

TRANSFORMING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION LEAD TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM LEARNING COMMUNITY

YEAR 2 SESSION 2 NEWSLETTER



What's Inside?



General Overview

A high-level summary of content discussed during the learning sessions, as well as connections made among participants



Session Highlights

Challenges, strategies and questions to consider that were shared during small group discussions



Office Hours

Additional ideas and support for individual teams offered by our guest lecturer, specifically related to project goals with a focus on equity





GENERAL OVERVIEW

For session 2, participants explored innovative strategies for recruiting and retaining the early childhood workforce. This session included a live Q&A from our featured guest expert and scaffolded conversation considering the current challenges and opportunities grantees experience around strategies for recruitment and retention, specifically apprenticeship models and competency-based teacher preparation. Our conversations were inspired by guest expert Caroline Campana, who shared in her webinar information about the development of apprenticeship programs and what it takes to support institutions of higher education (IHEs) in implementation.

LEARNING GOAL

Equitable and effective strategies for degree completion through apprenticeships and competency-based teacher prep



SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Q&A

For session 2, we welcomed **Caroline Campana**, Director of Workforce and Professional Development for First Up. Her responsibilities include designing and overseeing the apprenticeship work that First Up provides across the state of Pennsylvania, managing all professional development opportunities, planning the annual conference, and managing a team of early childhood consultants.

Caroline has over twenty years of experience working in the early childhood field and holds a Bachelor of Science in Education and a Master's degree in Educational Leadership. Caroline is a Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) certified instructor, and a certified Financial Coach, and obtained her Non-Profit Executive Leadership Certification from Bryn Mawr College. In addition to working at First Up, Caroline has taught social and emotional development courses for Penn Literacy Network through the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to First Up, Caroline worked as an education consultant in Chester County for her own firm. Caroline provided various centers guidance and support while assisting each center in achieving Keystone Stars accreditation. Caroline has extensive experience with Keystone Stars, Best Practice, and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation.

During this live question-and-answer session, participants asked questions about considerations for starting and strengthening apprenticeship models.

There is an impressive amount of collaboration happening in Philadelphia, how did you get all of the players at the table?

First Up started their work with one school district that offered an apprenticeship model and engaged with a local community college. They took a year to plan and formalized the program during the second year. Having a small pilot allowed for high-quality coaching and mentoring, which was a big part of the success. Piloting first also supported the colleges in building the capacity of their coaching. From the pilot phase, they have slowly evolved and grown into the program they have now, which features many partnerships across the state.



How are you meeting challenges around recruitment?

There is no doubt that the global pandemic impacted the field, and in many ways this feels like the first-year programs might be back on their feet. This is where having multiple strands of offerings, especially for those who may not otherwise have thought of becoming a teacher. Those who are reticent about a degree can start with the certification program, where they can start building college skills and take three courses slower and improve their confidence. At the end of this program, participants will end up with nine credits that are aligned to the apprenticeship program, where they can get another nine credits. First Up maintains partnerships with multiple IHEs to provide online coursework and asynchronous options to meet accessibility needs.

How has First Up been able to finance these programs successfully?

Funding has shifted from different sources over time. There is significant support from a local professional development organization that receives funding from the state (Office of Child Development and Early Learning Block Grant). Each college has its own funding streams to support its side of the work as well, and several utilize the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education grant (TEACH) to help fund. Some schools use both tuition funding from private grants and TEACH.

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

During each learning community session, participants are offered the opportunity to make direct connections to the challenges and successes experienced in their work related to this grant. Participants use a protocol to consider the session topic objectively, reflectively, and with an action-oriented lens. From these conversations, participants uplifted connections and challenges, opportunities for change, and questions to consider.

Connections and Challenges

- Many participants made connections to parts of the strategies Caroline shared. However, they said they often lack the capacity to be “all in” considering their challenges with sustainable funding and collaboration.
- There is widespread recognition that teachers and supervisors are stretched thin, and there are nationwide workforce challenges, making it more challenging for teachers to take courses.
- Participants shared strategies to increase partnerships, including with Head Start and internships with high school students.

“I’m rethinking the whole conversation about certification, thinking about how we are banning together as scholars and researchers to ensure we are holding onto competencies but also envisioning so that we are meeting the demands of our ever-changing workforce.”

- Participant

Opportunities for change

- Competency alignment is essential to making a sustainable program.
- In alignment with the first learning community session this year, it is important to consider who is at the table when designing recruitment and retention strategies like apprenticeship models.
- There is a need to advocate for policy change to accept experience for course credit. Additionally, there is a need to make the case inside of IHEs that there is a benefit to matriculating more students as the outcome instead of credit hour production.

Questions to consider

- How do we leverage our partnerships towards policy changes that address compensation?
- How can partnerships be used to lessen silos and create a unified system?
- In states with limited history of apprenticeship in education, do we utilize to a model that had been worked on previously, but never took hold, or continue the momentum of current strategies?



OFFICE HOURS

The team from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and Salish Kootenai College participated in a rich dialogue with Caroline Campana. These conversations focused on the challenges each team is experiencing in navigating apprenticeship models and considerations for effective collaboration in their respective contexts.



**CAROLINE
CAMPANA**
Director of
Workforce and
Professional
Development,
First Up

Key Considerations

Tips for building and implementing early childhood apprenticeship models. The following considerations were offered by Caroline to those who participated in office hours.

Collaboration and co-creation from the start supports systems development. Using existing relationships to co-create components of programs creates buy-in for the work. There is an opportunity to broaden career pathways for early childhood teachers and leaders.

“My dream is to someday have this coaching model built into a Master’s leadership course so that the coach can earn credit. Because you look at that’s a career pathway too, right? If you have a teacher who’s been teaching for many years, really is a great classroom teacher, understands best practice, understands developmentally appropriate practice, and has those leadership skills, it’s their career pathway to become a coach and then maybe even move into another administrative role. So it’s just a different career pathway for them.”



Connections and collaboration between IHEs and childcare programs enable learn-and-earn-type programs to be part of benefits packages.

“More funders are coming to us now and get wanting to get involved because we’re not just supporting the apprentice and the coach in the program, we’re supporting the whole program. So it’s been a much more holistic approach and able to provide stipends for coaches.”

There are some universal challenges across the nation regarding recruiting and retaining the early childhood workforce. It’s important to think outside of the box when it comes to supporting students and the workforce.

“We need to try to think about anybody that’s part of alternative career pathways. We give them food stipends, we give them computers, textbooks, materials for their classrooms, access to social workers if they need it, and help them in dealing with all of the things that they’re dealing with in their lives, teaching mindfulness coursework, doing some understanding trauma, being trauma-informed. We always talk about supporting the whole child. In the same way, this apprenticeship program is wrapping our arms around the whole program and just helping them in any way they need.”

“It’s been a great journey. It’s probably been the highlight of my career because I’m really proud of this work and really amazed at how many lives we’ve touched and how many people have gotten a college degree that never thought they’d have the opportunity. So the impact really keeps driving me to do more of this and to grow this in our state.”

– Caroline Campana