



DC COMMISSION ON EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER COMPENSATION

Pursuant to the Pre-K Clarification and Acceleration Emergency Act of 2010, Bill 18-605, the University of the District of Columbia convened the DC Commission on Early Childhood Teacher Compensation for the purpose of developing a compensation strategy that will enable the District of Columbia to recruit and maintain a well-qualified, community-based early childhood workforce, to serve children birth to age five. The 13-member Commission is composed of leaders from the early childhood industry, business, philanthropy, and civic organizations, and met over a seven-month period to develop its recommendations. The Commission is pleased to present these recommendations to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education. The report outlines a systemic framework that provides financial incentives for those individuals who are striving to meet the legislatively-mandated degree requirements for teachers and assistant teachers of young children.

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Commission Charge

Recognizing the significant contributions that high-quality early care and education programs contribute to the District's efforts around school reform, workforce development and the city's overall economic vitality, the Council of the District of Columbia enacted the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008. Championed by former Council Chair and current Mayor Vincent C Gray, the legislation established voluntary, universal pre-k for all District three and four-year-olds. This ground breaking, historic legislation established high-quality program standards that all programs, regardless of auspices, are required to meet by 2014. Chief among these requirements is the mandate that all District teachers, of three and four year olds, earn a bachelor's degree and all assistant teachers earn an associate of arts degree. The funding provision of the legislation provides for funding at a rate equal to the District's Uniform Per Student Funding Formula once a program meets the degree requirements.

“The Commission is charged with addressing how to recruit and retain a highly-qualified, highly-effective teacher workforce for the District of Columbia’s community-based early childhood sector.”

In an effort to align the District's early childhood compensation and benefits policy with the new degree requirements set forth in the 2008 law, the Council enacted the Pre-K Clarification and Acceleration Emergency Act of 2010. This supplemental legislation directed the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) to develop a compensation plan for community-based pre-k teachers and submit it to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). In 2011, Mayor Gray announced a new policy direction called Early Success, designed to expand and improve the quality of infant/toddler care in the District of Columbia including issues related to workforce development. The Early Success workforce component was included in the Commission's deliberations and is reflected in this report.

This report contains the Commission's strategic recommendations and should serve as an overall framework for improving the quality and quantity of District teachers working with children from birth through school entry.

Early Childhood Teacher Compensation: A National Crisis

High-quality early education is fundamental to ensuring children’s readiness to learn and to thrive in school and in life. Over thirty years of research and analysis demonstrates that children in high-quality early childhood programs are more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, and earn more income. They are also less likely to engage in criminal activity, repeat grades or be referred to special education as compared to children who have not had the benefit of high-quality early education programs.

From this substantial body of research, there is also acknowledgement that a strong relationship exists between an early childhood teacher’s educational preparation, experience, and compensation and their effectiveness in the classroom.ⁱ

However, despite this body of evidence, many teachers and assistant teachers, in community-based programs, remain inadequately prepared, poorly paid, and lack incentives for professional growth and development. In 2012, the General Accounting Office released a report revealing that 77 percent of American early childhood teachers earned less than \$22,000 a year, which is the federal poverty line for a family of four.ⁱⁱ Teachers in the DC region fare slightly better but remain grossly underpaid at \$28,631 – roughly 60 percent of the starting salary for a District of Columbia Public School teacher with similar credentials.ⁱⁱⁱ As a result of these wages, childcare centers often experience high turnover rates, further undermining the quality of care and education.

As a result of the national failure to provide all young children with a stable workforce of highly-qualified, highly-effective and highly-compensated teachers, one-fifth to one-half of US children are not fully prepared to learn and to thrive when they enter school.



77%

Of American early childhood teachers earn \$22,000 or less – just below the federal poverty line for a family of four.





A number of states that are leaders in the early education reform movement have seized the mantle in reversing these shameful statistics through compensation initiatives designed to improve the quality of the early childhood educational workforce. In Massachusetts, a commission of business, civic, and political leaders recommended a combination of modest salary increases linked to credentials, an earned income tax credit, and a loan forgiveness program for teachers wishing to improve their skills. In Oklahoma, a state that provides pre-k to all four-year-olds, the Department of Human Services launched a program called Reward Oklahoma to provide education-based salary supplements to teachers, directors, and family child care practitioners.^{iv}

In the District of Columbia's continuing role as a leader in early childhood systems-building, it is imperative that the District join the twenty-two national, state and local compensation initiatives that are currently underway. This can be accomplished through a systematic approach that directly rewards teachers for relevant education, experience and performance.

Vision 2014: A Highly-Qualified, Highly-Effective, Highly-Compensated Teacher In Every Classroom

The Pre-K Acts of 2008 and 2010 propose a conceptual framework for the development of a high-quality early childhood education system that holds all partners---parents, teachers, program administrators, and government leaders accountable for the only results that matter---children who are prepared to succeed in school and in life.

As a critical building block in this effort, the Pre-K Acts further mandate the development of a system of teacher preparation, professional development and on-going support to ensure every early childhood teacher is highly-qualified, highly-effective, and highly-compensated. Based upon labor market trend surveys and the latest empirical research in early education teacher compensation, the Commission envisions a workforce system that integrates qualifications, effectiveness, and compensation. As seen in the figure on the next page, such an approach constitutes one of the most comprehensive, forward thinking early childhood education workforce systems in the nation.

HIGHLY-QUALIFIED

By 2014, the Pre-K Act of 2008 requires that all lead teachers will hold a bachelor’s degree and all assistant teachers will hold an associate’s degree. Research has shown that specially trained and credentialed early childhood educators provide



effective early learning experiences for children.^v Historically, teachers of young children, in the community-based sector were required to meet minimal professional standards that often resulted in minimal to custodial care for young children. The new early childhood reform movement with its focus on children's readiness for school raises the bar regarding the degree and credential requirements for all teachers working in all sectors

HIGHLY-EFFECTIVE

Taking a page from the K-12 school reform movement that requires teachers to meet threshold credentials and degree requirements, the Commission is raising the bar by calling for a data-driven approach that assesses teacher effectiveness beyond degree attainment. The Commission would encourage OSSE to work with the multiple training organizations and the DC Early Childhood Higher Education Collaborative to develop systems that support and measure teacher effectiveness. This would include a process for on-going technical assistance and professional development that ensures that teachers continuously improve the quality of instruction and child outcomes.

HIGHLY-COMPENSATED

Publicly funded early childhood programs should offer competitive salaries designed to recruit and maintain the most well qualified, effective workforce. Currently, the District's workforce spans three unique sectors – DC Public Schools, DC Public charter schools, and community-based programs. Both the DC Public Schools and DC Public Charter Schools are funded through a Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF), and both sectors are able to offer competitive wages accordingly. To ensure the community-based sector is able to offer the same competitive salaries, the Pre-k Act of 2008 requires OSSE to fund all pre-k programs that meet quality standards, including teacher degree requirements, at a rate equivalent to the UPSFF. The Commission believes all early education programs should receive funding necessary to recruit and retain a qualified, effective staff of teachers.

Strategic Recommendations

Over a seven-month period, Commission members reviewed prevailing wages and benefits for public school systems in the metropolitan Washington area and high-performing early education programs in the private and public sectors; consulted with nationally-recognized experts on early childhood systems-building; participated in a webinar provided by a national wage and compensation consulting firm; and received technical assistance from local education finance experts.

This information gathering process and due diligence groundwork provided the Commission with the ability to benchmark its salary schedule recommendations within the range of “best practices” in both the public and private sectors. Within this context, the Commission recommends that OSSE adopt a comprehensive approach to teacher compensation that includes the following strategies:

✓ **ACHIEVE PARITY WITH DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The form and function of the salary schedules, within the compensation strategy, approximates the base salary schedule for the District of Columbia Public Schools in that it rewards both experience and additional educational attainment.

✓ **AUTHORIZE IMMEDIATE SALARY INCREASES FOR CURRENT, QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMS.**

Teachers should be eligible for enhanced salary compensation once they meet the legislatively-mandated degree requirements. Current teachers, who already meet these requirements and teach in high-quality classrooms as defined by the legislation, should be eligible immediately.

✓ **EMPHASIZE PROFESSIONAL MASTERY IN THE INITIAL YEARS OF AN EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER’S CAREER.**

The Commission recommends that OSSE weigh educational attainment and professional development over experience in the initial years of a teacher’s career. These initial years are formative for a new teacher and constitute a ‘make or break’ moment for this critical part of the workforce. Teachers remain eligible for increased compensation as a result of additional educational attainment but only begin to accrue the benefits of experience after they have successfully taught in classrooms for three years. At the start of year four,

teachers will receive a ten percent increase in salary and be eligible for three percent automatic increases in subsequent years.

In part, this approach is inspired by both the Defense Department's system, which rewards teachers for completing training with increased compensation, and the Commission's desire to incentivize teachers to improve their own performance. Such a schedule will also address the chronically low rate of retention (8 months to two years) that plagues the community-based sector.

✓ ENCOURAGE CONTINUED EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND FOSTER CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

The Commission structured levels of education attainment in such a way as to incentivize lead teachers to enhance their skills by earning a Master's degree and incentivize assistant teachers to eventually obtain the credentials necessary to become lead teachers.

✓ ENSURE A PATHWAY TOWARD STATE CERTIFICATION.

The Commission recommends that OSSE create an alternate pathway for individuals wishing to pursue state teacher certification and that this pathway's compensation schedule mirror that of DC Public Schools.

✓ ESTABLISH DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHERS OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS AND LINK REQUIREMENTS TO SALARY INCREASES.

Given the emerging focus on the quality of infant/toddler care and education, the Commission is recommending new degree and credential requirements, and a compensation schedule for infant/toddler teachers. The Commission recommends that infant/toddler head teachers earn an Associate's of Arts degree with a concentration in infant/toddler development and that assistant teachers hold a Child Development Associate credential with an infant/toddler endorsement. The Commission further recommends that OSSE develop a timeline for the implementation of the infant/toddler degree and credential requirements as well as the salary schedule recommended listed in Appendix Two.

Sustainability and Implementation

In releasing these recommendations, the Commission joins a number of states that are working to attract and retain an effective, qualified workforce. The Commission proposes a pathway for funding these compensation strategies that align with the legislative intent of the Pre-K Acts of 2008 and 2010.

✓ IMPLEMENT 'PARITY' MANDATE WITHIN PRE-K ACT

Under the provisions of the Pre-K Act, OSSE is required to fund community-based programs that meet high-quality standards at a rate equivalent to the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula. The mandate further requires OSSE to first utilize all existing federal and local funding streams primarily the Child Care Development Block Grant and Head Start funding and local subsidy dollars. Effectively, this allows OSSE the flexibility to redirect existing funding to support an infant/toddler quality improvement and expansion initiative. These provisions were intended to sustain quality and ensure equity across all sectors.

Therefore, given the historic inequities across sectors, the Commission recommends that, pursuant to the law, OSSE fund community-based pre-k programs that meet high-quality standards with local funding that is equivalent to the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula. The Commission further recommends that 3 and 4 year old children attending community-based pre-k programs should be included in the public school enrollment count and assigned a unique student identifier that will follow them throughout their educational journey.

✓ INCREASE CHILDCARE SUBSIDY REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR INFANT AND TODDLER PROGRAMMING.

While the remedy for funding inequities in the pre-k arena can be addressed through the UPFSS, the Commission recommends that OSSE consider applying the cost saving an to increase in the infant/toddler subsidy up to 80 to 90 percent of the current market rate. This would provide infant/toddler programs with the funds needed increase salaries based on the new degree and credential requirements and would also serve as an incentive for the expansion of infant/toddler programs.

A Final Word

The Commission believes these recommendations represent a critical building block in developing a workforce development system for early childhood in the District of Columbia. We realize that it will take bold and dynamic leadership to carry out these recommendations, however, we also believe that OSSE has the institutional will and the courage to translate these recommendations into a systemic reality.

Appendix One: Recommended Salary Schedules, Pre-K Teachers

The Commission recommends the following salary schedule for lead teachers and assistant teachers who work in community-based organizations.

Schedule 1: Lead Teacher, Pre-kindergarten				
Year of Full Time Teaching Experience, w/Degree Requirements	Step	BA	BA +15 Credits	MA or BA +30 Credits
1-3 years	1	48962	51410	53858
4 years	2	53858	56551	59244
5 years	3	55474	58248	61021
6 years	4	57138	59995	62852
7 years	5	58852	61795	64738
8 years	6	60618	63649	66680
9 years	7	62436	65558	68680
10 years	8	64310	67525	70740
11 years	9	66239	69551	72863
12 years	10	68226	71637	75049
Schedule 2: Assistant Teacher, Pre-kindergarten				
Year of Full Time Teaching Experience, w/Degree Requirements	Step	AA	AA +30 Credits	BA
1-3 years	1	41863	44066	48962
4 years	2	46049	48472	53858
5 years	3	47430	49927	55474
6 years	4	48853	51424	57138
7 years	5	50319	52967	58852
8 years	6	51828	54556	60618
9 years	7	53383	56193	62436
10 years	8	54985	57879	64310
11 years	9	56634	59615	66239
12 years	10	58333	61402	68226

Schedule 3: Lead Teacher, DC State Certified				
Year of Full Time Teaching Experience, w/Degree Requirements	Step	BA	BA +15 Credits	MA or BA +30 Credits
1 Year	1	51,539	53,256	54,975
2 Years	2	51,716	54,099	56,242
3 Years	3	52,777	55,210	58,699
4 Years	4	54,725	57,147	61,158
5 Years	5	56,655	59,087	63,611
6 Years	6	58,599	61,032	66,078
7 Years	7	61,068	63,496	69,132
8 Years	8	63,517	65,957	72,171
9 Years	9	65,985	68,414	75,232
10 Years	10	68,431	70,879	78,273

Appendix Two: Recommended Salary Schedules, Teachers of Infants and Toddlers

Lead Teacher, Infants and Toddlers				
Year of Full Time Teaching Experience, w/Degree Requirements	Step	AA	AA +30 Credits	BA
1-3 years	1	41,863	44,066	48,962
4 years	2	46,049	48,472	53,858
5 years	3	47,430	49,927	55,474
6 years	4	48,853	51,424	57,138
7 years	5	50,319	52,967	58,852
8 years	6	51,828	54,556	60,618
9 years	7	53,383	56,193	62,436
10 years	8	54,985	57,879	64,310
11 years	9	56,634	59,615	66,239
12 years	10	58,333	61,403	68,226

Assistant Teacher, Infants and Toddlers				
Year of Full Time Teaching Experience, with Degree Requirements	Step	CDA	CDA + 15 credits	AA
1-3 years	1	35,792	37,676	41,863
4 years	2	39,372	41,444	46,049
5 years	3	40,553	42,687	47,430
6 years	4	41,769	43,968	48,853
7 years	5	43,023	45,287	50,319
8 years	6	44,313	46,645	51,828
9 years	7	45,643	48,045	53,383
10 years	8	47,012	49,486	54,985
11 years	9	48,422	50,971	56,634
12 years	10	49,875	52,500	58,333

Appendix Three: Notes and Additional Resources

ⁱ In recent years, research has increased on the relationship exists between an early childhood teacher's educational preparation, experience, and compensation and their effectiveness as in the classroom. In 2007, ETS released a review of relevant research in this area which underscored the link between teacher quality (inclusive of qualifications, compensation, and effectiveness measures) and increased student outcomes. The study can be found at

<http://secc.sedl.org/orc/resources/LinkBetweenTQandStudentOutcomes.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ In February 2012, the General Accounting Office released a report, *Early Child Care and Education: HHS and Education are taking steps to improve workforce data and improve quality*, which includes the latest national data on early education workforce wages. The report can be found here:

<http://gao.gov/assets/590/588577.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Average DC regional early education wages and average retention rates provided by Payscale Inc in a report to this Commission on December 5, 2011. Similar information can be found at the United States Department of Labor.

^{iv} More information on both programs can be found online at the Oklahoma Department of Education and Massachusetts Department of Early Education websites.

^v Please refer to research papers in Endnote One.