

# CAPE COD COLLABORATIVE, TWO-DISTRICT PROJECT 2016

## Dennis-Yarmouth and Monomoy Regional School Districts

WITH

## Preschools in the Towns of Chatham, Dennis, Harwich, & Yarmouth

[www.capecodcollaborative.org/index.cfm/projects/preschoolearly-learning-initiatives/](http://www.capecodcollaborative.org/index.cfm/projects/preschoolearly-learning-initiatives/)

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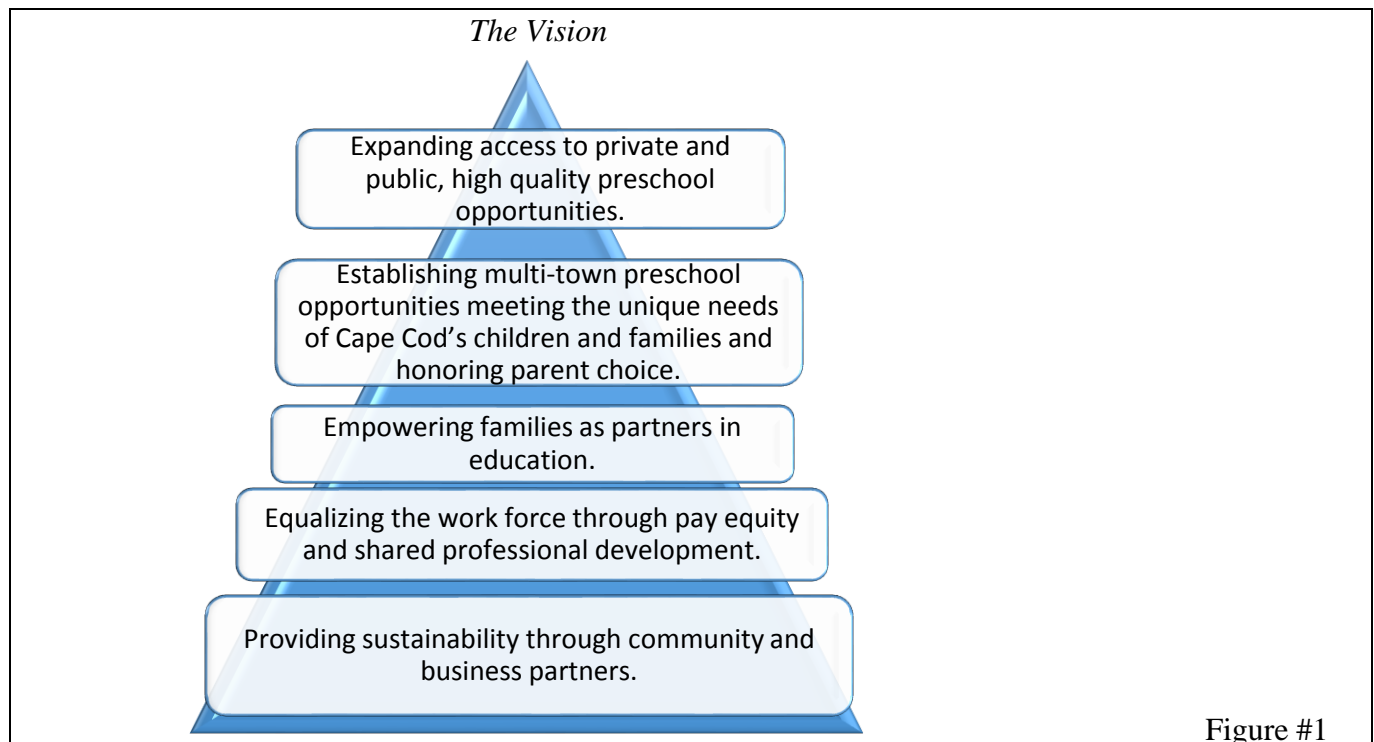
## Commonwealth Preschool Planning Grant Fund Final Strategic Plan

### I. *Executive Summary*

The Cape Cod Collaborative, Two-District Project has been a journey bringing together educators representing private preschools and regional public school districts in four towns. Social agency representatives have joined the project and continue to support the goal of expanding access to preschool for every child. A volunteer, open strategic planning committee was formed. This committee includes more than twenty-two stakeholders from the four towns; they are members of both regional school districts, private and non-profit early childhood leaders, grant directors, preschool educators, principals, the CEO of Head Start (Cape Cod Child Development), CFCEs' directors, and consultants from Strategies for Children. Additionally, representatives from Cape social agencies, including Barnstable County Public Health and the Department of Children and Families, have joined in the efforts. This eclectic group met weekly or bi-weekly with consistent attendance both in person and online.

Throughout the process, the committee members openly discussed each option of preschool expansion. They shared their personal and professional hopes and dreams; read research; and planned community outreach opportunities to have even more input from constituents. While the details of five months' work cannot be delineated here, it is significant to note the unanimous, strong collaboration and mutual passion for early childhood education. That commitment has been outlined in a shared vision with the **overarching goal of expanded access to high quality preschools for every child and family** in the four partnering towns, and, eventually, hopefully, across the Cape and Islands.

The vision for this over-arching goal is simply stated in five principles that have been endorsed by every member of the Planning Committee and is illustrated in Figure #1, below:



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Designing a proposal, one that could become a model, for expanding access to high quality early education is a daunting task. The proposed strategic plan on the ensuing pages is just that – a proposal. Four months is a minimal amount of time to complete such a multi-faceted plan. Yet, the basic components are included with anticipated need to continue the process of planning, consulting, revising, and implementing first steps. All will require on-going collaboration and discussion. None of this will be a reality without the support of schools and communities, early childhood educators, and, most of all, the children’s families.

In the proposed Strategic Plan for a Multi-town Preschool Model, leadership is key. Since this proposal spans two public school districts, four towns, and potentially, more than twenty licensed, private preschools, coordination is imperative. The drafted leadership plan recognizes the present and continuing facilitation by the Cape Cod Collaborative. Through grant funding, an Early Education Advisory Committee will be established representing all of the regional stakeholders and early learning educators. This committee will be coordinated under the Cape Cod Collaborative in cooperation with the partnering school districts’ superintendents. An Early Childhood Educator Coordinator will be employed by the Collaborative, if funds are available, to provide the monitoring and coordination of the continued work of expanding access to high quality and licensed preschools. All of the planning initiatives, grants, and professional development will go through the committee in constant collaboration with the private and public educator representatives and administrators.

No program design proposal can be realistic, or even feasible, without a thorough needs assessment. A thorough needs assessment has been completed. The body of the proposal includes an abridged needs assessment; the full data and explanations are attached in the appendix. Glaring needs and parent requests for high quality and accessible preschool education are apparent. At least 35% of the children come to kindergarten without any early education and more come with incomplete or minimal learning opportunities. Issues of poverty, transportation, dual language, family dysfunction, and access are delineated.

A strong early education program plan is proposed across the four towns. The existing preschools are willing to collaborate. The early childhood educators have attended shared professional development and want more such training. Both private and public preschools are joined in the proposed efforts to address capacity and quality needs. Curriculum components and alignment are high priorities detailed here, including instructional strategies, learning standards, and authentic assessment. In this multi-town plan, the local early education programs must meet the needs of their local families and children while also sharing common curriculum standards and outcomes. Such a balance is graphed as a Venn diagram and will be implemented through the shared vision. All will take time and continuous dialogue.

At this point in the planning process, defining costs and sustainability options is somewhat difficult. Several models have been researched. What is proposed is a modified cost plan based on the New Jersey Abbott Preschool Program. The NJ Abbott Preschool Program has been the subject of long term studies and has demonstrated proven results. No one is expecting implementation immediately. Rather, a three-year phased in plan is outlined. All will require additional funding with those funds coming from a variety of resources, including local revenue as well as federal, state, and private grants.

Any strategic plan is a proposal that requires action steps. This one is no different. It is the hope of the Planning Committee to procure funds to proceed with immediate action steps, no matter how small they must be. The excitement and commitment will continue through continued, collaborated efforts.

## **II. *Leadership Plan***

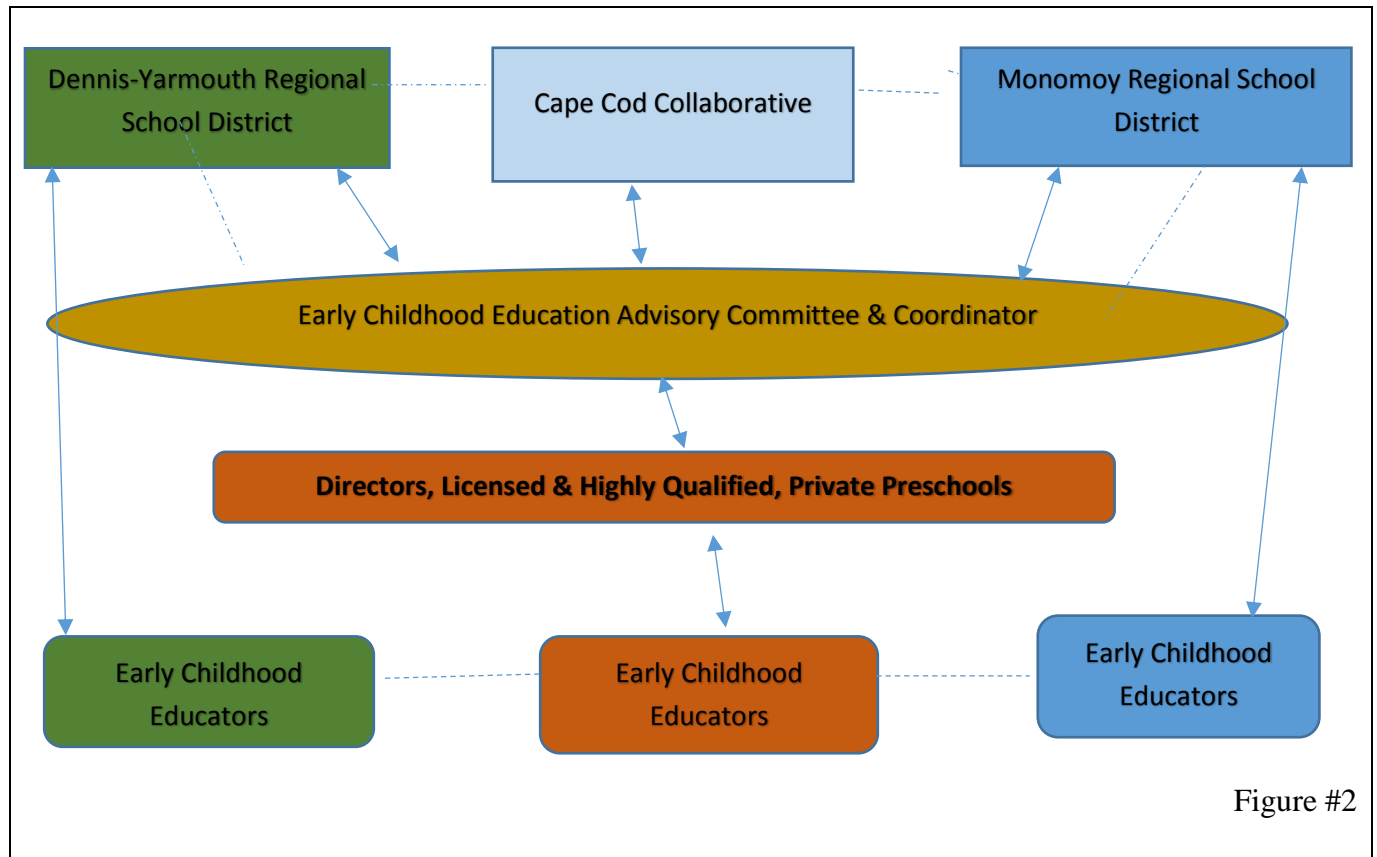
Developing a leadership plan for a four-town Preschool Expansion Model is no small task. The very effective Planning Committee for the Preschool Expansion Grant has facilitated the process. Their passion, commitment, and continuous diligence is testament for the on-going work of this initiative.

