Texas Rising Star 4-Year Review State Workgroup Meeting

Tuesday, December 17, 2019

10:00 am- 2:00 pm

# Welcome, Overview and Introductions:

The Workgroup meeting was called to order at 10:15 am. 11 Workgroup members were present, and 4 members attended via teleconferencing.

TWC reviewed the timeline and the materials the Workgroup would be using for reference.

Commissioners were in attendance and addressed the Workgroup:

* Chairman Bryan Daniel thanked the Workgroup for their volunteer efforts and stated that they are near the end of the revisions. Chairman ‘appreciated all the hard work the Workgroup has done.’ Chairman emphasized that ‘the way for the public to buy in on child care is to be strategic on how to sell it. When child care is being sold in a manner that emphasizes the opportunity that gives women the ability to return to work, more people will buy in.’ Chairman concluded with stating that the Workgroup’s efforts and work will be noticed. Chairman departed at 10:30am.
* Commissioner Aaron Demerson thanked the Workgroup members for being present. He stated that ‘good conversations are happening in regard to child care.’ He wished the Workgroup happy holidays and appreciated their ‘volunteer efforts as he has two boys that came from the CC system.’ Commissioner departed at 10:20 am.
* Commissioner Julian Alvarez III thanked the Workgroup and stated he was ‘excited to be present and is very fortunate to have Reagan Miller overseeing the division. She has assembled a great team, that have developed great ideas and helpful data.’ Commissioner stated there will be a “Baby Boot Tour,” in April 2020. Commissioner wants to ‘listen to stakeholders and volunteers’ ideas and feedback to prepare for the next legislation sessions. This tour will be a joint effort with Reagan’s team.’ Commissioner departed at 10:55am.

# Discussion

The Workgroup reviewed outstanding proposed revisions.

## P-N-06: Nutrition

* The Workgroup previously agreed to move this measure to the subcategory of SCR in Category 2 as a new measure but was undecided on how this might look to capture the varied age ranges and health department concerns.
* Two options were proposed:
* Option 1: Scoring remains based on the number of indicators as it already was for P-N-06. There is still allowance within each indicator to comply with health concerns.
	+ Option 2: Change the scoring to focus on consistency of observing self-help skills in the classroom, including lunch (varied and consistent opportunities are provided throughout numerous contexts observed).
* The Workgroup agreed with option 2.

## S-ILE-02: Infant Classroom Environments

* Three options were proposed to the Workgroup.
* Option 1: Leave as a standalone required measure for Infant classrooms.
* Option 2: Remove and place clarification within Category 2 measures that interaction should occur during diaper changes.
	+ The intent of this option is to focus on the engagement between the teacher and children.
* Option 3: Change to include Toddlers for diapering and potty-training experiences.
* The Workgroup emphasized that both engagement and environment are equally as important and a combination of having both engagement and environment was proposed. Additionally, the majority of the Workgroup would like this item to include toddlers as well.
* The Workgroup discussed concerns about staff qualifications and this topic was placed on the parking lot for follow up discussion.
* Consensus was for Option 2.

## Weighting Categories:

The Workgroup had previously discussed how categories with multiple classrooms are determined. Current methodology is utilizing the median of each measure’s score then averaging the measures, thus the classrooms that scored the highest and lowest are not considered in the final scored. Only the teachers that scored in between are considered, so if there are any outliers, they will not affect the score.

* The Workgroup agreed to keep the median score methodology.

Additionally, the Workgroup had previously discussed changing how the categories are weighted when determining overall star level. Current methodology has each category bearing equal weight.

* Three options were proposed to the Workgroup.
	+ Option 1: All categories remained equally weighted (25% each).
	+ Option 2: Categories 1, 3, and 4 weight 20% and Category 2 weights 40%.
	+ Option 3: Category 1 - 30%, Category 2 - 40%, Category 3 & 4 - 15%
* The Workgroup discussed the overall impact of having Category 1 be weighted more than it needs to. There was concern that if the focus is on Category 1, the wanted results will not be achieved and if too much is put on providers right away, providers may opt out of Texas Rising Star.
* Consensus was for Option 2.

## Confirming Terminology

Anytime the following words are used within the Guidelines, Texas Rising Star documents, and website, the following terms will be changed to the agreed upon term.

* Provider will be changed to Early Learning Program (Program or Facility as applicable). The Workgroup agreed.
* Caregiver will be changed to Teacher (Staff as applicable)
	+ - The Workgroup discussed language from the National Task Force for Power to the Profession is using “educator,” and the Workgroup has the opportunity to adopt that language now.
		- The Workgroup discussed this terminology is a step for caregivers to view themselves as educators.
		- Consensus was to use educator (teacher or staff as applicable).
* Rating will be changed to Recognition.
	+ The Workgroup was informed that at the ACF Regional Meeting it was stated that other states have shifted to using “recognition.”
	+ Some Workgroup members felt that rating and recognition can be interchangeable.
	+ Consensus was to keep both terms and use as applicable.
* Deficiency will be changed to Violation
	+ The Workgroup suggested that the term violation sounds more permanent.
	+ The terms “citation” and “issue” were proposed.
	+ The Workgroup did not reach consensus on this, and this consideration was left pending.

## Screening Form

The Workgroup had previously discussed a proposed 6-month lookback for deficiencies; however, the Workgroup disagreed with the 6-months. Child Care Licensing is now publishing 5 years of licensing history on their website.

* The Workgroup agreed to a 12-month lookback for initial applicants.

The Workgroup additionally discussed the impacts of screening form deficiencies (dropping a star level for 6-months).

* The Workgroup discussed the allowance of “corrected at inspection” for Level 1 deficiencies.
* A Workgroup member shared a letter from a provider on the financial impact the program had when it received a Level 1 deficiency.
* It was proposed to the Workgroup that TWC will take all their input on this item and put together some recommendations to be discussed in a future conference call.

## Continuous Quality Improvement Plans (CQIP)

* In collaboration with CLI Engage IT staff, the CQIPs will be autogenerated through Engage and have the ability for personalization for each Program, Classroom and/or Teacher (as needed or applicable).
* This will help leverage Engage’s existing functionality regarding the tools and data it already possesses thus minimize the additional costs and enhancements needed.
* The Workgroup reviewed a draft of how the CQIP will be generated and implemented within Engage.

## Overview of Proposed Changes

The Workgroup reviewed the proposed changes that have been agreed upon at this time in preparation for submittal to the Commission. This information is captured within the “Data Summary” document available on the Texas Rising Star Workgroup webpage. Each table was reviewed and additional discussion was allotted or follow up was noted.

**Table 1: Screening Forms**

* No additional discussion or follow up noted by Workgroup.

**Table 2: Screening Forms Additions**

* No additional discussion or follow up noted by Workgroup.

**Table 3: National Accreditation Considerations**

* No additional discussion or follow up noted by Workgroup.

**Table 4A: Director and Staff Qualifications**

* The Workgroup noted that they would like to discuss Director and Staff qualifications at a follow-up meeting/call.

**Table 4B: Teacher-Child Interactions**

* No additional discussion or follow up noted by Workgroup.

**Table 4C: Lesson Plans and Curriculum**

* No additional discussion or follow up noted by Workgroup.

**Table 4D: Nutrition and Indoor/Outdoor Environments**

* No additional discussion or follow up noted by Workgroup.

**Table 4E: Parent Education/Involvement**

* No additional discussion or follow up noted by Workgroup.

**Table 5: Texas Rising Star Process**

* The Workgroup discussed some concerns on monitoring timeline compliance and impacts to those programs who fail to reach CQIP goals.

**Table 6: Additional Considerations**

* The Workgroup discussed how compliance with the certification course might yield better results if assessors were centralized.

## Future Discussions

The Workgroup has noted the following topics as areas of discussion for future meetings and future 4-year review.

* Screening Compliance for Background Check violations
* Requiring all CCS programs to participate within Texas Rising Star
* Career Lattice for Directors and Teachers (minimal education requirements)
* Cross-training for Texas Rising Star staff (assessors/mentors) and Child Care Licensing staff
* Centralized Assessors
* Continuity of Care supports
* Consumer education for families
* Data Research on revisions within TRS (including group size/ratio, 1-star)

## Implementation of Changes

TWC shared with the Workgroup a draft timeline regarding the implementation of the proposed changes.

* Fully Implemented revisions by January 2021 with some “grandfathering” allowances
* Supports will be provided to Texas Rising Star staff (assessors/mentors) via regional trainings in Late Summer 2020 and webinars available Early Summer – Winter 2020. A running FAQ document will be created for consistent messaging at the regional trainings. TWC will provide a pre-scripted power point for Boards to share with early learning programs to help understand the changes proposed.
* TWC will have stakeholder meetings in February 2020 in various locations, which will be hosted by the Board and begin at 6:00 p.m.
* There will be a freeze on visits and assessments while training occurs for early learning programs and TRS staff.
* Those who are needing recertification or initial assessments will be prioritized for WF Registry compliance. Goal is by 2022 all TRS programs will be in the WF Registry.
* TRS Assessor Staff will be required to pass the certification course and TRS mentor staff to complete the training course between September 2020 and December 2020. Additionally, assessors will be required to meet quarterly reliability checks.

# Next Steps

* Parking Lot items will be discussed in the next conference call.
* TWC will send a Doodle Poll to schedule remaining conference calls after the holidays.