TRANSFORMING EARLY EDUCATOR LEAD TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS LEARNING COMMUNITY

FINAL REPORT

JULY 2022

SCHOOL READINESS CONSULTING

EARLY EDUCATOR INVESTMENT COLLABORATIVE
Professional Educators. Professional Compensation. Prepared Children.

INTRODUCTION

In Spring of 2021, School Readiness Consulting (SRC) was selected by the Early Educator Investment Collaborative (The Collaborative) to support their Transforming Early Education Lead Teacher Preparation Program grant. SRC led the grantee learning community for this multi-partner innovation grant. SRC has a long history of collaborating with organizations across the country to support the advancement of equitable early childhood systems. To lead the learning community, SRC utilized our knowledge of the systems, structures, and stakeholders in the early learning context and our belief that successful outcomes are built from relationships and human-centered processes. This report details the learning community process, results, and SRC's key considerations for next steps.

Who Is School Readiness Consulting?

The mission of School Readiness Consulting (SRC) is to integrate strategic thinking, best practice, and evaluation to transform learning and affirm the right of all children to thrive. SRC impacts the lives of children and their families by partnering with cities, counties, states, nonprofit organizations, and foundations to promote equity in early learning. As a consulting firm focused on early childhood, SRC's comprehensive approach integrates a focus on advising and communicating on behalf of system-level efforts, supporting best practices in early learning, and executing rigorous evaluation of early learning initiatives. The intersection of these three areas of impact and a commitment to social justice enable SRC to build systems for all young children, from birth through third grade.

History of Transforming Early Educator Lead Teacher Preparation Program Through Multi-Partner Innovation Grant

In the past year, the Early Educator Investment Collaborative has awarded eight grantee recipients comprised of partnerships of institutions of higher education (IHEs) with states, territories, and tribal nations to transform preparation programs for early educators, break down systemic barriers to education for people of color, and increase financial assistance and compensation for students studying to be early educators. Grantees' efforts are focused on preparing early care and education (ECE) teachers through a competency-based bachelor's degree, and linking state and tribal nation efforts to increase funding for ECE students and compensation for teachers post-graduation.

GRANTEES

Grantees included the following institutions of higher education (IHEs) as principal investigators (PIs), along with several state and local partners from each state/tribal nation:

California State University, Sacramento

University of Colorado Denver

Georgia State University

University of Hawaiʻi at ʻMānoa

College of Menominee Nation

Salish Kootenai College

North Seattle College

University of Nebraska

GOALS AND APPROACH

Innovative transformation of early childhood education lead teacher preparation programs is complex and requires comprehensive supports as each state, IHE, territory, and tribal nation entity has different needs and priorities. The learning community provided the opportunity for partnerships and new connections among grantees. In this environment, lessons learned are shared and ideas are generated so that participating states, territories, and tribal nations can make meaningful connections. In order to accomplish this, SRC focused on co-designing the learning community activities and content with the selected grantees, taking into consideration grantees' self-identified learning needs and best practices for an inclusive and trust-based community. SRC also sought out consistent opportunities for input from the learning community members about how to enhance their learning and on what topics.

In addition to the eight grantees, The Collaborative wanted to offer a lighter-touch participation option to other IHEs and their partners who applied for the funding opportunity but did not receive a grant. Of these invited guests, representatives from five IHEs participated by attending the virtual learning sessions and resources for each learning cycle. These offerings included George Mason University, Fairfax, VA; Bank Street College, New York; William Patterson University, Wayne, NJ; University of Wisconsin Whitewater; and Fort Lewis College, Durango, CO.

The Early Educator Investment Collaborative defines a learning community as "a group of people who share a common concern, a set of problems, or an interest in a topic and who come together to fulfill both individual and group goals. Communities of practice often focus on sharing best practices and creating new knowledge to advance a domain of professional practice. Interaction on an ongoing basis is an important part of this."[1]

SRC LEARNING COMMUNITY GOALS

Manage a learning community for partnerships of IHE and state, territory, and tribal nation entities who are working to innovatively transform teacher preparation for early childhood lead teachers.