The proposed four-town Preschool Expansion Model will continue to evolve across the region served by the Dennis-Yarmouth and Monomoy Regional School Districts with partners from Head Start (locally established as Cape Cod Child Development) and private preschools across the four towns. The Strategic Plan funded by the Department of Early Education and Care's Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) will be utilized to guide preschool expansion efforts, incorporating a mixed delivery system to increase access to early education for three and four-year-old children. Any new program initiative will encompass these entities included as stakeholders in the planning process: public schools in the partnering school districts; partnered, licensed, private preschools; Cape Cod Child Development (Head Start); and social agencies, community leaders, and interested parents.

The two foundational, regional school districts are each governed by their own School Committee and Superintendent. In the same manner, the licensed, private schools, who have been involved, are managed by their own directors. Members of social and community agencies are represented and have participated as stakeholders and contributing guides to the expansion initiative. Through the PEG Expansion Grant Planning this group of community wide representatives has come together in mutual agreement focused on increasing access to preschool for children and families across the participating communities. The disparate backgrounds and varying programs have found true common ground in the goals to reach out to all children for the purpose of establishing early childhood education that incorporates all domains of social, emotional, and cognitive development. These various constituent partners will offer on-going consultation and advice to the preschool expansion project through a Cape Cod Collaborative facilitated group to be known as the Early Education Advisory Committee.

The Early Education Advisory Committee will have core representation from the original PEG Planning Group. The Committee will establish regular meetings and direct lines of communication across the communities and constituents. Both private and public preschool educators will have voice and means to maintain open dialogue through the Early Education Advisory Committee. If grant funds are available, activities of the Advisory Committee will be facilitated by a Cape Cod Collaborative employed, Early Childhood Education Coordinator. This Coordinator will perform under the direction of Paul Hilton, Executive Director, and Joseph Gilbert, Director of Special Projects. This Early Childhood Education Coordinator will work closely with the Public Schools' Administrators and Private Preschools' Directors. The Coordinator will also establish and support on-going work with the area social agencies' directors and/or representatives. Through this collaborative and cooperative relationship, the Coordinator will steward the accomplishment of objectives within the Strategic Plan. [See Figure #2, below.]

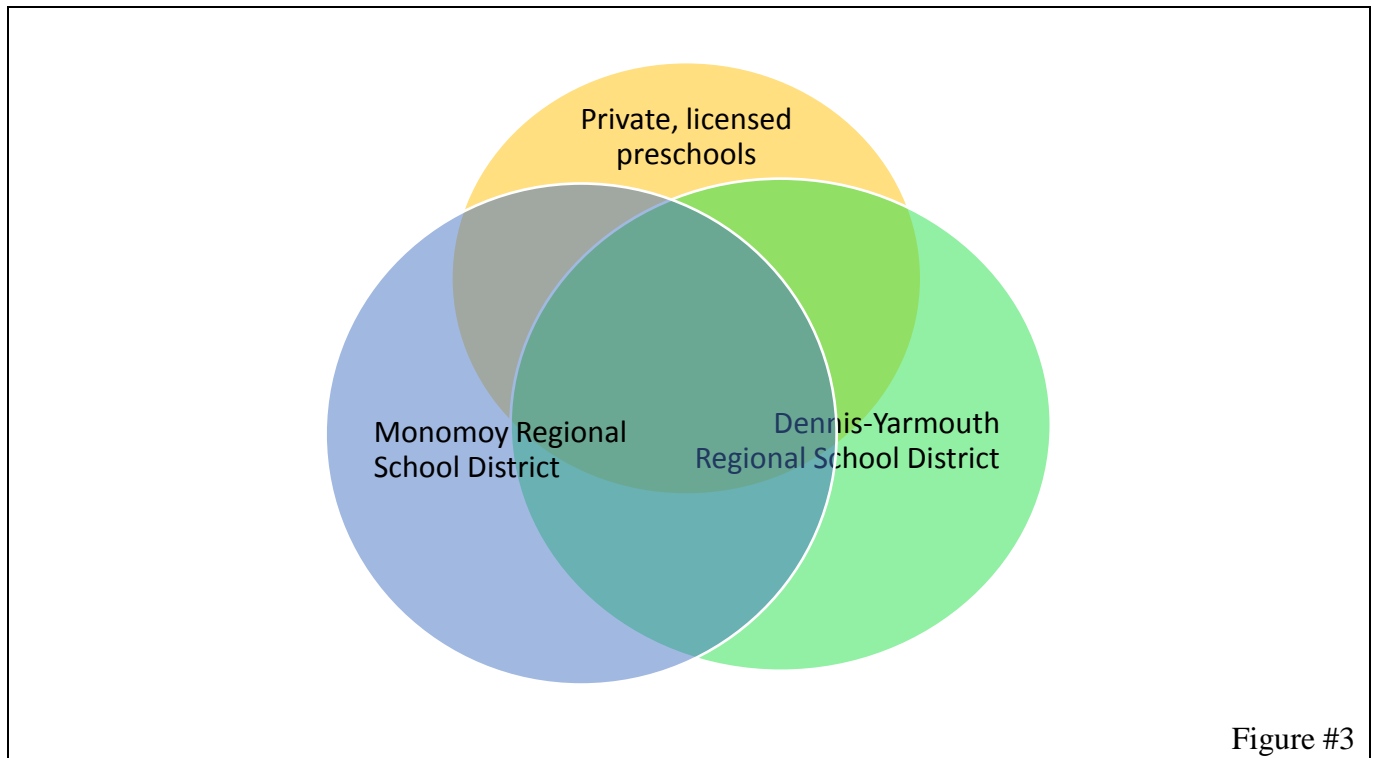
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Key roles for both the Advisory Committee and the Coordinator will be the collaboration of efforts and open communication, among partners and with the communities. The maintenance of a regular meeting schedule will be the beginning of ensuring continuation of the work and dialogue that has been established through the planning process. Since this cooperative plan crosses many geographical and organizational jurisdictions, the Early Education Advisory Committee will be critical for implementation of expanded access to preschool across the area. All the details of program design, curriculum alignment, early educator training and professional development, family engagement, and comprehensive services will be coordinated through the Committee. While the efforts of the Committee will be to ensure common programs across the entities, it is also understood that each community has some unique needs. Therefore, the specific private and public preschools within these communities will have to respond to those needs.

The principles and over-arching guidelines for early childhood education will be mutually agreed upon and supported by the local administrators and directors. Concurrently, these principles and guidelines will be reviewed and supported through the Early Education Advisory Committee. All discussion, as well as any variation, will be coordinated through the Committee. The Committee is charged with the facilitation for the common efforts aligned with the vision and goals of the Strategic Plan. This means that there will be continuous and open dialogue. The goals and vision are shared; the over-arching guidelines for program quality and design are in agreement; family engagement and comprehensive services are common across the communities; and, still, there is room for local direction and local

decisions responding to local needs. If one envisions a Venn diagram [see Figure #3, below], the reality of expanded preschool across communities becomes clear.



Any graphic depiction is illustrative but not accurate proportionately. Most importantly, the critical and essential components of early childhood education are held in common agreement and alignment, but there are small variations unique to specific settings. Public school administrators and local directors of licensed, private preschools will maintain their respective authority. The collaborating partners will work with their own staffs and across agencies to ensure implementation of the goals and vision for early childhood education in the four-town area. At the same time, the representatives from all these constituents will work with the Early Education Advisory Committee to implement the mutually agreed programs with expanded access for all three and four-year old children.

These collaborative efforts through the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee are built upon a long history of close networks across the private early childhood centers. Additionally, public preschools have established transition meetings with preschool centers to help, support, and orient incoming kindergarten students. These partnerships and cooperative efforts have been rekindled through the planning committee for this initiative. The stakeholders across the sectors are committed to expanded access to preschool education through continued focus on collaboration, planning, and specific steps – work that goes beyond transition meetings and occasional networking opportunities.

This expanded access to preschool education will be a phased-in process, beginning with open, shared professional development and community outreach. Funding, both local revenue and grant funds, will need to be procured. The proposed Early Childhood Education Coordinator, with the Cape Cod Collaborative, will seek and submit multiple grants to support the four-town initiative.

Grants will be sought through federal, state, and private sources. Specifically, the Coordinator and Early Education Advisory Committee will seek support from the Massachusetts Departments of Early Education and Care and the Elementary & Secondary Education; both grant funding and program guidance will be essential. Also, the Coordinator and Committee will continue to work with *Strategies for Children, Inc.*, to advocate for public support for early childhood education. Any grants received for the four-town initiative will be administered by the Early Education Advisory Committee through the fiscal entity of the Cape Cod Collaborative. The proposed Early Childhood Education Coordinator will be responsible for implementation of grant funds to support expanded preschool programs across the four towns in alignment with the Strategic Plan and in consultation with the administrators of the schools and school districts.

The Early Education Advisory Committee will continuously gather data and information from the partnering stakeholders and the communities, with outreach to other Cape Cod communities and agencies. This on-going data collection and review will be essential to maintain the relevance and appropriateness of all early childhood education programs. Any collected data will be reviewed by the Committee and shared with the administrative bodies of all constituents. The Early Childhood Education Coordinator will facilitate this on-going process, maintaining open communication and dialogue across all preschools, school districts, social and community agencies, and the Cape Cod Collaborative.

