



What Does It Take: A Convening of State Leaders to Identify Common Barriers and Craft Effective Solutions to Expanding Preschool
Summary of State Needs Related to Expanding Public Preschool
September 10, 2019

Prior to our September convening, state teams were invited to complete a survey about preschool expansion and participate in a planning phone call with the CEELO staff. The following identifies some of the existing and anticipated barriers, organized by common themes.

State Administration and Capacity

- Decreased funding over the years
- Not enough state capacity for monitoring
- New state governance structure, impact is not known
- Limited funding to support state office

Funding

- Not enough money!
- Political will and competing priorities in the legislature
- Annual appropriations
- Focused only on increasing number of children attending pre-K, not other priorities such as: addressing/improving quality; other implementation needs (e.g. transportation); cost of living increases; moving from part-day to full-day
- Multiple funding streams causes confusion/possible gaps (having several pre-K funding streams; several ECE funding streams, e.g. SPED preschool and pre-K)
- Increasing rates & who makes the decision on how much \$ is needed for state administrative rates, per child slot rates, contract amounts with pre-K grantees
- Reimbursement policies based on attendance
- Funding levels and funding needs vary by pre-K setting
- Lack of start-up funds
- Limited support for blending/braiding funds

Workforce

- Achieving salary parity and comparable benefits (pre-K with K-3 teachers; pre-K teachers employed by different settings); livable wages
- BA required for only some pre-K teachers based on setting
- Lack of alternative certification/licensure pathways
- Lots of pre-K teacher turnover
- Scholarships available for obtaining credentials/degrees, however, no salary increase if you get a BA/credential
- Lack of diversity in pre-K teaching staff
- Misalignment with higher ed (teacher prep) and pre-K program needs
- Overall workforce shortages

Facilities

- Decrease in availability of public school facilities (major impact due to new kindergarten policies (full-day K) and 3rd grade reading laws (children spending 2 years in K)
- Public schools do not meet minimum requirements for pre-K/older public schools in need of renovation
- Understanding of what is needed in terms of facility space, but not clear on what is currently available
- Lack of dedicated funds for new construction
- Geographical differences (urban vs. rural availability)

Operating a Mixed Delivery System (public school, private center, Head Start)

- Collaboration is encouraged, but guidance on how to do it is vague and there is a lack of coordination by state
- Quality currently varies across the settings
- QRIS system: different QRIS/quality expectations by setting OR same QRIS system for all settings, but public schools can't meet requirements
- School leaders/principals don't have ECE experience/knowledge
- Collaborating/Partnering with Head Start
 - Aligning pre-K standards with the HS Performance Standards
 - Head Start does not want to receive state pre-K grant
 - Changing HS grantees through federal re-competition
 - Challenges determining level of state funding

Finally, in order to be successful at implementing an expanded preschool program, state and local systems that support the following policies and practices need to be clarified and/or revised:

- Coordinated enrollment of pre-K students
- Tuition collection mechanisms
- Transportation (especially rural settings)
- Settings with mixed-age classrooms (3s and 4s)
- Facility/child care licensing
- Transition of children from pre-K to kindergarten
- Alignment of curriculum, assessment, teacher PD (pre-K into K and beyond)

This meeting is sponsored by the [Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes](#). One of 22 Comprehensive Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) is designed to strengthen the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) to lead sustained improvements in early learning opportunities and outcomes. CEELO will sunset on September 30, 2019; however our work will be sustained by the collaborating partners. The Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO) is a partnership of the following organizations:

