

# BBF Professional Preparation and Development Committee

## Meeting Notes 2/18/2025

**Meeting Attendees:** Brendan Rooney, Sonja Bracey, Cynthia Greene, deb Grennon, Didi Harris, Elise Doner, Tia Fotion, Courtney Isham, Joanna Houston, John Cipora, Kelly Hayes, Renee Kelly, Lisa Maynes, Becky Millard, Paula Nadeau, Lynne Robbins, Joanne Rouleau, Staci, Adri Taylo-Behrman, Tricia Pawlik, Beth Truzansky, Julia Wayne, Darla Senecal, Michelle, Helen Mattheis, Beth Wallace, Sharron Harrington, Susan Titterton

### **Meeting Summary:**

I. Meeting introductions

II. Cynthia Greene – Farm to Early Childhood (FTEC)

- Will be leading a conversation on where Farm to Early Childhood programs fit in ECE field.
- Agenda
  - Overview of FTEC
  - FTEC PD and alignment with state systems
  - Supporting structures
  - Discussion: intersection with PPD
- What is FTEC?
  - A group of strategies that can impact the educational classroom and food purchasing at ECE sites to enrich connections with local food and producers.
  - Three C's: Classroom, Cafeteria, Community
    - Classroom: Sensory learning, cooking, STEAM, field trips
    - Cafeteria: Meals, snacks, taste tests
    - Community: Family engagements, community events
- Why engage in FTEC?

- 70% of VT children are cared for outside of home at some point, and 2/3 of their meals occur outside of the home.
  - FTEC can also be a strengthening factor for families, staff, and communities dealing with hunger and food insecurity, offering protective factors.
  - FTEC is a research-based practice that meets Head Start performance standards, and is recognized by CDC SNAP-ED intervention.
  - Increase in willingness to try and enjoy fruits and vegetables, changing eating behaviors for entire families.
  - Eating local food invests in local economy and employment.
- Vermont FTEC Coalition
    - Includes state agencies and community partners.
    - Designed to figure out how to scale and increase access.
    - Focuses have been on:
      - Network and Advocacy
      - Professional Development
      - Resources
- CDC's Spectrum of Opportunities Framework
    - Ultimate goal: improved ECE facility-level policies, practices, and environments.
    - FTEC worked with grants, coaches, communities of practice.
    - Programs should be receiving money to support nutrition programming through Act 76
- Professional Development Scaffold: Individuals
    - Approaches to think about food and nutrition education systems at the individual level through workshops. 2-6 hours, virtual/in-person, open to any groups.

- Reflective practice is always a part of FTEC
- FTEC 3-credit Course: differentiated 45 hour instruction, offers a 3-credit ECE-related course.
- Professional Development Scaffold: Teams/Programs
  - VAAFMTSE Grant
    - 18 months, virtual
    - Open to regulated programs
    - Coaching, tech assistance, implementation funds, action planning/CQI
  - Northeast FTS Institute
    - 12 months
    - In-person retreat and conclusion
    - Robust coaching, tech assistance, action planning/CQI, CoP
    - Open to regulated programs, suited for center-based.
- Discussion: Intersection with PPD Committee
  - PPD Work Plan/Priorities
    - Advanced Levels
    - Cross-Sector Collaboration
    - Equity
  - Content
    - Curriculum and Learning Environment
    - Healthy Safety Nutrition
    - Family and Community Partnerships
  - Recognition
    - Compensation

- Credentials, Certificates
  - SPARQS, STARS, Regs
  - Instructors, Coaches/Mentors
  - Business Practices (FCF)
- Courtney Isham: thank you for presentation. Thinking of connections to STARS, how do we elevate these opportunities within STARS. Thoughts on how this is integrated into STARS.
    - CG: that’s a great question, and maybe worth an offline conversation that is more in depth. FTEC programs are so comprehensive that they meet criteria for 5 stars, but I would love to connect to talk more.
    - CI: As we think more about how to connect families to STARS, this seems like a great opportunity for that.
  - Deb Grennon: thanks for presentation. STARS quality piece is a great angle to work for providers – in the field, since we help with financials, we see many programs that can’t afford to feed their students, and I would love to hear more about how to fix that in service of higher equity. Providers are trying to feed children, but don’t have consistent access to funding.
    - CG: we are working very hard on sustainability models – we have pilot food procurement models. USDA has agreement with VT in place (currently) called “Local Foods for Schools and Childcare”, USDA will give \$300,000 for local food for EC. We want to work with First Children’s Finance to figure out financial supports for families.
  - Julia Wayne: connection to CIS, a large number of referrals come from WIC. Home visitors helping with food and breastfeeding, see potential connection to support families with healthy local foods.
    - CG: coalition works closely with WIC; would love to talk to make CIS connection more concrete.

