The Mayor's Early Learning Council

The State of Early Learning

Early Learning Council
Final Report submitted
to Mayor Lovely A. Warren

Believe.

City of Rochester, NY
Lovely A. Warren, Mayor
Rochester City Council

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Executive Summary

Early childhood is a foundational period for growth and development. Research is clear that high-quality early education programs can provide both short- and long-term benefits for students, families and communities. Providing a strong start for children is particularly important here in Rochester, where families must struggle to overcome the obstacles created by staggeringly high poverty rates and a perennially low-performing school district.

Mayor Warren recognized the importance of early learning when she established the Early Learning Council (ELC) in March 2014. The ELC was charged with describing the early childhood education context in Rochester and with developing recommendations for its improvement. Over the past several months, Council members held robust community conversations through public hearings and focus groups that yielded important information. Furthermore, members visited early childhood settings, interviewed key leaders in the community and did archival research to reach the recommendations highlighted later in the report.

Overall, Rochester's Pre-K program stands out as an island of success in an otherwise troubled education system. Recognized as a national leader, our Pre-K program is rated in the top 5% nationally on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-R), one of the national benchmarks regarding quality early education standards.[1] The success of Pre-K represents what our community can accomplish when it works together on behalf of kids.

However, Pre-K represents a small slice of a student's educational journey and there are several alarming trends that occur before and after Pre-K that deeply troubled many Council members. For example, over 60% of students scored below average on the Brigance Early Childhood Screen when entering Pre-K and by the 3rd grade,[2] only 6% of students were considered proficient in reading based on state assessments.[3] We know that when children are not reading at grade level by third grade, the likelihood of not graduating increases significantly, particularly when combined with poverty.[4] Furthermore, we know that increased dropout rates and poor early childhood education are contributing factors to what is called the cradle-to-prison pipeline.[5] Research has shown that high quality early childhood education can significantly interrupt this pipeline.[6] There were other troublesome issues the ELC found in Pre-K and other early childhood programming, including resource disparities between public and private providers; a lack of transparency and accountability; and low parent involvement.

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[1] https://www.childrensinstitute.net/sites/default/files/photos/recap-annual-report_2012-2013.pdf page IV.

[2] http://www.actrochester.org/education/school-readiness/school-readiness-screening

[3] http://www.actrochester.org/education/academic-achievement/student-performance-grade-3-english

[4] Hernandez, D. J. (2011). Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation. Annie E. Casey Foundation.

[5] Children's Defense Fund. (2007). America's cradle to prison pipeline. Washington, DC: Retrieved from http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/cradle-prison-pipeline-report-2007-full-highres.html

[6] Brown, B. (2011). Inside-Out Approach to Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline: An Adequacy Argument for Early Childhood Education in Massachusetts, An. Whittier J. Child. & Fam. Advoc., 11, 123.
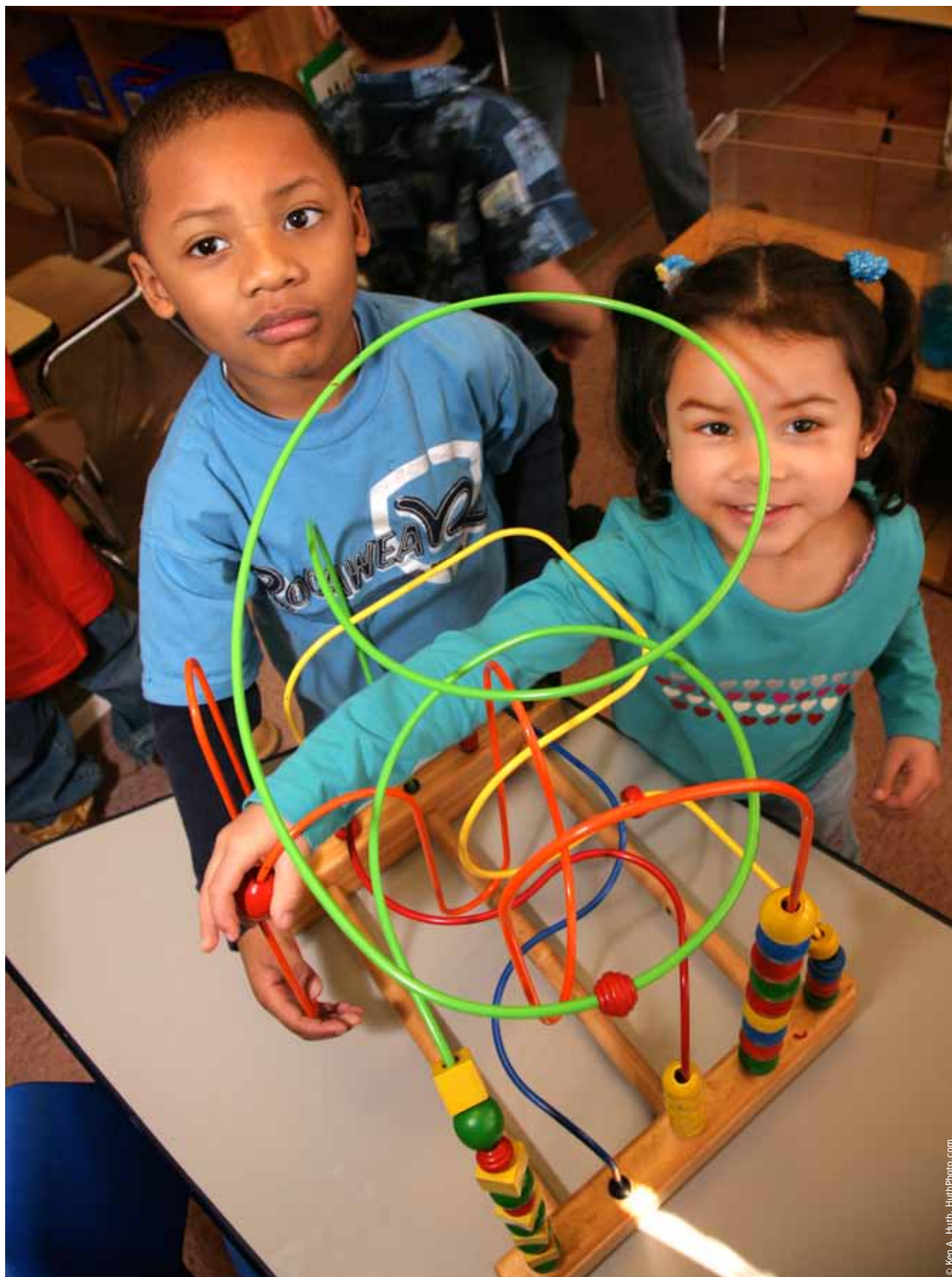
While the Mayor has limited control over many of these issues, the ELC believes that City Hall must play an expanded leadership role to ensure the success of our youngest children, with an emphasis on addressing the challenges described in this report. President Theodore Roosevelt coined the term 'bully pulpit' referring to the White House, as a terrific platform to advocate an agenda. Much of the ELC's discussion centered on how Mayor Warren could use her bully pulpit to ensure that every child in Rochester gets a good start.

Following is a summary of the ELC's key findings and recommendations, which are provided in more detail throughout the report:

- **Rochester is widely considered to have high quality Pre-K.** This quality is confirmed by numerous measures and reports and is aided by strong collaboration between community stakeholders. However, this information has not been adequately communicated to parents and families, where skepticism about quality remains high.

- **There are serious gaps in preparation for 3-year-olds who often arrive in Pre-K needing significant help.** Much of this problem can be traced to the loss of 7,000 childcare subsidies since 2001, leaving over 22,000 eligible Rochester children without subsidy assistance and thus without early learning support. Furthermore, even students that make significant progress in Pre-K are often not prepared to succeed in kindergarten.

- **Summer learning loss between Pre-K and kindergarten (K) is significant.** The Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership (RECAP) estimates that children enrolled in Pre-K who then enter kindergarten in RCSD lose between 20% and 30% of the skills gained in Pre-K over the summer, with the greatest loss in math and science.

- **Parents are concerned about the lack of transparency and accountability of the Pre-K program.** These concerns include the program's lack of state oversight and checks and balances; the City School District's multiple roles as Pre-K program administrator, program regulator and provider; and a lack of public oversight during the provider selection process.

- **Rochester Pre-K is under-enrolled.** This could be due to a number of factors, including lack of awareness due to poor communication on the benefits of Pre-K; lack of transportation to programs; and a cumbersome enrollment process that requires separate applications for Head Start, RCSD and community-based programs. Furthermore, parents who do not speak English as a first language and newly arrived refugees have difficulty accessing information when there are not translations available.

- **Teacher preparation in the area is of high quality although enrollments are low. Furthermore, the pay differential between RCSD and community based providers, while improving, remains troubling.** For example, the Early Childhood Development Institute estimates that the actual per pupil cost of a district Pre-K classroom is twice that of the community-based providers, the biggest factor being salary. This has implications for both teacher quality and high teacher turnover rates at many community-based providers.

Considering all the data analyzed, the ELC has developed the following recommendations:

1. **There was strong consensus among Council members and stakeholders who gave testimony that the City of Rochester's priority should be funding programming gaps before and after Pre-K. Recommendations include:**

   • Re-allocate City budget toward stemming summer learning loss, particularly the summer before kindergarten;

   • Join the Winning Beginnings Coalition to lobby for additional public funding for early childhood programming, childcare subsidy increases and transportation funding;

   • Pursue innovative funding vehicles like social impact bonds and public-private partnerships to fund early childhood priorities where public funding is inadequate. Study successful examples in other places such as Cincinnati, Utah and Denver;

   • Convene an inter-agency body to coordinate birth to 8 services, braid funding and pursue collaborative solutions to stretch limited public funds; and

   • Take leadership in funding childcare subsidies. Subsidies fund opportunities for children in working families to receive high quality early education, which is often too expensive for many families. Currently over 50% of eligible children are unserved.

2. **In addition to advocating for adequate funding, we believe the Mayor can play an important role in addressing resource disparity between the public and private Pre-K providers by considering the following recommendations:**

   • Reduce start-up barriers and facility costs for small providers by making City facilities available for use at subsidized rates;

   • Expand the City's housing credit program to all Pre-K teachers and teaching assistants (district, community-based organization or charter school) who want to teach and live in Rochester; and

   • Convene a consortium of local teacher colleges aimed at reducing the tuition burden for employees of small providers pursuing a degree in early childhood education and recruiting more teachers of color to the field.

3. **The ELC firmly believes that public confidence is vital to sustaining a vibrant and fully funded Pre-K program and that City Hall can and should play an important role ensuring the public's trust by considering the following recommendations:**

   • Represent the interests of Rochester taxpayers and parents at the district's Pre-K decision-making table, where local grant allocation and policy are decided;

   • Advocate for a transparent and simplified Pre-K funding system at the local level, where "money follows the child," actual costs are reported to the public annually and administrative overhead is kept in check;

   • Advocate for a fair and open Pre-K provider selection process at the local level, ensuring taxpayers that all providers–district, community-based or charter–are selected based on evidence of program quality and compliance;

- Commission research identified as critical to advancing the sector: 1) an annual census of 2- 3- and 4-year-olds and 2) a city-wide study of the short- and long-term academic gains of students that attended high-quality Pre-K versus those who did not, with an eye toward understanding ways to stem the fade-out of Pre-K gains. We recommend this research be aligned with ROC the Future;
- Refine and bolster the existing UPK Policy Advisory Council, by recommending that the UPK PAC add at least one City of Rochester representative to the table to formally link and align the recommendations of the ELC and the ongoing work of the City of Rochester to the UPK PAC work plan and efforts; and
- Request the UPK PAC submit a quarterly report with updates and recommendations to the RCSD School Board and the Mayor.

4. **The Mayor should lead a shift away from traditional parent involvement toward authentic parent empowerment and leadership, similar to Head Start's parent involvement and aligned with the City's work on the National League of Cities Educational Alignment project.**

- Replicate the Chicago Parent Ambassador program, a peer-to-peer recruiting effort credited with fully enrolling Chicago's Head Start program;
- Enlist City librarians as early childhood navigators, trained to facilitate Pre-K enrollment and connect parents to Birth to 8-years-old resources;
- Cross-promote early childhood programs in City publications, at City kiosks and through Public Service Announcements featuring Mayor Warren as a Pre-K parent;
- Invest in new web-based information tools to aid parents and parent advocates in making informed Pre-K enrollment decisions, integrated with existing referrals services like 311;
- Encourage all Pre-K providers to opt-in to a common application to simplify the enrollment process for parents; and
- Ensure that all materials and web resources are translated into the languages needed to serve all Rochester families.

Given the major challenges facing children and families in Rochester, the ELC believes we must build upon the existing strengths of the Rochester Pre-K program and share best practices with educators both before and after the Pre-K year. At the same time, the Mayor is uniquely positioned to address many of the challenges in the larger early childhood system described in this report. As a result, the ELC strongly urges City Hall to play an expanded leadership role in helping to ensure that all of Rochester's children have the strong start necessary for future success.

Early Learning Council Process

Mayor Lovely Warren's Early Learning Council (ELC) will:

- Conduct a robust public discussion about the challenges and opportunities inherent in educating Rochester's youngest and most vulnerable students;

- Convene a series of public hearings, inviting parents, practitioners and early childhood experts to present feedback on the current Pre-K delivery in Rochester and explore local and national models;

- Report on the status of Rochester's current Pre-K program, including current and projected enrollment, funding sources, the supply of high-quality professional development and barriers to access and expansion; and

- Recommend program and policy changes to improve Rochester's Pre-K program, including concrete strategies to expand access, improve quality and increase parental choice.

Additionally, we were asked to address the following specific items:

- Determine the number of seats currently available in Pre-K programs across the City;

- Describe the minimum standard for high quality Pre-K;

- Determine the current number of teachers available to educate our young children;

- Determine and advise on what is currently preventing families from accessing Pre-K programs; and

- Develop options for a single point of entry for potential Pre-K users and providers.

Three public hearings were held in April and May at which parents, providers, early education experts, charter school representatives and the general public attended. All hearings were live-streamed on the City's website and its public access television channel. Speakers submitted written testimony in advance of the hearings and all testimony was reviewed by the ELC and used in the development of the final report. The ELC held two focus groups in June 2014, one for providers and one for parents.

ELC Chairs formed four work groups in order to thoroughly answer our charge: Parents, Providers, Policy and Teacher Pipeline. These groups conducted research, visited Pre-K settings, reviewed policy documents, state regulations and interviewed key members of the Rochester early childhood community. Additionally, an executive writing group was formed that took responsibility for writing the final report based on the findings of these work groups. Consensus regarding findings and recommendations was built at council meetings, subcommittee discussion and through email.

An important part of our work together has been to focus on changing the deficit language that is commonly used to describe city residents, particularly parents and children. We consciously worked to effect a culture shift by using asset-based language that emphasizes the strengths in what children and families bring to school rather than what they do not. This shift has enabled us to see the value in diverse practices and how that diversity can be used to improve education.

Pre-K Landscape in Rochester

Pre-K is a state-funded early childhood education program with strict regulations that all centers are required to follow. The New York State policy on early learning states:

> Early childhood education, for all children from birth through grade four, is an integrated system that ensures each child receives a healthy start and attains the knowledge and social/emotional skills needed for successful learning. Components of the system are programs that start early, are high quality and developmentally appropriate. They also need to be standards-based; staffed by highly qualified teachers and administrators; and embracing of the multicultural and diverse communities that they serve. It is a system that promotes coordination of comprehensive services and successful partnerships among families, community-based organizations and schools.
>
> http://www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/policypaperjanuary2006.htm

What counts as high quality?

One of the first questions we explored was what "high quality" means in Rochester. There are national and state standards that provide quality indicators and national accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or Pathways. In 2011, New York State adopted new Pre-K standards, known as Pre-K Foundation for the Common Core. Currently, there is no statewide Pre-K accountability report card (http://www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/). In 2010-11 New York State piloted a quality-rating program, known as Quality Stars New York. Monroe County was one of 10 areas selected to be a part of the pilot, with 17 Monroe County daycare centers participating in the pilot (http://qualitystarsny.org/). Some support continues, even though the major funding for the pilot has ended. National accreditation is considered the gold standard in the early childhood field to index high quality that parents could use to judge a center. In the Rochester area there are two venues for national accreditation: National Association for the Education of Young Children (http://www.naeyc.org) and Pathways (https://www.childrensinstitute.net/pathways). Currently, there are nine nationally accredited Pre-K programs in Rochester, one of which is also participating in the NYS Quality Stars pilot. For many years, national Head Start has used a quality initiative through which programs can receive either a "program of achievement" or "program of excellence designation." Rochester's Head Start does not have either designation. (http://www.nhsa.org/initiatives_and_partnerships/quality_initiative).

"We have exceptional early childhood services and programs that this community has invested in for many years. Access is critical; working to maintain and grow them will need all of us working together."

-Lynn Lubecki, Rochester's Child

Through public hearings and focus groups, we developed the following list that indicates what Rochester early childhood professionals consider to be high quality Pre-K :

- Certified teachers who are trained in teaching children of different racial and cultural backgrounds

- Developmentally appropriate curriculum that is based on theories of child development

- All domains of development (social, emotional, physical and cognitive) are meaningfully addressed

- Culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy

- Adequate support for children with disabilities

- Social workers to help deal with trauma

- Strong family engagement

- Appropriate guidance from RCSD

- Standards for quality include:

    - NYS regulations

    - Head Start performance standards

    - National accreditation standards: National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation /Pathways National Early Education and Care Accreditation

    - Environmental Rating Scales

    - Participation in RECAP through Children's Institute

On several measures, Rochester Pre-K is considered to be of high quality. However, we did find that parents and families share a different perspective. As the parent work group report will illustrate, parents experience the Pre-K landscape as a set of silos that are difficult to navigate. Furthermore, communication about quality Pre-K has not reached parents and families.

General information about the Rochester Pre-K context
Number of providers (See Appendix D for full list)

We counted the Rochester City School District (RCSD) as one provider with 31 different sites. Community Based Providers (CBO) constitute the remaining 28 providers for a total of 29 providers. We did not include private or parochial schools in our accounting, as they are not funded through NY State.

The map to the right provides data on people living in poverty by census tract, the percentage of children under the age of 5 living in poverty and indicators for each provider. The map allows us to see the geographic distribution of Pre-K sites across Rochester in order to make sure all children have close access to a provider.

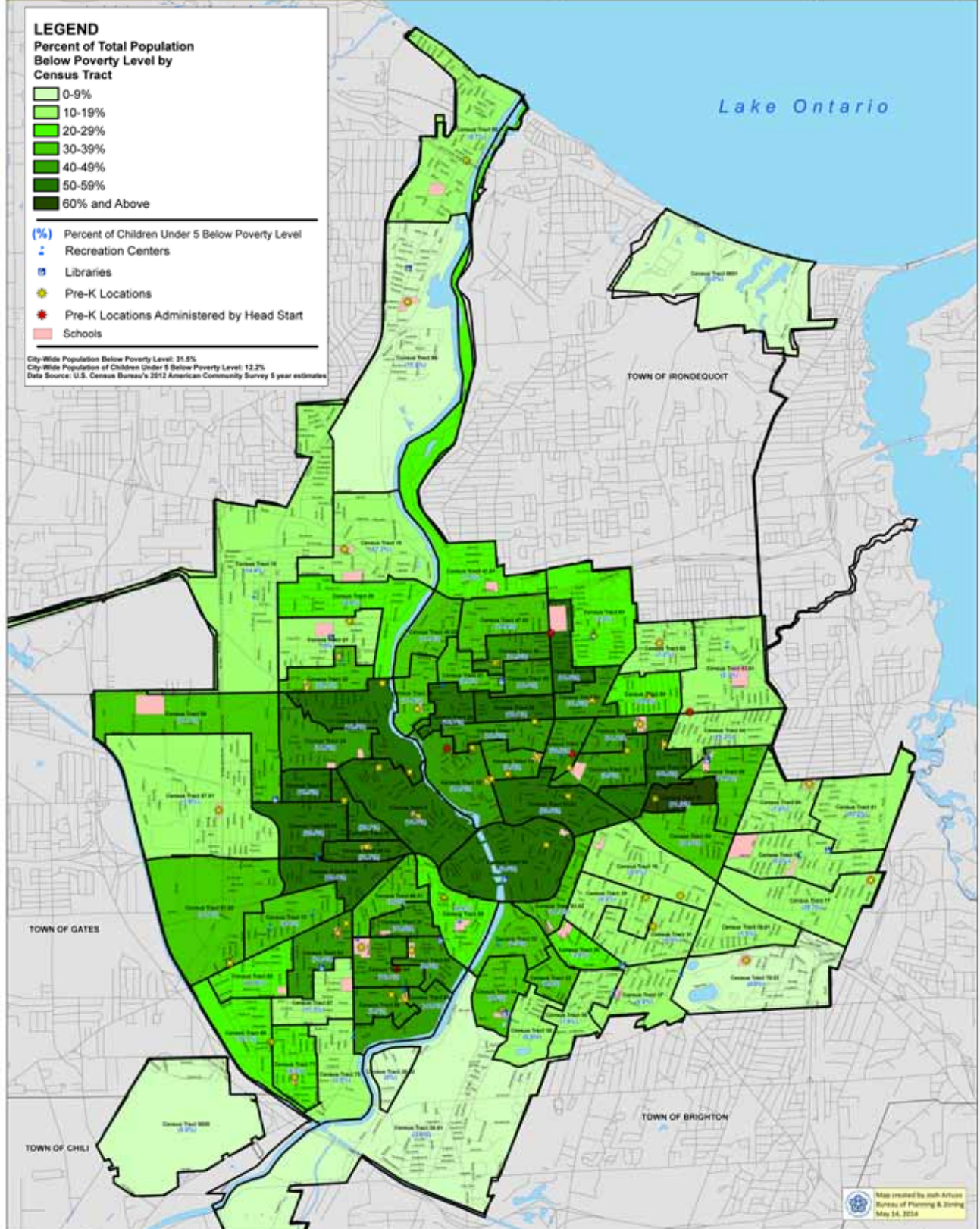City of Rochester, N.Y. - Percent of Population Below Poverty Level

Number of 4-year-olds

It proved much more difficult to determine how many 4-year-olds there are in Rochester and how many of those 4-year-olds are currently enrolled in Pre-K. The numbers varied depending on whom we asked. Each early childhood organization counts differently. We came up with the following by compiling information we received through hearings, interviews and web research.

Based on 2010 census data, there are approximately 3,100 4-year-olds in the City of Rochester. BEDS New York State Education Department-- Basic Education Data Systems data show there are a little over 1,000 Pre-K seats available in CBOs and approximately the same number of seats in RCSD classrooms for Pre-K students. In total, the district enrolls about 900 students, depending on the time of year. In 2013-14, there were 1,939 children enrolled in Pre-K, including both CBO and RCSD settings. In addition, there are 407 4-year-olds in Head Start programs supported by federal dollars only (Head Start serves a total of 784 4-year-olds across all its funding sources. With 3-year-olds included, Head Start serves a total of 1,588 children). Thus, there were approximately 2,343 4-year-olds, or 76%, served by Pre-K programming in the 2013-14 school year. The remaining 24% of children may be in private Pre-K, parochial schools or home daycare settings.

Enrollment processes

Currently, there are three different Pre-K enrollment processes in Rochester: Head Start, Rochester City School District Pre-K and CBO Pre-Ks.

The RCSD maintains a master telephone directory of all Pre-K sites (Head Start, district and CBO) as well as a web directory with links to basic profile pages for each provider, sorted alphabetically (http://www.rcsdk12.org/Domain/5983). Profiles include information about program hours, location, telephone number, but does not link to external provider websites. In addition, there is a link to the annual RECAP report conducted by Children's Institute.

For enrollment in a RCSD school-based Pre-K class, parents can either download a PDF form, pick up a hard copy of the form from RCSD Central Office, or request that a form be mailed to them. This form is used for both district Pre-K and CBO sites.

Head Start, administered by Action for a Better Community, has a single point of enrollment for its five Head Start and Early Start sites. Their website includes basic information about the program, location information and an on line registration form that includes a dropdown menu of locations (http://www.abcinfo.org/head-start/childhood-development-center-).

To enroll in a CBO site, parents must first consult the RCSD list of participating providers and then contact the provider directly. Alternatively, some parents of 3-year-olds currently enrolled in community programs for childcare will enroll in Pre-K at their current childcare program.

CBO providers use the RCSD form but need to manage their own registration process. Only the large CBOs appear to have websites and none appear to have on-line Pre-K registration. CBOs offer parents assistance in completing the form.

Pre-K, for both RCSD and CBO sites, is advertised to prospective families and the community at large. Advertisement has included:

- Flyers
- Newspaper ads
- Envelope fillers
- Back pack notices (e.g., sent with older children in elementary school to let their parents know about upcoming registration for Pre-K, as well as sent with children in childcare programs)
- TV commercials on WXXI television
- Doorknob hangers
- Lawn signs
- Radio ads
- Public service announcements

In addition, recruitment has also happened at the Monroe County Department of Social Services reception area. This recruitment has been conducted by both RCSD and CBO staff in the past and has been done in a coordinated effort to recruit families who have not yet applied for Pre-K and who may not have been reached through other methods. In spite of this array of advertising mechanisms, parents and families still do not get adequate information about Pre-K and its role in their children's education.

There appears to be no official mechanism to refer parents across organizations in the event that a provider is at capacity. However, the Early Childhood Education Quality Council, (ECEQC) membership includes the majority of non-profit CBOs who provide Pre-K and they informally collaborate on family recruitment, as well as connecting families to each other's programs.

Funding

Two new state funding streams added in the last year allow for full-day programming and the possibility of expanding the number of available seats. These funding streams add to the existing streams. Pre-K was adopted in 1997 and is still in effect as a half-day service. The second is now known as Priority Pre-K, last year's $25 million statewide competitive grant program (of which Rochester received $10 million). The third, called highly innovative, full-day Pre-K, is planned for implementation in 2014-2015 ($300 million to NYC, $40 million for the rest of the state).

The RCSD budget is $20.8 million, a figure that combines original UPK funding ($10.8 million) with Priority Pre-K ($10 million). Head Start combines federal funding of $11.2 million with RCSD Pre-K funding of $1.2 million for a total of $12.4 million.

The RCSD projects that for the 2014-15 academic year, CBOs will receive $8,707 per pupil, RCSD lead sites will receive $11,110 per pupil and Rochester Preschool Parent Programs (RPPP) (also RCSD programs) will receive $8,520. We did find that per pupil funding does not follow a child after the BEDS count is complete on October 1. If a family moves their child, which is their right, the money stays with the center that counted the child on October 1. The BEDS number is only as good as student attendance rate is on "BEDS day." Many children may not be counted at all, calling into question the scope of the problem of funding not following the child. As we state in our recommendations, a comprehensive and transparent early childhood system developed by the Mayor could facilitate tracking children across systems of care, thus ensuring that funding stays with the child. Given the importance of these early years, we have included the following general information about young children, 0 - 47 months old, in Rochester.

The first 47 months of life in Rochester

A child's life of learning begins at birth and critical brain functions take shape before age 3.[7] The first three years of life are a period of incredible growth in all areas of a baby's development. A newborn's brain is about 25 % of its approximate adult weight. But by age 3, it has grown dramatically by producing billions of cells and hundreds of trillions of connections, or synapses, between these cells.[8] This growth can either be encouraged or discouraged by the parents and caregivers in each child's life, either setting them off to a good start and establishing healthy patterns for life-long learning – or not.

School readiness, thus, does not begin with Pre-K for 4-year-olds, but instead begins much earlier. Where a child spends his/her time before they are four impacts on their school readiness and their life-long learning. We know that positive early childhood development can mediate the negative effects of poverty, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable children. Furthermore, we know that children enrolled in high-quality early childhood programs are more likely to graduate from high school, hold a job and are less likely to commit a crime than their peers who do not participate, thus interrupting the cradle-to-prison pipeline.[9]

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[7] James Heckman. Investing in disadvantaged young children is good economics. 2007.

[8] Zero to Three, National Center for Infants, Children and Families.

[9] Edelman, M. (2014) http://www.childrensdefense.org/newsroom/child-watch-columns/child-watch-documents/making-strided-for-preschool.html

Childcare in the first 47 months

The use of childcare has increased greatly as family dynamics have changed over the years. Currently, 72% of Monroe County families do not have a stay-at-home parent.[10] When they go to work, parents need a safe place to leave their children. The setting is best chosen by the parents. What matters is not the type of setting chosen, but rather the level of quality of care delivered within that setting. Within each of these settings, there is a range of quality. High-quality or low-quality care *can* exist in any setting, with a relative, with a provider who works out of their home, or from a center in a professional building.

Early care and education is provided to children 0-3 (up to 47 months, prior to 4th birthday) in five primary settings:[11]

1. Daycare Centers: Provide care for more than six children at a time, not in a personal residence.

2. Family Daycare Homes: Provide care for three to six children at a time in a residence; may add one or two school-age children. The maximum allowable number of children will depend on whether and how many, infants are in care.

3. Group Family Daycare Homes: Provide care for seven to twelve children at a time in a residence; may add one or two school-age children.

Each of the three settings listed above can serve children ages six weeks through twelve years and operate for more than three hours a day.[12] A provider must use an assistant when more than six children are present.

4. Legally Exempt: Care is provided in a residence for one or two children and is exempt from licensing and registration requirements; this can include relatives (e.g., grandparents caring for children).

5. Early Head Start: Early Head Start provides care services for low-income children from birth through age three.

Why does quality matter?

Decades of research has shown that when vulnerable children spend their early years (0-5) in high-quality settings, they do better in school and life. Vulnerable children:

• Achieve more in math and reading when they get to school;

• Have better coping skills and fewer behavior problems;

• Are less likely to need costly special education services; and

• Increase their chances of high school graduation.[13]

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[10] 2006-08 American Community Survey

[11] The Center for Governmental Research. Community Status Report on Children: Establishing Baseline Measures and Investments for the 2010 Community Action Plan for Greater Rochester's Children. February, 2010

[12] New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

[13] Lawrence J. Schweinhart, Helen V. Barnes and David P. Weikart. Significant Benefits: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 27 (High/Scope Press, 1993).
Lawrence J. Schweinhart, PhD. The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40: Summary, Conclusions and Frequently Asked Questions (High/Scope Press 2004).
Lazar I, Darlington R. Lasting effects of early education: a report from the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 1982.

There are two studies that are frequently cited for research on high-quality early care and education: The Perry Preschool Project and the Abecedarian Project. These programs began in the 1960s and served children from struggling households. Follow-ups at the twntieth, thirtieth and fortieth year yield strong results demonstrating that children who attend high-quality childcare and education are more likely than their peers to do well in school and in life.

The results of these studies highlight important characteristics of quality care, which research has confirmed in other studies as well, including:

- Highly skilled, attentive teachers;
- Small class sizes and small adult-to-child ratios;
- Age-appropriate curricula and stimulating materials in a safe physical setting;
- Alanguage-rich environment;
- Warm, responsive interactions between staff and children; and
- High and consistent levels of child participation.[14]

Childcare is expensive, especially high quality care.

New York State & Monroe County – Subsidies
Childcare is one of the largest expenses facing working families and is a particular burden for parents at the low end of the income spectrum. New York State was named the least affordable state for Center-Based Infant Care in 2012. The average cost of one year of high-quality infant care in Monroe County ($12,000) is more than double the cost of annual tuition at a SUNY college ($5,570).[15] These costs are far out of reach for most low-income working families.

Because of this, New York State law provides that working families are eligible for childcare assistance if their income is under 200% of the federal poverty level ($38,180 for a family of 3, for example).[16] Subsidies offer critically needed financial aid for parents trying to keep children in safe, consistent, high quality care on very tight budgets.

"The current subsidy decrease in this community is creating a crisis. In the last 3 years, we have seen a 50% drop in our 3-year-old population, mostly due to subsidy cuts. Our community's efforts in developing successful children must begin before the age of 4."

-Connie Rodriquez, Wilson Commencement Park

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[14] The Children's Agenda, 2010 Community Action Plan. http://www.thechildrensagenda.org/docs/2010ActionPlanFullReport.pdf

[15] Child Care Aware of America, Child Care State Fact Sheets. 2013.

[16] http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/LegReport%20USE%20FINAL.pdf. The OCFS report estimates 562,656 under age 12; we added 1/12 to cover children in their 13th year who are also eligible.

Majority of eligible families unserved

However, this support for low-income families has become dramatically less available. Approximately 29,000 children living in working families in the Greater Rochester region (Monroe County) are eligible for a childcare subsidy, but currently only 6,700 receive a subsidy. Over 7,000 children have lost their subsidy since 2001.[17] Because of inadequate funding, more than 70% of working families who are eligible by New York State standards do not receive this assistance.

Number of children receiving child care subsidies - Source: Monroe County
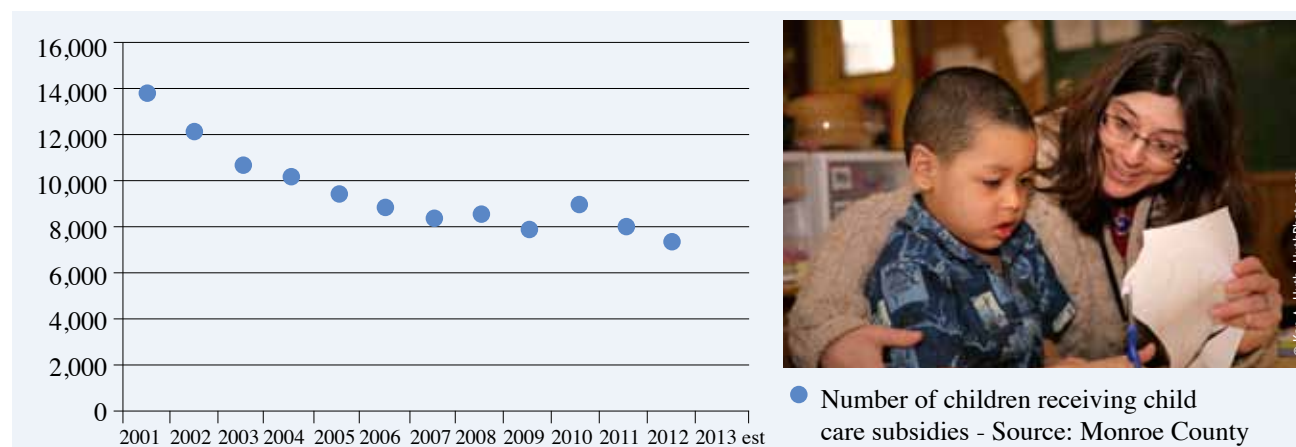
How the subsidy system operates:

• Parents apply for a subsidy if they are eligible and if there is sufficient funding in place, they will receive a subsidy to help pay their daycare costs. In Monroe County, the applications have been frozen for nearly two years, due to insufficient funding.

• Daycare can be purchased from all types of legal childcare providers

• Eligible children are those between the ages of 6 weeks and 12 years (up to their 13th birthday).[18]

• Driven by parent choice

• Parents pay a co-pay for daycare costs.