### III. *Program Design and Development*

**The Vision.** This proposed strategic plan is designed for a unique situation that encompasses four towns, two regional school districts, and more than twenty private preschool education programs. Therefore, the Planning Committee felt that it is critically important that all stakeholders share the same vision to be able to implement such an expansive strategic plan. Our adopted vision for preschool access is as follows:

- *Expanding access to private and public, high quality preschool opportunities.* The communities of Chatham, Dennis, Harwich, and Yarmouth together with public and private educators recognize that increased access to high quality private and public preschool opportunities is an essential part of building a strong educational program. Expanded prekindergarten programs will offer more prospects for children who may be homeless, at high risk, are of the working poor, or from large families with four or more children under the age of five. Using a “mixed delivery” model, one that provides early childhood education in both private and public school settings, would respond to the increasing demands of young families who are looking for access to preschool education within these communities. In a mixed delivery model, all centers are high-quality, licensed, participating in the state’s Quality Review Improvement System, and/or National Association of the Education of Young Children accreditation, and coordinate with local public schools, K-3 programs. These centers are aligned with the “Massachusetts Early Childhood Guidelines”, “Standards for Social/Emotional Development”, and the “Approaches to Play and Learning Standards” as well as “*Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Birth to Five*” to ensure alignment. Additionally, all early childhood educators, and their respective centers and curriculum, are aligned with both *The Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for PreK through 12 for PreK through 12* and *new MA STE Standards* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>). It also is a system in which educators in

all public and private preschools are offered comparable professional development in training sessions that are open and available.

- *Establishing multi-town preschool opportunities meeting the unique needs of Cape Cod's children and families and honoring parent choice.* The established proposal is designed to meet the needs of families in all four towns. It will provide preschool opportunities that will include part time and full time services. There will be a variation of options in the schools to meet the individual needs of children and families. Parent choice will be protected through the expansion of access to these high quality preschool opportunities.
- *Empowering families as partners in education.* Parents as partners is the essential core of building a strong foundation. They are acknowledged as their child's first and most important teacher. The protective factors of "Strengthening Families Model" will be promoted: Parent Resilience, Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, and Concrete Support in times of need. This will be done through daily communication within the school context, parenting workshops (with on-site child care support), professional development for teaching staff, and referrals to the appropriate agencies. "A strengths-based approach helps parents feel valued because they are acknowledged as knowledgeable and competent. They develop a sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy because they have opportunities to build their skills, experience success, and provide help to others" (The Center for the Study of Social Policy).
- *Equalizing the work force through pay equity and shared professional development.* Through the grant process a plan will be phased in to equalize the salaries of private preschool teachers holding a Bachelor's degree with that of their public school counterparts; currently, this discrepancy is often in excess of \$20,000 annually in salary, only. Additional measures will include reimbursement for the cost of college courses as well as mentoring and/or coaching for teachers. Private preschools will be invited to participate in district high-quality professional development. Professional Learning Communities will be created to be inclusive of both private and public preschool educators.
- *Providing sustainability through community and business partners.* Our community partners include businesses and social agencies that employ our families. In the communities of Dennis, Yarmouth, Harwich, and Chatham these would include, but are not limited to, hotels, resorts, restaurants, nursing homes, police departments, fire departments, recreation departments, Cape Cod Hospital, the local large grocery chains, and larger construction related businesses. Local charitable foundations and non-profit organizations will also be invited to partner in the expansion of preschool access.

**a. Needs Assessment Results** (Summarized here but included in entirety in Appendix I.)

**Methodology.** As part of the preschool planning process, the planning team conducted a thorough needs assessment to learn more about the current preschool landscape in the four-town region and the needs of children, families, and the community at-large. The overall approach and research questions were informed by both the planning grant RFR guidelines provided by the Department of Early Education and Care and the ideas, concerns, and questions raised by planning team members during its meetings. The team used several methods to collect information - a survey of preschool program administrators, a

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parent survey, two open community forums, and a review of existing data. This mixed methods approach of gathering data and information from multiple sources allowed the team to identify common themes and arrive at an accurate portrait of the community and its needs.

**Cape Cod context.** Group discussions at planning team meetings revealed a unique Cape Cod socio-economic context that shapes the needs of children and families. The region has a seasonal economy and workforce, as well as a growing immigrant population. Cost of living increases (i.e. housing, health care, higher education) during the recent recession have resulted in growing numbers of “working poor.” Compared with previous decades, the Cape’s child population is smaller in size but higher in need. The young workforce (25-44) population has been in decline due to lack of jobs and affordable housing.<sup>1</sup> Child poverty is increasing across the Cape, from 8.6% in 2000 to 15.4% in 2014.<sup>2</sup> The opioid epidemic, well documented in Massachusetts and the Cape, is having a measurable impact on babies – 3% of babies born on Cape experience withdrawal symptoms (Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)).<sup>3</sup> Family structures are weakening. There’s shared agreement by the planning team, including local DCF workers, of a foster care crisis and a growing number of grandparents raising children. Housing instability and homelessness, food insecurity, and crime increases are all well documented by local agencies and media outlets.

These data points and anecdotes support a growing need on the Cape, complicated by the multiple factors of economic, social, educational, and health. These detailed trends highlight the needs of the working poor and struggling middle class.

**Young children.** In our partnership across the four towns, there are approximately 430 children per single year of age at any given time.<sup>4</sup> Cape-wide, an estimated 30-40% of children enter kindergarten with no preschool experience.<sup>5</sup>

Young child population:

<b>Town</b>	<b>&lt; 1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>B-5 AVG</b>
Chatham	29	37	35	35	27	33	<b>33</b>
Harwich	85	91	84	108	104	97	<b>95</b>
Dennis	103	100	108	111	90	86	<b>100</b>
Yarmouth	207	176	240	199	194	198	<b>202</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>430</b>

*Source: Census 2010*

<sup>1</sup> Northeastern University Dukakis Center for Urban & Regional Policy. (2014). Shaping the Cape’s Future. Commissioned by Cape Cod Young Professionals. Retrieved from: <http://capecodeyoungprofessionals.org/images/uploads/ShapeTheCapeSummaryReport.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Child poverty rates shown for Barnstable County. Sources: Census 2000; American Community Survey, 2010-2014 5-year estimates.

<sup>3</sup> Based on 1,185 births in FY15, 3% = 35 children. Carter, A. (2016, Jan 21). Effects Of Opioids Can Reach Into Womb. Retrieved from: [http://www.capenews.net/mashpee/news/effects-of-opioids-can-reach-into-womb/article\\_0e4fcdfe-7933-5f6f-91c0-29eeda2ff602.html](http://www.capenews.net/mashpee/news/effects-of-opioids-can-reach-into-womb/article_0e4fcdfe-7933-5f6f-91c0-29eeda2ff602.html) .

<sup>4</sup> Census 2010.

<sup>5</sup> The source for the 30-40% estimate is local kindergarten screening data collected from school districts across Cape Cod and the Islands.

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Assuming 430 children per single age cohort, at a rate of 35% of kindergarten students with no prior preschool, then **150** kindergarten students per year enter public school with no prior preschool. That number doubles to 300 when combining 3- and 4-year-olds. Any number must also be assessed in light of national research that shows 20% of the families, where children are not attending preschool, want to keep their children at home. In spite of that adjustment, there are still an estimated 240 children who would attend early childhood education programs if they had access and opportunity.

In discussing access and capacity issues as a team, preschool administrators encouraged thinking of the target population as those children unenrolled and under-enrolled. Varying program schedules (length of day, length of year) may not be meeting the needs of working families. Transportation needs may vary based on program schedules. More work is required to identify program capacity and classrooms needed to meet target expansion and enrollment numbers.

**Families.** The planning team conducted outreach with parents, to both capture their needs and opinions about preschool programming and to raise awareness of preschool planning and potential expansion in the four-town region. A total of 59 parents were surveyed. Parents from all four towns are represented in the sample. The majority of parents (86%) report that their child does or did attend preschool, and most of these reported that the preschool experience met their needs and the needs of their child. [One note to this “majority of parents”: the data was gathered at parent events at their respective schools; thus, skewing the data to parents who are involved in school and, therefore, attend these events.]

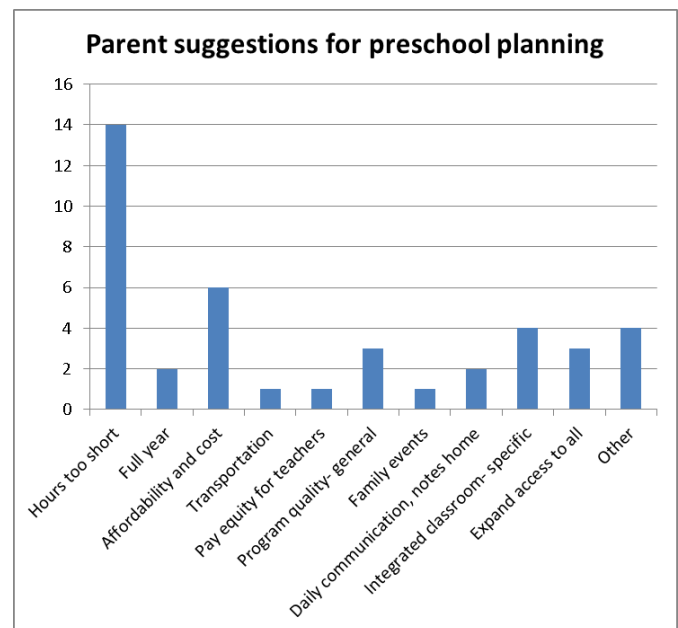
When asked to provide suggestions or considerations for planning future preschool services, parents offered a range of feedback.

By far the largest concern voiced by parents was program hours. A half-day is too short a schedule for most working families.

*“She goes to her school because it is 8-2:30 and sometimes aftercare. Half day programs do not work for us, and this only works because we have family that picks her up at 2:30 most days.”*

*“9 is a tough start time, even 8:45 would be better so that I could get to work by 9. My mom lives nearby so the half day works, but if I did not have family here I don't know what I would do.”*

In general open response questions, parents commented on a range of specific program characteristics, including program and teacher quality, curriculum, integrated classrooms, and transportation. There was support for expanding access community-wide:



*“The more we can do to bring families in when their children are young the better. From infant on...”*

*“Free public preschool for all would be great.”*

The parent survey was a critical component of our needs assessment, and was fairly representative of parents who have accessed early education in the mixed provider system. However, given that 30-40% of kindergarten students arrive with no prior preschool experience, more information should be collected from this population to learn their opinions about and barriers to preschool access.

**Programs.** Within the four-town region, there are four public school preschool programs and 18 community-based preschool programs licensed by the Department of Early Education and Care. The planning team administered a survey to these programs, with questions based on the program quality prompts listed in the preschool planning grant RFR, “needs of educators and programs in the community.”<sup>6</sup> A total of 12 programs completed the survey (9 community-based, 3 public school: D-Y, Monomoy Regional Schools, and Cape Cod Regional Technical High School).

Highlights include:

- Responding programs’ total preschool **enrollment vs. capacity**: 567 / 588. Net spare capacity is - 21 across programs. Based on calculated spare capacity, the team would need to identify space to create new classrooms for preschool expansion.
- Half of programs surveyed (6/12) report preschool **waitlists**: 194 total children, including 153 children from the two largest programs.<sup>7</sup>
- All programs but one take part in the state Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Average **QRIS** rating for respondents is 2.0. One program is level 4.
- Self-reported **strengths and weaknesses** varied by program type, and present clear opportunities for collaboration and leveraging unique strengths. Public school programs reported similarly to each other (D-Y and Monomoy) and different from community-based programs. This was likely due to the many operational differences and conditions of public and private programming (i.e., half-day, inclusion, family engagement, teacher compensation).
- A range of innovative **family engagement** strategies (relationships, communication, activities) is utilized across programs.
- Survey respondents report a mix of **education levels** for their educators/staff, with the BA being the most common degree held: 11 associate degrees, 23 bachelor’s degrees, and 10 higher degrees. There would be an ample supply of teachers with a BA or higher to draw upon should state or federal funding require lead teachers to hold BA degrees.
- A wide range of **professional development** needs are reported. Educators in the region access professional development using many strategies and outlets – when trainings are accessible (schedule and location are commonly reported barriers).
- Respondents were asked to reflect on **what “success” looks like** for educators, programs, and the community. They described clear, ambitious and achievable visions of success for children, families, programs, and the larger Cape Cod region.

*“All participants including children, staff and parents are feeling welcome, valued and socially and emotionally supported.”*

<sup>6</sup> Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. (2015). RFR – SRF 160074 Preschool Expansion Planning Grant, PEPG 001.

<sup>7</sup> Separately, the local Department of Children and Families (DCF) administrator reports an extensive voucher waitlist. The survey revealed that 7 out of 12 programs accepted vouchers. The planning team discussed systemic challenges inherent in the voucher system, including low voucher rates that are a disincentive for programs.

*“Success in the community happens when the community’s identity is tied to caring about young families/children so that the community develops the reputation as a desirable place to live (translates into home sales to young, working families who support schools and add to the workforce).”*

*“Meeting child’s developmental needs. I think if children learn to be problem solvers. I think if children have somewhat met the grade-level expectations. I think if families are invested in their child’s education. Teachers are partners with parents, and parents are partners with teachers.”*

*“Happy children who feel safe and loved, who feel confident and self-assured. Happy teachers and staff who feel appreciated and compensated well for their extremely hard work and dedication.”*

**Community perspectives.** The planning team held two open community forums in Harwich and Yarmouth to provide the broader community with an overview of the planning process and a chance to give input. These events were held in the evenings to encourage attendance. Approximately 50 individuals attended representing teachers and administrators (preschool and K-12), parents, community members, and local leaders.

The themes discussed at the forums were similar to those that arose during planning team meetings. These include: cost, sustainability, eligibility, Cape families and the unique economic challenges they face, public/private dynamics, workforce quality, professional development, and pay equity. An assortment of feedback, concerns, and creative suggestions were offered as well, providing fresh insight for the planning team. The forums helped ensure that the planning team was “on track,” planning preschool expansion to accurately meet the needs and realities of the community.

**Summary.** The needs assessment was extremely valuable to the planning team and the overall planning effort. The data and information gathered provide a shared understanding of the needs of children, families, and programs in the four-town region. The process has informed the team’s ideas for program design. In the months and years ahead, the needs assessment will provide a baseline of data and a common, shared understanding of need for the many diverse stakeholders involved in the preschool planning process.

#### **b. Teacher Capacity and Classroom Quality**

**Teacher capacity.** Program quality is a critical factor to expanding access to early childhood education for all children. The quality of any program goes beyond licensing and assessment; quality is dependent on teachers’ professional training, capacity, and their responsive classrooms. Being child-centered is only the starting point. All educators and administrators will have access to shared professional development opportunities, both workshops and credit-based courses. All professional development will be high quality and meet the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education’s Standards for Professional Development as delineated on their website (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.html>).

Research has provided evidence that training, even high quality professional development courses, are not sufficient without follow-up and modeling. A plan for coaching, mentoring, and modeling of best practices will be developed by a sub-committee of the Early Education Advisory Committee. This plan will be mutually adopted by the participating partners. All early childhood educators, in both private and public settings, will have access to coaching and mentoring as arranged by their respective directors and

administrators. Specific coaching and observation will also be arranged following the shared, professional development courses. At times, peer assistance coaching (PAC) will also be part of this plan to enhance collaboration among all early childhood educators in their respective settings. The mentoring and coaching implementation will follow the EEC model, “*Peer Assistance and Coaching Model for Massachusetts*” (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/peer-assistance-and-coaching/>).

There are many ways that grant funding can support high-quality professional development. Within the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of public and private partners will oversee this multi-year plan to provide instructional experiences that are aligned with Early Education and Care licensing mandates. A priority of needs will be developed from a database listing the current expertise of both public and private staffs. A multi-year goal will help stakeholders know how a professional development plan will be implemented. Offerings will need to be provided on nights and weekends or at a time when it will not impact children and families. Webinars and on-line courses that accommodate scheduling needs of stakeholders will be offered. The use of shared substitutes will be investigated. Whenever possible, opportunities for conversations across the private and public educators will be provided following major professional development offerings or series. Given the geographical expanse of the region, a digital means for these conversations will be explored, i.e. an early education blog with secure access for the educators.

Established partnerships and organizations will continue, and be expanded, to provide on-going high quality, professional development opportunities for all early childhood educators in our communities. Specifically, Cape Cod Collaborative, through the Annual All Cape Professional Development Day and training series, Cape Cod Child Care Network, SEEPP, and the Dennis-Yarmouth and Monomoy Regional School Districts, will continue to offer multiple training opportunities. Additional providers will also be sought using the “Massachusetts Registry of Professional Development Providers” (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/aboutregistry.html>) and referrals from accredited schools, colleges, and universities. The Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee will conduct an annual survey of early educators and administrators to determine their needs and preferences for professional development courses and workshops.

Local higher education opportunities are available to support early childhood educators in their career ladders. A collaboration has been established since 2015 with Cape Cod Community College and the Cape Cod campus of Bridgewater State University. This has opened up local opportunities for educators to complete their Bachelor’s Degrees in education. The Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee, facilitated by the Early Childhood Education Coordinator, will build upon this collaboration and work with the higher education institutions to coordinate courses that meet the needs of educators in the partnering preschools. Access will be facilitated by offering a combination of in-person, online, and hybrid platforms for the educators’ courses.

**Classroom quality.** The quality of the programs, and their classrooms, that will participate in this partnership will be determined by the working toward or sustaining QRIS level 3. Preschool programs who are currently accredited by NAEYC will be recognized as maintaining that active accreditation. The crosswalk between the quality-assessment programs will be addressed through collaborative meetings of the respective preschools’ educators and administrators.

In addition to any assessment or quality system, classroom quality is maintained by the educators who are responsible within the school setting. All classroom instruction will reflect recognized best practices, including differentiation and child-centered strategies. Each preschool program, whether private or public, will have at least one educator with a Bachelor's degree in every classroom. The lead teacher in each classroom will be required have a Bachelor's degree, at least. Classes will have a maximum ratio of 10:1, child to educator. Ideally, the class ratio will be lower than 10 students to 1 teacher.

Educators, and administrators, will be supported through high quality professional development as described above. Professional development is only effective training if the strategies and content are implemented in the classrooms. Program directors will insure classroom quality through the monitoring of training implementation as assisted by coaching and collaboration. Individual preschools will provide their own observation of teachers for evaluation purposes; however, collaboration will occur across programs for observation of the effective utilization of high quality professional development.

Various observation models, including the EEC model "PAC", incorporating CLASS, will be utilized to support implementation of the professional development. The Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee will work closely with private center directors and public school administrators to coordinate this multi-faceted approach. There will be opportunities for peer observation, coaching within classrooms, and collaborative observation across the various private and public preschools. In addition, professional learning communities will be formed that provide a means for private and public school educators to meet, collaborate, design, and implement effective instructional strategies. Educators will have the opportunities to discuss feedback from observations and examine the best practices to incorporate all of the standards of learning – social/emotional, approaches to play, and the Pre-K standards of the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for PreK through 12*. The PLC's (Professional Learning Communities) will be an on-going forum for early educators, across settings, to plan integration of all standards in age- appropriate, child-centered instruction.

The physical facilities will be appropriate for younger children, open to family visitation, and will demonstrate high quality as defined by both QRIS and NAEYC standards. Needless-to-say, the physical buildings and classrooms will be continuously well maintained and inspected for safety. Equipment will meet the requirements for early childhood education. Licensing requirements will be met in all preschool facilities, equipment, and classrooms.

Transportation to and from high quality preschools is a challenge across the somewhat rural expanse of Cape Cod, including the four partnering towns. Discussions have begun regarding various possibilities to provide access to all young children. In some instances, parents have stated their preference to provide their own transportation. It is well understood that this is not a reality for all families. Therefore, various approaches to sharing transportation, central pick-up/drop-off locations, and current available transportation programs are under examination. Transportation is a complex issue especially when differing agencies and municipalities are involved. As such, this topic will need continued study and discussion leading to possible negotiation with an eventual resolution.

c. ***Comprehensive Services and Family Engagement***

Within our four communities there are several points of entry where families can access services to meet a variety of needs. Our comprehensive network of community agencies, programs, and organizations are

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available and seek to work together to assist families as needed. This network includes, but is not limited to, the following stakeholders: CFCE Coordinators; the Family Resource Center at Harwich Elementary School; WE CAN (a women's empowerment group); Department of Children & Families; Cape Cod Child Development; Cape Cod Child Care Network; Family Continuity's Cape Cod Family Resource Center; WIC; Barnstable County Public Health; The Early Learning Network Of the Cape and Islands; local libraries; food pantries; churches; pediatricians; and private/public early childhood programs. Representatives from all have been involved, to one extent or another, in the planning and development of this proposal. These organizational partners are committed to the vision's principle of "empowering families as partners..." to meet their needs surrounding comprehensive early education. A pamphlet will be developed to raise awareness of the services and programs available. The resource pamphlet will be distributed by all partners in our network. The new resource pamphlet will be in addition to, and cited in, the currently existing "Family Resource Directories" for the Mid-Cape and Lower Cape. These directories delineate preschool and childcare options. All Directories will be updated to include information on expanded access to high quality, early education. These booklets will be disseminated throughout Cape Cod, and the Islands, and will be made available at several regional, social service offices, including WIC, the Cape's Diaper Bank, the TANF and DCF offices.

Open house programs and community wide forums will be organized to bring the information about available services to families. The Early Education Advisory Committee will work closely with community leaders in the four towns to organize showcase events where agencies can meet with families informally to acquaint them with their respective services. Local cultural and religious organizations will be invited to participate. Speakers will also be made available to these groups to provide the information in a setting that is comfortable for their constituents. Whenever appropriate and feasible, local agency representatives will be available at the partnering private and public preschools' locations, as well as local family shelters.

Parent training workshops will be organized, publicized, and be held in a variety of locations accessible to residential areas. Specific topics will include "Effective Positive Discipline," "Transitioning Your Child into School," "Partnering with the Schools for Family Success," "What to Expect in Kindergarten," "Positive Solutions for Families," and "Strengthening Families in our Community," to name just a few possibilities. Child care will be arranged to provide greater ease for families' participation in such workshops. All of these opportunities will be planned collaboratively with the Early Education Advisory Committee, local school administrators, and the respective CFCE Coordinators in the partnership areas.

Interactive parent-child programs will be designed and offered across the area, in early education centers, public schools, and local organizations, and co-sponsored by the Early Education Advisory Committee. These programs will target transition ages, three to four and four to five – or entering preschool and entering kindergarten. Early educators and Kindergarten teachers will design the programs based on the current program, "The Year before Kindergarten" that is in place in some public school districts. These programs will introduce various "hands on" experiences that are everyday learning opportunities and are easily implemented with readily available, low-cost, or no cost, materials. Such programs will also offer opportunities for educators to work with parents/family members and children, observing their interactions, and modeling language to scaffold children's learning. At the same time, transition into the next level of schooling will be an easier transition for both children and their families.

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Comprehensive services must include local libraries and other Cape early literacy professionals. Resources will be shared across the libraries, schools, centers, museums, and non-profit organizations to create and expand parent-child programs on the importance of reading to your child. Forums and workshops will be created to demonstrate read aloud techniques and follow up activities readily available in the home and community. The Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee (and Coordinator) will work with public libraries and the Dennis-Yarmouth Bookmobile to reach out to a variety of community locations, including local laundromats and churches, for literacy activities, promote high quality, early education access, and offer books and early learning materials to families. For example, the Bookmobile may travel to a local Fire Department to greet families and children, read a story on fire safety, and then have families engage in a tour of the fire station while at the same time distribute materials on available preschool options.

The web page that was established through the PEG Expansion Grant will continue as another access point for information. Families, as well as educators, will receive directions and reminders for checking this site for updates. Also, links will be made between the local schools' websites and the Early Childhood Education web page, "Preschool/Early Learning Initiatives," on the Cape Cod Collaborative website (<http://www.capecodcollaborative.org/index.cfm/projects/preschoolearly-learning-initiatives/>).

In addition to the Collaborative website, families and educators will be encouraged to utilize the United Way's "Brain Building in Progress" website. On their website more information is available that will provide further insight and opportunities for children's enrichment and family education on the importance of early learning. The WGBH resources will also be introduced to early educators and families as another barrier-free method of learning with young children.

Access to the internet may be limited. Many families only have internet access only through their "smart phones." The partners will collaborate to offer hands-on computer sessions to fully explore the many resources listed above. These sessions will be offered in a computer lab of one of the public school partners or at a local library.

**d. *Inclusion***

The law provides for public inclusive preschool settings for children starting at 2.9 years of age. Public schools also seek grant funding to increase their capacity for staff training and varied resources for preschool aged children found eligible for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In many cases the mandatory services provided in the IEP can be delivered in the classroom and benefit many other children, as well. This enables a full range of students to receive additional support from a specialized educator or trained paraprofessional without loss of classroom experiences.

It is the vision of the committee to expand placement of children with disabilities to continue to include private school settings. Through planning creative service delivery models and additional training, some children with a diagnosis can benefit by receiving equal opportunities in a private setting. This increases options for children and their families surrounding placement that can be offered and discussed at the IEP TEAM meeting when and if eligibility is determined. The same holds true for those children of diverse families who would benefit from additional support in learning English.

Educators will be provided additional professional development training in early detection, early strategic actions, how to use questionnaires and simple assessments such as “Ages and Stages,” “Early Screening Indicator,” etc., as well as coaching with partners across the private/public programs. Specific training and support will include courses through the EEC, such as “Act Early; Know the Signs.” Possibilities to include children in a variety of settings are a challenge and a goal worth attaining. Continued efforts to do so will be facilitated through the Early Education Advisory Committee, the Coordinator, and all participating school administrators and directors.

**e. Curriculum and Assessment**

Curriculum and assessment will continued to be implemented according to the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for PreK through 12* and the *Massachusetts STE Standards* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/>) and the *Massachusetts Early Education Guidelines*, including the *Social/Emotional Standards and the Approaches to Play & Learning Standards* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/curriculum-and-learning/>). These standards are currently recognized and followed in all of the participating private and public preschool programs. Curricula capacity in support of dual language learners and their families will be built and expanded by implementing “WIDA Early English Language Development Standards” across all partnering early childhood education programs. All of these standards correlate with both the “early learning standards” in the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for PreK through 12* and *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework, Ages Birth to Five*. Educators will need continuous training in both the content and the practice of these standards. The consistent implementation and integration of these various standards will be an on-going focus of administrators, directors, and educators across the private and public programs. This focus will be enhanced by both high quality professional development and follow-up observations as well as the collaborative discussions through the PAC and PLC models.

Because of the wide variety of program styles currently being offered in the more than twenty private and public preschool settings, it becomes difficult to provide one published curricula with some uniformity while allowing for individuality. Envisioning a multi-year approach to curriculum development and mapping, the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee will create a curriculum subcommittee to assess the data procured from the program, parent, and educator surveys. From this data, a list of priorities will be established that identifies professional development needs in the areas of curriculum, child development, literacy, mathematics, STE, and “Social/Emotional and Approaches to Play” standards. High quality, professional development training in how to use observation and other complimentary assessments will occur simultaneously. Release work opportunities will be established for representatives to meet and establish the protocols to be followed. As stated earlier, opportunities for coaching and mentoring will also be provided to educators in all programs.

Assessment, across early education classrooms, will continue to be reviewed for alignment with the standards and licensing expectations. Individual student assessments must be research-based. Some private and public preschool educators are currently using “TS Gold”, in part or in full, while some programs are using other assessments to indicate children’s learning outcomes. One critical work of the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee will be to address both assessment needs and implementation of research-based assessment tools, specifically those tools meeting both QRIS and NAEYC approval. In addition to establishing assessment tools, the coaching, mentoring, and PLC forums will address the use of assessment data.

Assessment is incomplete without plans for incorporating data analysis into curriculum and instruction planning for all educators and children. Therefore, the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee will work closely with all private and public preschool programs to provide on-going training and support in the effective use of data. In this way, students' learning outcomes and social/emotional growth can be both addressed and documented within classroom instruction.

**f. *Birth to Grade 3 Alignment***

Another essential component to delivering high quality programming is to address the continuum of learning that spans birth to Grade 3. The Early Education Advisory Committee's curriculum subcommittee will gather input from the stakeholders. This subcommittee will examine the Preschool Standards in Literacy, Math, Writing, Social/Emotional and Play, and Science and will begin the challenge of organizing a continuum of learning for all in the districts. The subcommittee will also review proven curriculum models, such as "Opening the World of Learning" (OWL), which integrate the standards. Public and private preschool educators will work together to grasp the larger picture and to clearly identify the prerequisite skills necessary to advance in learning and play.

All public school programs and some of the private preschool educators are currently working on unpacking state standards and curriculum mapping with a focus on vertical alignment, pre-K to grade 3. In both regional districts, "Tools of the Mind" components are integrated in the Kindergarten curriculum. Educators are very interested to discuss this curriculum and its vertical progressions across the private and public partners. Professional development to expand this curriculum to preschool settings is being explored for this upcoming school year.

Kindergarten transition and readiness are areas where attention has begun and will continue. This focus in professional development is being provided to strengthen relationships between private and public programs around common core standards, social-emotional development, and common instructional strategies. The programs are using the "Elements of High Quality Kindergarten" (EHQK) documents as a resource and support. The continuing private-public partnership will expand these efforts through shared professional development.

Alignment workshops have already begun across the various settings to provide for consistency in a continuum of learning from age three to grade 3. Private and public early childhood educators will continue to work together in both high quality, professional development workshops and through collaborative committees. These high quality, professional development opportunities will be provided by all the partners in coordination with both the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Alignment will need to be a continued focus of early educators, specifically members of the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee. No true alignment, age three to grade three, is ever complete because of the evolving curriculum and instruction strategies. New and revised learning standards, in all domains, will also affect the continuum of learning for all students. Therefore, the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee will prioritize alignment, and alignment review, throughout planning and implementation for expanded preschool opportunities.

#### IV. *Plan for Costs and Sustainability*

**Program Costs.** Determining the costs of programs in the early stages of planning, as we are presently, is difficult and an estimate at best. There are current budgets and expenditures in existing early child education programs; there are also current guidelines for costs, such as compensation, that have been published by Federal programs funded through Federal grants. The Preschool Expansion Grant [PEG] programs in five Massachusetts' cities (Boston, Springfield, Lowell, Lawrence, and Holyoke) are examples of such federally funded programs. One more determining factor of costs is the local program needs. Still, all of these factors can only indicate an estimate for this proposal. Therefore, we have used the factors listed here and the needs assessment, included earlier in this document, to draft the costs as described in this section.

The needs assessment revealed that across the Cape, 30-40% of entering kindergarten students arrive with no prior preschool experience. Given the four-town average child population by single year of age (430), an estimate of 35% not enrolled in preschool equals 150 four-year-olds or 300 three- and four-year-olds. It remains unknown if all 300 "unserved" preschool-age children would enroll in preschool if it were free, accessible, and high-quality. Prior research does indicate that 85% of parents are likely to enroll their children in preschool under those exceptional conditions.<sup>8</sup> In addition to unserved children, parent and program surveys revealed a substantial "underserved" population that struggles with the hours, affordability, and transportation of current program offerings.

One method to determine costs is to use the Federal guidelines for the PEG preschool programs when expanding opportunities for early childhood education. This model can be estimated for the identified numbers of children in the four towns of this proposal. Providing the Federal PEG model, full-day, full-year preschool, to just 100 children (one-third of total unserved preschool-age population) at a per-pupil rate of \$16,000 (PEG model) would cost \$1.6 million. At this scale, the program would consist of five classrooms enrolling 20 children each. Each classroom would have a full time, licensed teacher, with at least a B.A. degree, and a certified teaching assistant.

Another perspective is to extrapolate costs from the court-ordered New Jersey "Abbott model" [See Appendices, 3 & 4, Documents on the NJ Abbott Model Preschool Program]. The Abbott model was enacted after a 1998 court order regarding early education for low income and poverty level children in thirty-one New Jersey school districts. That court order has evolved into law, practices, and policy for preschool education for all children in an additional eighty-four districts and has been updated as recently as 2015. Extrapolating from the court ordered New Jersey "preschool mixed delivery model" per pupil rate of approximately \$13,000 for a full year and with extended day programs, a phased in model is proposed. Our "phased in model" would entail a 6.5 hour day within a 180 school year.

A three-year phased in timeframe is proposed within this strategic plan. This proposed "phase in" would have an ultimate goal of providing an additional 100 children, at least, access to high quality preschool (a minimum of one-third of the total unserved preschool-age population in the towns of Dennis, Yarmouth, Chatham and Harwich). The estimated cost would be \$10,500 per child. This amount does not cover

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<sup>8</sup> Opinion Dynamics Corporation. (2006). Early Education Survey of Massachusetts Households. Commissioned by Strategies for Children.

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“compensation parity” as this needs to be studied further. At this scale, the additional preschool opportunities would consist of at least five classrooms (including mixed delivery options utilizing private preschools) enrolling 20 children (FTE of 10 per class) each. In some incidences, enrollment will be expanded within existing classrooms that have the capacity. Note: Districts have indicated that additional sources of funding will be necessary for the implementation stages.

In Year 1 of implementation planning, the planning team will continue to explore program design models and refine its budgetary assumptions accordingly. Additional research, review and study will be conducted with respect to staffing (classroom teachers, coaches, family support, and administration support), curriculum and supplies, and transportation. A cross-section of stakeholders, both educators and social agency personnel as well as community leaders and families, will be included in the planning team.

As the Vision states, the priority is “*Establishing multi-town preschool opportunities meeting the unique needs of Cape Cod’s children and families and honoring parent choice.*” The drafted proposal is designed to meet the needs of families in all four towns. It will provide preschool opportunities that will include part time and full time services. There will be a variation of options in the schools to meet the individual needs of children and families and maximize early education opportunities.

Next steps:

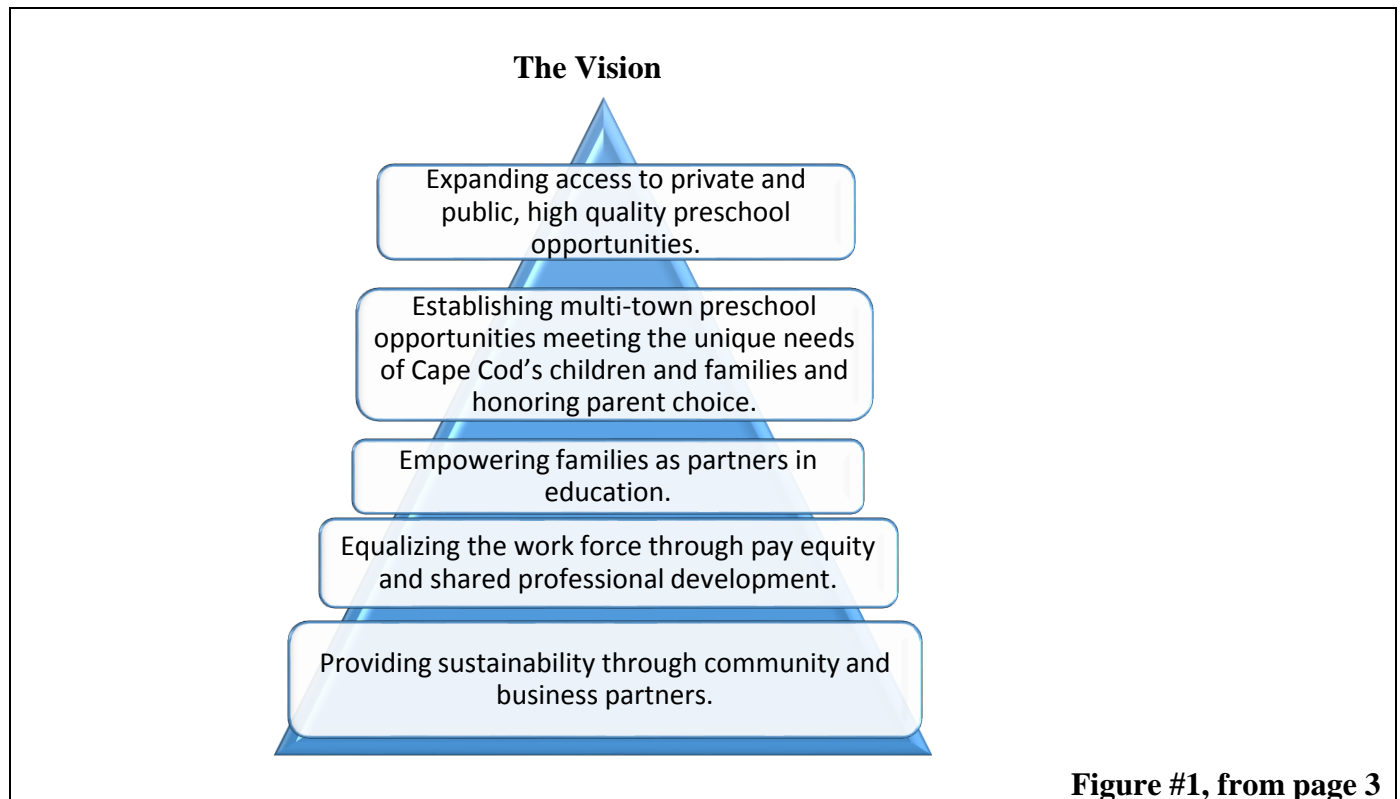
- The Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee will establish a budgeting work group or planning team to generate draft program budgets based on various cost assumptions, which will be presented to the full Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee for review. In-kind support by program partners will be identified when possible on an item-by-item basis.
- The Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee will present the budget to local stakeholders (town officials, school committee, and local philanthropy) and explore options for local matching revenue.
- The Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee will work with school district and kindergarten registration officials to continue to improve data collection processes at kindergarten entry, and report annually on the percent and number of children by district and school that enter kindergarten without preschool. Data will help inform enrollment projections and preschool design. Data results will be shared with preschool directors and Cape Cod Child Development (Head Start) for corroboration and for planning additional access options.

**Sustainability**

The key to sustainability will be the focus on the vision that has been adopted by the stakeholders represented throughout the planning process, February through June 2016. This vision, illustrated previously and below, provides the guidelines necessary for not only expanding access to high quality, preschool education, but also serves as a benchmark for progress and planning for the Committee, schools, and educators. The vision will be illustrated on brochures, newsletters, posters, and all communication regarding the project and process of expanding access for all children. This publication will provide a foundation for common understanding among partners.

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This vision is “real” because of the early partnerships across private and public early childhood educators, including Head Start. For more than twenty years, individual educators and preschools have sought to build collaborative networks. These early partnerships are now strengthened through this planning initiative and the work that has begun together. Private preschool directors have resolved to move ahead, working together for all areas of their work. Public and private educators not only have a shared voice but they also have shared goals defined by the common vision. These commitments will continue to provide foundations and impetus to the work ahead.



The four-town preschool expansion plan will build on the initial five-month planning period with an additional year of implementation planning (Year 1). Members of the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee will include, but not be exclusive to, the original planning committee of February – June 2016. During first year of implementation planning, the Advisory group will prepare for implementation of a pilot program which would begin in Year 2, summer 2017. The pilot would be expanded access, extending preschool opportunities to more children. If deemed successful, the pilot would be expanded to reach a total of at least five classrooms and at least 100 children by Year 3, summer 2018. Based on the complexity of the two-district/four-town preschool expansion model, a phased-in approach would help ensure successful program implementation and continued collaboration among Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee members, schools, families, and organizations.

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Implementation planning, as well as the actual phased-in implementation, will occur in accordance with the principles of the initiative's vision. All of the communities of the partnering schools will need to be brought into active participation. Stakeholders need to be given voice just as families need to be active participants. Below is a summary of aligned activities that the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee would be responsible for conducting in the months and years ahead.

Year 1: *July 2016 – June 2017*

Continued outreach to support *expanding access to private and public, high quality preschool opportunities and establishing multi-town preschool opportunities meeting the unique needs of Cape Cod's children and families while honoring parent choice:*

- Share the plan with key stakeholders, local leaders, elected officials, Cape Cod Young Professionals, and other groups.
- Explore cross-sector partnerships with Cape Cod Child Development (Head Start), public health, Early Intervention, public housing, local businesses, *providing sustainability through community and business partners.*
- Collaborate with other Cape Cod towns and school districts to support preschool planning efforts Cape-wide. Adapt the four-town plan to meet other communities' needs as appropriate.
- Schedule interviews and focus groups with "high-needs" families, including families with unenrolled preschool age children, *empowering families as partners in education.*

Ongoing program design planning aligned to all five principles of the vision and to reach shared agreement around:

- Facilities – conduct capacity study to identify feasible classroom space including both private preschools and public schools for options of a mixed delivery system
- Program schedule (day/year), and variability for parent choice
- Child ages and classroom designs (3s, 4s, mixed-age?)
- Child and family eligibility criteria, definition of "high-need"
- Program and teacher quality standards and definitions (in further detail)
- Shared professional development
- Staffing positions: classroom teachers and support specialists
- Transportation policy
- Data collection and analysis strategy – what data needs to be collected that will continue to inform program design and implementation (data on children and families, programs and educators)
- Begin to implement the readily available steps, or "low hanging fruit," of preschool plan, such as expanding shared professional development
- Explore and discuss elements of model MOU with both private and public preschools
- Monitor state and federal policy development
- Funding – costs and revenue (see Costs section)
- Recruitment for child enrollment and staff hiring for pilot classrooms (*begin February 2017*)

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Year 2: *July 2017 – June 2018*. Continue to publicize and share the vision through specific action steps.

- Begin implementation by opening two pilot classroom sites, goal to serve 40 children total.
- Weekly program team meetings to review program operation and improve implementation.
- Monthly governance meetings to review findings of program team with the Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee.
- Conduct planning for expansion of two to three additional classrooms.

Year 3: *July 2018 – June 2019*. Continue to publicize and share the vision through specific action steps.

- Expand pilot implementation (if deemed successful in Year 2) by opening three additional classroom sites, and bringing total enrollment to at least 100 children in at least five classrooms across the four towns.
- Re-examine and evaluate action steps and results to this point, using the five principles of the vision to determine both progress and effectiveness in expanding access to high quality preschools across the four towns...in both the private and public settings.

## **Conclusion.**

Envisioning preschool for every child is a matter of access and opportunity. Families in the four towns, who have partnered on this proposal, need both. Cape Cod appears to be a bucolic area with little needs; the truth is quite the opposite for many of the year-round residents who live here. Seasonal work, English as a second language, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, family dysfunction, and, simply, the lack of accessible resources within a reasonable distance, all challenge our area families. These challenges are particularly acute when considering expanded preschool, with high quality early learning programs. Yet, educators and social agencies are more than willing to reach out and plan the best opportunities for all young children.

Through their commitment and outreach in creating this strategic proposal, the planning committee hopes it will serve as a model for these four towns, as well as additional Cape Cod communities in the future, for the implementation of preschool access for every child. Funding and resources, of all kinds, will be needed. The hope is that this plan will not only be a model but will also be a blueprint for establishing collaboration and joint efforts to secure those resources to continue – to eventually establish high quality early learning opportunities for each and every child.

## Appendix One

### *Complete Needs Assessment with all Relevant Data*

#### **Cape Cod Preschool Expansion Plan: Two-district / Four-town partnership**

Needs Assessment Unabridged

Titus DosRemedios

#### **1. Introduction.**

As part of the preschool planning process, the planning team conducted a thorough needs assessment to learn more about the current preschool landscape in the four-town region and the needs of children, families, and the community at-large. The overall approach and research questions were informed by both the planning grant RFR guidelines provided by the Department of Early Education and Care as well as the ideas, concerns, and questions raised by planning team members during its meetings. The team used several methods to collect information - a survey of preschool program administrators, a parent survey, two open community forums, and a review of existing data. This mixed methods approach of gathering data and information from multiple sources allowed the team to identify common themes and arrive at an accurate portrait of the community and its needs.

#### **2. Cape Cod context.**

At several points during planning team meetings, team members raised the issue of the unique Cape Cod context. Team members live and work on the Cape, and work closely with families. As such, they understand the complex needs of Cape children and families. These include:

- Decline in young workforce (25-44) due to lack of jobs, affordable housing.<sup>9</sup>
- Child poverty increasing across Cape: 8.6% in 2000 vs. 15.4% in 2014<sup>10</sup>
- Opioid crisis affecting babies – 3% of babies born on Cape experience withdrawal symptoms (Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS))<sup>11</sup>
- Foster care crisis
- Grandparents raising children
- Seasonal economy impacts workers' needs
- Immigrant populations and English language learners: Students whose first language is not English: 14% in D-Y; 7% in Monomoy.<sup>12</sup>
- Housing instability, homelessness: 394 homeless individuals counted in January 2016, Barnstable County and Islands.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Northeastern University Dukakis Center for Urban & Regional Policy. (2014). Shaping the Cape's Future. Commissioned by Cape Cod Young Professionals. Retrieved from: <http://capecodyoungprofessionals.org/images/uploads/ShapeTheCapeSummaryReport.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Child poverty rates shown for Barnstable County. Sources: Census 2000; American Community Survey, 2010-2014 5-year estimates.

<sup>11</sup> Carter, A. (2016, Jan 21). Effects Of Opioids Can Reach Into Womb. Retrieved from:

[http://www.capenews.net/mashpee/news/effects-of-opioids-can-reach-into-womb/article\\_0e4fcdfe-7933-5f6f-91c0-29eeda2ff602.html](http://www.capenews.net/mashpee/news/effects-of-opioids-can-reach-into-womb/article_0e4fcdfe-7933-5f6f-91c0-29eeda2ff602.html) .

<sup>12</sup> Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2016). Selected populations report, 2015-2016 school year.

<sup>13</sup> O'Brien L. (2016, May 10). Point-In-Time Count Shows Increase In Cape's Homeless. The Bourne Enterprise. Retrieved from: [http://www.capenews.net/bourne/news/point-in-time-count-shows-increase-in-cape-s-homeless/article\\_85776c2c-81f5-5e0a-b234-eaa4699c9ffc.html](http://www.capenews.net/bourne/news/point-in-time-count-shows-increase-in-cape-s-homeless/article_85776c2c-81f5-5e0a-b234-eaa4699c9ffc.html)

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- Food insecurity
- Health care costs
- Crime increase: Violent crime on Cape up 20% from 2001 to 2013.<sup>14</sup>

These issues were highlighted as part of the presentation given at the community forums. The parent and program surveys revealed similar information and themes. Data and anecdotes support a growing need on the Cape, complicated by multiple factors- economic, social, educational, and health. These trends on the Cape are both distinct from and similar to trends across Massachusetts, and highlight the needs of the working poor and struggling middle class.

### 3. **Preschool data 101 – synthesis of available state and local data.**

The bottom line goal of our strategic plan is to expand children's access to high-quality licensed or license-exempt preschools. In order to understand the scope of our challenge, the planning team examined current available data from state and local sources. Highlights include:

#### Children

- Preschool population, four towns: approximately 430 children per single year of age<sup>15</sup>
- 30-40% of children enter kindergarten with no preschool experience.<sup>16</sup>

#### Programs:

- 4 public school preschool programs
- 18 community-based preschool programs
- Additionally, family child care - licensed home-based programs

#### Waitlists:

- Head start preschool waitlist
- DCF preschool voucher waitlist

#### Young child population:

<b>Town</b>	<b>&lt; 1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>B-5 AVG</b>
Chatham	29	37	35	35	27	33	<b>33</b>
Harwich	85	91	84	108	104	97	<b>95</b>
Dennis	103	100	108	111	90	86	<b>100</b>
Yarmouth	207	176	240	199	194	198	<b>202</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>430</b>

*Source: Census 2010*

<sup>14</sup> Brennan, G. (2015, Feb. 8). FBI statistics reveal Cape Cod crime trends. Cape Cod Times. Retrieved from: <http://www.capecodtimes.com/article/20150208/NEWS/150209445>

<sup>15</sup> Census 2010.

<sup>16</sup> The source for the 30-40% estimate is local kindergarten screening data collected from school districts across Cape Cod and the Islands.

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Early grade enrollment:

Kindergarten enrollment size is a good comparison for estimating the total Pre-K capacity needed to achieve universal or near-universal pre-k. Grade cohort sizes vary from year to year, but there are currently 412 students enrolled in kindergarten.

<b>School District</b>	<b>PK</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Dennis-Yarmouth	71	277	254	271	266
Monomoy	79	135	155	153	191
<b>TOTAL</b>	150	412	409	424	457

*Source: DESE, School enrollment by district, 2015-16*

Preliminary calculations based on the above data give insight into the number of slots needed for preschool expansion. Assuming 430 children per single age cohort, at a rate of 35% of kindergarten students with no prior preschool, then **150** kindergarten students per year enter public school with no prior preschool.

A 2006 Massachusetts household survey commissioned by Strategies for Children revealed that **85%** of families with preschool-age children expressed interest in enrolling their child in a high-quality early education program.<sup>17</sup> Strategies for Children continues to utilize this figure in policy planning to estimate the likely take-up rate for free, voluntary, high-quality preschool.

For the four town region, assuming that 85% of the 860 3- and 4-year-olds living in the region at any given time would enroll in preschool, then **731** total slots would be needed to meet that estimated demand.

In discussing this data as a team, preschool administrators encouraged thinking of the target population as those children unenrolled and under enrolled. Varying program schedules (length of day, length of year) may not be meeting the needs of working families. Transportation needs may vary based on program schedules.

More work is needed to identify program capacity and classrooms needed to meet target expansion and enrollment numbers.

#### **4. Program survey.**

A survey was conducted of preschool programs in the four towns. The planning team crafted a survey based on the program quality prompts listed in the preschool planning grant (RFR, “needs of educators and programs in the community,” p. 15).<sup>18</sup> The survey was given to program directors, who were asked to respond with their entire program in mind, and for preschool-age programming specifically.

A total of 12 programs completed the survey (9 community-based, 2 public school (D-Y and Monomoy), 1 regional vocational school). The sample includes a range of program sizes. No family child care programs

<sup>17</sup> Opinion Dynamics Corporation. (2006). Early Education Survey of Massachusetts Households. Commissioned by Strategies for Children.

<sup>18</sup> Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. (2015). RFR – SRF 160074 Preschool Expansion Planning Grant, PEPG 001.

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completed the survey. The sample mirrors planning team membership, which is representative of different program types and geographic location.

Questions covered a variety of access and quality themes: enrollment, capacity, workforce credentials, professional development, family engagement, and visions of success. Respondents reported a range of strengths and weaknesses based on candid self-assessment of program quality and capacity.

Highlights from survey findings:

- Responding programs' total preschool **enrollment vs. capacity**: 588 / 567. Net spare capacity is -21 across programs. Based on calculated spare capacity, team would need to identify space to create new classrooms for preschool expansion.
- Half of programs surveyed (6/12) report preschool **waitlists**: 194 total children, including 153 children from the two largest programs.
- All programs but one take part in the state Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Average QRIS rating for respondents is 2.0. One program is level 4.
- A range of program **strengths and weaknesses** were reported. Public school programs reported similarly to each other (D-Y and Monomoy) and different from community-based programs. Likely due to the many operational differences and conditions of public and private programming (i.e., half-day, inclusion, family engagement, teacher compensation). Many clear opportunities to collaborate and design a new program leveraging the strengths of each sector.
- A range of innovative **family engagement** strategies (relationships, communication, activities) is utilized across programs.
- Survey respondents report a mix of **education levels** for their educators/staff, with BA the most common degree held: 11 associate degrees, 23 bachelor's degrees, and 10 higher degrees. There would be an ample supply of teachers with a BA or higher to draw upon should state or federal funding require lead teachers to hold BA degrees.
- A wide range of **professional development** needs are reported. Educators in the region access professional development using many strategies and outlets – when trainings are accessible (schedule and location are commonly reported barriers).
- Respondents were asked to reflect on **what “success” looks like** for educators, programs, and the community, and described clear, ambitious, and achievable visions of success for children, families, programs, and the larger Cape Cod region.