- Becky Millard: question on tie-ins to afterschool; what are the intersections here?
  - CG: Afterschool is grouped in with EC systems. Agency of Agriculture takes the lead on Afterschool, and has created pathways for AS professionals to gain access to FTEC through K-12 systems. It has been a difficult question for FTEC in regards to scalability, but we are working on that. For PD, we leave things open to both Afterschool and EC fields.
  - Trisha Pawlik: our staff are able to access things through the CACFP, and have programs that have accessed resources and trainings through Cynthia. AS programs have even hosted some PD. Questions of whether trainings should be offered to everyone, or split along age lines.
  - CG: Summer meal programming seems like a potential opportunity.
- Cynthia: question on badges, certificates, recognition opportunities. Where do we stand on this?
  - Becky: BFIS can't really do badging, but that doesn't mean that we can't use badging – just that it can't be in the system. There are changes in the pipeline, but not imminently.
  - John Cipora: this was the main area that I had questions. This committee has talked about stackable credentials for over a decade – this seems like it could be a great connection to that work.
    - CG: thank you – this does seem like a worthwhile exploration.
    - Becky: options are to seek permission, or to build the systems that we see a need for and go from there. Childcare licensing rules need to be revised on a regular basis, and this could be an area of revision

- Lynne: agreed with Becky; certainly lots to consider at CDD level, unsure if there's opportunity for a change at this point but is interested in badging once database is in place. Needs to be considered in whole package of where we end up.
- Becky: to circle back to badging system, it may be of interest to talk about what form that might take in advance of any licensing changes.

### III. 2024 Vermont Head Start Workforce PIR Data - Renee Kelly, VT Head Start Collaboration Director

- What is Head Start and Early Head Start
  - Comprehensive child development programming
  - Gives children from at-risk backgrounds the skills they need to be successful in school and life.
  - Promotes school readiness
  - Different program types reflect needs of communities.
- Who does Head Start and Early Head Start serve?
  - Head Start primarily serves 3-4 year olds
  - Early Head Start serves infants, toddlers, pregnant people
  - Income eligibility
    - At or below 100% of FPL
- VT Head Start and Early Head Start
  - 7 HS recipients
  - 6 EHS recipients
  - 5 community action agencies
  - 1,273 children and their families
  - 72 locations

- 671 staff employed
- \$26,890,187 in FY24 funding
- Head Start Collaboration Offices
  - Authorized by Head Start Act
  - Have national as well as regional priorities
- What is PIR (Program Information Report)?
  - Date on services, staff, children served by HS programs nationwide.
  - Important source of descriptive and service data.
- Workforce Composition
  - Infant Toddler Classroom teachers had a dip in 2023, and returned in 2024.
  - Assistant teachers had a bump in 2023, and have lowered again in 2024.
- Teaching Staff
  - Infant Toddlers have a much lower rate of Bachelor's degrees compared to classroom teachers, and a higher rate of CDAs.
- Average salaries and wages
  - Classroom teachers - ~47,000; 24 per hour
  - Assistant: ~36,000; 19 per hour
  - Home Visitors: ~43,000; 22.5 per hour
- Engaging and investing in families as workforce
  - 18% of staff are current or former HS or EHS parents
  - 71% of volunteers are current or former HS or EHS parents
- Coaching in Head Start and Early Head Start
  - 19 individuals provided intensive coaching
  - 74 Ed and Child Development staff received coaching