• Daycare is primarily funded through the New York State Child Care Block Grant (NYSCCBG), which is primarily pass-through federal funding. New York State provides funding, counties are mandated to pay a portion of the costs (for example, Monroe County receives about $35 million a year from New York State to pay for local childcare subsidies and Monroe County is mandated to supplement this with about $4 million. Counties can choose to voluntarily invest additional dollars in to the subsidy system.)[19]

• Counties manage the system locally on behalf of New York State (and receive additional administrative dollars from NYS to do so).

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[17] Proposed Monroe County Budgets, 2007-2013.

[18] There is also Protective/Preventive daycare assistance, which is provided when it is needed as part of a child services plan for children who have been abused or maltreated or whose caretaker is seriously ill in order to allow a child to remain at home rather than entering foster care. Protective/Preventive daycare is not included in the NYSCCBG funding mechanism but continues to be funded through a combination of federal Title XX funds, other state revenue sources and local funding.

[19] The NYSCCBG allocation reimburses 75% of the cost of Family Assistance daycare (Monroe County pays the other 25%) and 100% of transitional and low income daycare up to the level of the block grant allocation amount.

Services for Children with Disabilities

Special Children's Services are early intervention services delivered to children 0-5 years old who show learning delays and/or disabilities. When a learning delay or disability is identified for a child, it is important to get them services as quickly as possible. Through early intervention, the functional abilities of infants, toddlers and pre-school children are maximized and the need for more costly services later in childhood is reduced.

There are two programs within Special Children's Services, distinguished by the ages of children served. Early Intervention Services (EIS) serves children ages 0-3 years and is under the authority of the State Department of Health. The County Department of Health (DOH) determines center-based childcare providers' eligibility and services or consultants who deliver the services either in the child's home or in childcare.

Education for Children with Disabilities (ECD) services are mandated programs for children 3-5 years old under the authority of the Department of Education. For these services, it is the Department of Education that sets the eligibility criteria.[20]

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[20] Lee-Davis, Carolyn. The Children's Agenda Analysis of the proposed 2012 Monroe County Budget.
    www.thechildrensagenda.org

Other early childhood programs/initiatives in Rochester

City of Rochester programs for young children

In addition to a vast array of recreation and youth services offered by the City of Rochester (http://www.cityofrochester.gov/DRYS/), Rochester Public Library (RPL) programs for youth ages 8 and under include:

- Raising a Reader – targets ages birth to 18 months and families. RPL partners with Head Start to provide in-home services and training for families on how to read with children. There are funds available to serve 140 families in the Northeast part of the city. Each family receives a new book bag on every visit. At the end of the program, the family receives a book bag to keep, as well as books to begin a home library.

- Early Childhood Literacy Program at the Maplewood Library – This is a pilot project which ran from January to June 2014. It was a focused and planned three-hour class for ages 3-4 taught by teachers from Falls View Academy, and a literacy tutor. The classes use a blend of the High Scope and Common Core curricula for Pre-K, which has been approved by the RCSD. If the City sees this is a successful model, funding will likely be pursued to replicate the program at other libraries.

ROC the Future

Working within the nationally recognized STRIVE framework (www.strivenetwork.org), ROC the Future (RTF) is an effort to align initiatives and resources within the Rochester community to create a cradle-to-career educational pipeline that will serve every child in the Rochester City School District. This program is dedicated to building a strong civic infrastructure that supports improvement in student outcomes through collective impact.

In 2011-2012, Monroe Community College (MCC), the Rochester City School District and the United Way initiated the project. Large, community-wide plenary sessions were held to communicate intentions and to solicit information, interest and feedback. With this feedback and informed by evidence, the conveners selected third grade literacy as the starting point of this work.

In fall 2012, a part time program director, Richard Costanza, was provided as a contribution by MCC. Some additional start-up funds were provided by MetLife, through KnowledgeWorks, which oversees the national STRIVE organization. ROC the Future adopted the framework from the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, which focuses on attendance, expanded learning opportunities and school readiness as key elements of on-grade level reading. To establish a baseline of resources around these concepts, ROC the Future commissioned a community asset-map specific to third-grade reading. The United Way and the Farash Foundation funded this report that was developed by the Center for Governmental Research.

In summer 2013, ROC the Future appointed The Children's Agenda to serve as the backbone organization; made possible due to financial contributions from JP Morgan Private Bank, The Community Foundation and United Way. To this end, a full-time staff person was hired – Dr. Leonard M. Brock. Upon hire, staff proposed governance guidelines and bylaws that were revised and adopted by conveners. Conveners elected 4 officers: Anne Kress, MCC as Chair; Jennifer Leonard, Community Foundation as Vice-Chair; Chris Wiest, Rochester Business Association as Treasurer; Patricia Uttaro, Library Director, City of Rochester as Secretary.

Please see Appendix C, page 55 for additional information.

National League of Cities

In the fall of 2013, Rochester was one of six cities across the United States to be awarded technical assistance through the National League of Cities' Municipal Leadership to Promote Educational Alignment for Young Children program. Rochester's five goal areas are: 1) Identifying and addressing barriers to early developmental screening; 2) Increasing parent engagement in elementary schools; 3) Identifying new funding mechanisms for 3-year-old Pre-K; 4) Developing an alignment plan for Pre-K-2 curriculum; and 5) Increasing the number of children participating in summer reading programs.

Please see Appendix C, page 62 for additional information.

Early Childhood Development Initiative

The Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) is a 20+ year-old voluntary collective of community experts in early childhood. ECDI's mission is to mobilize the community to expand and improve developmentally appropriate early care and education. ECDI's focus is on children, prenatal through age eight and their families; families with few resources and supports are the highest priority. ECDI is not funded. Sponsors and partners fund programs directly.

Please see Appendix C, page 63 for additional information.

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Workgroup reports

The ELC formed four work groups to provide thorough coverage of our topic: providers, parents, policy and teacher pipeline. Each work group worked to pull together information to answer the same set of questions as illustrated in the folowing pages. After this shared process and focus groups were conducted, each group put their findings into a narrative format.

Guiding Question 1: What are Rochester's greatest strengths with respect to early learning? What can the Mayor do to build upon those strengths?

Providers:

- Providers actually work well together; real trust and cooperation among the different providers, including professional development, recruiting
- Consensus that Rochester has high quality Pre-K (4-year-olds)
- Strong advocacy groups (ECDI); Children's Agenda; ROC the Future, etc.
- Resources (training, expertise)
- Commitment of providers to collect/analyze data (RECAP)
- Reach out to ECDI and other groups to acknowledge their work; improve the connections with the City
- Connect with groups that advocate for young children; bring public focus to these groups; lift them up
- Develop and use ELC web page to help people learn more and as a point of entry
- Marketing initiative where Mayor advocates for enrollment in Pre-K; do a public service announcement (PSA) right away (this summer)

Parents:

- RECAP, a uniform, city-wide annual program evaluation
- Diversity of choices (Head Start, RCSD, CBO)
- Head Start Parent programming

Teacher Pipeline:

- Large range of teacher preparation institutions
- High standards for certification
- Bring attention to the high quality of preparation Pre-K teachers have
- Bring attention to the fact that the Mayor believes that Early Childhood Education, specifically Pre-K, is a win-win for the city of Rochester. Expanding programs to include all eligible children will not only provide the instruction and readiness skills kids need to flourish in kindergarten, but also employ more teachers, many of whom are graduating from area colleges
- The Mayor could use the bully pulpit to encourage area colleges to provide more opportunities for underrepresented minority students from Rochester to gain B-2 certification

Policy/Advocacy:

- Collaboration and shared advocacy and information sharing efforts between stakeholders with ECDI, ECEQ and others, including RECAP report
- Nationally recognized Pre-K program, which Mayor and others should highlight more as model of how Rochester can work together and succeed
- Diversity of choices for parents (RCSD, Head Start, home-based)

Guiding Question 2: What are Rochester's three weaknesses or challenges? What can the Mayor do to address them?

Providers:

- Early care, childcare are not always high quality; there are pockets of excellence, but there are areas in need of improvement

- Infrastructure problem about where the children are and where we pull them from; lack of recognition of licensed family daycare providers; need to look at why the young children they care for not accounted for; us versus them culture; how do we align care so that these providers are not afraid

- Pre-K – K summer loss

- Mayor can advocate for 3-year-olds and Pre-K-K gap

- Talk to people from Head Start (or three on three group) about shifting their focus to 3-year-olds (federal funding)

- Facilitate a connection between Head Start and family childcare providers; bridge these conversations; work with County to make these conversations happen; advocate for the subsidy reimbursement reinstated and raised

- Seeking funding for summer programming; need intensive, minimum of 6 hours per day, 6 weeks programming

- Pilot a summer learning initiative (scope to be determined) that could go to scale; could be partnership with Horizons; needs continuity through grade three

Parents:

- Information barriers for external stakeholders (parents & taxpayers in particular)

- Many provider silos and multiple enrollment processes for parents to navigate

- Inadequate funding for transportation & childcare subsidies

- Inherent conflict of interest of RCSD being both Pre-K program administrator and provider

- Fade-out of Pre-K gains by third grade

Teacher Pipeline:

- Low enrollments

- Lower salaries, advocate for the value of teaching as a profession

Policy/Advocacy:

- 0-3 year-old programming, primarily due to loss of more than 7,000 subsidy slots since 2000

- Fade-out of Pre-K gains in K-3

- Lack of summer programming between Pre-K and kindergarten (RECAP shows children lose 20-30% of Pre-K skills over summer)

- Disparities in salaries between RCSD and CBO teachers and funding formula for full-day vs. Head Start

- Disconnect between larger centers and home-based centers resulting in tiered system

- Lack of data before and after Pre-K, particularly longitudinal studies

- High kindergarten teacher turnover rate at RCSD and lack of integration between Pre-K and kindergarten practices

Guiding Question 3: What are the key data points that our final report should shine a light on?

Providers:

• Pre-K– the quality of providers in Pre-K in top 4-5% on national standards; take this model to 3-year-olds and Pre-K - K summer

• Find that we don't have enough data points to document numbers of children, where they are, need to find the kids and track them; possibly do an annual census to find them (Child and Adult Care Food program could help/also a quality indicator); could we get birth records? How do we create a census of where 1, 2, 3-year-olds (48 months) are? Communication and enrollment would be much easier

Parents:

• RECAP parent involvement metrics

• Open seats, by provider

• Program financial information: Actual per pupil & program administration costs

• K-3 student outcomes, fade-out of Pre-K gains

• Subsidy rates

Teacher Pipeline:

• Number of teachers that are prepared locally

• The need for local programs to provide quality training for teachers of young children. B-2 certifications will focus on the developmental levels of 3 and 4-year-olds. If we count on only extension programs potential teachers may not get the work they need to deal with "other people's children."

Policy/Advocacy:

• 62% of screened Pre-K students were rated delayed or below expected performance on Brigance Early Childhood Screen

• 6% of RCSD students scored proficient or higher on 3rd grade state reading assessment in 2013. 23% were proficient or higher in 2012 before Common Core assessments

• Average score of 6.1 on 1-7 scale for Pre-K students on ECERS (from RCSD testimony at ELC hearing)

Guiding Question 4: What strategies does your work group recommend to expand access to high-quality, full-day pre-K? Have these strategies been implemented in other cities? What are the key obstacles? How could the Mayor support the strategies?

Providers:

- Develop and use 311 phone service as point of access for information about Pre-K

- Develop and use ELC webpage as point of access

- Get everybody high quality from B-3

- Transportation issues: bus pass strategy, but will need to work with employers to understand the time involved

- Finding funding for busses

- Develop a Mayor's early learning support system where she pulls all the initiatives together

- Have City family days where we could enroll children

- Pennsylvania has integrated database across providers for early childhood

Parents:

(Unless otherwise noted, all strategies would be City-directed. Obstacles include funding, resistance to change.)

- Develop a city-wide parent ambassador program to build awareness of benefits of Pre-K and recruit families. (Modeled on COFI Head Start program in Chicago)

- Reduce transportation barriers through a mix of tactics:

    (1) Monitor the geographic distribution of Pre-K sites as part of ongoing City planning; develop system to alert EC community to bottlenecks, access barriers (NYC)

    (2) Expand Walking School Bus program to selected Pre-K sites (Chicago, Rochester) (Lead agency: Health Foundation)

    (3) Integrate information about public transportation into new school choice web tool/map (DC) (see below)

- Strengthen the early childhood education pipeline by advocating for child care subsidy reform and incentivizing collaboration between in-home child care and Pre-K providers (Lead: EDIC, Winning Beginnings, etc.)

Policy/Advocacy:

- Mayor's Office to create website and other tools/supports for parents to understand and navigate school choices (consider DC system)

- Study new State Pre-K program regs to determine if flexibility exists to support summer programming (or raise funds for it)

- Increase transparency of RCSD Pre-K selection processes and break down silos between RCSD, Head Start and Home-based centers (Consider including City Hall in process)

- For 0 - 3-year-old programming:

- Mayor work with Monroe County and other stakeholders to advocate for increased County subsidies for 0 - 3-year-olds

- Consider innovative policies from other cities, including:

- Campaign led by Mayor's office to raise funds for 3-year-old programming (see *Cincinnati Preschool Promise*, page 47)

- Use of Social Impact Bonds to support programming (See *Utah High Quality Preschool Program*, page 47)

Guiding Question 5: What strategies does your work group recommend to improve and sustain quality programs? Have these strategies been implemented in other cities? What are the key obstacles? How could the Mayor support the strategies?

Providers:

- Expand RECAP downwards; develop an integrated system for all early childhood programs

- Support centers becoming accredited; collaborate to find funding to support accreditation; develop an incentive like more reimbursement to have accreditation; lobby with the County to do all that

- Key obstacle: sustained funding

Parents:

Improve program accountability and transparency:

(1) Expand RECAP to include information prioritized by parents: financial data, classroom ratios and K-2 outcomes comparing Pre-K students to non- Pre-K students and providing year-to-year trends

(2) Create fair and open competitive selection process for all prospective Pre-K providers, including RCSD, give City seat at selection table

(3) Create transparent funding system where money follows child to Pre-K of parent's choice; central office services are separately accounted for (Collaboration of RCSD, City, Children's Institute)

Policy/Advocacy:

- Mayor's Office to convene community providers to help secure discounted tuition rates at local colleges and help them advocate for improved quality; Sign on to Winning Beginnings advocacy agenda

- Improve alignment with City programs, particularly libraries and recreation

- Expand RECAP report to include K-3 and Charters for uniformity and better data collection to inform fade out and improve quality

- Use RECAP report and/or ROC the Future report card to highlight state of early childhood education with community and parents with Mayor, Superintendent and County Executive

Guiding Question 6: What strategies does your work group recommend to increase parental involvement and choice? Have these strategies been implemented in other cities? What are the key obstacles? How could the Mayor support the strategies?

Providers:
- Choice at Pre-K is pretty good; for younger choice is also there
- Clear weakness on parental involvement
- Go to homes and recruit
- Tie in with CACFP program
- Marketing by Mayor
- Tap into faith community to talk to parents about involvement and to raise awareness about the value of Pre-K and other early childhood programming
- Connect with RCSD's office of family engagement

Parents:
- Create a web-based early childhood hub and Pre-K school choice tool (DC, NOLA, Philadelphia), integrate with existing referral services
- Develop a city-wide Pre-K Parent Ambassador program, modeled after COFI Head Start project in Chicago

Teacher Pipeline:
- Professional development on involving parents
- Early Childhood centers should be full service providers that include opportunities for parenting classes.
- Key obstacle: pervasive deficit perspective of City parents and families

Policy/Advocacy:
- Use Mayor's office as bully pulpit to highlight programming and convene parents, including PSAs focused on recruitment during enrollment period
- Include Mayor's office in ECDI (already done)
- Develop a city-wide Pre-K Parent Ambassador program, modeled after COFI Head Start project in Chicago

"We suggest increasing the number of UPK seats for 3-year-olds at community-based daycares, not just the Rochester City School District, so that parents, regardless of zipcode can choose where their children attend UPK, especially if a child and family has a long and positive history with a daycare."

-Ida Perez, IBERO

Providers

It is widely accepted among providers that Pre-K in Rochester is of high quality. We found that the early childhood community is a tight-knit group of committed educators who work well together, cooperating on professional development and recruitment. Providers are committed to collecting and analyzing data through the annual Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Project (RECAP) process. There are strong local advocacy groups, including the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI), the Children's Agenda and ROC the Future that are improving the early learning context in Rochester and could serve as an early learning support system for the Mayor, should she wish to draw upon these initiatives. The provider focus group suggested we remember that the County is also a service provider, not just a funder and as such, has a captive audience. The County could help track children and produce a full service early learning system. The Mayor could consider advocating for more "community schools" such as the one at School 17 that provides social services, instruction and health care.

We feel that the Mayor could play a positive role in communicating the strengths of the Pre-K provider community by building better connections between these various organizations and City Hall. The City could develop a vibrant web page that would educate Rochester families about the importance of early childhood development and that could serve as a single point of entry for families who would like to find a provider. Furthermore, the Mayor could do PSAs, in English and Spanish,[21] on radio and television promoting enrollment in Pre-K at key times during the year.

We did find some weaknesses that are worthy of attention. While Pre-K is of high quality, early childcare in Rochester is not always of high quality. There are pockets of excellence, but there are areas of improvement. Rochester has an infrastructure problem that prevents a shared understanding of where children are as they pass through various systems (e.g. from the County to the school district). There is a general lack of recognition of licensed family daycare centers in the early childhood community, some of which is based on a lack of trust on the part of family daycare providers. It appears there is an "us vs. them" culture that exists between family daycare providers and Pre-K providers. Given that family daycare providers would lose money if their children enroll in Pre-K, some providers talk parents out of switching. The Mayor could help this divide by facilitating a connection between Pre-K providers, Head Start and family daycare providers that might ameliorate these tensions.

"A 3-year-old child is able to observe, absorb and engage in a learning environment that is age-appropriate and pertains to the life skills they needs as learners. Children at any age are very curious; thus they can explore the classroom and begin to bloom as learners."

-Shirley Green, Montessori Academy

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[21] Provisions should be made for translation into other languages as needed. In particular, the large Somali refugee population needs to be accounted for.

There is a clear gap in high quality services for 3-year-olds. The cost of high quality childcare is a barrier for many families, which leads to many families going unserved. This gap results in many 3-year-olds not being prepared for even a developmentally appropriate Pre-K setting. Additionally, the provider supply line is underutilized which in turn threatens fiscal viability. The Mayor could help with the cost of childcare by advocating with the County to reinstate and increase childcare subsidies so that low-income working families can access quality programs.

Another apparent gap is what is called the "summer learning loss" between Pre-K and kindergarten. One way to think of this is that children who do not participate in high quality summer programming "lose" what they have learned in Pre-K before entering kindergarten. Because the current academically focused RCSD kindergarten curriculum is developmentally inappropriate, it puts young children entering kindergarten at a disadvantage. The Mayor could use her bully pulpit to advocate for smaller class sizes, high performing teachers (some low performing teachers are "dumped" in kindergarten) and a more developmentally appropriate kindergarten curriculum.

However we look at it, the summer between Pre-K and kindergarten offers the Mayor a unique opportunity to seek funding that would provide high quality education for transitioning children. This program should be an intensive six-week, six hours per day program of high quality play-based instruction. Rochester Children's Nursery is starting a summer program that could serve as a City model. The Mayor could pilot a summer learning initiative that would eventually go to scale. Horizons may be a good partner in this endeavor. Recreation centers and libraries might play a key role in reducing this summer loss. A comprehensive program that could take 3-year-olds to third grade would be an important priority for the Mayor.

We find that there are not enough data points to track children from birth to Pre-K. We strongly urge the Mayor to take leadership in putting together a way to track children who need services so that none are "lost." Perhaps we could do an annual census, beginning with accessing birth records. The Child and Adult Care Food program may be of help. RECAP offers a comprehensive set of data points for children who we know are in Pre-K, but could be expanded "down" to include children from birth to 47 months. Accreditation would provide an additional data point that families could use to determine high quality. There are nine accredited Pre-K sites in Rochester at this time, but increasing that number could be something for which the Mayor could advocate. She could develop a financial incentive in which accredited centers would receive more funding. Funding remains an obstacle for universal accreditation. The Mayor could advocate for funding from the County or State to support centers getting and maintaining accreditation.

Access to high quality Pre-K is hampered by several factors. One key factor is lack of awareness, due to poor communication, of the positive role of Pre-K in child development. The most needy families are not aware of Pre-K. We do recommend a robust City webpage that could serve as a single point of access to information, however, not everyone has access to web-based sources. We suggest adding Pre-K information to the existing 311-phone service, if it is not currently available. Surprisingly, the provider focus group pointed out that many Rochester residents do not know about the availability of the 311 information and referral service. Apparently, word of mouth is an important source of information for Rochester families. The Mayor could sponsor City Family

Days where families could enroll their young children in Pre-K or new programs for 3-year-olds and Pre-K-K summer transition students. The provider focus group suggested we put pamphlets in all recreation centers and libraries, that we go door-to-door and neighborhood canvassing wearing t-shirts that would attract attention, using TV, radio and billboards to get the word out. In the past, flyers have gone into City water bills; this is something the Mayor might consider doing again. Other government assistance programs (WIC, SSI) could post flyers or put them into mailings. City Hall could hand out Pre-K posters with licenses for businesses. The provider focus group suggested that the Mayor create an app, with both English and Spanish options, whereby families can have easy access to information about Pre-K programs. The Mayor could also create a "family forum" similar to the provider forum that offers families an authentic voice in their child's early education.

Such family days may also improve family involvement, which is another key weakness for Pre-K at this time. We suggest a program that would go into homes and communities for recruitment and to develop relationships with families as one way to improve family involvement. We could tap into faith communities to talk to families about the importance of their involvement in their children's development and to raise awareness about the value of Pre-K and other early childhood programming. Facilitating a connection with RCSD's office of parent engagement is another avenue to pursue. Language barriers also impact family participation. Having materials in multiple languages and translators at events are key strategies to ameliorate these barriers. Times of meetings need to accommodate family schedules as does enrollment processes and locations. Sometimes families don't get their first choice of school and are left with a location that is far from their home, which leads to transportation difficulties.

Lack of transportation is another key issue impacting access. Very few Pre-K providers offer transportation services due to its high cost. The RCSD does offer bus passes for families; however, this is not always convenient, especially when family members are trying to get to work on a given schedule. The downside to universal transportation, however, is a reduction in face-to-face interaction with families. Finding funding for universal transportation for families could be a key action taken by the Mayor.

"We are neighborhood-based and get to know the families and individuals that participate in our programs. Overall, over half of our staff members live in the neighborhoods we serve, 80% live in the city of Rochester... We do not pay as much as the district for teachers and often have less experienced staff. They bring energy, passion, creativity and more, but need support."

-Sue Davin, Community Place

"We need to give parents a chance to learn new skills; we need to support them in having a voice in issues important to them and their children; and we need to listen to their concerns."
-Mary Jo Brach, ECDI

The provider focus group was asked to comment specifically on what we have observed to be tensions between RCSD and Community Based Organizations. Several important points were raised:

- Existing professional development and training is working but an expansion is needed for unified delivery of services afforded to RSCD, Pre-K agencies, stakeholders and/or community partners.

- Better ways and opportunities for sharing information in the Partners Forum; and overall, more open communications with each stakeholder are needed. Also, there's a need to define what it means to be "kindergarten ready."

- The need for the Forum to identify issues and problems faster and address these matters with a solid solution. The community needs to be informed of the process and resolutions.

- The various multiple community partnerships such as the Partnership Forum, Policy Advisory Council and Family Resource Center need to be maintained, integrated and expanded. This will strengthen communications and coordination and influence policy decisions that affect the programs.

- Families enroll in multiple locations and the agencies, providers or District do not know where the child may be; as a result, an agency's budget may be negatively impacted because it is expecting to provide services for the child but the family has selected another service provider that can meet their needs, such as transportation.

- There is a need to have cross-representation and support at the table, especially with the Forum, which needs to include a representative from the City of Rochester.

- An opportunity exists for greater collaboration, coordination and communications between school principals and providers. There is a disconnect with the RCSD because the principals are not at the table as constituents.

- There needs to be a common application form for services, whenever possible and the process should be automated to maintain confidentiality.

- Attention needs to be given to ensuring consistency and commonality in evaluations and delivery of services.

- The RCSD and Pre-K, with the assistance of community, developed and executed a plan in accordance to New York State's requirements and provisions 25 years ago. That plan should continue to be a framework for advocacy and shaping policy regarding Pre-K programs around children.

- There needs to be an advocate for change at the State level, one who could advocate for income-eligible daycare funding from the State, for the County. We need as much advocacy as possible – this type of funding helps get young children into quality Pre-K programs.

Parents

Parent skepticism

Our work group was comprised of parents, advocates and non-educators, charged with representing the parent interest in our investigation of the early childhood system. As such, we bring an outsider's perspective to a policy area that has largely been dominated by a relatively small and tight-knit group of early childhood professionals. Our most striking finding is that the message of Rochester's Pre-K excellence, widely held among the early childhood "insiders" and is not reaching parents and more broadly, taxpayers. While our work group considered Rochester's annual evaluation (RECAP) an asset, we found that few, if any, parents or taxpayers had ever read the report and many were surprised by the findings. Throughout our fact-finding, we also noted an underlying skepticism about the high-quality claim, among both our work group members and the parents who gave us feedback.

The root source of this skepticism seems to be the very structure of the Pre-K program. Concern centered on the program's lack of state oversight and checks and balances, especially when compared to New York State's K-12 public education accountability system and the federal Head Start program. "The fox guarding the hen house," "incestuous" and "self-serving" were some of the ways our work group described the city school district's multiple roles as Pre-K program administrator, program regulator and provider. Our work group was particularly concerned about the lack of public oversight during the provider selection process and what we viewed as a grossly inequitable distribution of the $20 million grant between district and community-based Pre-K providers. Another concern was that there appeared to be no financial transparency and few safeguards to limit central office costs and ensure the full per pupil allocation flowed to the classroom. As one of our work group members boldly said, "from my perspective, it looks as if the Pre-K program budget is balanced on the backs of the community-based providers, whose teachers are living pretty darn close to the poverty level. We have a duty to speak up about this." (It's worth noting that in New York City, Mayor DeBlasio shared our concern about income inequality between public and community-based teachers and devised a "comparable pay" mechanism to make pay more fair across sectors. The Head Start program has a similar mechanism.)

The parent skepticism also appears to stem from the well-documented fade-out of academic gains over the long-term. As one of our work group members asked, "How can it be that Rochester has both the best Pre-K in the country and the worst graduation rates for black boys in the country? Those two claims don't square." Another asked, "Why isn't the early childhood community kicking and screaming about their good work being lost by third-grade?"

Unlike the Head Start program, where federal law grants parents governance rights and mandates transparency, parents have no remedy under NYS' Pre-K program to address these concerns. Although the Mayor has no statutory obligation to intervene on the parents' behalf, we urge her to use the weight of the office to improve public oversight of the Pre-K program. Left unaddressed, we believe this skepticism among the external stakeholders threatens the sustainability of the state's program, among the most expensive in the country. While our work group supports the Provider Workgroup's recommendation to expand Pre-K to 3-year-olds and summers, it is conditioned on a serious effort to improve program accountability and transparency.

Silos and barriers to participation

Parents shared frustration about having to navigate so many silos and cumbersome procedures. To better understand the parent frustration, our group pored over Rochester's existing enrollment procedures and investigated those in model cities. Currently, there are three separate enrollment processes for Head Start, the Rochester City School District and the community-based providers. There is no common application, master wait/open list or official mechanism to help parents identify where there are openings or apply to multiple schools. There is only limited information available about schools and with the exception of the Head Start enrollment process, a very paper-driven, English dominant enrollment process. There is no mechanism to compare schools and parents would have to call the state to find out if a provider was cited during an inspection.

The District of Columbia, Denver and New Orleans are among the cities with robust school finder tools and provide good models to Rochester. See Promising Practices section for more details.

The following data were considered most important to parents during the school selection process:
- School location, directions and links to public transit information ■ Accreditation
- Inspection history data ■ Key quality data from RECAP ■ Class size, student-teacher ratio
- Teacher qualifications ■ Teacher turnover rate ■ Number of open seats ■ Program hours
- Per pupil spending ■ On-site wrap around services ■ Transportation available
- Special programs/services offered ■ Student suspension rates

Parent empowerment, not involvement

It is no accident that the Head Start program has a well designed "one-stop-shop," precisely the enrollment procedure parents described to us they wanted. When parents have a role in governance like they do in Head Start, they have real levers to make program improvements and address barriers to their involvement. This is not so under New York State's Pre-K program, what we see as a serious flaw of the law.

Our work group sees this lack of true parent empowerment and opportunities for leadership at the heart of the Pre-K program's chronic low parent participation and under-enrollment, reported in the last RECAP report. We also saw no signs that the City School District was comfortable granting parents this power. We are optimistic that the City of Rochester has identified parent engagement as one of its focus areas under the League of Cities/ROC the future initiative. We are particularly excited about the historic opportunity of a "parent mayor" and see Mayor Warren as an important role model to Rochester's parents, uniquely positioned to lead the shift from traditional parent involvement to parent empowerment that we see as critical.

As the City's new parent programming takes shape, we urge you to consider the following themes that emerged in our work with parents and our research on best practices. First, information barriers must be addressed, particularly when English is not a first language. A lack of tools to make informed decisions about Pre-K was the most common complaint we heard from parents. The District of Columbia, Denver and New Orleans are cities that took these information gaps seriously and invested in smart and intuitive web tools for parents. Rochester should do the same. Second, we need to build parent capacity through peer-to-peer training and leadership development. In Chicago, a Parent Ambassadors program has been credited with connecting to "hard-to-reach parents and fully enrolling their Pre-K program. We see this in-person, peer recruiting strategy as an important complement to the web-based information tools we've recommended. Third, give parents a role in decision-making if you want them to be invested in Rochester's early childhood education system. With the exception of Head Start, parents don't have rights; they will need a champion to win them. See Promising Practices section for more details.

Our vision: Rochester Pre-K Promise

While we appreciate that the full Council might prefer more incremental change, our work group wanted to highlight the Cincinnati Pre-K Promise as a program Rochester should seriously consider replicating. Founded by the mayor of Cincinnati, the project blends public and private funding and has been key to expanding high-quality early education in Cincinnati. The program is agnostic on provider type and any provider—public, private or charter—can qualify so long as they meet quality standards. At the heart of the program is the concept of "money following the child" to the school of a parent's choice. Rather than the school district selecting providers, parents choose a provider from the qualified list and spend "tuition credits." In addition, funds are used to conduct research, advocacy and to build broad community engagement, areas that we see as missing or weak in our local landscape.

Policy

The policy landscape around Pre-K and early childhood education is rapidly changing in New York State and across the nation. Rochester is well positioned to take advantage of these changes due to close stakeholder collaboration and the high quality of existing Pre-K programming. At the same time, the community faces significant challenges, including poor student outcomes before and after the Pre-K year; a lack of summer programming before kindergarten; and a lack of data to better understand and explain issues such as the troubling fade-out that happens by 3rd grade. For example, we know that 62% of screened Pre-K students were rated delayed or below expected performance on the Brigance Early Childhood Screen and only 6% of RCSD students scored proficient on state reading assessments in 2013. Until these issues are better understood and addressed, Rochester's Pre-K system stands out as an island of success in a system that is failing students both before and after their participation.

While these challenges are both real and troubling, it is well worth noting and celebrating the success of Rochester's Pre-K program. In a sea of bad news surrounding Rochester students, the Pre-K program has an average score of 6.1 over the last ten years on a scale of 1-7 on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS), which is 1.8 standard deviations above the American and Western European averages. Additionally, Pre-K students showed an average of 21 months of growth during the school year on the Child Observation Record, which is recognized as one of the premier instruments for measuring intervention efforts. The success of Pre-K should be highlighted by the mayor and other community leaders as an example of how Rochester can succeed when it works together on behalf of kids. Given the program's success, community leaders should determine strategies for bringing the best practices of Pre-K into kindergarten and beyond, including more collaborative professional development opportunities for early childhood educators and RCSD teachers and staff.

This work group wanted to highlight several programs underway in Cincinnati that are focused on school readiness and early literacy. Cincinnati started the Strive Together collective impact model, which has been adopted by Rochester and ROC the Future. However, they are much further ahead of Rochester in many respects, including a commitment to transformative action on early learning through the following initiatives:

- **Read On!** is a multi-year, multi-faceted campaign for early grade-level reading that includes a focus on kindergarten readiness, summer learning, attendance, community will and parent engagement.

- **Read On!** Venture Philanthropy Fund is designed to provide resources for bringing proven early childhood strategies to scale; spread best practices through collaboratives working in different areas of early grade-level reading and providing access to capital for new, innovative ideas to pilot. The goal is to raise $20 million over 5 years through local and national investments to support this work.

- **Cincinnati Pre-School Promise** is an independent, cross-sector effort to ensure ALL children in Cincinnati have the opportunity to attend quality pre-school at age 3 and 4. The program is agnostic on provider type and any provider-- public, private or charter--can qualify so long as they meet quality standards. The Promise would provide tuition credits to families on an income-based sliding scale; establish a market for quality by providing more tuition assistance for parents who choose higher rated programs; support for centers to improve their quality; and an accountable structure focused on stewardship of resources, transparency and continuous improvement.

The work group believes Rochester should study these models as strategies for transitioning from discussion to action in providing expanded, high-quality learning opportunities for our children. There are several other strategies City Hall should consider to strengthen early childhood access, quality and parental engagement, including:

- Improved alignment with City programs, particularly Libraries and Recreation;

- Support of the Winning Beginnings early childhood advocacy agenda;

- Using the Mayor's Office to convene community providers to help improve quality and secure services such as discounted tuition rates at local colleges;

- Advocate for flexibility in the new state Pre-K program to allow funds to be used for summer programming before kindergarten;

- Work closely with the County and other community stakeholders to advocate for increased childcare subsidies for younger children;

- Hold an annual event with County and RCSD that highlights results of the RECAP report and other report cards, such as ROC the Future and ACT Rochester, to discuss key results, make commitments to improve and better engage families and community leaders; and

- Review and consider innovative programs from other cities where mayors have led efforts to improve and expand early childhood education, such as Cincinnati, Salt Lake City and Columbus.

Teacher Pipeline

New York State requires the following criteria to certify early childhood teachers:[22]

All teachers in the universal full-day pre-kindergarten program shall meet the same teacher certification standards applicable to public schools. Pre-kindergarten teachers providing instruction through this section shall possess:

a. a teaching license or certificate valid for service in the early childhood grades; or

b. a teaching license or certificate for students with disabilities valid for service in early childhood grades; or

c. for eligible agencies as defined in paragraph b of subdivision one of section thirty-six hundred two-e of this part that are not schools, a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related field and a written plan to obtain a certification valid for service in the early childhood grades as follows:

    i. for teachers hired on or after the effective date of this section as the teacher for a universal full-day pre kindergarten classroom, within three years after commencing employment, at which time such certification shall be required for employment; and

    ii. for teachers hired by such provider prior to the effective date of this section for other early childhood care and education programs, no later than June thirtieth, two thousand seventeen, at which time such certification shall be required for employment.

d. Completion of a NYS Registered Program - Early Childhood Education (Birth-Grade 2)

e. Institutional Recommendation - Early Childhood Education (Birth-Grade 2)

f. NYS Teacher Certification Exam - Liberal Arts and Science Test (LAST)

g. NYS Teacher Certification Exam - Elementary Assessment of Teaching Skills (ATS-W)

h. Content Specialty Test (CST) - Multi-Subject

i. Workshop - Dignity For All Students Act

j. Fingerprint Clearance

As of April 1, 2014, there are 120 teachers in all Pre-K classrooms. Only two are not permanently certified (therefore have teacher's certification and a masters degree). Those two are in CBOs and are currently in the process of and close to getting their permanent certifications. Average starting salary is $42,000 - $45,000 for RCSD teachers and $35,000 - $42,000 for CBOs.

The Teacher Pipeline work group[23] reviewed teacher preparation institutions in Western New York, through websites and follow-up phone calls to determine the potential pool of Pre-K teachers available to Rochester. Out of 19 teacher preparation programs in Western New York, 15 offer NYS B-2 certification through either undergraduate or graduate programs. Childhood certification (grades 1-6) can get certifications that extend their grades 1-6 certifications to early childhood at most of these institutions.

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[22] Source: http://eservices.nysed.gov/teach/certhelp/CertRequirementHelp.do\

[23] This work group is indebted to the diligent work of University of Rochester doctoral student Emily Perkins for her help with this research.

Institution	# students 2014	2015	2016	2017
Alfred	18	15		
Brockport[24]	Closed program			
Buffalo State	No response			
Canisius	30	14	10	10
Cazenova	2	3	3	9
Daemon	No response			
Fredonia	20-30	20-30	20-30	20-30
Geneseo	20	19	12	14
Keuka	12	4	10	6
Nazareth	No response			
Niagara	No response			
Roberts Wesleyan	4	4	4	4
Syracuse	No response			
Buffalo	No response			
University of Rochester	2	2	2	2

Fredonia has the largest program with an average of 25 students graduating over the next three years. The University of Rochester has the smallest program, which projects approximately two students graduating with a Master's degree in each of the next four years. Even though the numbers of enrollments will vary, we can expect approximately 100 teachers available per year over the next four years. Teacher turnover rates in RCSD run consistently about 6%, while the turnover rate for CBOs is about 16%. There does not appear to be a shortage at this time.

The range of teacher preparation institutions in the area is a key strength of the Rochester early learning context that the Mayor could highlight. Preparation is of high quality in that it meets the demanding requirements of NYS. The Mayor could capitalize on her belief in early learning to argue for expanding programs to include all Rochester children. This advocacy would not only provide the instruction and readiness skills young children need to flourish in school, but will also employ more teachers, many of whom are graduating from these area colleges and universities. However, there remains a low number of teachers of color in Pre-K and in area teacher preparation institutions. Furthermore, many Pre-K teachers do not live in Rochester. The Mayor could encourage area colleges and universities to more aggressively recruit teachers of color to gain B-2 certification and use the Rochester Educator Housing Fund to support teachers living in the city.

Another way the Mayor could boost the quality and diversity of Rochester's Pre-K teachers is to advocate for the value of teaching as a profession. This advocacy could impact low enrollments in B-2 certification programs and may help to increase what tends to be low salaries of early education teachers.

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[24] Closed their B-2 certification due to low enrollment

Final Recommendations

The Final Recommendations reflect the diverse composition of the ELC and what we hope will become the new template for addressing Rochester's public policy challenges. We are comprised of early childhood experts, community and business leaders and parents. Some of us are academics, others are practitioners. Some lead establishment institutions, others of us advocate for change. Although we brought significantly different perspectives to the work, we were united in the goal of ensuring a high-quality early education for every Rochester child.

Across the four work groups, consensus emerged around three critical gaps in Rochester's early childhood landscape, gaps where the mayor could play a value-added role: Resources, Accountability and Parent Empowerment. Below the discussion of each gap area are bulleted actions recommended by the different work groups. The range of recommendations reflects the diversity of perspectives that we brought to the ELC.

Resource Allocation and Alignment

High-quality early learning for all children is arguably one of the best investments a city can make in its future. From improving graduation rates to reducing crime to decreasing social services costs, the benefits of high-quality Pre-K are many.[25] In addition, new economic research suggests a big return on the early childhood investment. The national business organization, Ready Nation, reports that for every $1 invested in high-quality Pre-K education, there is a $1.79 economic return, more than the same investment in the manufacturing or retail sectors.[26] In light of this large and growing evidence base on early education, mayors are increasingly leading efforts to expand programming and increase quality in their cities. Indeed, one of the most important roles a mayor can play is that of chief fundraiser. Since 2007, Denver has raised more than $40 million for high-quality Pre-K through a 12-cent tax on purchases over $100. In Salt Lake City, the mayor has led the first social impact bond program targeting early childhood education, which will blend private capital and other funding sources. In Cincinnati, the mayor has spearheaded the Pre-K Promise, which is aggressively raising public and private funds so that all three and 4-year-olds have the opportunity to attend quality Pre-K. Mayor DeBlasio's high-profile campaign to expand access to Pre-K resulted in New York City receiving $300 million of the state's $340 million Pre-K allocation.

There was strong consensus among Council members and stakeholders who gave testimony that the City of Rochester's priority should be funding programming gaps before and after Pre-K. Preliminary estimates suggest that there are currently 1,700 3-year-olds not enrolled in a Pre-K program that would greatly benefit from an extra year, at a cost of approximately $6 million per year.

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[25] Barnett, S. (2012) Investing in Effective Early Education: Getting NY Back on a Path to Success. National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from www.centerforchildrensinititatives.org.

[26] Ready Nation report. http://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/news/2014/04/24/exclusive-report-shows-investments-in-pre-k-pay.html

High-quality summer programming is estimated to cost an additional $1,100 per pupil.[27] An important follow up for the mayor would be to conduct a thorough cost analysis of meeting the needs of 3-year-olds and mediating summer learning loss.

We recommend the City consider the following strategies to fully fund a robust early childhood system in Rochester:

• Create a City program aimed at stemming summer learning loss, particularly the summer before kindergarten;

• Join the Winning Beginnings Coalition to lobby for additional public funding for early childhood programming, childcare subsidy increases and transportation funding;

• Pursue innovative funding vehicles like social impact bonds and public-private partnerships to fund early childhood priorities where public funding is inadequate; and

• Convene an inter-agency body to coordinate Birth to 8 services, braid funding and pursue collaborative solutions to stretch limited public funds.

• Take leadership in funding childcare subsidies. Subsidies fund opportunities for children in working families to receive high quality early education, which is often too expensive for many families. Currently over 50% of eligible children are unserved.

In addition to advocating for adequate funding, we believe the mayor can play an important role in addressing resource disparity between the public and private Pre-K providers. We heard many concerns about resource allocation from CBOs, which, among other things translates into salary inequality. According to the 2014-15 Rochester City School District Budget, the average salary for a district Pre-K teacher is $61,334; $71,310 for special education teachers. The same teacher in a community-based setting, with the same credentials, makes an average hourly salary of $23.72, which roughly translates to a maximum of $33,208 annually. The disparity is even greater when benefits are factored in.[28]

We highlight this salary inequality for two important reasons. First, low salaries are closely linked to high teacher turnover and quality problems.[29] According to the district's Office of Pre-K administration, the average teacher turnover of community-based providers is as much as five times higher than that of the district. In the last two years alone, seven community-based providers reported 50% or greater teacher turnover. Second, testimonial evidence from providers suggests that these lower-paid teachers are more likely to live in the city.[30]

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[27] Estimates based on information provided by the Early Childhood Development Institute. The $6 million figure assumes $3,200-$3,800 per pupil costs, the same as half-day costs for 4-year-old programs delivered by community-based providers. Summer costs based on a pilot program run by the Rochester Children's Network and Friendship Children's Center.

[28] Both the Head Start program and New York City's Pre-K program have adopted mechanisms to ensure "comparable pay." Wall, P. (2014) In teacher pay gap, another obstacle for DeBlasio's Pre-K plan. Chalkbeat New York. http://ny.chalkbeat.org/2014/02/06/in-teacher-pay-gap-another-obstacle-for-de-blasios-pre-k-plan/#.U6XnGdgg9jo

[29] Barnett, S. (2003) Low Wages=Low Quality. Solving the Real Preschool Teacher Crisis. National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from www.centerforchildrensinititatives.org.

[30] A 2009 Rochester City School District analysis estimated that fewer than 24% of Rochester teachers lived in the city, in sharp contrast to the 80% of educators by the Community Place of Rochester.

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"Head Start has been essentially flat-funded for the past ten years and the district formula for allocation of funds to community providers is flawed. There are opportunities to more equitably distribute resources of this community."
-Loretta Kruger, Head Start

We believe that better financial reporting is a critical first step toward addressing this resource disparity, as we outline in the next section. In addition, we recommend that the mayor use her economic development toolkit to help address the disparity and level the playing field for the community-based providers, for example:

• Reduce start-up barriers and facility costs for small providers by making City facilities available for use at subsidized rates;

• Expand the City's housing credit program to all Pre-K teachers and teaching assistants (district, community-based organization or charter school) who want to teach and live in Rochester; and

• Convene a consortium of local teacher colleges aimed at reducing the tuition burden for employees of small providers pursuing a degree in early childhood education and recruiting more teachers of color to the field.

Transparency and accountability

In contrast to the K-12 public education system, the state education department plays a relatively arms-length role in regulating Pre-K programs in New York State.[31] For example, there are no state-issued school report cards measuring educational inputs or quality like there are for elementary and secondary schools, a problem repeatedly raised by parents during our fact-finding. Nor are there state-issued fiscal reports, making basic questions about program costs difficult to answer and masking resource disparity between district and community-based providers.[32] In fact, state law delegates program evaluation and reporting to the local school districts, which also act as the Pre-K program administrator and a provider themselves. Indeed, most of the concerns we heard from community-based providers and parents centered on the multiple—and at times, conflicting--roles the school district plays in the Pre-K space. The fact that charter schools are now eligible to compete for Pre-K funding will potentially further complicate the matter.

The ELC firmly believes that public confidence is vital to sustaining a vibrant and fully funded Pre-K program and that City Hall can and should play an important role ensuring the public's trust. City Hall is uniquely positioned to be an impartial third party in Rochester's Pre-K landscape and champion of public oversight at the local level. Specifically, we recommend that the City of Rochester:

• Represent the interests of Rochester taxpayers and parents at the district's Pre-K decision-making table, where local grant allocation and policy are decided;

• Advocate for a transparent and simplified Pre-K funding system at the local level, where "money follows the child," actual costs are reported to the public annually and administrative overhead is kept in check;

• Advocate for a fair and open Pre-K provider selection process at the local level, ensuring taxpayers that all providers—district, community-based or charter are selected based on evidence of program quality and compliance;

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[31] "In Albany, officials wave Pre-K warning flags for New York City" Chalkbeat. http://ny.chalkbeat.org/2014/04/28/in-albany-officials-wave-pre-k-warning-flags-for-new-york-city/#.U6MS2dgg9jo

[32] Barnett, S. (2003) Low Wages=Low Quality. Solving the Real Preschool Teacher Crisis. National Institute for Early Education Research. Retrieved from www.centerforchildrensinititatives.org.

- Commission research identified as critical to advancing the sector: 1) An annual census of 2- 3- and 4-year-olds and 2) A city-wide study of the short- and long-term academic gains of students that attended high-quality Pre-K versus those who did not, with an eye toward understanding ways to stem the fade-out of Pre-K gains. We recommend this research be aligned with ROC the Future.

- Refine and bolster the existing Pre-K Policy Advisory Council (PAC), by recommending that the Pre-K PAC add at least one City of Rochester representative to the table to formally link and align the work and recommendations of the ELC and the ongoing work of the City of Rochester to the Pre-K PAC work plan and efforts.

- Request the Pre-K PAC submit a quarterly report with updates and recommendations to the RCSD School Board and the Mayor.

Parent empowerment and outreach

In the latest RECAP report, program evaluators sounded the alarm about "stubbornly low" parent involvement in the Pre-K program, urging "entirely different approaches … if parent participation is desired." This call for a radically new approach to involving parents was echoed by the parent representatives on the ELC, as well as by parents who participated in our public hearings and focus group.

We feel strongly that any new approach to parent involvement in Rochester must include new players and a new philosophy. We are optimistic that the City of Rochester has stepped forward and identified parent involvement as one of the focus areas in their League of Cities/ROC the Future initiatives. As the City begins to design its parent involvement program, we urge the Mayor to prioritize programming for parents of young children and consider the following recommendations.

The Mayor should lead a shift away from traditional parent involvement toward authentic parent empowerment and leadership, similar to Head Start's parent involvement and aligned with the City's work on the National League of Cities Educational Alignment project, which has a focus on parent engagement and empowerment. This new approach should focus on removing information barriers, providing opportunities for peer-to-peer training and involving parents in decision-making about the Pre-K program. Specifically, we recommend the City should:

- Replicate the Chicago Parent Ambassador program, a peer-to-peer recruiting effort credited with fully enrolling Chicago's Head Start program;

- Enlist City librarians as early childhood navigators, trained to facilitate Pre-K enrollment and connect parents to birth to 8 resources;

- Cross-promote early childhood programs in City publications, at City kiosks and through Public Service Announcements featuring Mayor Warren as a Pre-K parent;

- Invest in new web-based information tools to aid parents and parent advocates in making informed Pre-K enrollment decisions, integrated with existing referrals services like 311.

- Encourage all Pre-K providers to opt-in to a common application process to simplify the enrollment process for parents; and

- Ensure that all materials and web resources are translated into the languages needed to serve all Rochester families.

Promising Practices

Innovative approaches to funding early childhood education

Read On! is a multi-year, multi-faceted campaign for early grade-level reading that includes a focus on kindergarten readiness, summer learning, attendance, community will and parent engagement.

Read On! Venture Philanthropy Fund is designed to provide resources for bringing proven early childhood strategies to scale; spread best practices through collaboratives working in different areas of early grade-level reading and providing access to capital for new, innovative ideas to pilot. The goal is to raise $20 million over five years through local and national investments to support this work.

Cincinnati Pre-School Promise
A public-private partnership based on three factors to ensure success: Parent choice, building on existing resources and sustainable funding. See additional information in the Parent Workgroup section of this report and at http://www.cincy-promise.org/index.html

Denver PreSchool Program
The Denver PreSchool Program provides tuition support for all Denver families with a child in the last year of preschool before kindergarten, which is funded by a dedicated sales tax. Since 2007, the program has raised $40 million, providing quality preschool to over 25,000 Denver children. 70% of the Denver 4-year-olds are enrolled in the program, with over 90% of graduates being prepared for success in kindergarten. For additional information, visit www.dpp.org

Utah High Quality Pre-K Social Impact Bond Program
The Utah program represents the first Social Impact Bond targeting early childhood education. It is designed to deliver a high impact and targeted curriculum to increase school readiness and academic performance among 3- and 4-year-olds. As a result of entering kindergarten better prepared, it is expected that fewer children will use special education and remedial services in kindergarten through 12th grade, which results in cost savings for school districts, the State of Utah and other government entities. The first $1 million investment in this program will enable 450-600 children to attend pre-school this fall. Funding is provided through a mix of private capital and other public funding sources which provide Pay-for-Success payments to repay the loans, based on the cost-savings associated with the reduced use of special education and ancillary services. For more information, please visit: http://www.goldmansachs.com/what-we-do/investing-and-lending/urban-investments/case-studies/impact-bond-slc-multimedia/fact-sheet-pdf.pdf
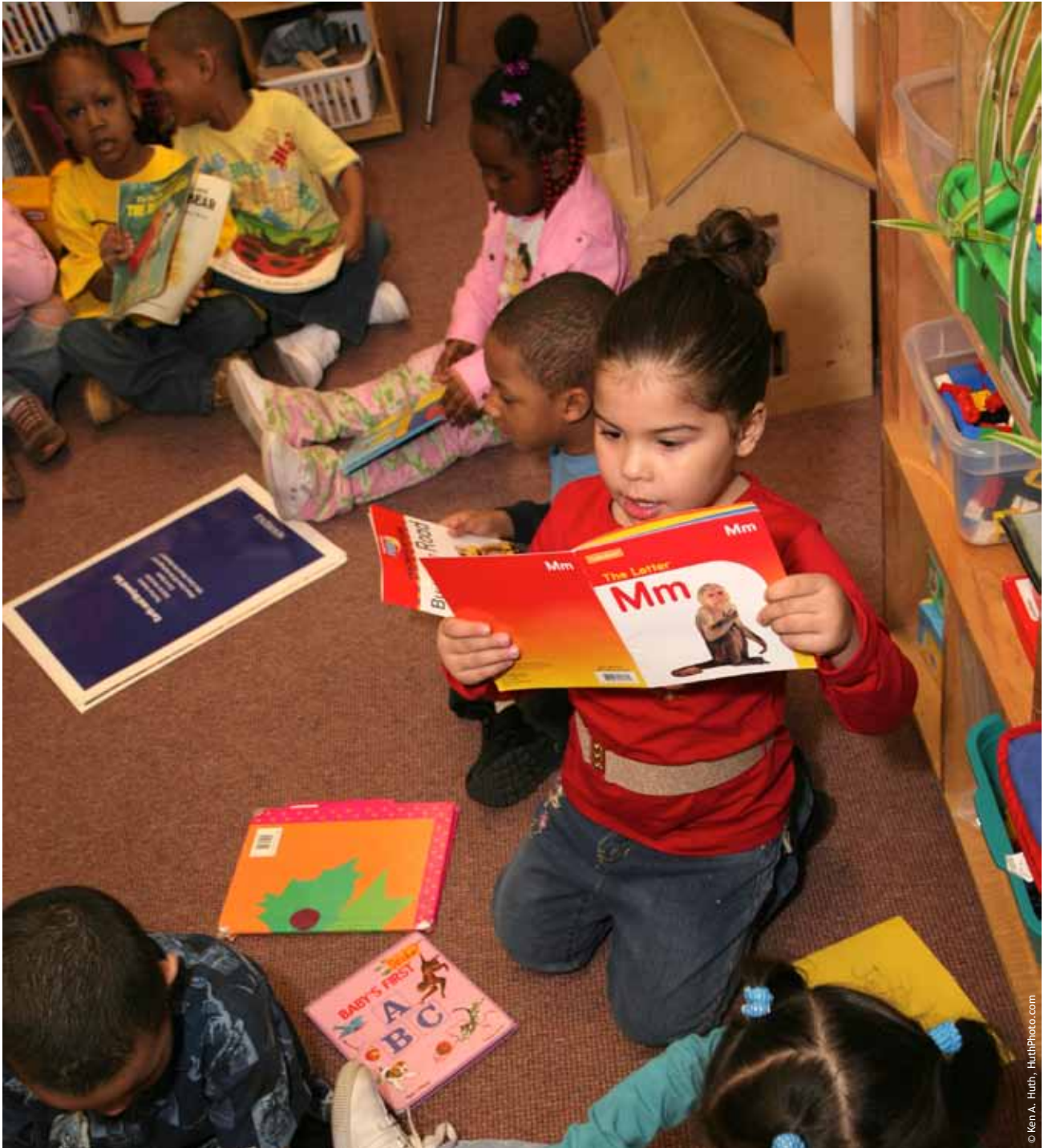
"The challenges faced by the YMCA include transportation, insufficient funding for student supplies and a district administrative process which is often cumbersome."

-Sara Cole, YMCA

Inter-agency collaboration and integration

KIDS Database, Philadelphia

http://www2.gse.upenn.edu/child/projects/kids

The Kids Integrated Data System (KIDS) is a nationally recognized integrated data system for research and evaluation to improve the public health, social and educational services of children and youth in the City of Philadelphia. A collaboration among the City of Philadelphia, the School District of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania, KIDS was built to "create a shared capacity for Philadelphia's civic leaders to produce and use quality information to inform decision making around public policy and practice. KIDS includes data from children's vital statistics, physical and behavioral health services, homelessness and child welfare services and public school education."

Master Child Index, New York City

http://www.nursingcenter.com/lnc/pdfjournal?AID=534331&an=00124784-200411001-00012&Journal_ID=&Issue_ID=

The project is an integrated database of childhood immunization and lead test registry databases, coordinated by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Parent empowerment and choice

Denver Public Schools

http://schoolchoice.dpsk12.org/early-education/

Learn DC

http://www.learndc.org/schoolprofiles

Robust pre-K hub with school search tools. Integrated with GIS map, public transit information.

My School DC—single point of enrollment for DC schools

http://www.myschooldc.org/

Chicago Parent Ambassador Program

http://www.cofionline.org/sites/default/files/Briefings_complete_WEB_0.pdf

A project of COFI (Community Organizing & Family Issues), it is an innovative, parent-created program that has successfully increased the participation of at-risk, low-income children in quality early learning programs in Chicago. Employs parents and grandparents as community outreach workers. Credited with fully enrolling Chicago's Head Start program.

NYC Pre-K Web Hub

http://schools.nyc.gov/ChoicesEnrollment/PreK/default.htm

One-stop shop for parents that includes a school search tool, site inspection information, wait list/opening information. Translation into 5 languages available.

Pre-K Teacher supports/services

T.E.A.C.H. program

http://teach.nbcdi.org/about

The program originated in North Carolina and has since expanded to 21 states and the District of Columbia. The Project addresses "the issues of under-education, poor compensation and high turnover within the early childhood workforce. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project gives scholarships to childcare workers to complete course work in early childhood education and to increase their compensation."

Childcare WAGE$

http://www.childcareservices.org/ps/participating-states/

Originating in North Carolina and expanded to five states, the project provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers, directors and family childcare providers working with children up until the age of 5.

NYC Pre-K employment web site

http://schools.nyc.gov/careers/teachers/prek.htm

Appendices

A. List of who participated in hearings and focus groups

ELC Hearing March 18, 2014

Lynn Lubecki	Rochester Childfirst Network
Marsha Dumka	EDCI
Connie Rodriquez	Wilson Commencement Park ELC
Kimberly Roberson	Caring and Sharing
Sara Cole	YMCA
Mary Brach	Southwest Family Resource Center
Loretta Kruger	ABC
Robin Hooper	RSCD
Pat Dangler	RCSD
Ida Perez	IBERO
Nancy Kaplan	Rochester's Child
Donald Bartalo	Literacy Specialist
Dannette Bailey	Parent
Kimberly Burns-Ellis	Baden Street
Shirley Green	RCSD Montessori Academy

ELC Hearing April 15, 2014

Ade Mohamed Amin	Jefferson Headstart Committee/Somali
Dannette Bailey	Parent
Jewell Brown	Nathaniel Rochester Community School
Donna Marie Cozine	Renaissance Academy Charter School of Arts
Charlene Herring	Parent
Brian Hickman	E3Rochester
Henry Padron	Teacher #12
Lori Thomas	Former RCSD Teacher
Jamie Trostle	Parent/Paraprofessional

ELC Hearing May 8, 2014

Ade Amin Mohammed	Somali Community
Mary Jo Brach	Southwest Family Resource Center
Jacqueline Cady	Early Childhood Initiative
Donna Marie Cozine	Renaissance Academy Charter School of Arts
Linda Damico	CP Rochester
Pat Dangler	RCSD
Linda James	Crestwood Skip Generations
Joe Klein	E3 Rochester
Loretta Kruger	ABC
Lynn Lubecki	Rochester Childfirst Network
Nancy Stanton Multer	Early Learning Specialist
Ida Perez	IBERO
Cynthia Robinson	ABC Pre-K Teacher
Bridget Shumway	Generations Care
Ronke Tapp	Parent

A. List of who participated in hearings and focus groups

Provider Focus Group June 9, 2014

Sara Cole ....YMCA
Kimberly Roberson ....Caring and Sharing
Carol Robinson ....Caring and Sharing
Nancy Kaplan..Rochester's Child
Kimberly Burns-Ellis ....Baden Street
Pat Dangler...RCSD
Robin Hooper...RSCD
Mary Jo Brach..Southwest Family Resource Center
Marsha Dumka..EDCI
Nancy Consol..Rochester Childfirst Network
Loretta Scott...Rochester City Council
Nancy Forgue ....Monroe County DHS
Andrew McGowan..RCSD
Joi McMurty...Friendship Children's Center

Parent Focus Group June 10, 2014

Kerry Coleman..Parent
Amy Levine ....Pre-K Teacher RCSD
Paulette Vaccaro...RCSD Pre-K Parent Program
Ruth Me ....Pre-K RSCD
Justin Kwasa ....Northeast Charter Schools Network
Joan Lee ....Parent
Ronke Tapp ....Parent
Jackie Foster...Parent
Anthony Deoca ....Parent
Toddiya ....Parent
Antonia Shipp ....Parent
Margie McGee ....Parent
Kim Hunter ....Parent

B. Glossary of Terms

Early Childhood: The developmental stages from birth to age 8.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP): Practices that nurture a child's social/emotional, physical and cognitive development by basing all practices and decisions on (1) theories of child development (2) individually identified strengths and needs of each child uncovered through authentic assessment and (3) the child's cultural background as defined by his/her community, family history and family structure. http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/PSDAP.pdf

Three CORE CONSIDERATIONS OF DAP:

• **Knowing about child development and learning.** Knowing what is typical at each age and stage of early development is crucial. This knowledge, based on research, helps us decide which experiences are best for children's learning and development.

• **Knowing what is individually appropriate.** What we learn about specific children helps us teach and care for each child as an individual. By continually observing children's play and interaction with the physical environment and others, we learn about each child's interests, abilities and developmental progress.

• **Knowing what is culturally important.** We must make an effort to get to know the children's families and learn about the values, expectations and factors that shape their lives at home and in their communities. This background information helps us provide meaningful, relevant and respectful learning experiences for each child and family. http://www.naeyc.org/DAP

Developmentally Appropriate	Developmentally Inappropriate
Curriculum and experiences that actively engage children.	Teacher directed instruction with an inflexible timeline.
Rich, teacher supported play	Heavy reliance on whole group instruction
Integrated curriculum across all domains	Fragmented lessons without connections that are meaningful to children
Emphasis on children's initiative and choice	Rigid adherence to a packaged 'one size fits all' curriculum
Teachers plan for the children's day following the interests and responses of the children	Teachers following a predetermined script without regard to children's interests or responses
Adapting curriculum and teaching strategies to help individual children make optimal progress	Highly prescriptive requirements along with rigid timelines for achieving them
Wide focus (i.e. literacy, math, social skills)	Narrow focus (i.e. only on literacy or math)

Source: Early Childhood Education Quality Council

B. Glossary of Terms

School Readiness: A commitment to promoting universal school readiness requires:

• Giving all children access to the opportunities that promote school success

• Recognizing and supporting children's individual differences

• Establishing reasonable and appropriate expectations for what children should be able to do when they enter school. https://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/Readiness.pdf

Professional Development: Professional Development is a continuum of learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families, as well as ongoing experiences to enhance this work. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices and dispositions of early childhood professionals. http://www.naeyc.org/ecp

Summer Learning Loss: The loss of academic skills over summer vacation. The degree of loss varies across grade level, subject matter and family income.

Child Development: The biological, psychological and emotional changes that occur in human beings between birth and the end of adolescence, as the individual progresses from dependency to increasing autonomy.

Navigator: Adapted from the field of nursing, navigators are people who educate and support parents and families empowering them to make informed decisions about early childhood education. Navigators also provide a single point of contact for families making key education decisions.

Social Impact Bond: Social Impact Bonds are innovative and emerging financing instruments that leverage private investment to support high impact social programs, such as early childhood education.

C. Additional documentation regarding early learning landscape

ROC the Future Program Summary

ROC the Future is an effort to align initiatives and resources within the Rochester community to create a cradle-to-career educational pipeline that will serve every child in the Rochester City School District. We are working within the nationally recognized STRIVE framework (www.strivenetwork.org), dedicated to building a strong civic infrastructure that supports improvement in student outcomes through collective impact.

In 2011-2012, Monroe Community College, the Rochester City School District and the United Way initiated the project; large, community-wide plenary sessions were held to communicate intentions and to solicit information, interest and feedback. With this feedback and informed by evidence, the conveners selected third grade literacy as the starting point of this work. An expanded Conveners' Group (executive board) was established with representatives from early childhood organizations, K-12 schools, higher education, community organizations, government, philanthropy, faith-based institutions and corporate partners, all of whom volunteer their time and contribute institutional resources to further the collective vision, provide strategic guidance, promote and report data and provide the leadership necessary to advance the project.

In fall 2012, a part time program director, Richard Costanza, was provided as a contribution by MCC. Some additional start-up funds were provided by MetLife, through KnowledgeWorks, which oversees the STRIVE organization. To focus efforts, ROC the Future adopted the framework from the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, which focuses on attendance, expanded learning opportunities and school readiness as key elements of on-grade level reading. To establish a baseline of resources around these concepts, ROC the Future commissioned a community asset-map specific to third-grade reading. The United Way and the Farash Foundation funded this report that was developed by the Center for Governmental Research.

For each of these elements, a network of volunteers is established, composed of representative ROC the Future organizations with expertise and resources focused on that area, to make that benchmark their primary focus. The networks are charged with: identifying and tracking indicators for a benchmark; integrating successful, evidence-based strategies into practice; and sharing progress and effective practices across the network and with the Conveners' Group. Two of these networks have been formed by ROC the Future and the other two recognized networks are joint partnerships with existing cross-sector groups already working on school attendance and college access/retention i.e., RCSD chronic absenteeism committee and the College Access Network.

ROC the Future Program Summary (continued)

In summer 2013, ROC the Future appointed The Children's Agenda to serve as the backbone organization. The aforementioned was made possible due to financial contributions from JP Morgan Private Bank, The Community Foundation and United Way. To this end, a full-time staff person was hired – Dr. Leonard M. Brock. Upon hire, staff proposed governance guidelines and bylaws that were revised and adopted by conveners. Conveners elected 4 officers: Anne Kress, MCC as Chair; Jennifer Leonard, Community Foundation as Vice-Chair; Chris Wiest, Rochester Business Alliance as Treasurer; Patricia Uttaro, City of Rochester as Secretary. The new structure went into effect at the July conveners' meeting, together with a new meeting agenda format focused on decision-making. This allowed for more efficient and effective use of meeting time, as evidenced by post meeting verbal assessments/evaluations. Representatives from the Greater Rochester Quality Council are also now at the table to help ensure effective governance, quality and leadership processes.

We have formally adopted consensus language and are complete with the development of mission and vision statements, as well as an elevator speech. We have created a communication's team as part of ROC the Future to ensure consistent, effective messaging and ongoing communications with key constituents. Staff co-organized talking points and key messages for a group of ROC the Future conveners (Anne Kress, Jennifer Leonard, Patty Malgieri, Joe Rulison) for a meeting with the Democrat & Chronicle's editorial board. Staff wrote an op-ed for the D&C's special "Unite Rochester" report highlighting ROC the Future as a positive, potential model for progress. Moreover, staff participated in an online Facebook expert conversation with more than 200 onlookers [hosted by Democrat & Chronicle] and highlighted ROC the Future as a catalyst for education reform.

Staff organized three events on August 1 with Shawn Dove, the national manager of the Campaign for Black Male Achievement. This event was branded as a ROC the Future effort, in part; the result of a formal vote amongst conveners. ROC the Future also co-sponsored the Grad Nation education summit on October 30. Grad Nation was a local community event that gathered 300 stakeholders to discuss improving graduation rates, in response to a proposal-ask from Collin and Alma Powell's America's Promise Alliance.

ROC the Future launched a community report card with targets and measures for continuous tracking. The Center for Governmental Research led much of this work and has dedicated countless time and resources to this effort. In addition to the report card launch, the official ROC the Future website was completed and is now live at www.rocthefuture.org. A press release was sent to the public describing the before referenced.

Established next steps for ROC the Future include securing additional funding to support infrastructure, finalizing network action plans and identifying evidence-base strategies and practices to scale.

C. Additional documentation regarding early learning landscape
ROC the Future Program Summary (continued)

Current Organizational Membership in Conveners' Group

Action for a Better Community

Center for Governmental Research

The Children's Agenda

The Children's Institute

The City of Rochester (Mayor's Office)

Dixon-Schwabl

Greater Rochester Quality Council

Ibero-American Action League

J.P. Morgan

Monroe Community College

Monroe County (Dept. of Human Services)

Rochester Area Community Foundation

Rochester Business Alliance

Rochester City School District

Rochester Education Foundation

United Way of Greater Rochester

Current Networks

<u>Expanded Learning</u>

Boys and Girls Club

Center for Time and Learning

Children's Agenda

Children's Institute

Encompass

City of Rochester Youth Services

Greater Rochester After-School Alliance

Greater Rochester YMCA

Mercier Literacy

Rochester Area Community Foundation

Rochester City School District

United Way of Greater Rochester

<u>School Readiness</u>

Action for a Better Community

Center for Governmental Research

The Childcare Council

Early Childhood Development Initiative

Early Childhood Education Quality Council

The Children's Agenda

The Children's Institute

Greater Rochester YMCA

NYS Office of Child and Family Services

Rochester City School District

United Way of Greater Rochester

<u>School Attendance</u>

Varied community partners, led by RCSD

ROC the Future's Definition of School Readiness

"School readiness" describes the capabilities of children, their families, schools and communities that will best promote student success in kindergarten and beyond. Each component – children, families, schools and communities – plays an essential role in the development of school readiness. No one component can stand on its own.

- **Ready Children.** A ready child is prepared socially, emotionally, behaviorally, physically and intellectually within the developmental domains addressed in the New York State Early Learning Guidelines and the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation of Common Core. Children develop holistically; growth and development in one area depends upon development in other areas.

- **Ready Families.** A ready family has adults who understand they are the most important people in the child's life and take responsibility for the child's school readiness through direct, frequent and positive involvement and interest in the child. Adults recognize their role as the child's first and most important teacher, providing steady and supportive relationships, ensuring safe and consistent environments, promoting good health and fostering curiosity, excitement about learning, determination and self-control.

- **Ready Schools.** A ready school accepts all children and provides a seamless transition to a high-quality learning environment by engaging the whole community. A ready school welcomes all children with opportunities to enhance and build confidence in their skills, knowledge and abilities. Children in ready schools are led by skilled and qualified teachers and school administrators who recognize, reinforce and extend children's strengths and who are sensitive to cultural values and individual differences. Classrooms in Ready Schools reflect a nurturing, developmentally appropriate environment, following a curriculum that includes opportunities to strengthen social, emotional, physical and cognitive abilities.

- **Ready Communities.** A ready community plays a crucial part in supporting families in their role as primary stewards of children's readiness. Ready communities, including businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood service providers, the medical community, social service providers, philanthropic funders, community groups and local governments, work together to support children's school and long term success by providing families affordable access to information, services, high-quality childcare and early learning opportunities.

Indicators of School Readiness

In order to define, assess and track school readiness, we must set objectives, research-based benchmarks for each component of school readiness and develop clear strategies for measuring progress towards these benchmarks.

C. Additional documentation regarding early learning landscape
ROC the Future Program Summary (continued)

Examples of ready children include:

Communicate effectively with adults and children by:
- labeling objects and feelings;
- providing simple descriptions for events;
- effectively conveying information, desires and needs; and
- using simple language and grammar to solve problems and negotiate adults social interactions.

Display emerging **literacy** skills by:
- showing interest in and interacting with books as they are read by adults;
- answering questions; learning to use new words and tell stories;
- recognizing and producing speech sounds, such as rhymes, beginning sounds and letter sounds;
- identifying some of the letters of the alphabet, especially the letters in their names;
- learning about print concepts from books, signs and household objects; and
- engaging in drawing and pretend writing, writing their name, letters and other printed symbols.

Show an interest and skill in **mathematics** by:
- counting and using numbers to describe and compare;
- recognizing and sorting simple shapes and describing their position;
- identifying simple patterns;
- making comparisons based on length, weight, time, temperature and size; and
- using objects in play, experimenting with materials, building blocks and puzzles.

Build early **science** skills by:
- exploring and showing curiosity;
- asking and answering questions about nature, why things happen and how things work;
- identifying patterns and changes in daily life; and
- making observations based on the five senses.

Learn about **history and social studies** by:
- interacting with their family, peers, religious and social communities;
- recognizing ways in which people are alike and different; and
- recognizing the relationships between people, places and time.

Enhance **physical and motor development** by:
- learning to control their bodies;
- strengthening their muscles;
- practicing different movements;
- participating in regular physical activity; and
- practicing healthy living and appropriate daily care routines.

Exhibit emotional, behavioral and social skills, as well as a sense of self-worth by:
- feeling secure and valued in their relationships;
- expressing their emotions and taking pride in their accomplishments;
- recognizing the consequences of their actions;
- showing self-control; and cooperating with others, using nonphysical ways to resolve conflicts.

ROC the Future Program Summary (continued)

Examples of Ready Families include…

Interact with their children, helping them to develop listening and communication skills and to express their feelings, needs and wants. Adults:
- read to and speak with children regularly and respectfully;
- appreciate the child's view of the world;
- encourage exploration of the world in which they live;
- are dependable; and
- engage with children with joy, warmth and comfort.

Encourage and act as the bridge to positive social relationships. Adults:
- help children learn to cooperate with others;
- help children follow simple directions and complete basic tasks;
- foster friendships with other children;
- teach children routines and how to respond to rules and structure;
- help children learn how to handle disappointments; and
- expose children to and help them describe different people, places and things.

Ensure their children are healthy by:
- completing all eye, ear, dental and other medical screenings as well as immunizations; and
- supporting healthy habits, including nutrition.

Ready Schools…

Smooth the transition between home and school by:
- communicating pre-kindergarten and kindergarten standards and other school information to families through activities such as home visits, telephone calls, questionnaires and kindergarten visitation days; and
- forming effective relationships with parents and early childhood programs to share children's pre-kindergarten experiences and to assess their development.

Support instruction and staff development by:
- employing highly qualified teachers, with a preference for early childhood certification;
- employing highly qualified administrators, with a preference for early childhood expertise;
- maintaining appropriate class sizes;
- encouraging professional development for all staff, within and across grade levels and
- using best practices in the classroom.

Support teachers as they assess the individual needs of children, design instruction based on these needs and regularly monitor students' progress.

Partner with communities by participating in activities such as:
- recreational and enrichment programs;
- family literacy activities;
- before and after school care;
- open houses; and
- communication with community-based childhood education programs.

C. Additional documentation regarding early learning landscape
ROC the Future Program Summary (continued)

Provide resources and services to address the diverse and individual needs of students including:
- educational services;
- health and mental health services; and
- social services.

Emphasize the importance of early childhood education by:
- regularly reviewing the quality, appropriateness and alignment of the curriculum across all grades and phases of development; and
- regularly focusing on the quality of teachers' interactions with children at all grade levels.

Ready Communities…
Promote collaboration to reach the most vulnerable children and families through diverse channels of communication by:
- supporting effective, innovative strategies;
- building a sustainable, collaborative, comprehensive system that maximizes resources;
- evaluating available services for quality and accessibility; and
- directing available public and private philanthropic dollars where they are needed the most.

Ensure all children have access to high-quality early care and education programs by:
- collaborating to utilize all possible childcare subsidy dollars;
- supporting community-based early childhood programs to meet and maintain standards of high quality care; and
- evaluating community and school based early childhood programs to ensure standards are met.

Provide accessible and affordable family services related to physical health, mental health and lifelong learning. These services include, but are not limited to:
- literacy, English language learning, parenting skills and adult education;
- home visiting programs;
- basic health care and nutrition services, including prenatal care;
- mental health counseling;
- early identification and treatment for children with disabilities and other special needs;
- drug and alcohol counseling;
- family court services; and
- child abuse prevention.

Promote public assets such as parks, libraries, recreational facilities, civic and cultural venues and other opportunities to provide a better quality of life for families, encourage early learning opportunities and foster community participation.

Collect data on children, families, schools and community resources with regard to their accomplishments in school readiness and use these assessments in program planning and resource allocation.

Provide resources, including financial, to support children, families, schools and community entities and agencies in the efforts to improve their school readiness.

C. Additional documentation regarding early learning landscape

**Municipal Leadership to Promote
Educational Alignment for Young Children
City of Rochester, NY**

NLC Coordinating Council: Patricia Uttaro, Director of Library and Carolyn Lee-Davis, The Children's Agenda co-lead a small working group under the auspices of the Strive initiative (ROC the Future), to be the coordinating body of the many collaborative tables and work happening in Rochester currently. Members include:
- Jackie Campbell, Assistant Commissioner of Youth Services, City of Rochester
- Mary Jo Brach, Family Resource Centers & Current Co-Chair of ECDI
- Jacque Cady, Chair Emeritus, Rochester's Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI)
- Dirk Hightower, Executive Director, The Children's Institute
- Nancy Kaplan, Rochester's Child (private funder)
- Loretta Kruger, Deputy Director, Action for a Better Community
- Jerome Underwood, Senior Director of Youth Development & Family Services, RCSD
- Katie Yarlett, Director of English Language Arts & Chair for 3rd Grade Reading Effort, RCSD

Short Term Goals, October 2013-December 2014
1. Establish a baseline number of children, 0-3, receiving developmental screenings and craft an action plan, including policy levers, to address the barriers to being detected, screened, & referred.

2. Build community knowledge on the promising practices of defining, measurement and tools for increasing parent engagement in elementary schools and craft a local action plan based on promising practices.

3. Vet new financing mechanisms for funding Pre-kindergarten for 3 year-olds, including Social Impact Bonds. Learn lessons from cities that have passed legislation to dedicate specific tax dollars to early education.

4. Develop a local alignment plan for PreK-2nd grade by

   a. Incorporating input Pre-K and K teachers to increase cross-grade understanding of Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten expectations, curriculum and assessment tools to identify key alignment plan pieces

   b. Increasing professional development opportunities in early education for principals

   5. Summer Reading: identify existing summer reading programs and determine opportunities for alignment to increase number of children served.

Long Term Goals (by September 2018) assuming technical assistance & funding increases
- Increase by 50% the number of children 0-3 with developmental needs that are detected and served to increase their school readiness and improve their 3rd grade reading achievement.
- Implement local action plan to increase parent engagement in 10 elementary schools, with School District, City and community support.
- Expand high-quality pre-kindergarten to 50% of all 3-year-olds, starting with children from low- and moderate-income families.
- Implement the Prek-2nd grade alignment plan in 10 (25%) of RCSD elementary schools.

C. Additional documentation regarding early learning landscape

Early Childhood Development Initiative
Rochester - Monroe County

Vision/Mission: Every child in Greater Rochester has the foundation to succeed in school and in life. To make this vision a reality, The Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI)'s mission is to:
- Mobilize the community to expand and improve developmentally appropriate early care and education;
- Serve as a catalyst for change by promoting significant, broad-based and steadfast community commitment to improving the quantity and accessibility of quality early care and education; and
- Engage public and private stakeholders and advocates for public policies that support and encourage those services.

ECDI is not funded. Sponsors and partners fund programs directly.

Focus: Children, prenatal through age eight and their families; families with few resources and supports are the highest priority.

Selected Accomplishments:
- Early childhood voice represented at local initiatives and statewide committees.
- Raised $90K to purchase developmentally appropriate materials for RCSD kindergarten, critical to success of new 2011-12 kindergarten curriculum.
- Brought back $8M dollars to the County for childcare subsidies from NYS.
- Local accreditation system for early childhood programs, Pathways, launched.
- Child Care Council, Inc. key leader on statewide efforts on improving infant & toddler care through NYS Infant Toddler Network.
- Initiatives that support secure attachments in children birth – three: Talk, Sing and Play with your Baby (media messaging) and Nurturing Communities (a childcare program which permits mothers to care for their own babies while they pursue college education).
- RECAP: 14-year assessment system measuring quality in UPK programs developed and implemented; findings include Rochester has highest quality classrooms for 4-year-olds in Western world. New assessment measure (CLASS) introduced to measure quality of teacher-student interactions.
- Rochester one of 13 NYS Quality STARS pilot communities.
- Monroe County leadership continues to support and maintain the differential for accredited childcare providers, rewarding quality.
- RCSD UPK: wrote proposal and leveraged resources to bring UPK to RCSD; fully integrated with 20 community partner agencies and reaches nearly 2,000 4-year-olds each year.
- BASIC proposal funded by United Way, implementation has increased access to mental health services for young children in Rochester.
- PLTI – Started a local branch of this national initiative – a 20 week class for parents on civic engagement – public/private funded partnership

Chairpersons: Mary Jo Brach (mbrach@hillside.com) Marsha Dumka (marsha@dumka.com)
ECDI Committees: Advocacy, Social Emotional Wellness, Parenting, PreK-3, Professional Dev.

C. Additional documentation regarding early learning landscape

ECDI Long-Range Goals 2011-14: Greater Rochester is a community that values, funds and supports, through policies and practices, each child's early development.

Infants and toddlers have a secure relationship with at least one predictable adult who is sensitive and responsive to the child's developmental needs.

Children have access to high quality early care and education (ECE) that support their well-being.

Children have capacity to manage their emotions and interact positively with others.

Parents have the knowledge, skills and resources to make positive choices and advocate for themselves and their children and parents are partners in early education policy decisions.

Policies that support and encourage those services.

Partners and Participating Agencies:

ABC Head Start
Center for Governmental Research
Child Care Council, Inc.
Children's Institute
City of Rochester Police Department
Community Place of Greater Rochester
Early Educators' Network
Early Childhood Education Quality Council
Early Childhood Intervention Council
Family Resource Centers at Crestwood
Family Child Care Satellite of Gr. Rochester
Generations Child Care
Grantmaker's Forum of New York
Hillside Family of Agencies
Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation
Max and Marian Farash Foundation
Monroe Community College
292-Baby (formerly Rochester Parent Network)
Strive Initiative (ROC the Future)
Mount Hope Family Center

Monroe County
   Health Department
   Human Services Department
New York State:
   Regional Early Childhood Direction Center
   Office of Children and Families
Rochester Area Community Foundation
Rochester Assoc. for the Education of
   Young Children
Rochester's Child
Rochester Childfirst Network
Rochester City School District:
   Department of Accountability
Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program
Stepping Stones Learning Center
The Children's Agenda
WXXI Public Broadcasting
Young Audiences of Rochester

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Ray Mayoliz

John McMahon
David Mohney
Geraldine Scott
Sandra Simon
Ira Srole
Tiana Stephens
Josephus Tisdale
Suzanne Warren

D. List of Rochester UPK providers

Community based organizations (28)

School	Accredited
ABC Head Start, Jefferson Avenue Ctr.	
ABC Head Start, Clifford Avenue Ctr.	
ABC Head Start, Hart Street Ctr.	
ABC Head Start, Hudson Avenue Ctr.	
ABC Head Start, North Street Ctr.	
Asbury Day Care Ctr.	NAEYC
Baden Street Settlement	NAEYC
Bubbles Day Care	
Caring and Sharing Child Care Ctr.	
Community Childcare Ctr.	
Community Place of Greater Rochester	
Friendship Children's Ctr.	
Ibero Early Childhood Services	
Jefferson Ave. Childhood Development Ctr.	NAEYC
Lakeside Child and Family Ctr.	Pathways
Oregon Leopold Day Care	NAEYC
Peter Castle Family Resource Ctr.	
Rochester Childfirst Network	Pathways
Southwest Family Resource Ctr.	
St. Paul's Day Care	
Stepping Stones Learning Ctr.	
Volunteers of America Children's Ctr.	Pathways
Wilson Commencement Park	NAEYC
Wilson Foundation Academy	
YMCA, Carlson Metro Ctr.	
YMCA, Lewis Street	NAEYC
YMCA, Maplewood	
YMCA, Southwest	

RCSD (31 sites)

01 - Martin B. Anderson School
02 - Clara Barton School
05 - John Williams School
07 - Virgil I. Grissom School
08 - Roberto Clemente School
09 - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School Pre-K Bilingual Class
10 - Dr. Walter Cooper Academy School
16 - John Walton Spencer School
17 - Enrico Fermi School
19 - Dr. Charles T. Lunsford School
20 - Henry Lomb School
22 - Lincoln School
22 - Lincoln School Pre-K Bilingual Class
23 - Francis Parker School
25 - Nathaniel Hawthorne School
29 - Adlai E. Stevenson School
33 - Florence S. Brown Pre-K Program, Including Bilingual Class
34 - Dr. Louis A. Cerulli School
36 - Henry W. Longfellow School
39 - Andrew J. Townson School
41 - Kodak Park School
42 - Abelard Reynolds School
43 - Theodore Roosevelt School
44 - Lincoln Park School
45 - Mary McLeod Bethune School
46 - Charles Carroll School
50 - Helen Barrett Montgomery
52 - Frank Fowler Dow School
53 - Montessori Academy
57 - Early Childhood School District Program Site, 595 Upper Falls Blvd

Biographies

Joanne Larson, PhD, *Co-chair*

Joanne Larson, PhD is the Michael W. Scandling Professor of Education and chair of the teaching and curriculum program at the University of Rochester's Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development. A former preschool teacher and director, she teaches master's level literacy courses, as well as doctoral level courses on curriculum, teaching and change and introductory and advanced qualitative research methods. Larson's ethnographic research examines how language and literacy practices mediate social and power relations in literacy events in schools and communities.

She is currently collaborating with Rochester community residents on a participatory action research project examining changes associated with transforming a local corner store into a cornerstone of healthy living. She is the editor of *Literacy as Snake Oil: Beyond the Quick Fix, Second Edition* (Lang, 2007) and co-editor of the *Handbook of Early Childhood Literacy* (Sage, 2013). Her book, *Making Literacy Real: Theories and Practices in Learning and Teaching* (Sage, 2005), co-authored with Jackie Marsh, explores the breadth of the complex and important field of literacy studies, orientating literacy as a social practice grounded in social, cultural, historical and political contexts.

Her new book, *Radical Equality in Education: Starting Over in U.S. Schooling* (Routledge, 2014), chronicles how the United States has reached a crisis point in public education and offers suggestions for a complete reboot of the current K-12 educational system.

Carrie Remis, *Co-chair*

Carrie Remis began her career in education in 1994 as an advocate for New York State's community college system, representing both the college presidents and boards of trustees in Albany. A native of Rochester, she returned home to serve on the administration of the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music and the Margaret Warner Graduate School of Education. She later joined the administration of the Nazareth Schools, an independent pre-K-12 Catholic school system with a long tradition of excellence and diversity.

It was as a parent leader in the Rochester City School District that Ms. Remis became concerned about inequities within the public school system and the limited opportunities for meaningful community participation to address these systemic problems. In 2006 she co-founded the Rochester Fund for Educational Accountability, an all-volunteer organization providing technical assistance and training to communities invoking their rights under federal education law. In 2009 she founded the Parent Power Project, aimed at building the advocacy capacity of parent organizations across the state.

In 2011, Governor Cuomo appointed Ms. Remis to his New York Education Reform Commission. The only parent representative on the Commission, Ms. Remis has been a vocal proponent of greater transparency and parental involvement in education policy discussions.

Ms. Remis is a former member of the *Democrat and Chronicle's* Board of Contributors and frequent contributor of articles on education reform. She serves on the boards of the Opportunity in Education Coalition, the National School Choice Week Coalition, the Center for Educational Justice and the New York Campaign for Achievement Now. In addition, she is an active member of the League of Women Voters and an advisor to Girls4STEM, an organization of Monroe County high school girls working to close the gender gap in STEM education.

Ms. Remis holds a bachelors degree in History from the State University of New York at Albany. She and her husband Tom, an attorney, are natives of Rochester, NY. Their daughter is enrolled in a Greater Rochester area high school.

Hollis S. Budd

Hollis S. Budd is the first executive director of the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation (Rochester, N.Y.), one of the largest foundations in upstate New York. The foundation is dedicated to the civic and religious communities of its founders, who believed in the importance of education in all of its aspects and knew the power of entrepreneurial creativity.

Her responsibilities include day-to-day management of the Foundation's operations and grant making process and oversight of its assets. Additionally, she is CEO of Farash Foundation Real Estate Management, LLC and in that capacity is responsible for the Foundation's real estate.

Ms. Budd joined the Farash Foundation on January 1, 2011 after a thirty-one-year career at the University of Rochester. Her most recent position at the university was as Associate Dean for MBA Administration and External Relations at the William E. Simon Graduate School of Business Administration. During her tenure at the university, she also served as the institution's first female vice president.

Ms. Budd currently sits on the Simon School's Executive Advisory Committee and Dean's Forum. She served as a trustee of the Farash Foundation from 2007 until her appointment as Executive Director in 2011. Her past and present board affiliations include 2020 MicroClinic Initiative, Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family Service, Memorial Art Gallery, Friends of School of the Arts, Junior Achievement, Friends of Strong Memorial Hospital, Golisano Children's Hospital and the Consortium for Graduate Studies in Management, a preeminent organization for promoting diversity and inclusion in American business.

A Chicago native and a graduate of Rush Medical College in Chicago, she also completed graduate work at the University of Rochester and work at the Center for Creative Leadership. She and her husband, Dr. James Budd, are residents of Rochester, N.Y. and are the parents of two adult daughters and one grandson.

Peter C. Carpino

Peter C. Carpino is president of the United Way of Greater Rochester, the region's premier fund raising organization for health and human services. United Way last year raised $27 million for the support of human service programs and initiatives that help advance the common good throughout the six-county Greater Rochester area.

Prior to his appointment as United Way's president in April 2005, Carpino served for 10 years as president of the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, the third largest United Way in Pennsylvania. Under his direction, the annual campaign grew 51 percent between 1995 and 2000, representing a net dollar increase of nearly $3.8 million.

Carpino began his career with the United Way in Rochester, serving for 11 years (1976 through 1987), first as communications director and later as vice president for marketing and resource development, responsible for a $29 million campaign. From 1987 through 1994, he served as vice president for development and communications at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, where he was responsible for all fund raising, alumni relations and marketing communications.

He is a former member of United Way Worldwide's National Professional Council, Inclusion Council and U.S. Task Force on United Way's Economic Model and Growth. He also is a former board member of the United Way of New York State.

He holds a Bachelor's degree from St. John Fisher College, a Master's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a Ph.D. from the Union Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Carpino and his wife of 41 years, Mary Ellen, have two daughters, Karen and Christine.

Carolyn Lee-Davis

Carolyn Lee-Davis, MPP, is Senior Policy Analyst at The Children's Agenda where she led work on early childcare and education for eight years. She has been the coordinator of the Greater Rochester Parent Leadership Training Institute since January 2011. She is pleased to co-lead the National League of Cities Education Alignment Coordinating Council with Patty Uttaro and is honored to Co-Chair the NYS Winning Beginnings Child Care Issues Committee with Susan Antos. Carolyn is an active participant at a number of community tables, including the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI), the Community Advisory Council for the Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership (RECAP), the UPK Policy Advisory Council and the NLC Working Group on Parent Engagement.

Carolyn has a Master's degree in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Prior to coming to The Children's Agenda, Carolyn has six years of experience in policy analysis, research, evaluation and development.

Ernest Flagler

Ernest Flagler-Mitchell is the father of eight children. Ernest graduated from East High School in 1997. He was accepted in the Firefighter Trainee program in 11th grade at East. Ernest became one of the first African Americans to complete the fire-fighter trainee program and made it into the Rochester Fire Department. Ernest is a 17-year veteran of the Rochester Fire Department, working his way up the ranks and is currently a fire marshal.

Ernest founded Rochester Parents United. As a leader of Rochester Parents United, he has shown an ability to merge different factions, bringing together parents of students in public schools and charter schools.

For decades, Rochester parents looked to organize and improve schools and had just two options: the sanctioned district parent's council and the outside advocacy groups working with the teachers' union. Ernest believes that neither option is truly independent or in the best interest of parents and students. Neither option empowers parents to bring change in their schools; instead, they simply use parents to lobby Albany for more funding and to block reform. For this reason, Ernest founded the Rochester Parents United, a union of district and charter school parents with a unique focus: greater accountability and choice.

Marilynn Patterson Grant, Ed.D.

Dr. Marilynn Patterson Grant is the owner and operator of M. P. Grant, LLC an educational consulting organization. She currently consults with a network of charter schools in Washington, DC. She has done so since April 2012. In September 2011, she completed a one year consultancy working with two high schools in the Detroit public school system. Additional consulting work has been done in Baltimore, Maryland New London and Norwalk, Connecticut and Kenosha, Wisconsin. Dr. Grant brings a wealth of skills, talents and experience in her highly regarded work with principals and teams of teachers. Dr. Grant is the former Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning in the Rochester City School District (RCSD). She was appointed to that position in the fall of 2008. As the Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Patterson Grant managed a budget of over $60 million dollars and provided leadership for 391 employees, 30 of whom were direct reports.

A native of Washington, D.C., Marilynn is the daughter of the late Rev. R.L. Patterson, a Baptist minister and Mrs. Mattie Pringle Patterson, a retired preschool administrator. Marilynn is a graduate of the University of Rochester where she engaged in bachelor and masters studies. Additional academic work was conducted at SUNY Brockport, Harvard and Oxford University in England. In May 2010, she earned her Ed.D. in Executive Leadership from St. John Fisher College.

Donald Hardaway, Jr.

Donald Hardaway, Jr., is the Community Engagement Specialist for the Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency with a focus on Joint Usage of Schools, Farmers Markets and Healthy Corner Stores. Donald works to increase environmental changes to affect quality health outcomes in efforts to reduce childhood obesity and increase access to quality foods. Donald also teaches at MCC as an adjunct lecturer and participates in several community based coalitions and groups.

He is a native Rochesterian and has a passion for improving health and educational outcomes in our city. Donald Hardaway is a graduate of Roberts Wesleyan College with an undergraduate degree in Organizational Management and graduate degree in Strategic Leadership. He is also has a certification in Lean Six Sigma at the Black Belt level.

A. Dirk Hightower, Ph.D

A. Dirk Hightower, Ph.D. has been Executive Director of Children's Institute, Inc. since 1991. He is also a Senior Research Associate at the University of Rochester. Prior to that Dirk served as Research Director for Children's Institute and the Center for Community Study from 1982 to 1991. He has co-authored scores of research papers, chapters and a book. He has served on the editorial board of various research journals. His primary interests include social and emotional assessment, promoting healthy social and emotional development, evidenced-based prevention interventions for young children, community collaboration and the use and development of web-based decision support systems to enhance the translation and use of information (COMET).

He has been principal investigator on state and federal grants. He helped initiate and continues to have significant involvement with the RECAP, a multiagency collaborative focused on prekindergarten outcomes. He is a co-founder of the COMET Informatics system. In addition, he is Past President of the New York Association of School Psychologists, served three terms on the Board of Education of the Rush-Henrietta Central School District and presently serves on multiple city, county and state advisory boards that focus on the success of children.

Ty Kelly

For the last 20 years Ty has worked for Wegmans Food Markets; currently he is the Director of Youth Development. For the last decade he was in charge of the Hillside Work Scholarship Connection for the Rochester Market and recently has accepted the responsibility for the program for the Wegmans Markets in Syracuse, Rochester and Prince George's County in Maryland. Over 700 current and former graduates of the program are still employed though out the company in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia. His leadership and high standards has helped these students be accountable for their academic performance resulting in all of them graduating from high school; most of them attended or are attending college and several have begun their careers in management.

Ty has served on several boards such as; Hope for Kids where he served as the Chairman of this board which supported the Monroe County Teen Drug Treatment Court; Treasurer and Board Member for the Frederick Douglass Resource Center; The Boy Scouts of America; and Trustee and Financial Secretary for the East Henrietta Road Church of Christ. Ty was born and raised here in Rochester. Ty and his wife Yolanda of 25 years, have 3 children, Ty Jr., Michael and Kirsten.

Dorthea King-Simpson

Dorthea is a Consultant for Early Childhood Professionals. Her knowledge and skills allow her to apply her strong expertise in the area of Training & Development. Before becoming a consultant, Dorthea served as a caseworker in the School Partnership for Youth Program and as the director of a School-Age Center, in the city of Utica. Most recently, Dorthea served as the director of Family Childcare for over 8 years. She also served as the director of nutritional services for Rochester Childfirst Network.

Professional accomplishments: As the Director of Family Childcare for Rochester Childfirst Network, Dorthea was pivotal in the development of three major programs, in alignment with its strategic outcomes. The re-vamping of Food Link's Provider Purchasing Program, which increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables at an affordable price for daycare providers; the Family Childcare Refugee Grant, which delivers the NYS Health & Safety and business training to refugees providing daycare in their communities. Dorthea and her colleague co-wrote and presented professional development curriculum for office and support staff, to build on the organization's professional standards.

Volunteerism: Dorthea believes in the saying "The more you give the more you receive" and has an extensive history of volunteer service. She has served as a member of the board of directors for Family Services of Rochester and The Family Childcare Association of NYS. She has served as a member of the League of Women Voters, The Mohawk Valley Frontiers Club and the Greater Utica Sunrise Rotary Club. Dorthea currently serves as a member of the Rochester Area Nutrition Education Network, The United Way Early Childhood Blueprint for Change advisory committee, SUNY Albany's Professional Development Distance Learning Committee and the Monroe County Cornell Cooperative Extension Board of Directors.

Education: Dorthea is a NYS Early Childhood Credentialed Trainer, Dorthea holds a BA in Psychology from SUNYIT, Utica NY and a MA in Organizational Leadership from Medaille College, Rochester NY.

Family: Dorthea enjoys spending time with loved ones and practices the art of speaking, as a member of the Pinnacle Toastmasters Club. Dorthea is a wife, mother and grandmother and lives in the town of Chili NY.

Jennifer Leonard

As president & CEO of Rochester Area Community Foundation since 1993, Jennifer Leonard leads a $290-million grant making foundation that has worked on early childhood development for more than 25 years. Current foundation goals address regional vitality and creating a more equitable community with respect to race, education and poverty.

Jennifer has advocated for childcare subsidies and quality after-school programs as a member of the Rochester Community Coalition; serves as vice president of ROC the Future, Rochester's cradle-to-career education initiative; and is a partner with the Rochester City School District in reducing chronic absence and expanding the school day. She has led her field nationally and worked on local and national boards, currently the Ad Council of Greater Rochester and Center for Governmental Research. Jennifer received the 2010 Athena Award from the Rochester Business Alliance Women's Council.

Dr. Jeff Linn

Dr. Jeff Linn is an Associate Professor of Educational Administration at SUNY Brockport where he teaches classes on leadership and site based management. Prior to his present position Dr. Linn served as Director of Staff Development, primary school principal and Director of the UPK programs in the Canandaigua City School District for 12 years.

Previous to that Dr. Linn spent 11 years at SUNY Brockport as an Associate Professor of Literacy and Multicultural Education. Dr. Linn received his PH. D in 1989 from Penn State University.

He and his wife Linda live in Rochester and have two children: a sophomore at the School of the Arts and the other a SOTA graduate and freshman in college.

Makita Saloane

Makita Saloane is the Chair of the Rochester City School District's Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and a parent representative on the Superintendent's Executive School Based Planning Steering Committee. She has been a member of the Parent Advisory Council since 2010, previously holding the position of Vice-Chair from 2010-2013. Ms. Saloane represents Abelard Reynolds (School #42), Wilson Foundation Academy and Charlotte High School.

Makita Saloane has been involved in education for a decade. She began her involvement when her child entered the Rochester City School District in kindergarten. Initially, she became a member of the school's PTA, eventually serving as the president. While serving as president she was credited with changing parents' perception of School #42's PTA and increasing minority parent participation. However, she knew that she could make a greater impact by serving at the District level.

Since becoming a member of the PAC, she has been instrumental in elevating the voice of parents and ensuring that their input is a part of decision-making at the school and district level. She has served on numerous committees, including the Title 1 Parent Conference Committee, which in 2013 held the most successful and attended event in the history of the conference. Part of the success was the PAC committee members' suggestion to change the venue and events. This resulted in over 2,000 parents, children and community members in attendance at Ontario Beach Park in Charlotte.

As a parent member of the Superintendent's Executive School Based Planning Steering Committee, she has been active in ensuring 100% of the district's schools are compliant with the required number of parents on their School Based Planning Team and have a parent group. Now, this initiative is tracked annually and reported to the Board of Education Commissioners.

Makita Saloane is an alumna of the Rochester City School District, graduating from John Marshall High School. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Master's degree in Organizational Leadership. Ms. Saloane is employed by Frontier Communications as a Senior Regulatory Compliance & Reporting Analyst. She currently resides in the city of Rochester with her two daughters who attend School #42 and Wilson Magnet High School Commencement Academy.

Honorable Loretta C. Scott

Loretta is currently serving her second term as a at-large member of the Rochester City Council and her first term as City Council President. Loretta has extensive experience in the public, not-for profit and private sectors. She served with the City of Rochester for 30 years in a number of progressively responsible positions. She retired as Commissioner of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Human Services in 2005. As Commissioner she was responsible for the administration and operation of a major City department with a budget in excess of $21 million and a staff of nearly 400 full and part-time employees.

Loretta has been active in the community for many years and is well known for her efforts to ensure access to service and opportunities for the economically disadvantaged, especially children. Loretta has participated as a founding member of cutting edge initiatives such as the African American Leadership Development Program, the Greater Rochester After School Alliance and the New Futures (academic development) Initiative. She also was actively involved in the development of the Early Childhood Education Initiative which leveraged significant investments into early education services for children. Loretta is the past chair of the boards of directors for Action for a Better Community, Inc. and Anthony L. Jordan Health Center. Additional past and present board service also includes the United Way Services Corporation, the Rochester Black Business Association and Alternatives for Battered Women.

Loretta is also a small business owner and operates a commercial janitorial service company. Loretta holds a B.S. Degree from SUNY Empire State College.

Patricia Uttaro

Patricia Uttaro has served as the Director of the Monroe County Library System and Rochester Public Library since 2009. She has worked in various capacities within the Monroe County Library System for more than 30 years, including service as Director of the Ogden Library in Spencerport. Patricia is a fifth generation Rochester native and a graduate of Nazareth Academy and Empire State College. She earned her Master's in Library & Information Science from the University of Buffalo.

A passionate reader, Patricia firmly believes there is power in the written word and that learning to read and reading to learn are the most basic yet essential skills for a person to thrive, prosper and enjoy a successful life.

Jeff Smink

Jeff Smink founded Cobbs Hill Consulting (CHC) in 2013 with the goal of providing high-quality, strategic consulting to local, state and national organizations seeking to improve outcomes for children, particularly in high-poverty communities. He is a nationally-recognized expert on issues related to education policy and politics, with over 15 years of high-profile experience on a wide range of issues at the federal, state and local levels. Prior to starting CHC, Jeff was a leader on the emerging issues of expanded learning time and summer learning, working for both the National Center on Time and Learning (NCTL) and the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA).

As Vice President of Policy at the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA), Jeff developed and led the Association's policy portfolio at the national, state and local levels. While at NSLA, Jeff created the New Vision for Summer School initiative, a framework for innovative summer programming embraced by urban districts and states across the nation, including New York City, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Rhode Island and California. He also led the National Campaign for Summer Learning, which helped result in over $50 million in new public investment in summer learning programs between 2009 and 2012. As the New York State Director at NCTL, Jeff worked with key stakeholders at the state and district level to build, implement and sustain support for expanded learning time throughout New York State and Rochester.

Jeff has been cited extensively in the media on issues related to education, including the New York Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, Christian Science-Monitor, Fortune, Education Week and National Public Radio.

In addition to his work on expanded learning, Jeff worked in several education policy positions, serving as a political appointee of Governor Edward Rendell at the Pennsylvania Department of Education and as Legislative Associate for the Council of Chief State School Officers in Washington, DC. In both capacities, he was deeply involved in the development and implementation of major national and state education reform efforts, including the No Child Left Behind Act.

Jeff earned a Master of Education from Harvard University and a Bachelor of Arts and teaching certification from Allegheny College.

Honorable Van Henri White, Esq.

In 1990, Van White returned to his hometown (he attended Number 50 and 22 Schools as a child) to work as a Monroe County Assistant District Attorney. In 1994, Van left the District Attorney's Office to serve as Mayor William A. Johnson's Special Counsel on Crime and Violence Initiatives. In his role as the City's "Crime Czar," White did everything from close down drug houses to start original youth violence prevention and intervention programming like Late Night Basketball, Teen Court and Pathways to Peace. Long after Van left City Hall, these groundbreaking programs continue to positively impact area schoolchildren.

After leaving City Hall, Mr. White opened up his own private law firm where he began specializing in cases involving school safety issues -- the most significant of which was Givens v. RCSD. That case (involving the only student killed on City School District property) redefined the legal responsibilities of school districts when it comes to school safety.

In 2006, believing that he could have a greater impact on improving school safety by working from "within the system," Van ran a successful campaign for a vacant seat on the City of Rochester School Board. Since being sworn in January 2007, Van has been an outspoken advocate for improving school safety, raising graduation rates, decreasing truancy rates and attacking the problem of lead poisoning -- which is proven to have a detrimental and devastating effect on the academic performance of urban children.

Having served as Board Vice President for two non-consecutive terms in 2008 and 2013, Van White was elected as Board President in 2014.

Mr. White is the father of two District graduates who have both gone on to college.

Chris Wiest

Chris Wiest is Vice President, Public Policy and Advocacy for Rochester Business Alliance. In this role, Chris is responsible for developing public policy positions and managing RBA's government relations function on behalf of nearly 2,000 member organizations. Prior to RBA, Chris worked in the human resource and legal departments at Harris Corporation, Schlegel Corporation and Nixon, Hargrave, Devans & Doyle.

He is actively involved in the community, having served as a cub scout leader, Junior Achievement classroom instructor and United Way Committee Member. He serves on several boards including CURE for Childhood Cancer, Small Business Council of Rochester, ROC the Future, SUNY Brockport College Council and the Monroe County Conservation Council. Chris holds a M.S. from Rochester Institute of Technology and a B.A. from the University of Rochester. He is a graduate of Leadership Rochester and is a past recipient of the Rochester Business Journal's "40 Under 40" leadership award.

For more information call 311.
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