



Members in Attendance

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
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
Howard Morrison	- Texas Education Agency

Members not in Attendance

Dr. Elaine Zweig	- Collin County Community College
Dr. John Gasko	- Texas Early Learning Council, QRIS Subcommittee
Pattie Herbert	- Infants 123

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
Kimberly Berry	- Governmental Relations
Shyam Popat	- Senator Zaffirini Staff

Meeting Summary

Welcome, Roll-Call and Overview of the Agenda

Approval of November 7, 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.

Final Review of Recommended Qualifications for Mentors and Evaluators

- Minimum work experience – the workgroup confirms for consistency, to use the same language for Associate’s Degree for listing the related fields.



Doug clarified that the workgroup is stating four years of minimum classroom experience is required, in addition to education.

Michele raised a question if the requirement for a Bachelors plus four years of classroom experience was reasonable. She asked if the classroom experience could be broadened to other areas, or reduced to fewer years to avoid reducing the pool of candidates.

Rebecca reported it has been her experience for assessors to have education with no classroom experience make observations or suggestions without having knowledge about practical application.

Other thoughts:

Michele suggests making experience category a bit broader. The group indicated other areas would be acceptable, such as child care experience, Pre-k, headstart, and elementary (kindergarten-third grade). After further discussion, recognizing the value of a balance of education and experience in a relevant setting, the group also decided reducing the experience requirement to one year for candidates possessing a bachelor's degree.

Overview of Early Learning Council Recommendations

Reagan led the workgroup through a point by point review of the Early Learning Council recommendations

QRIS Scope recommendations:

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

This is the current approach.

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

We do not have legislative authority currently for a 5-star system. A fifth star point system was suggested. The group determined that at this time, 4-stars are appropriate.

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

This is currently the case.

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

This is the current structure.

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

This is the current approach.

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

HB 376 set-aside 2% of each Board's allocation to be used for quality activities and required TWC to fund TRS staff at the Board. Additionally, HB 376 requires increased tiered reimbursement rates for TRS providers.

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

Currently, there is no mechanism for this type of financing.

Functionality Recommendations:

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

The workgroup reached consensus on this recommendation at the last meeting.



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

This is an aspect all subcommittees and subgroups are aiming to be mindful of in their work.

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

This is current practice.

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

This issue was discussed at the last workgroup meeting. The workgroup can take this into consideration moving forward. The Board representative commented that this strategy seems doable.

Functionality Recommendation # 5: Incentivize success in the QRIS.

Rate implementation as a result of HB 376 has been delayed to consider recommendations, and to allow time to implement changes. Rate increase will be effective September 2015.

The workgroup will continue the discussion of how to designate ratings for nationally accredited facilities, as well as military.

Technical Recommendations:

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

There is currently no funding available for such a system, though having a state-wide system to collect data would be advantageous. Perhaps a template could be created and distributed locally so data could be collected at the local level. The workgroup could recommend seeking future funding for a more advanced data collection system, state-wide.

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

This is already in place.

Other discussion/consideration:

How many classrooms should be observed? ELC recommendation is 33%.

Consider mandating at least one classroom in each age-range visited, or 50% of all classrooms, etc. or raising the percentage of observations with the star level. Some group members expressed concern that certain age groups would not be visited, therefore, they suggested 50% or one per age group (whichever is the minimum) discussion to continue.

Consider a cursory, short form visit for all classrooms, and then a longer, in-depth observation for a sample percentage of classrooms.

How does the assessor determine which classrooms to evaluate?

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

There is no mandate for Boards to contract with nonprofits.

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

There is some concern among the workgroup that 3 years between recertification is too long. Visits may not be consistent across the state. Issue of noncompliance with licensing raised and suggested that licensing deficiencies should be tied to more frequent visits.



ELC recommends random visits.

Recommend changing policy to an established statewide frequency for consistency.

Systems Evaluation and Piloting Recommendations:

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

HB 376 did not include pilot study.

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

HB 376 did not include funding for this level of analysis. A strategy for incorporating an outcome analysis for TRS will be part of the workgroup's recommendation.

Quality Criteria Recommendations:

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.

Regarding both quality criteria recommendations, HB 376 provided a good legislative framework for broad participation, further enhanced by participation on subcommittees by additional stakeholders. Each subcommittee is charged with making recommendations to the workgroup.

QRIS Promotion Recommendations:

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

There is no funding in HB 376 for promotion activities; however, there is the option to utilize the TWC TRS website to distribute information and to serve as a resource.

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

It will be necessary to rely on local workforce Boards for this piece. It will be important not to oversell the resources available, and set a reasonable expectation for a manageable workload. It may be necessary to maintain a TRS waitlist for providers at some point.

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

In the recommendations, the TRS website is an important key. It may be valuable to link to other resources as well to share other avenues for potentially waitlisted providers, such as DFPS, TEA, and the United Way.

Budget and Timeline Recommendations:

Budget and Timeline Recommendation #1: Provide adequate funding.

This item is on the list for further discussion.

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

The Early Learning Council's preferred assessment tool is CLASS. There is nothing in the ELC recommendation for birth to 15 months.

Discussion on Assessments

Ms. Miller reviewed the summary and chart regarding facility and child assessments. This document was designed for the workgroup to consider, have discussion, and provide input.



Process for Application- Discussion Points:

1. Should Applicants be required to attend an orientation (prior to entry into TRS)

Subcommittee 1 (Director/Staff Qualifications), has held discussions and determined either attending an orientation, or viewing a video, should be a requirement during application for directors. This would be entry point, prior to obtaining 2-star designation.

The Parent Involvement group have discussed and agree it would be helpful to have an orientation to inform providers about what they are signing up for. Other members indicate this would be a positive thing.

The workgroup is in favor of introducing the orientation component as a recommendation.

2. Should applicants be required to complete a TRS self-assessment tool as part of the application process?

Several members comment that this is a good and inexpensive option being discussed by various subcommittees. Additional questions regarding how often assessments and reassessments should be conducted will be explored on December 19, after additional information is compiled from Board's and distributed.

3. Should there be a maximum number of DFPS deficiencies that would preclude application for TRS?
4. Should certain licensing deficiencies preclude a provider from application for TRS?

Process for Facility Assessment-Discussion Points:

1. How often should programs be assessed/reassessed?
2. How often should programs be monitored (for TRS criteria and/or TRS required licensing requirements)?
3. Should the assessment/monitoring process include provider self-reports?
4. What procedures should be considered for self-reports?
5. How classrooms are assessed at each site?
6. What are norms for inter-rater reliability?
7. Should random visits be used as a part of the process?
8. Should penalties exist for programs not maintaining the star level?
9. How should the assessment tools be selected or approved?

For December 19 meeting, feedback from the members will help guide discussion, input is due December 6.

Within subcommittee discussions, what has been recommended related to child assessments?



The child – caregiver subcommittee has looked at the various tools to identify good predictors of quality. They have not looked at individual measures to see which is better than the others at this point. Additionally, the subcommittee didn't discuss adopting a specific tool; rather, they are looking at individual measures within the individual tools and how they would fit in the level. The subcommittee is sensitive to copy right issues. Curriculum/Physical and Social Activities subcommittee has a similar approach.

Ms. Miller stated that cost is a concern, and she is glad to hear that there are tools available at no cost. TWC staff is available to assist with defining measures, if subcommittees need assistance.

Howard requested clarification if the aim is to create a master list, rather than one tool over another tool.

Ms. Miller stated that the goal is a cross-reference of how the tools measure and monitor, so the workgroup wouldn't be purchasing or electing one, but using as a resource to learn what they have to offer in the creation of TRS.

Child assessments:

TRS guidelines do not include this, nor do ELC recommendations; however, this issue was raised at the Public Comment meeting. The workgroup understands there are different costs associated, and a one-size all approach is not preferred. One proposal is to offer a menu of approved tools. The next question then becomes, what will be the Approval process?

A workgroup member asked what role TSR plays in this process. Will this overlap with TRS? They were recently awarded a grant- TEA is instructed to adopt multidomain assessment tools – measure kindergarten readiness.

Mr. Morrison (TEA) has reviewed provisions of the grant legislation. It does not define multidimensional assessment – TEA is working on this currently.

Mary Clare points out Head Start and NAEYC use child assessment extensively. These assessments demonstrate growth and how the teacher was intentional in achieving goals. She suggests having this as an emerging practice, for the highest tier, add as criteria in an unfunded 5th- star) or add this in that very top level. The system would give points for highly educated staff. (Use of portfolios, for CDAs)

Subcommittee Reports: Work Scope, Work Plan, Parking Lot

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

Doug and Sandra provided the report, on behalf of Elaine.

The subcommittee has divided into four subgroups to accomplish the work, they are:



- Director Qualifications
- Staff Training
- Caregiver Qualifications
- Staff Orientation

Director Qualifications:

Recommendations include:

- Require minimum age of 21 years
- Require training course (Examples: Entry level – introductory course Part 1, Level 2 and 3 – Director Certification course Part 2, embed Taking Charge of Change in courses)

Other items discussed:

- Verification of most measures would be structural
- Stressed that lower levels would receive quality improvement and higher TRS levels would receive higher enhanced reimbursement rates.
- Stressed that they do not want to put the education level out of reach for most providers.

Outstanding Issues/Questions:

- Would current providers be grandfathered into the new system?
We don't want to create a new certification system where most providers would not be eligible.
This will be discussed at 12.19.13 meeting

Staff training:

Recommendations include:

- Limiting the number of self-study training hours (for homes); currently all 36 hours can be self-study.
This should be reduced to 12 hours
- Specifying the training topics
- Specifying that caregivers are obtaining training hours in the age range of care they are providing.
(Ex- Infant teachers are obtaining training hours in toddler areas. The group is interested in the work the curriculum group is doing.)

Caregiver qualifications:

Recommendations include:

- Raising the Staff's educational qualifications to 50% of the full time staff (from the current (30%)
- Amending Option B to include 12 semester hours "successfully" completed
- Amending number of years of experience working with children increase to 2 years (from 1 year)
- Providing clarity on how this Option D measures are met. (discussed improving/clarifying "supervision" related to Mentoring/coaching to require meeting to discuss lesson plan specified number of hours to increase accountability)



- Limiting the number of self-study training hours to 6 (for homes); currently all 36 hours can be self – study
- Adding in-person orientation hours
- Adding specific staff orientation subject areas

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

The subcommittee has divided into three subgroups to accomplish the work, they are:

- Systems
- Ratios/Group Size
- Child/Caregiver Interaction Measures

Systems Group:

Discussions included:

- Transitioning as many centers into 2-star as possible, while also making a distinction in this level: not just making them “good, licensed centers”.
- Making further distinction between 3-star and 4-star, additional meaning between each level.

Ratios/Group size:

Discussions included:

- Going forward and not backwards by making standards easier, or less stringent.
- Needing to define now how to go forward, specifically want to see improvement in infant and toddler.

Child/Caregiver Interaction Measures:

Discussions included:

- Reviewing and discussing the many instruments.
- Agreeing that the group likes ELC’s core competencies “beginner, intermediate, advanced.” and progression

Curriculum/Physical and Social Activities – Dr. John Gasko

Reagan provided the report on behalf of Dr. Gasko.

Curriculum /Activities:

This subgroup is revising multiple pieces of guidelines and looking at different requirements for age groups. Howards serving on the subgroup and shares the group is examining and adding from infant toddler guidelines domains to include written curriculum plan, physical, health , social, emotional, cognitive, language, etc.

Indoor outdoor environment:

Michele provided the report. The group is sticking to physical environment, arrangement, and equipment, rather than materials, etc.



Health and Nutrition:

Reagan provided an update. The group has completed proposed measures, as well as a template containing scores for either “structural” or “process” for each criteria. The subgroup is now working on defining how each process will be scored, 0-3. Reagan will share this template with the rest of the group, for consideration in their subcommittee work.

A question came up in the subgroup’s work of how to score ‘not met’ versus ‘not observed’ or ‘not applicable’. What if a center does not serve all age groups? Inter-rater reliability is needed across the state.

Parent Involvement and Education – Pat Smith

Pat Smith reports her subcommittee is having a meeting later this afternoon. They have not meet since the November 7th report. They have not yet broken into subgroups, but they may opt to divide their work this way.

Reagan reminds the workgroup the initial timeline goal was to have half of the subcommittee work and recommendations completed by the December 19th meeting. Reagan acknowledged the heavy workload and everyone’s busy schedules and offered TWC staff as a resource to assist with drafting work for subcommittees. Reagan states for the December 19 meeting, subcommittees should have written documents ready to present with as much filled in as possible.

The group confirms that the key is to recommend measures above licensing standards. Michele offers to review subcommittee documents to identify any duplication of measures that are already covered in licensing.

Discussion on Next Meetings (Attachment 8)

- **December 19** - TRS Workgroup Session (in person at **TEA** or via conference call)
On the agenda:
 - Grandfathering and/or assessing National Accreditation and Military Operations
 - Child Care Licensing Impact on TRS
- **January 24** - TRS Workgroup Session (in person at TWC or via conference call)
The meeting was extended to three hours.
- **March 6** - Public meeting, in person
The meeting is scheduled for 12:30-4:30.

(Note: Subcommittee participants will be invited to attend the December 19th meeting).

Upcoming Agenda Items:
Assessor separate from Mentors/TA

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:10 pm.