- Practice Based Coaching using Together Learning and Collaborating Model
- Staff Turnover
  - 37% of staff vacancies remained unfilled for a period of 3 months or longer.
  - 12% higher compensation
  - 17% retirement or relocation
  - 17% involuntary separation
  - 53% other
- PD Structure and Opportunities
  - Community Level
    - Each HS recipient receives training and technical assistance (T&TA) funds.
  - Regional Level
    - Provide T&TA to recipients directly.
  - National Level
- Discussion
  - Becky: higher CDA proportion for infant/toddlers may have to do with Head Start requirements, and the pathway to the Infant/Toddler CDA.
  - CG: wondering about stackable, portable certificates – how do those work with professionalizing the field? Creates bridges to Afterschool people as well.
    - RK: sticking point around state standards and definitions – language around specific development. Need to make sure that these credentials are universal and transferrable. Who are we trying to prove quality to – families or the state?



- Deb Grennon: concerns over turnover rate and gaps in hiring. Questions on staff development. Noticing that number of family childcare home professional seems to be shrinking.
  - RK: if you are a partner with HS, you as a family childcare provider would open a certain number of HS slots and meet expectations to receive funding and support. Even though these standards are important, the partners have had a hard time meeting them due to the additional stresses it provides. Very volatile situation right now – partnerships aren't flourishing since partners are feeling overwhelmed and we aren't able to give them enough support.
- Paula: report just came back for apprenticeship evaluation, how do we integrate these other specializations into an apprenticeship program of some kind? Mentoring: we serve the apprentices, but also the mentors. Expecting more conversations with CDD and HS re: coaching.
  - RK: part of the difficulty we're running into is teacher burnout with rates of high needs students
  - Beth: We don't always have the same level of insight of what's happening in programs, so thank you for sharing this data. How do we use the data more actively, and are people in HS programs accessing PD in the same way as others?
    - Becky: lots of their PD is done in house.
    - RK: I'm getting more questions than in the past on how to access resources and what we can do to provide more. EI is at a workforce shortage, CIS is at a workforce shortage
- Cynthia: re family childcare: we have troubles with programs maintaining enrollment. Is it time for our system to look at Family Friend and Neighbor programs? Lastly, how do we build systems to lower the barriers to access for programs re: credentialing, PD, burnout.

- Becky: what can we do to build easier onramps and take some of that burden on the system side to take it off of people in the field?

#### IV. Discussion on OPR Report

- Moving towards recognizing ECE as a Profession
- Bill introduced in house – OPR has made recommendation, now it's in the house.
- Licenses for ECE 1, ECE 2, ECE 3
  - This would change a lot on licensing requirements for recognized EC providers.
- Open Discussion
- Becky: what would the role of the Career Ladder be if these changes take place?
  - CG: it is hard to visualize a change this big, but it is worth reimagining the systems we have in place to fit into the new licenses.
  - Becky: how will this interact with AOE Ed Licensure?
  - John Cipora: thinking around the Career Ladder, how many institutions of higher ed in VT are providing grants to employees to gain higher education and progress up the ladder?
    - Renee: in VT, we have many partners who would be interested in helping, but there are logistical/financial hurdles – can we ensure that there are actual bonuses or incentives to progress up the ladder?
    - Becky: the only way to move this forward is to have a wage increase. A benefit to the ECE licenses is that they have very clear expectations for each step of the progression – it's possible that the Career Ladder could help people get to the first steps of the ECE licenses.
    - Cynthia: I could see this tying into badges well.

- Becky: I feel that this has the potential for a very significant shift in our system.
- Sharron: historically, part of the challenge has been how to create clear, stackable pathways.
- Susan Titterton: having clear credentials could help make the field less fragmented and build partnership within the field. Plan is for Career Ladder to have direct ties to new ECE credentials.
- Becky: there will be many opportunities to discuss things further as this moves through the house.
- Susan: this could lead to a baseline expectation of preparation as people enter the workforce.

## V. Member Updates

- Beth Truzansky: BBF is hosting a conversation for BBF Network members (including PPD, Regional Councils) to provide input on the strategic plan on 3/5  
<https://www.buildingbrightfutures.org/event/strategic-plan-community-conversation-for-early-childhood/>

### Relevant Links:

Meeting resources available at: <https://northernlightsccv.org/resources/vermonts-ecpd-system/ppd/>

### Possible next topics: