

Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC) History and Current Status

History:

The Workforce Sub-Committee of the Early Childhood Cabinet (2008) developed a framework to address PA 05-245 – (all School Readiness teachers to hold a BA degree by 2015). The subcommittee looked at the potential of meeting the legislative goal both from the perspective of the educational pipeline, the number of bachelor's degree programs and the salary for BA teachers in the early childhood workforce. In addition the Subcommittee believed the salary estimate for a BA teacher with a degree should be in the range of \$35,000 to \$39,200. The Workforce Sub-Committee report submitted to the Early Childhood Cabinet in June of 2008 requesting a legislative change to allow 50% of teacher to hold a BA and 50% to hold an AA. In addition, there was a proposal that an Early Childhood Teacher Credential (ECTC) should be developed.

Legislation was proposed in 2009 known as the 50/50 bill and did not pass. Also in 2008-2009, a credential workgroup made up of representatives from higher education faculty, state agencies, the head start collaboration office, CT Charts-A-Course, CT AEYC, the Hartford Area Collaborative, and child care providers worked on standards and competencies, an alternative route, a program approval process, practicum experience requirements, AA to BA transfer, and out-of-country and out-of-state candidate requirements. This work was presented to the Commissioners of Higher Education and Education. The legislation was proposed again during the 2010 session of the General Assembly. It was passed in the Senate with a number of amendments and never came up for a vote in the House.

In the fall of 2010 the Departments of Higher Education, the Community College System, Education, and Office of Workforce Development agreed that none of the agencies or those representing these agencies would put forward new legislation addressing teacher qualifications. However, in the 2011 session, Senator Beth Bye put forward legislation similar in concept to the previous 50/50 bill.

Also in the fall of 2010, the State Department of Education, supported by the Office of Workforce Competitiveness, determined that an ECTC pilot should be attempted to see how prepared higher education institutions would be to meet the standards developed in 2009 and to test the approval process. Correspondence from the Department of Education went out to the original 2008-2009 credential workgroup, inviting participants to review the work and make revisions given that NAEYC revised their standards for college program approval and to respond to the impending new legislation. Members of the group that met represented the EC Alliance, 2-yr and 4-yr faculty, CT AEYC, Charts-A-Course, the Hartford Area Collaborative, and Departments of Higher Education and Education. Some revisions were made to the competencies to align with the new NAEYC standards and a pilot process was discussed and approved to measure the commitment of programs to adjust or develop new early childhood concentrations and degree pathways.

In March 2011 a letter from the Commissioner of Education was sent to all 2-yr and 4-yr colleges inviting them to participate in a pilot phase of revising or developing early childhood concentrations and degrees. Three consultants, Merle Harris, Regina Miller, and Deb Adams developed an application, review process and technical assistance mechanism to manage the project.

Current Status:

Public Act 11-54 is now in effect outlining the qualification requirements for all state funded early childhood programs.

Seven institutions are actively engaged in the pilot: BA level (Charter Oak, Goodwin, UCONN, and Post), AA level: (Housatonic, Gateway, and Goodwin, Tunxis). Indicating interest for 2012 are Mitchell, SCSU, University of Hartford, and St. Joseph, as well as other community colleges engaged in the NAEYC accreditation process. We expect the remaining 4-yr and 2-yr colleges to indicate interest within the next 18 months to 2 years.

The consultants conducted site visits to each of the seven institutions, provided technical assistance in completing the applications, reviewed the applications, provided feedback, and are awaiting any additional materials or answers to questions to complete the reviews. Responses are due August 31st.

Next Steps: The consultants will present to the State Board of Education the results of ECTC work, request approval (as required in PA 11-54) of these programs, and provide recommendations for further department support. We also need to solidify a process for awarding credentials to individuals and a data collection and tracking system.

Issues: Routing program approvals (for newly developed programs) through the re-organized Department of Higher Education and the State Board of Education. Compensation strategies are an issue, and cost of obtaining a credential needs further discussion.