Develop and implement differentiated learning experiences for the grantees and participants on topics based on the needs and interests of grantees to support their work.

Learning Community Components

Guided Pre-work and Guest Lecturers

- Content and expertise
- Aimed to meet the learning needs of the community

Virtual Learning Community Sessions and Team Spotlights

- Connections across IHE
- Deeper understanding of context-specific challenges and opportunities

Open Office Hours

- Opportunity for individualized support and feedback with a content expert

Technical Calls and Listening Sessions

- Reinforced each component and content of the learning community
- Feedback provided help shape future sessions and structure

Newsletter

- Summarized content and conversations from each session and office hours

Optional Neworking

- Provided a space for teams to connect and discuss project work in an open forum

1. http://www.communityofpractice.ca/background/what-is-a-community-of-practice/ Retrieved May 4, 2021

SRC designed a learning community with the following five key components that are detailed in the next section: 1) guided prework and guest lecturers, 2) virtual learning community sessions and team spotlights, 3) open office hours, 4) newsletter, and 5) optional networking. These components were designed to maximize the time of each participant by providing a mix of asynchronous, tailored scheduling, and whole group opportunities. The broad learning needs of the group were met by the guided prework and guest lecturers that provided specific expertise. The session spotlights, and connections made during each virtual community learning session, provided a deeper understanding of context-specific challenges and opportunities. Open office hours with the guest lecturers provided each team the opportunity for individualized support and feedback with a content expert. These components were reinforced with technical calls and listening sessions with the SRC team, which took place throughout the year. The feedback received during each of these sessions informed the facilitation team's planning of each session and the key considerations found in this report.

Timeline

AUGUST–OCTOBER 2021	OCTOBER 2021	NOVEMBER 2021	OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 2021
Introduction and Co-Creation	Group orientation	Learning Session 1 and Open Office Hours	Technical calls

JANUARY 2022	FEBRUARY 2022	FEBRUARY 2022	MARCH 2022
Learning Session 2 and Open Office Hours	Midpoint listening session	Optional networking	Learning Session 3 and Open Office Hours

MARCH–APRIL 2022	APRIL 2022	MAY 2022	JUNE 2022
Technical calls	Optional networking	Learning Session 4 and Open Office Hours	End of Year Listening Session

THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

SRC structured the learning community space, centering racial equity and providing opportunities for the grantees and participants to share, problem solve, and learn. SRC provided multiple components to the learning community to meet both the broad learning needs of each team as well as key opportunities to raise specific challenges and knowledge across the teams. The SRC team utilized the listening sessions and technical calls to co-inform the session topics, spotlights, and guest lecturer opportunities.

> **"Our team chooses at least one question from the REIA framework to discuss at the beginning of each of our team meetings."**
>
> **– Participant**

