

Early Learning Updates

October 2013



Early Childhood Education Matters

- Every dollar invested in prekindergarten programs produces savings to taxpayers of approximately \$7 through reduction of remediation, special education, welfare and criminal justice services.*
- These investments have the greatest impacts on children from disadvantaged family backgrounds.



Belfield, Clive R. (2004) *Early Education: How Important Are the Cost Savings to the School System Research Briefing*. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University

Regents Support of Early Childhood Education

- Expanding access to high-quality early learning opportunities has been a key priority of the Board.
- In 2013, the Regents State Aid proposal recommended dedicating \$75 million to provide high quality full-day programming for some of New York's most at-risk students.
 - The enacted budget included \$25 million for new pre-kindergarten full- and half-day seats.
- Our 2010 Race to the Top application was one of the few that responded to the Early Learning Priority.
 - The proposal included a \$4 million investment to implement QUALITYstarsNY in the programs feeding into the state's lowest performing schools.

Snapshot of New York's Prekindergarten Programs

- **Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) (\$384.7 million)**
 - 443 school districts providing services to approximately 103,400 students.
 - 80% of students served reside in high-need districts
- **Full-day and Expanded Half-Day Pre-Kindergarten (\$25 million)**
 - Competitive grant to create new full-day placements and expand half-day seats
- **Preschool Special Education (\$1.3 billion)**
 - Services provided by approximately 500 providers to 80,000 preschool students with disabilities.

Other Early Learning Settings

- **Department of Health**
 - **Early Intervention (ages 0-3)**
 - **Early Head Start (ages 0-3)**
 - **Head Start (ages 3-5)**
- **Office of Children and Family Services**
 - **Child Care (ages 0-12)**



Early Learning Challenge - Primer

- In 2011, the US Departments of Education and Health and Human Services launched the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (ELC) to provide states an opportunity to focus deeply on birth through age five early learning and development programs and close achievement gaps by supporting state efforts to build stronger services and programs for young children and their families.
 - New York participated in the state's submission, which was lead by OCFS.
- In August 2013, a new round of the ELC was launched, and the Department once again collaborated with OCFS and DOH on the development of the state's application.



Key Components of the ELC

The state's ELC application was organized around five key areas:

- **(A) Successful State Systems:** to build on the State's existing strengths and to ambitiously move forward the State's early learning and development agenda;
- **(B) High-Quality, Accountable Programs:** to create a common tiered quality rating and improvement system that is used across the state to evaluate and improve program performance;
- **(C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes:** to develop common standards within the state;
- **(D) A Great Early Childhood Workforce:** to provide professional development and career advancement opportunities; and
- **(E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress:** to inform early learning instruction and services to identify strengths and weaknesses.

QUALITYstarsNY

- **QUALITYstarsNY is the state's tiered quality rating and improvement system.**
- **In addition to QUALITYstarsNY being tested in over 200 early care and education programs, SED invested \$4 million of Race to the Top funds to implement it in the lowest-performing school districts throughout NYS.**
- **Programs are evaluated using an environmental rating scale, and resources are made available to support continuous improvement.**
- **The ELC application proposes to expand QUALITYstarsNY by recruiting over 2,000 programs serving children with high needs in a 4-year period and to provide targeted supports in a regional structure to improve program quality.**

Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core

- **As QUALITYstarsNY is rolled out, programs will receive points as they implement curriculum that addresses all of the developmental domains and aligns with the Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core.**
- **Web-based applications and online supports will be created to assist administrators, teachers, and family child care providers to implement instruction aligned to the Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core.**
- **A new train-the-trainer module will be designed to educate and build the capacity of trainers and higher education faculty on the content and intended use of the Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core.**

Kindergarten Readiness

- Regulations currently require the screening of all new entrants to our schools to determine which students are possibly gifted, have or are suspected of having a disability, and/or are English proficient.
- The application proposes to establish an Advisory Council to provide advice to the Board on the development of a tool to take an inventory of a child's skills at kindergarten entry.
- Such a process will not require a test or assessment in the traditional sense, but rather a tool to help teachers understand a student's skills to better understand gaps in knowledge and where to focus instruction and support.

Early Learning Inventory of Skills (ELIS)

- The goal of ELIS will be to establish an individual developmental baseline for each student.
- This will allow educators, parents, and policymakers to more fully understand the level of skills, abilities and knowledge possessed by children at the time of kindergarten entry.
- It will not be used by administrators or parents to prevent children from being admitted to Kindergarten.

Development of ELIS

(contingent upon an ELCG award to New York)

- The Board of Regents voted during its September 2013 meeting to develop a tool that will meet these requirements and be implemented by the 2016-2017 school year.
- The Regents will appoint an Advisory Council composed of educators, stakeholders and providers to support the development and implementation of ELIS.
- The Regents have a rich history of developing age-appropriate assessment tools.
- The development of ELIS will build off of this tradition and expertise.

Next Steps

- **The state's application was submitted on October 16.**
- **Awards are expected to be announced in December 2013.**