergarteners.

The TWC should ensure the selected process measures have established reliability and validity (inter-rater reliability, internal consistency, and validity).

Local workforce development boards should contract to train raters and ensure rater training is in alignment with the process measure developers' procedure and that routine inter-rater reliability is assessed to ensure routine and proper use.

Functionality Recommendation #3:

Design and administer quality improvement efforts locally.

The technical assistance, or quality improvement element of the system, should be designed and administered locally by organizations contracted to do so. Local Workforce Development Board Areas should serve as the geographical areas the contracting organizations will be responsible for.

Only programs that serve subsidized children should receive technical assistance for quality improvement.

Functionality Recommendation #4:

Provide technical assistance in a two tiered fashion.

Mimicking the quality tiers recommendations, technical assistance should be organized in a two tier fashion: a focus on structural improvement and a focus on process improvement. This technical assistance should be rationalized so that providers first receive support meeting structural criteria (tiers 1-3) and then receive support meeting process criteria (tiers 4 and 5).

Functionality Recommendation #5:

Incentivize success in the QRIS.

Each tier level achieved should translate to an increased reimbursement rate for programs serving children whose families qualify for child care subsidies. The Texas Legislature should appropriate or direct specific funds for the purpose of increasing reimbursement rates to providers that successfully achieve higher tiers of quality.

Reimbursement rates follow the following model:

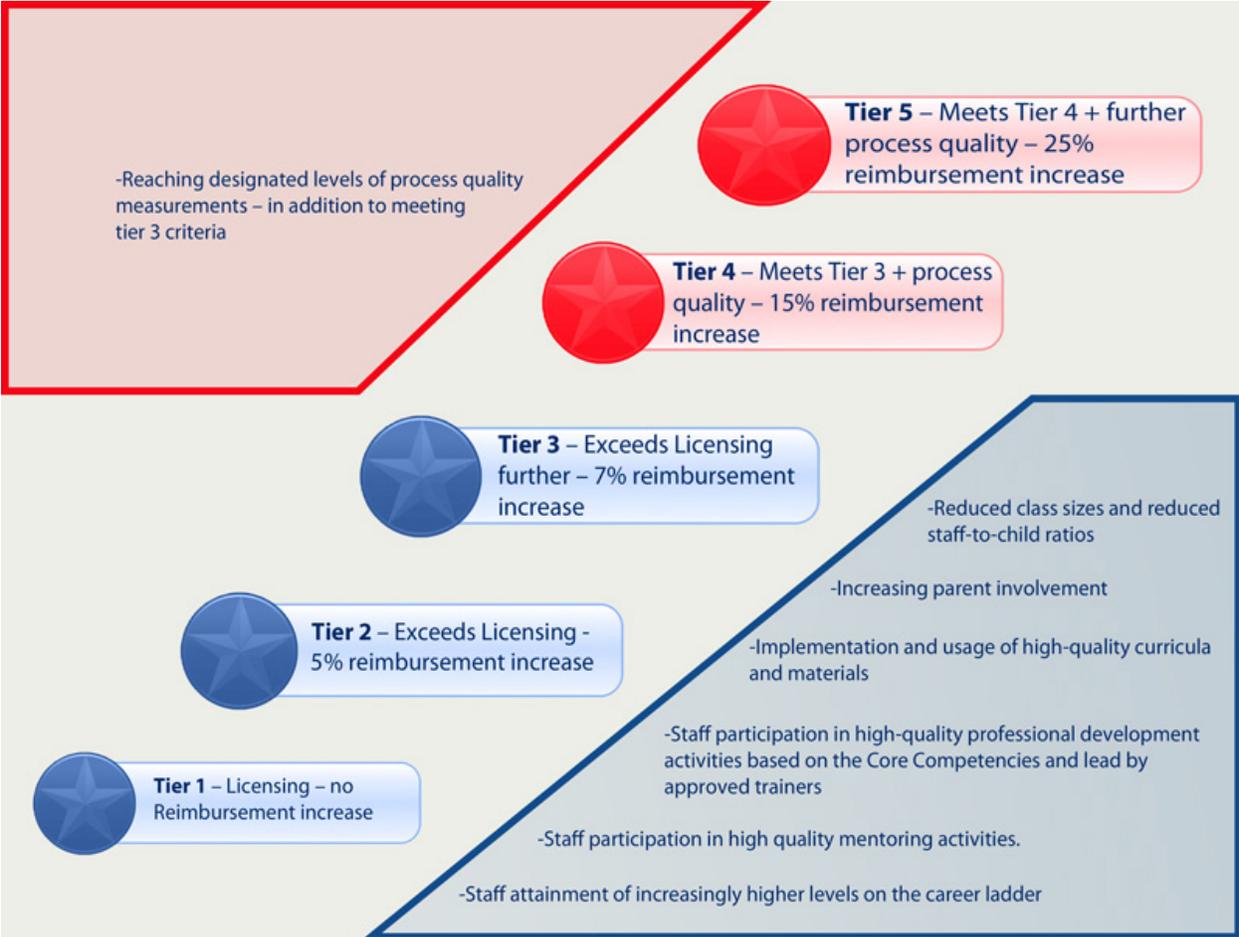
1. Tier 1 – no increased rate
2. Tier 2 – at least a 5% increased rate above the local base rate
3. Tier 3 – at least a 7% increased rate above the local base rate
4. Tier 4 – at least a 15% increased rate above the local base rate
5. Tier 5 – at least a 25% increased rate above the local base rate

The increased reimbursements should be based on an annual child care market rate survey, and all reimbursement rates should never fall below the 50th percentile of market. The percentage increase should be in addition to the base rate paid in each local workforce development area. Incentives should also include scholarships that support the early childhood workforce's professional development.

Programs that receive national accreditation should receive an automatic tier level designation based on a prior "cross walking" of each recognized accreditation; however, that designation should not exceed tier 3.

Figure 1. QRIS Tier Model

Figure 1 shows the relationship between the proposed tiers, percent increase of reimbursement rates, as well as the distinction between process quality tiers and structural quality tiers.



Technical Recommendations

The sheer size and volume of the Texas early childhood workforce demands that Texas adopt versatile and technology-oriented intake systems as well as online technical assistance and training. Similarly, data capture and the system's ability to analyze trends over time are paramount in creating an effective QRIS that improves child outcomes. At the start of the Council's efforts in investigating a Texas QRIS, child outcomes, cost containment, and the usage of existing technology were identified as priorities. The recommendations below reflect those priorities.

Technical Recommendation #1:

Employ a new or adapted data system to manage QRIS data, classroom progress, and other administrative needs.

The system should allow for programs to apply to join QRIS, complete a self report on structural requirements and other details. Programs applying should be in good standing with Child Care Licensing, which the system should verify. Also, the system should include a series of online training modules based on the Texas Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners and Administrators. Finally, the system should interface with the new with the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System to track and monitor credentials and professional development for QRIS enrolled programs.

Technical Recommendation #2:

Implement a year-round open enrollment process.

The QRIS include year-round open enrollment, and upon applying to join the QRIS, programs should receive a scheduled visit from Local Workforce Development Board staff, which will verify the self reports and complete the intake process.

In addition trained representatives from the Local Workforce Development Board will also schedule a series of days when the representative may return and evaluate a random sampling of classrooms for process quality – at least 33% of classrooms in a facility should be observed.

Based on the ratings the program received, the program will be assigned a tier distinction and be presented with the opportunity to enroll in technical assistance if the program is serving subsidized children.

Technical Recommendation #3:

Provide technical assistance locally, through contracts with skilled organizations.

Each Local Workforce Board should contract with a non-profit organization to operate technical assistance locally. The Local Workforce Development Board should also create a referral system for referring programs to technical assistance contractors.

To assist with cost containment, no program should receive more than two years of technical assistance, related to quality improvement, within a five year period. In addition, technical assistance should include a combination of contractor directed activities as well as referrals to online trainings for early childhood program staff.

Technical Recommendation #4:

Develop procedures and policies to ensure accountability in the QRIS.

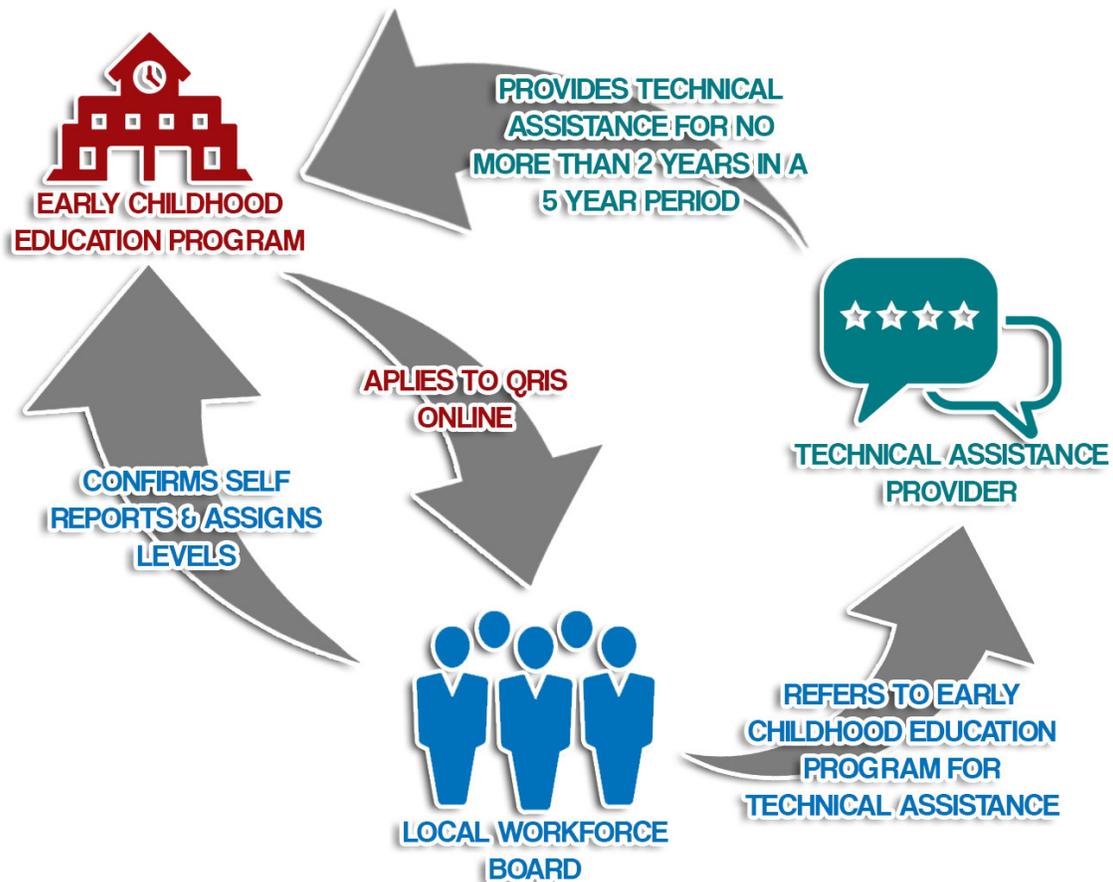
All early childhood programs enrolled in the QRIS should be subject to random visits from the Local Workforce Development Board Staff to ensure compliance with quality tier distinctions – penalties for failure to comply with quality tier distinctions and associated policies should be developed by the TWC.

All early childhood programs should be reevaluated at least three years from the last rating.

All early childhood programs should report major licensing violations, injuries that require medical attention, and/or major staffing changes to the Local Workforce Development Board. The TWC should develop policies and procedures related to reporting this type of information and the appropriate corresponding responses.

Figure 2. QRIS Service Model

Figure 2 shows the proposed relationship between various entities involved with a future Texas QRIS. As the figure indicates, early childhood programs would work with both the Local Workforce Development Boards and contracted technical assistance provider.



Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendations

Although QRIS have been increasing in practice among the states, there is a scarcity of data in existence on the efficacy of these systems. Some studies have been completed, however, and the results are mixed. The Council’s vision of a QRIS is one in which data is consistently utilized to improve the system. To that end, the Council has recommended the implementation of a robust data system to accompany a Texas QRIS from which researchers and policymakers can draw insights about the QRIS. Furthermore, the Council is particularly concerned with investigating and addressing other needs of the project through study and evaluation such as system functionality, reliability, and validity.

Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendation #1:

Conduct a pilot study.

Full implementation of the QRIS should be preceded by a pilot program study in at least two communities. At least one rural and one urban community should be represented in the study. The pilot study should also be accompanied by a feasibility study which should measure provider and parent satisfactions, implementation challenges, and cost maintenance. Pilot study findings should be reviewed and guide a period of QRIS revisions.

Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendation #2:

Conduct a regional system evaluation every five years.

A system evaluation should occur on a regular basis and measure the impact of tier distinctions on child outcomes, including school readiness. The evaluation should also measure the validity of the QIRS (concurrent/divergent validity – does it related to other standard measures in an expected way; predicative validity –does the system measure characteristics related to important identified outcomes).

Quality Criteria Recommendations

Of particular concern to providers and parents are the criteria on which programs are evaluated and rated. As mentioned above, the Council took steps to investigate the research base for many standard areas of quality criteria. The product of that investigation, has lead the Council to focus on a narrow set of structural quality areas coupled with process quality measures. However, no matter how narrow the spectrum of the quality measures selected, defining the precise scope of the various quality tiers is an important challenge. The Council believes that these tiers and other quality criteria determinations are best made collaboratively with oversight from the TWC. Below are the Council's recommendations for development of Texas QRIS quality criteria.

Quality Criteria Recommendation #1:

**Develop and implement a quality
criteria selection process.**

An integral aspect of the QRIS is to develop quality criteria. The TWC should host a 3-person panel of knowledgeable and qualified early childhood researchers and scholars and a 20-person advisory panel to develop strong, research-based criteria for a QRIS. Members of the panel should be selected by the Texas Governor. In addition TWC should

host and select members of a QRIS advisory council, and should consider the following participants while creating it:

1. The Head Start Collaboration Director
2. The Texas Child Care Administrator
3. A for-profit child care operation owner
4. A non-profit child care operation owner
5. A representative from the Texas School Ready! Project
6. A representative from a local work force development board
7. A representative from a local workforce development board contracting organization
8. A representative from a public two or four year University
9. An individual employed as a classroom teacher in a child care operation
10. An owner of a licensed child care home
11. An owner of a register child care home
12. A member of local government
13. A parent utilizing subsidized child care
14. A Head Start Director
15. A public school Administrator
16. A Teacher employed in a public Pre-k Program
17. A representative from a Child Care Resource and Referral organization
18. A representative from a military-based child care program
19. A Director from a nationally accredited child care program
20. A representative from a children's advocacy group
21. A representative from a disability advocacy group

**Quality Criteria
Recommendation #2:**

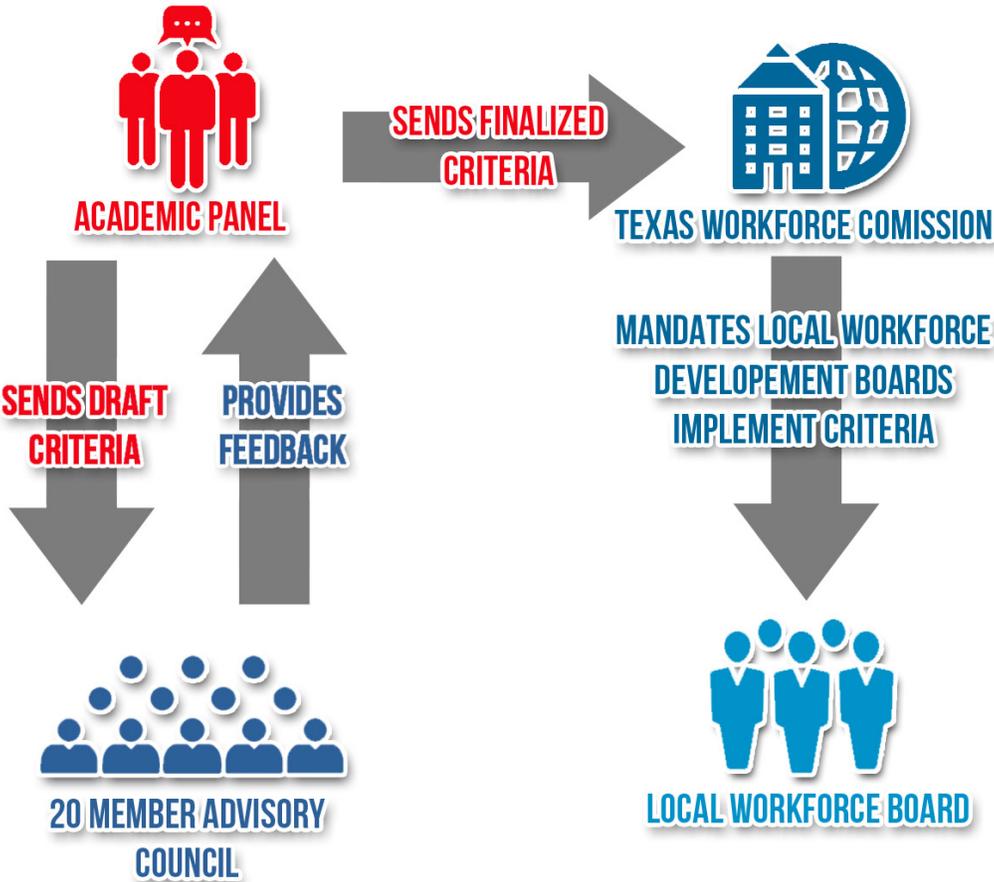
**Provide time and discussion
in the development of quality
criteria.**

Over the course of one year period the academic panel and the advisory council should produce the following products:

1. Clear structural criteria for programs to follow in attaining higher levels of rating (tiers 1-3) – the criteria must be linked to evidence that they promote improved child outcomes
2. Clear process criteria for programs to follow in attaining higher rating levels (tiers 4 and 5) – the group must select a highly validated teacher observation tool or tools for all types of early childhood classrooms (infants, toddlers, three-year-olds, and pre-kindergarten.) The group must indicate assessment levels/scores suitable for tiers 4 and 5 and at what frequency and what density they must be collected
3. Structural and process quality criteria for home-based child care that is linked to evidence that they promote improved outcomes for children

Figure 3. QRIS Criteria Development Model

Figure 3 demonstrates the relationship between the entities involved in the development of a Texas QRIS. The Council envisions an academic panel and large advisory council working in concert to supply the TWC with strong, research-based criteria for the QRIS. TWC would then finalize these criteria and disseminate them locally through the workforce board system.



QRIS Promotion Recommendations

It is important that the Texas QRIS be visible and transparent. Also relevant groups must be aware of the QRIS. Parents and providers must understand the system and be able to rely on it for information, uniformity, and consistency in evaluations and ratings of quality. To that end, system promotion or communications plays a critical role in a future QRIS in Texas. The large size of Texas and the large number of families and children present challenges with regards to communications, but it must be a priority for a QRIS to be a success in Texas.

QRIS Promotion Recommendation #1:

Designate funding for communication and promotion.

The Texas Legislature appropriate or direct funds towards the TWC for the creation, pilot, evaluation, improvement, and statewide launch of a QRIS. A portion of the statewide launch funds should be utilized for communications and promotional activities. These funds should be used to contract with a public relations or marketing firm to maximize messaging and advertising opportunities at the statewide level.

QRIS Promotion Recommendation #2:

Engage providers locally on QRIS.

To ensure local providers are aware of and understand the QRIS, each Local Workforce Development Board should hold a series of local meetings with local providers to thoroughly explain the process, changes, and to provide regular updates on system progress. The TWC should also provide Local Workforce Development Boards with sufficient materials to conduct outreach locally to providers.

QRIS Promotion Recommendation #3:

Utilize web-based communications.

The new QRIS should be accompanied by a new website with information for providers and parents, as well as ongoing e-communications on the QRIS, directed by the TWC.

Budget and Timeline Recommendations

In order to provide an estimate of the of the costs associated with implementing a QRIS, the Texas Early Learning Council tasked it's QRIS consultants with producing a draft 5-year budget for the system. There are many underlying assumptions that the budget is premised on. Below in Table 2 is a summary of these assumptions. Notice that the budget is based on adoption of the CLASS observation tool for cost estimation purposes; however, the Council recommends that TWC and its stakeholder group select the appropriate observation tools for the system.

Table 2

Major Assumptions of a Texas QRIS Cost Estimation	
Assumption 1	The TX QRIS will be a 5 tier system, with licensing as the first level of entry.
Assumption 2	The TX QRIS will be a Birth to Kindergarten system.
Assumption 3	Programs currently participating in the TRS, and regulated programs (licensed centers, licensed homes and registered homes) are priorities for initial rollout, followed by Head Start programs next.
Assumption 4	As a conservative estimate, it is assumed that the current subsidy reimbursement for Texas Rising Star (TRS) will be increased by 3% at each tier. They number of subsidy children currently being served will remain the same over 5 years. Current annual subsidy payments are estimated at \$400M.
Assumption 5	The TX QRIS will make a significant investment in scholarships that supports the ECE workforce's professional development.
Assumption 6	The TX QRIS will make a significant investment in direct technical assistance services to 75-95% of participating programs.
Assumption 7	The TX QRIS will rely on online training as the major training resource for programs and the ECE workforce.
Assumption 8	The TX QRIS will use the CLASS as the preferred assessment tool. The Strategic Plan proposes that a "portfolio of measures" be used in the QRIS. However, the cost estimation method tool (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/qris-cost-estimation-model-and-resource-guide) limits choices for assessment tools to CLASS and ECERS. Given the results of the literature review, it is assumed CLASS would be desired over ECERS in the new QRIS. As discussed in the Strategic Plan, the cost of the QRIS will increase with the number of assessment measures chosen.

Table 2, continued.

Major Assumptions of a Texas QRIS Cost Estimation																																		
Assumption 9	<p>The TX QRIS will adopt the following Implementation Approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 – Planning and developing standards • Year 2 – Pilot with 100 programs (The number 100 was chosen to ensure that programs represent a variety of demographics and sectors, and should not be interpreted as a statistically valid sample) • Year 3 – Focus is on transitioning current Texas Rising Star programs and fidelity of system implementation • Year 4-5 – Focus is on increasing participation of licensed programs, adding Head Start programs and strengthening the fidelity of system implementation. Registered homes will likely see a decline in participation as the system rolls out and stabilizes. <p>The following program participation levels are projected for Years 3-5.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #e91e63; color: white;"> <th colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">Projected QRIS Participation % Rates</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="width: 40%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;">Program Count</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Year 3</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Year 4</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Year 5</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Licensed Centers*</td> <td style="text-align: center;">9519**</td> <td style="text-align: center;">25%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">35%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">45%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Licensed Homes (7-12 children)*</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1743</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">30%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Registered Homes (up to 6 children)*</td> <td style="text-align: center;">6302</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">15%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Licensed Head Start (excludes HS operating under license exemption)***</td> <td style="text-align: center;">800</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">100%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* Source - 2011 Texas Licensing Report</p> <p>** Count includes Licensed Head Starts, but participation projections for Licensed Head Start are calculated separately</p> <p>*** Source - Personal communication with Texas Head Start State Collaboration Office Director</p>				Projected QRIS Participation % Rates						Program Count	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Licensed Centers*	9519**	25%	35%	45%	Licensed Homes (7-12 children)*	1743	20%	30%	40%	Registered Homes (up to 6 children)*	6302	20%	15%	10%	Licensed Head Start (excludes HS operating under license exemption)***	800		100%	100%
Projected QRIS Participation % Rates																																		
	Program Count	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5																														
Licensed Centers*	9519**	25%	35%	45%																														
Licensed Homes (7-12 children)*	1743	20%	30%	40%																														
Registered Homes (up to 6 children)*	6302	20%	15%	10%																														
Licensed Head Start (excludes HS operating under license exemption)***	800		100%	100%																														

***Budget and Timeline
Recommendation #1:***

Provide adequate funding.

The Texas Legislature should appropriate or direct \$116,000,000 towards the creation and startup of a Texas QRIS. These funds are for the first five years of the system, which includes planning, piloting, transition, two years of ongoing costs, as well as a fidelity and outcomes evaluation. After the first five years, the Texas Legislature should appropriate or direct a minimum of \$50,000,000 for each additional year. The TWC study and apportion funds according to need among its 28 local workforce development boards.

***Budget and Timeline
Recommendation #2:***

Follow a 5 year development and launch plan.

Year 1	Planning, stakeholder group formation, quality criteria creation, final program specification creation, and online system development
Year 2	Piloting in 2 communities
Year 3	Interpreting pilot data and adjusting policies accordingly
Year 4	Statewide launch through 28 LWDBs
Year 5	Continued enrollment and evaluation

HB 376 Considerations

HB 376, relating to the regulation of child care providers by the Texas Workforce Commission and local workforce development boards was passed during the 83rd Texas Legislature. The bill, authored by former State Representative, Mark Strama, mandates changes to the Texas Rising Star program, including provision for increasing infant and toddler training, increased reimbursement rates for child care providers caring for subsidized children, the creation of new rules for Texas Rising Star, disseminating information on the quality of child care operations, technical assistance to providers, and a complete review of the Texas Rising Star program.

The Council recognizes that opportunities do not always happen according to a perfect schedule. HB 376 is one of those opportunities, as it presents an opening to increase the quality of child care within the state and it anticipates some of the steps Texas will need to take to implement a full QRIS. In recognition of that, the Council sincerely hopes the Texas Rising Start Program Review Group review this document as well as the other important QRIS documents created by the Council during their review of Texas Rising Star. In addition, the Council has provided the following suggestions in relation to the specific considerations the workgroup is mandated by HB 376 to follow:

Consideration	Council Suggestions
professional development standards for child care directors and employees, including training and annual professional development requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take note of the new Core Competencies for ECE Practitioners and Administrators • Consider incentivizing participation in the new Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System
education and experience requirements for mentors and evaluators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider findings from the Council’s investigation review of mentoring programs, as well as the Council’s publication “Partners in Action.”
early learning and school readiness standards; guidelines for infants and toddlers in child care; research on infant and toddler brain development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference and utilize Texas’ new infant, toddler, and three-year-old early learning guidelines, and the existing pre-kindergarten guidelines for Texas, as well as related collateral materials
requirements regarding staff-to-child ratios and group sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult Council’ QRIS Strategic Plan
grants and rewards to child-care providers that achieve and maintain high levels of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider investments in T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® TEXAS Project in addition to increased subsidies

Table 3. 5-Year Texas QRIS Budget

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total 5-Year Cost	Assumptions
	PLANNING	PILOT	TRANSITION	ONGOING	ONGOING		
Strategic Planning							
Stakeholder engagement meetings/travel	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000	Meetings facilitated by QRIS Project Director; 12 meetings in Austin and 12 meetings throughout the state each year
QRIS Project Director	100,000	100,000	105,000	105,000	110,000	520,000	Staffed by a government employee to oversee entire project
Development of Standards							
Quality baseline data collection and analysis	75,000					75,000	Data needed to support development of standards
Expert consultant to develop standards	100,000	30,000				130,000	Year 1 - development of standards Year 2 - revisions to standards based on pilot evaluations
Literature review of standards	25,000					25,000	
Accountability and Monitoring							
CLASS assessor training		4,500	8,500	17,000	21,000	51,000	\$670 for assessors; \$2,100 for master observers/trainers; \$1,100 travel for each trainee
CLASS assessments		50,000	457,000	884,000	1,013,000	2,404,000	Performed every two years in 50% of classrooms for programs at levels 2, 3, 4, 5; average number of CLASS assessments completed each week by each assessor = 5; annual reliability checks completed through use of video

Table 3. 5-Year Texas QRIS Budget, continued

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total 5-Year Cost	Assumptions
	PLANNING	PILOT	TRANSITION	ONGOING	ONGOING		
QRIS administration	100,000	100,000	203,000	337,500	375,000	1,115,500	Infrastructure needed to support things such as: policy development, coordination of QRIS operations, appeals process, and data analysis and reporting administrative tasks
QRIS app review process		20,000	480,000	720,000	945,000	2,165,000	Salaries of QRIS application reviewers = \$40,000 for Years 2, 3, 4; increase to \$45,000 for Year 5; reviewers will complete 10 applications/week at set schedule during scheduled enrollment periods
Provider Supports and Incentives							
PD scholarships for center practitioners			5,693,000	9,421,000	10,651,000	25,765,000	Scholarships will remain at current level until Year 3, so are not factored into additional cost of a QRIS until Year 3; avg. scholarship amount = \$1,000; between 10-25% of practitioners will receive scholarships
PD scholarships for home practitioners			350,000	434,000	523,810	1,307,810	Scholarships will remain at current level until Year 3, so are not factored into additional cost of a QRIS until Year 3; avg. scholarship amount = \$1,000; between 10-25% of practitioners will receive scholarships
Technical assistance for center programs			5,651,000	9,726,000	11,743,000	27,120,000	Between 80-95% of programs will receive technical assistance; est. \$2,500/year/program

Table 3. 5-Year Texas QRIS Budget, continued

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total 5-Year Cost	Assumptions
	PLANNING	PILOT	TRANSITION	ONGOING	ONGOING		
Technical assistance for home programs			3,821,000	4,928,000	6,353,000	15,102,000	Between 80-95% of programs will receive technical assistance; est. \$2,500/year/program
Online training modules	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	1,250,000	Core competency online modules - annual support and enhancement
Tiered reimbursement			12,000,000	12,000,000	12,000,000	36,000,000	3% increase from current TRS rates across each tier based on est. \$400M total payments/year; number of children in the subsidy program will remain at current level
Consumer Education and Marketing							
Program recruitment/marketing			250,000	250,000	150,000	650,000	Efforts designed to transition and recruit programs - greatest effort will be immediately following pilot; efforts are reduced as the system becomes fully operational and program participation increases
consumer education, marketing					500,000	500,000	Marketing to parents is not recommended until system is fully operational
Data Collection and Evaluation							
QRIS Data System	200,000	250,000	120,000	140,000	160,000	870,000	Data system is developed across Years 1 and 2, by enhancing a currently existing system; Years 2-5 are support and maintenance costs that increase as participation and end users increase

Table 3. 5-Year Texas QRIS Budget, continued

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total 5-Year Cost	Assumptions
	PLANNING	PILOT	TRANSITION	ONGOING	ONGOING		
QRIS hardware (tablets)		80,000	30,000	20,000	10,000	140,000	Tablet cost is \$2,000/user; hardware costs increase as program participation increases and new users are added
Pilot Evaluation		25,000	75,000			100,000	Pilot evaluation will cross over Years 2 and 3
QRIS Validation Study				250,000		250,000	Formative study (process fidelity)
QRIS System Study					350,000	350,000	Summative study (system outcomes)
Total Annual Cost	870,000	929,500	29,513,500	39,502,500	45,174,810		
Total Five-Year Cost						115,990,310	



Texas Early Childhood Path to School Readiness

The Texas Early Learning Council is working towards the goal of improving school readiness in Texas by identifying needs and priority areas in the early care and education system, developing strategies for improvement, and facilitating high-quality outcomes.

Needs

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Data Sharing Across Agencies and Sectors
Unified, Cross-Sector Measures of Program Quality

Data and Quality Rating & Improvement (QRIS) Systems

Priority Areas

Improved ECE Cross-Sector Guidelines and Standards
Enhanced Local Collaborations on School Readiness

Collaborations and Standards

Long-Term and Short-Term Data on the Needs of Young Children and the Capacity of Texas ECE Programs
Parent and Child-Focused ECE System
Increased Access to High Quality Programs Among Underrepresented Families

Parental Outreach and Communications

Cross-Sector ECE Professional Development System
Improved Recruitment and Retention of Highly Effective ECE Professionals
Professional Development and Education Pathways for all ECE Professionals

Workforce and Professional Development

Strategies

Develop Recommendations for an Integrated ECE Information Exchange System
Develop Recommendations for a Statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Research and Implement a Web-Based, Cross-Sector Standards Comparison Tool for All Stakeholders
Develop and Implement Voluntary Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines
Create a Professional Mentoring and Coaching Strategies Toolkit for Programs
Pilot a Program for Quality Improvement in Home-Based Child Care in English and Spanish
Create a new, online child developmental screening tool for families, known as Act Early Texas!

Conduct a Comprehensive, Statewide ECE Needs Assessment
Texas Community Campaign for School Readiness (Local ECE Needs Assessments and Planning)
Implement a Statewide Community Awareness and Public Relations Campaign for School Readiness

Develop an ECE Professional Development System, with:
New Core Competencies with Trainings for All ECE Professionals
Career Lattice for All ECE Professionals
Compensation Study of All ECE Professionals
Evaluate the Capacity and the Effectiveness of Higher Education to Meet the Needs of the ECE Workforce
Support Scholarship and Financial Aid Opportunities for Texas ECE Professionals through T.E.A.C.H.® Texas
Assess and Develop Model Higher Education Articulation Agreements

Outcomes

Data-Driven Decisions for Policymakers, Providers, and Parents

Improved Cross-Sector Quality, Standards, and Collaborations

Identify Critical State and Local Needs and Engage in Targeted Outreach

Highly Qualified and Prepared Workforce

Goal

Improved School Readiness



Texas Quality Rating and Improvement System Recommendations

Texas Early Learning Council
September 2013

www.earlylearningtexas.org

**HB 376 Texas Rising Star Workgroup
Work Sessions**

Updated 11/7/2013

Date	Time	Hours	Type	Type	Objective
Monday, September 16, 2013	3:00 pm to 5:00 pm	2	Conf Call	Work Session	Initial Meeting
Wednesday, September 25, 2013	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	2	Conf Call	Work Session	~TRS Structure ~Determine Subcommittee Leads
Wednesday, October 09, 2013	9:00 am to 4:00 pm	All Day	In Person Austin TX	Public Meeting	/First Priority Action Items ~Opportunity for Public Comment
Thursday, November 07, 2013	1:00 pm to 4:00 pm	3	In Person/ Conf Call	Work Session	Sub Committee Reports
Wednesday, November 20, 2013	11:00 am to 1:00 pm	3	In Person/ Conf Call	Work Session	Discussion on Assessments
Thursday, December 19, 2013	1:00 pm to 4:00 pm	3	In Person/ Conf Call	Work Session	Sub Committee Reports Invite SubCommittees
Friday, January 24, 2014	9:00 am to 12:00 pm	3	In Person/ Conf Call	Work Session	Sub Committee Reports Invite SubCommittees
Thursday, February 20, 2014	1:00 pm to 4:00 pm	3	In Person/ Conf Call	Work Session	Sub Committee Reports Invite SubCommittees
Thursday, March 06, 2014	12:30 pm to 4:30 pm	Half Day	In Person Austin TX	Public Meeting	~ Discuss draft recommendations ~ Opportunity for Public comment
Thursday, April 10, 2014	1:00 pm to 4:00 pm	3	In Person/ Conf Call	Work Session	Sub Committee Reports Invite SubCommittees
Thursday, April 17, 2014	1:00 pm to 4:00 pm	3	In Person/ Conf Call	Work Session	Sub Committee Reports Invite SubCommittees

Updated 11/7/2013

Texas QRIS Recommendations

QRIS Scope Recommendations

The QRIS Scope Recommendations detail the Council's recommendations for the scope and reach of a Texas QRIS.

Scope Recommendation #1: Begin with a QRIS system mandated for the child care sector.

Scope Recommendation #2: The QRIS should be a five tiered system.

Scope Recommendation #3: The QRIS should be under the auspices of the Texas Workforce Commission.

Scope Recommendation #4: The QRIS should be a decentralized system.

Scope Recommendation #5: The QRIS should serve as an expansion of Texas Rising Star.

Scope Recommendation #6: Funding for the QRIS should be provided.

Scope Recommendation #7: A mechanism for private financing of the QRIS should be created.

QRIS Functionality Recommendations

The QRIS Functionality Recommendations detail the recommendations for how the Texas QRIS will drive improved quality in early childhood programs and reach the Council's desired goal for the system to improve child outcomes in Texas.

Functionality Recommendation #1: Include "structural" and "process" quality measures in the QRIS.

Functionality Recommendation #2: Select reliable and valid process measures for all age groups and train staff on the tools.

Functionality Recommendation #3: Design and administer quality improvement efforts locally.

Functionality Recommendation #4: Provide technical assistance in a two tiered fashion.

Functionality Recommendation #5: Incentivize success in the QRIS.

Technical Recommendations

The Technical Recommendations outline the Council's recommendations for the system's technical aspects, including data capture, enrollment, and technical assistance policies and procedures. **Technical**

Recommendation #1: Employ a new or adapted data system to manage QRIS data, classroom progress, and other administrative needs.

Technical Recommendation #2: Implement a year-round open enrollment system.

Technical Recommendation #3: Provide technical assistance locally, through contracts with skilled organizations.

Technical Recommendation #4: Develop procedures and policies to ensure accountability in the QRIS.

Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendations

The Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendations detail the Council's recommendations for a pilot study and regular evaluation of the Texas QRIS.

Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendation #1: Conduct a pilot study.

Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendation #2: Conduct a regional system evaluation every five years.

Quality Criteria Recommendations

The Quality Criteria Recommendations outline the recommendations for the selection of quality criteria measures that will be used to evaluate and rate programs enrolled in the Texas QRIS.

Quality Criteria Recommendation #1: Develop and implement a quality criteria selection process.

Quality Criteria Recommendation #2: Provide time and discussion in the development of quality criteria.

QRIS Promotion Recommendations

The QRIS Promotion Recommendations detail the Council's recommendations for marketing and promotion of the system to parents and early childhood programs in Texas.

QRIS Promotion Recommendation #1: Designate funding for communication and promotion.

QRIS Promotion Recommendation #2: Engage providers locally on QRIS.

QRIS Promotion Recommendation #3: Utilize web-based communications.

Budget and Timeline Recommendations

The Budget and Timeline Recommendations outline the recommendations for a five-year implementation timeline and five-year budget.

Budget and Timeline Recommendation #1: Provide adequate funding.

Budget and Timeline Recommendation #2: Follow a 5 year development and launch plan.