> **"We looked at the REIA early on as a team, but we need to revisit with our partners and continue to think about it, especially as we consider underrepresented and underserved students."**
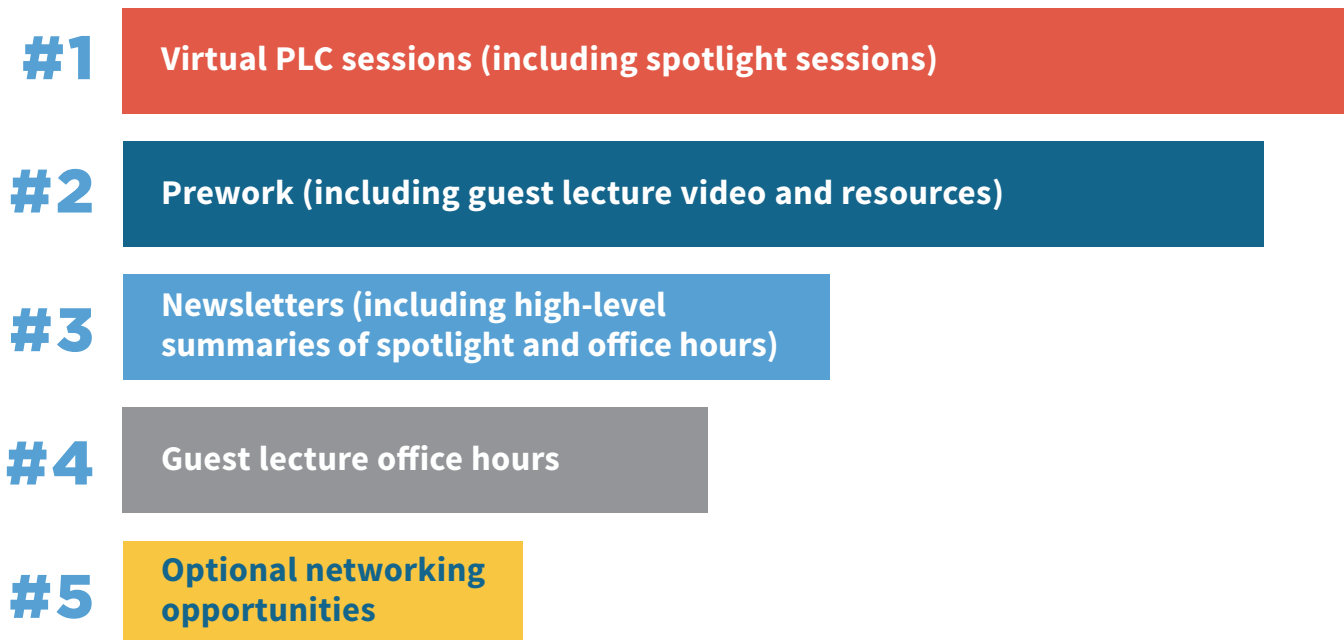>
> **– Participant**

Centering Racial Equity

SRC used the Racial Equity Impact Analysis (REIA) framework as part of the learning community structure to bring racial equity to the forefront of conversations. The framework was used to serve as a common resource for teams to consider while implementing their grant goals. The REIA framework was introduced in detail during session 1. Then during the small group breakout session for sessions 1–3, spotlight presenters and participants engaged in conversation and brainstorming based on prompts based on language from the REIA framework to support participants in identifying barriers and blind spots, and ultimately to help minimize adverse consequences during decision-making. During the final session, teams shared how they have been utilizing the resources, as well as appreciating the revisit as they want to be sure to ground their work and decision-making using the framework for the future.

What has been the most beneficial learning community component this year?

At the end of session 4, participants were asked which of the learning community components were most beneficial.

#1 Virtual PLC sessions (including spotlight sessions)

#2 Prework (including guest lecture video and resources)

#3 Newsletters (including high-level summaries of spotlight and office hours)

#4 Guest lecture office hours

#5 Optional networking opportunities

GUIDED PREWORK AND GUEST LECTURERS

The prework provided the introduction to the content, a guest lecturer, the recorded video lecture, and resources related to the topic of each session. Each guest lecturer provided a 30–45-minute recorded talk about a key issue at the intersection of early childhood system change and teacher preparation efforts. Additionally, SRC curated a list of additional readings, resources, and provocations to prepare teams for participating in the virtual learning session that followed.

"The speakers that you have selected, I really have enjoyed them. I have saved the material for future reference ...you have selected a very diverse set of people to present different topics. I have really enjoyed and benefited from it."

– Participant

The School Readiness Consulting (SRC) team utilized the existing survey of participant learning needs to identify four guest lecturers with expertise in the named areas of interest. This survey was conducted by The Collaborative prior to the learning community to gather possible topics, needs, and interest from the grantees. The needs of participants were both broad and deep, desiring both contextual information about success in the preparation of early childhood educators and specific information unique to teams' challenges navigating their institutes of higher education. Each guest lecturer provided engaging content focused on the intersection of their expertise and higher education through a 30–45-minute asynchronous video.

SRC built a pre-session resource guide to accompany each guest lecturer video. This resource guide format ensured that all resources were curated into one place, while the asynchronous format enabled each participant to engage with the material as their schedules allowed. Additionally, the selected resources balanced the desire of participants to hear from content "experts" who may have solutions to teams' challenges and offered opportunities for reflection. During the final listening sessions, some participants shared that they were a bit overwhelmed in the beginning and suggested that in the future, guidance similar to a syllabus be shared with all to help ground the group and provide more guidance to where the learning community was headed over the course of the year.

"I have less time for my own professional development, and reading articles, and things like that. And those spotlights have in a sense, become that form of professional development for me, where I get to do it in real time."

– Participant

VIRTUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY SESSIONS AND TEAM SPOTLIGHTS

SRC led four, 90-minute learning sessions with approximately 25 participants in attendance each session. Each learning session was designed to provide participants an opportunity to connect with individuals in role-alike positions in pairs/trios, engage in whole group learning and discussion based on targeted resources and topics, and learn more about the work of each grant team through discussions during the problem of practice and spotlight small group breakout sessions. These sessions created a space to share successes and challenges, receive feedback, and share resources and ideas.

During the application process, The Collaborative shared the results of a Grantee Learning Community Survey. This survey focused on the content areas of most interest to grantees, preferences on structure of the community, and identification of any field experts they would like to hear from. SRC used these survey results to identity each session topic and guest lecturer for prework and open office hours.

	SESSION TOPIC	GUEST LECTURER
CYCLE 1	Exploring racial inequities in the early childhood system through racial equity impact analysis.	**Dr. Iheoma Iruka.** Roots of inequities in the early childhood workforce and opportunities for institutions of higher education to make change.
CYCLE 2	Policies and practices that support higher education.	**Dr. Stephanie Bernoteit and Christi Chadwick.** Reflections on innovations and competency-based system of education preparation in Illinois.
CYCLE 3	Broader policy and systems change efforts in early childhood	**Miriam Calderon.** Linking policymakers to early childhood workforce efforts.
CYCLE 4	Ensuring sustainability, and accountability.	**Paul Schmitz.** Moving outcomes through collective impact.

Each session was limited to 90 minutes to meet the scheduling demands and capacity needs of teams across the country. This meant that there was a need for prioritization and efficiency to make sure that meaningful connections could happen in such a limited amount of time. Each session opened with a grounding focused on making connections between members and any specific content needed to frame the team spotlight breakouts. Then, two or three teams were featured at a time to share a "problem of practice" related to the session topic. Although each team's problem of practice was specific to their work, the learning community and experiences from others created a space for dialogue

and learning from each other. Participants noted the importance of having access to role-aligned connections in addition to hearing the work from other teams. The ability to exchange ideas in real time provided grantees connection, new ways of looking at a particular issue, and access to new resources. Participants shared that they appreciated the engaging techniques and technology used by SRC, and recognized that some faculty members were "a little bit" behind on technology, which lead to challenges at the beginning of the learning cohort to fully engage during the virtual learning sessions.

"The key questions that each of us have addressed in one of [the spotlight] presentations and the feedback that the group has provided it. When we have the spotlights and we get to share what we're doing in our work, that question brings into light some of the things that perhaps we hadn't thought about, and the challenges that we're facing in each of the states, or with our particular work."

– Participant

Problem of Practice

During the first learning community session, the team from Georgia discussed a focus cultivating a professional educational community of care and agency, particularly focusing on meeting the needs of nontraditional students." One idea shared by another grantee participant was to initiate a student advisory group that can raise issues as well as offer additional perspectives on policies and procedures that promote the success of students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and minimize adverse consequences. Such a group could provide a space for students to continually share hopes and fears and to offer suggestions for success. Another idea offered was to make paid release time available as a strategy to support students who are currently working in the classroom. This would allow working students to maintain their livelihoods and still engage in their teacher education courses.

"I can use the lessons learned from the various states, related to legislative bills and efforts on improving workforce data, and apply to my work. It was clear that higher education needs to be included in state early childhood systems-building efforts."

– Participant

OPEN OFFICE HOURS

Each grantee team had the opportunity to sign up with guest lecturers to receive individualized assistance during open office hours. The office hour format included 30 minutes to an hour to ask specific questions, receive feedback, and make connections.

Each guest lecturer provided a window of time for open office hours after each learning session. During office hours, teams were able to interact with the guest lecturer by asking questions and receiving feedback and additional resources. This structure allowed teams to engage with the topic area and guest lecturer content asynchronously, then group dialogue grounded in team spotlights during the session, followed by individualized support from office hours. For example, the team from the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa maximized the information provided by the content experts Dr. Stephanie Bernoteit and Christi Chadwick. The team presented during the spotlight session and brainstormed with learning community participants about improving compensation, and about how to change legislation and strengthen relationships with state agencies, policy makers, and advocates who elevate the importance of the early childhood workforce. The team then had the opportunity to continue the conversation in office hours with Dr. Stephanie Bernoteit and Christi Chadwick and ask specific questions related to the work Hawaiʻi is doing. This format was particularly successful for teams who engaged in all three components. While participants overwhelmingly appreciated the guest lecture videos, some suggested that having the speaker included in the live learning community session for Q&A would have been nice as their schedule made it challenging for them to attend office hours.

HAWAIʻI'S OFFICE HOURS

WITH DR. STEPHANIE BERNOTEIT AND CHRISTI CHADWICK

How can we finance compensation advancement?

"Whenever we can stand this work up as an example of good practices in workforce development at large, when credentials support progression [from] associate's degree to bachelor's and beyond, opportunities to talk about how we can better serve working adults who make it possible for every other working adult to go to work, situating the value and importance of this work, what we all understand about high-quality early learning and the long-term impact on children and families, all of a sudden it becomes an important lever for other things we are trying to solve in our education systems. We try to lift this up in conversations with advocates, stakeholders, and policy makers."

– Dr. Stephanie Bernoteit

DR. STEPHANIE BERNOTEIT

CHRISTI CHADWICK

What was the experience with passing legislation in Illinois?

• In fall 2020 through spring 2021, the Illinois Board of Higher Education launched a strategic planning process. In Illinois, there was a need for clear direction for higher education in the state. The strategic planning process and the plan, Thriving Illinois, became the backdrop for the legislation. Thriving Illinois was focused on three areas: closing equity gaps, building sustainable systems for individuals and institutions, and growth strategies for credential attainment.

• Throughout the strategic planning process, conversations were also happening with the state Board of Education, where the educator shortage became a focus and working groups were convened. This identified issue helped elevate the importance of early childhood workforce development—in particular, the need for stronger transfer pathways and supports for members of the incumbent workforce to access degree programs, in both associate and bachelor's degrees.

"I feel like the office hours have really been helpful because it's very specific to where we're at. So, this last time with Paul, I felt we were actually using some specific things and about how we're scheduling our meetings and running our meetings, as well as I think how we're strategically thinking about... how we move our leadership towards strategies. That was really powerful and significant."

– Participant

NEWSLETTER

The newsletter provided an in-depth summary of each session including the content provided in the prework resource guides, relationship building and connecting, spotlight sessions and high-level themes from office hours, and additional resources applicable to the learning community.

Capturing information in a newsletter format at the end of each cycle meant an opportunity to share back information across breakout rooms and with participants who were not able to attend the learning session or office hours. Participants noted that capturing the learning was particularly helpful for their review. The newsletter also provided streamlined communication for grantee teams knowing they could find the resources and information they needed between the resource guide and newsletter.

"The notes that [SRC] takes and provides with follow up information, especially because we're not able to attend all the sessions. Those key connections, the considerations, reading that is very helpful."

– Participant

"I just want to say that thank you for all the work that you put together this entire academic year, I'm pretty sure there was a lot of planning. I can see that by the emails, a lot of thought into it, the newsletter…. Like I said, I'm saving all these articles to share with people, to share with my students, just so that they see what other states are doing and where we're heading."

– Participant

OPTIONAL NETWORKING

SRC provided two optional 60-minute networking sessions for all participants. These networking sessions were informal opportunities to connect with participants across teams and make individual connections. Optional networking events were made available to all grantee teams as well as the participants who applied but did not receive funding.

Participants had the opportunity to complete a short pre-survey to share any topics they would like to discuss during optional networking sessions. The responses showed both a desire to focus on specific topics related to teacher preparation or systems change in higher education and more general conversation about current challenges and learning about the contexts of other states and communities. Each conversation had five to eight participants who offered each other resources, and information about their own communities and projects. Despite the differing needs across project roles, each participant found a way to contribute to the conversation.

> **"I appreciated talking about the complexity of our work. Not many venues for us to do this."**
> **– Participant**

MOVING FORWARD

Throughout this first year of the learning community, participants were given several opportunities to provide feedback to SRC. This included two technical calls with SRC facilitators, survey feedback during each virtual session, and a midpoint and final listening session. During the final learning community session, SRC also utilized a series of polls to gain additional insight into the learning components that were most beneficial to participants. Across this feedback, the SRC team has determined key considerations for The Collaborative as decisions are made for Year Two of the learning community.

Considering this feedback from learning community participants, SRC proposes the following considerations for the next phase of the learning community.

➡ **Provide coaching to support leadership and cross-sector collaboration.**

➡ **Increase time for shared learning particularly in role and institution-alike contexts.**

➡ **Document and share grantee experiences with the broader early childhood field.**

➡ **Increase supports needed to foster more robust sense of community for participants.**

Participants in this learning community are not immune to the ways the COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge communities and the early childhood system in unprecedented ways. Throughout the components of the learning community, participants raised concerns about their own capacity to engage due to the increased demands of their professional roles. From changing federal and state policy landscapes to the continued impacts of COVID-19, participants named that the broader system challenges in early childhood pervade their work in unprecedented ways. Despite these broad and deeply felt challenges, participants made meaningful connections to one another and shared opportunities for growth as a learning community.

> "I just think the field has been so battered because of the pandemic. It doesn't make our issues less important, but I just feel like they're even more pie in the sky right now when we're all just so desperate to keep the field afloat and to keep warm bodies, almost literally, in classrooms for young children."
>
> **– Participant**

Of the components available in this year's professional learning community, participants found the virtual learning sessions, prework resource guides, and the session newsletters the most beneficial. These components each provided a look at how other localities and peers are tackling key early childhood issues at hand. There is a clear desire from participants to understand what is happening across the early childhood higher education landscape to compare, contrast, and consider any applicable promising practices.

Based on the participants experience and feedback from this first year, any future learning community efforts would benefit from the following considerations.

What recommendations do you have for this group for the future?

SCALE: 1 = low priority • 3 = high priority

2.7	**Content-specific professional development and learning**
2.5	**Role-alike or context-alike discussion and connections**
2.4	**More time to problem solve together**
2.4	**Access to guest lecturers and resources**
2.0	**Leadership development and coaching**
1.8	**Grantee team support and coaching**

Provide coaching to support leadership and cross-sector collaboration.

Teams would benefit from intentional capacity building in racial equity–informed cross-sector collaboration and leadership development through coaching. During technical calls with SRC and the listening sessions, principal investigators from institutions of higher education uplifted that many of their specific challenges revolved around changing policies and practices, working across departments, and with those outside of their institutes of higher education. During technical calls, principal investigators also uplifted both challenges and opportunities related to working across sectors, and building will and action around their ideas with policy makers, advocates, and other early childhood leaders. Grantee participants recognized that systems change work requires a level of collaboration and leadership skill beyond the scope of their grantee work. Principal investigators specifically would benefit from optional and tailored leadership development support to lead collaborative cross-sector teams.

Increase time for shared learning particularly in role and institution-alike contexts.

While participants noted their general lack of availability and capacity, they also shared wanting more time to be with other participants and teams, particularly in role and institution-alike contexts. In order to build more robust learning opportunities, shared learning time should be increased and designed to maximize role-aligned connections.

"While it is good to know that we're all in the same boat, that doesn't feel super satisfying if we rediscover that every time that we meet. Is there a plan to take information from the projects and funnel it federally or funnel it back to other foundations, or some sort of advocacy action that could... I mean, it's no secret that there's shortages, but I think very specific examples and how this impacts particular states, or tribal nations, or programs, I think it just... For me, that would make this time feel very worthwhile, knowing that EEIC with what networks or power brokers it's connected to, is actually communicating this information in a systematic way."
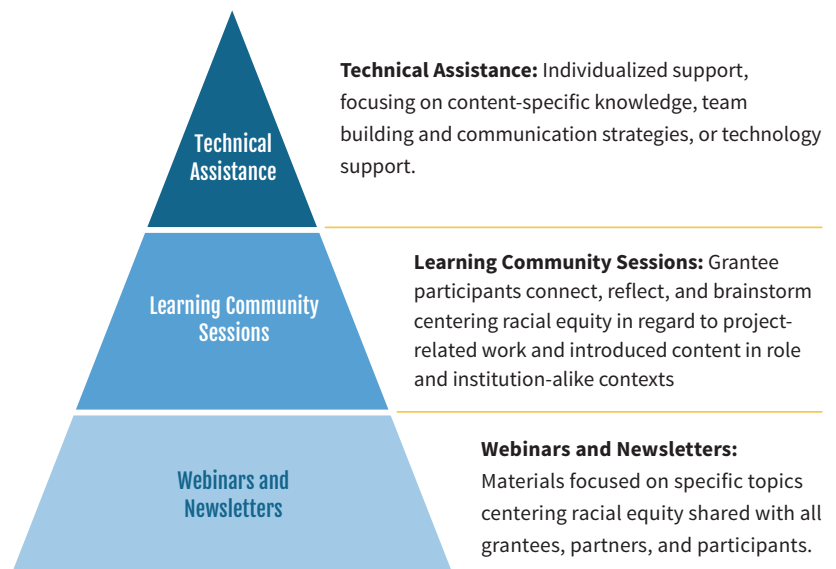
– Participant

Increase supports needed to foster more robust sense of community for participants.

During this first year of support, SRC created the foundations for community building both in the learning community and between teams. Moving forward, there are specific opportunities to increase connections between participants. Leveraging a community of practice model that 1) increases time together through longer or more frequent sessions and 2) encourages a dedicated group of cross-sector team members to attend would increase the sense of community and connection outside of the shared spaces. Using a tiered structure of support, grantee teams could first opt into their desired level of support, then identify the team members who would benefit, including community or state partners. All grantees would be able to access the prework webinars and session newsletters, some teams would also participate in the learning community sessions, and finally, a smaller set would engage in technical assistance (TA) calls. Technical assistance could focus on content-specific knowledge, team building and communication strategies, or technology support. Greater efficiency in team sharing for the purposes of the grant (webinars, panels, etc.) and the team spotlights during learning sessions would support the desire of participants to be making visible connections to the broader field.

As the Early Educator Investment Collaborative moves forward in its commitment to early childhood educator preparation and the early childhood systems in which they operate, this document provides context and considerations for supporting grantees. A successful approach to another year of the learning community will take into account the needs uplifted by the participants and commensurate supports.

Proposed Tiered Learning Community

Technical Assistance

Learning Community Sessions

Webinars and Newsletters

Technical Assistance: Individualized support, focusing on content-specific knowledge, team building and communication strategies, or technology support.

Learning Community Sessions: Grantee participants connect, reflect, and brainstorm centering racial equity in regard to project-related work and introduced content in role and institution-alike contexts

Webinars and Newsletters: Materials focused on specific topics centering racial equity shared with all grantees, partners, and participants.

APPENDIX

GRANTEE TEAMS

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

To engage a coalition of CSU campuses, community colleges, state agencies, and provider partners to revise the current ECE lead teacher curriculum with an emphasis on supporting Dual Language Learners, develop an ECE program of study peer review process, develop and pilot an observation-based competency-assessment tool, and address workforce diversity, compensation, and related issues.

COLLEGE OF MENOMINEE NATION

To offer a continuum of educational pathways, create a culturally responsive induction program, expand the array of course delivery options, and incorporate supports such as tutoring, counseling, and mentoring to improve ECE program delivery.

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Georgia State University: To create career pathways to increase the quantity and quality of culturally and linguistically diverse, appropriately compensated ECE professionals and augment a professional development partnership model to leverage the expertise of experienced teachers, and train novice education professionals through shared goals, professional mentorship, and collaborative strategies.

NORTH SEATTLE COLLEGE

North Seattle College: To augment its associate and bachelor's degree ECE programs by offering certificates in Spanish, Arabic, and Somali, focusing on anti-bias education, piloting community-based cohorts for ECE providers across the state, and creating supported education pathways for the workforce, from entry level through graduate school.

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

University of Colorado Denver: To facilitate a coalition of IHEs in Colorado that fosters systems reforms that address access to and quality of degrees, engages in research related to ECE workforce preparation, and influences policy change within and across multiple state agencies specific to teacher credentialing and licensure, credit for prior learning, and compensation.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI AT MĀNOA

University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa: To build the capacity of Hawaiʻi's ECE teacher preparation and career pathways, including accessible competency-based bachelor's and associate degree programs linked to coordinated student support innovations and a plan for competitive compensation for lead teachers.

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

University of Nebraska: To build a competency-based framework that defines common expectations across all early childhood settings, develop accessible pathways and support mechanisms, with a focus on addressing the needs of three distinct underserved communities in the state, to ensure all members of Nebraska's early childhood workforce

have equitable opportunities, and collaborate with local communities to ensure the curriculum and pathways are implemented in ways that are contextually grounded and culturally relevant.

SALISH KOOTENAI COLLEGE

Salish Kootenai College: To strengthen a robust, rigorous, and uniquely integrative Indigenous Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Program, integrate authentic language and cultural content across curricula, assure clinical field experiences for students, and promote innovative delivery models for degree and certificate programs for early childhood educators.

GUEST LECTURERS

1. **Iheoma U. Iruka, Ph.D.**, is a Research Professor in the Department of Public Policy, a Fellow at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG), and the Founding Director of the Equity Research Action Coalition at FPG (the Coalition) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Iruka is leading projects and initiatives focused on ensuring that minoritized children and children from low-income households, especially Black children, are thriving.

2. **Stephanie Bernoteit, Ph.D.**, collaboratively leads a statewide effort to enact a competency-based system of educator preparation, professional development, and credentialing in the field of early childhood education in Illinois. She is co-author and editor of publications on the subject, including "Advancing the Illinois Early Childhood Education Workforce: A Model College and Career Pathway" (Bernoteit, Holt, & Kirchhoff, 2017) and "Voices from the Field: Collaborative Innovations in Early Childhood Educator Preparation" (Bernoteit, Darragh Ernst, & Latham, 2016). Dr. Bernoteit serves on the board of directors of the Competency-Based Education Network. Christi Chadwick has spent over 20 years focused on advancing high-quality early learning opportunities for young children, particularly those from under-resourced communities. She currently serves as the Project Director for the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity, an initiative to support seamless pathways for students and upskill the early childhood workforce.

3. **Miriam Calderon** is the Chief Policy Officer at Zero to Three. Most recently, she served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Policy and Early Learning, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education for the U.S. Department of Education within the Biden Administration. Prior to that appointment, she was appointed by Governor Kate Brown to serve as the early learning system director for the state of Oregon from 2017 to 2020. She previously served in the Obama-Biden Administration advising on early learning policy at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Domestic Policy Council. Miriam has a diverse set of experiences in the early childhood field in program, policy, and advocacy.

4. Through his consulting firm, Leading Inside Out, and his role as Senior Advisor to the Collective Impact Forum, **Paul Schmitz** builds the collective leadership of organizations and communities to achieve greater impact. He is an author, speaker, trainer, and consultant whose work focuses on leadership development, collaborative culture, racial equity, community engagement, and result-based strategies. Paul is the author of Everyone Leads: Building Leadership from the Community Up (Jossey Bass, 2011). The book is based on lessons learned from 21 years of leading Public Allies, an innovative leadership development program that has helped thousands of passionate and diverse young leaders across the country begin careers working for community and social change.

RESOURCES

SESSION 1

Prework Guide

Newsletter

SESSION 2

Prework Guide

Newsletter

SESSION 3

Prework Guide

Newsletter

SESSION 4

Prework Guide

Newsletter

SCHOOL
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**EARLY EDUCATOR
INVESTMENT COLLABORATIVE**
Professional Educators. Professional Compensation. Prepared Children.