*“All participants including children, staff and parents are feeling welcome, valued and socially and emotionally supported.”*

*“Success in the community happens when the community's identity is tied to caring about young families/children so that the community develops the reputation as a desirable place to live (translates into home sales to young, working families who support schools and add to the workforce).”*

*“Meeting child's developmental needs. I think if children learn to be problem solvers. I think if children have somewhat met the grade-level expectations. I think if families are invested in their child's education. Teachers are partners with parents, and parents are partners with teachers.”*

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*“Happy children who feel safe and loved, who feel confident and self-assured. Happy teachers and staff who feel appreciated and compensated well for their extremely hard work and dedication.”*

## 5. Parent survey

Outreach was conducted with parents. The goal was two-fold: to capture the needs and opinions of families and parents of young children living in the region, and to promote the preschool planning process, raising awareness of potential preschool expansion in the four-town region. The planning team created a short survey during a planning meeting based on expertise and input from team members. The surveys were conducted at two school and community events geared towards families of young children and school-age children. Parents were asked to reflect on the preschool experience.

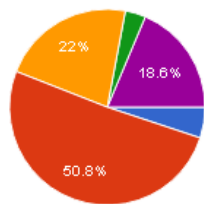
The planning team valued this feedback as a way to ensure the plan and program design would realistically meet the needs of families.

A total of 59 parents were surveyed. Administrators conducted the survey on tablets, one-on-one with parents. Each respondent was given a preschool planning brochure upon completion of the survey.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/17R-I8vGR9j7A05wzB7UyUbc890uSi9mscb6LlPPZgIc/viewanalytics>

Parents from all four towns are represented in the sample, with the majority residing in Yarmouth.

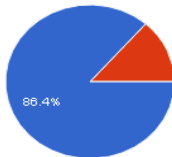
**Where do you live/name of town?**



Dennis	3	5.1%
Yarmouth	30	50.8%
Harwich	13	22%
Chatham	2	3.4%
Other	11	18.6%

The majority of parents, 86%, report that their child does or did attend preschool.

**Did/does your child attend preschool?**

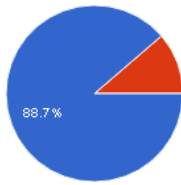


Yes	51	86.4%
No	8	13.6%

The majority of parents reported that the preschool experience met their needs and the needs of their child. Some “no” responses are actually “does not apply” since those children did not attend preschool.

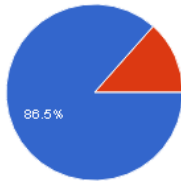
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Did/does your preschool experience meet your needs?



Yes 47 88.7%  
No 6 11.3%

Did/does the preschool experience meet the needs of your child?



Yes 45 86.5%  
No 7 13.5%

The survey did not ask what program children attended. However, based on parents open responses, it was clear that a mix of public school and community-based programs were utilized. A small number of parents reported accessing preschool off-Cape in other regions, states, or countries.

Two open response questions were asked.

**Why or why not did/does [the preschool experience] meet your/your child's needs?**

The vast majority of responses were positive, and highlighted the general developmental benefits to their child including: whole-child growth, social skills, K-readiness, pre-academic, play, diverse learning experiences, and child's love of learning and their teacher. Some commented positively on program quality elements: the curriculum, organization, cleanliness, communication with parents, ratios, and the special needs / integrated nature of the program.

*"My child's preschool has met or exceeded our expectations. It provides a safe environment for my child to learn (letters, numbers, shapes, etc.), grow (socially and emotionally) and have fun."*

*"Hours are great 8:30-4:30. Classroom/family style surroundings. Warm welcoming Experienced teachers. Science and Art focus. Allows my child to explore many areas of the mind"*

*"It was great to my child. Helped him a lot to get ready for Kindergarten."*

Three responses were about how the program identified and met the individual needs of their child.

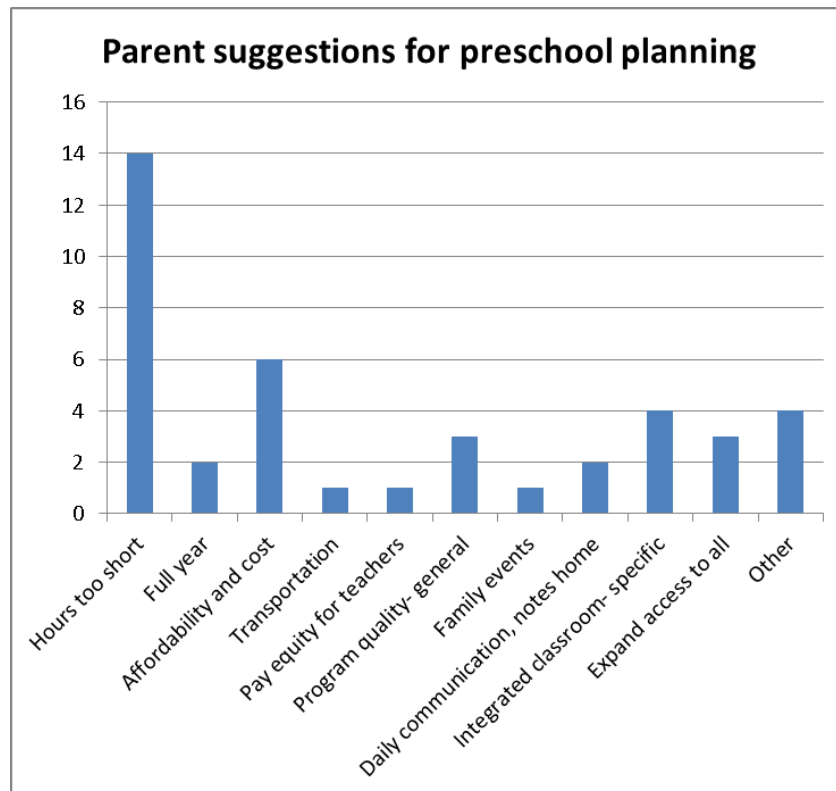
*"If she was not in preschool, may not have known so early that she had a language delay and so she had an IEP when she went into Kindergarten."*

*"Teachers have met his individual needs to problem-solve his struggles."*

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Four responses were framed in the negative: program was too academic, the half-day was too short, and programs were not clean enough.

**Is there anything else you think our group should consider when planning for preschool services in the future?**



By far the largest concern voiced by parents was program hours. A half-day is too short a schedule for most working families.

*“She goes to her school because it is 8-2:30 and sometimes aftercare. Half day programs do not work for us, and this only works because we have family that picks her up at 2:30 most days.”*

*“9 is a tough start time, even 8:45 would be better so that I could get to work by 9. My mom lives nearby so the half day works, but if I did not have family here I don't know what I would do.”*

Though transportation was only mentioned by one respondent, that individual also indicated earlier in the survey that their child did not attend preschool.

*“I would need transportation, full day of day care and should be offered at free or low cost”*

A few comments were specific to the integrated classroom and its policies.

*"I think the ratio of special needs and model students needs to be looked at."*

*"Keep integrated classrooms."*

This unique comment highlights perceptions of quality and "day care vs. preschool."

*"I think is a good idea to have a full time preschool because sometimes kids stay in day care till they're ready for Kindergarten without learning."*

There was support for expanding access community-wide:

*"The more we can do to bring families in when their children are young the better. From infant on..."*

*"Free public preschool for all would be great."*

The parent survey was a critical component of our needs assessment as it allowed the planning team to get a sense of parents' needs, attitudes, and experiences with accessing preschool.

The survey appears to be fairly representative of parents who have accessed early education in the mixed provider system. However, we know from district data that 30-40% of kindergarten students arrive with no prior preschool experience. More information should be collected from this population to learn their opinions about and barriers to preschool access.

As the planning process continues, it would be beneficial to build on this survey by collecting additional information from "high-needs families," as defined by the planning team. Strategies could include: targeting younger families with infants and toddlers, particularly those not yet accessing early education and care programs and services. Surveys or focus groups with immigrant families, foster parents, public housing residents, families with no transportation, and others would be informative.

## **6. Community forum notes**

The planning team held two open community forums to provide the broader community with an overview of the planning process and a chance to give input. Locations were held in the evenings to encourage attendance. Locations chosen were Harwich Community Center on April 7, and Station Ave Elementary School in Yarmouth on April 14. Approximately 50 individuals attended representing teachers and administrators (preschool and K-12), parents, community members, and local leaders.

The forums began with a brief presentation by Chris Martes of Strategies for Children, providing context, data, and parameters of the planning grant.

The conversation that followed was robust. Based on analysis of the chart paper notes taken during the forums, discussion items fell into three general categories: clarifying questions, questions the planning team does not have answers to yet, and suggestions from the group.

The themes discussed at the forums were similar to those that arise during planning team meetings. These include: cost, sustainability, eligibility, Cape families and the unique economic challenges they face, public/private dynamics, and workforce quality, professional development, and pay equity.

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An assortment of feedback, concerns, and creative suggestions were offered as well, providing fresh insight for the planning team. The forums helped ensure that the planning team was “on track,” planning preschool expansion to accurately meet the needs and realities of the community. We hope to continue the community dialog throughout the process, including at the end-of-grant community convening on June 14.

Community forum themes and feedback

**Clarifying questions:**

- Funding source - Where will the funding come from? Lots of options, current policy and state, federal funding dynamics.
- Affordability - Sliding scale? Program would be free if it follows the federal grant model (PEG).
- Does funding go to parents or programs? The vision is to make this free to all families.
- What do the plans look like in urban/cities? Federal grant is for 8 hour day, full year. What does “ours” need to look like? What CC families need may not be full day/full year.
- If this moves forward, it would be “connected” to the school district. Private partners would be considered a vendor, and MOAs would be established.

**Questions planning team cannot answer yet (TBDs):**

- Schedule – would the plan be for full day, full year? Some programs are school year only. The Cape plan can determine this, and there’s some flexibility with EEC.
- Stability of funding - This is a challenge for current PEG grantees. Goal would be a stable funding source, like Chapter 70 for K-12.
- Mixed-provider equity – How would private providers participate? Is there an RFP? And how would the plan ensure pay equity?
- Professional development - What’s the professional development plan? Planning team is exploring different approaches (i.e., joint professional development offerings, coaching).
- Eligibility - Would there be a lottery if the program is over-enrolled? Open slots, would parents need to “qualify”? Low SES? Each community handles this differently.

**Attendees’ suggestions for the plan:**

Families and children

- Cape families are unique - work spring/summer, financial hardships in winter. Pay attention to Cape’s unique working economy and the “working poor.”
- We’re seeing that families do value preschool, they are just confused on how to access it, navigating the system is hard.
- Transportation issues.
- Explore innovative parent components. (i.e., Rochester, NY co-op model with parents was a key driver of quality).
- Outreach – some lack access, some choose not to participate.

Workforce

- Focus on employment and training issues within early ed. workforce.

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- EPS grant now tied to coaching, explore partnership / leverage existing opportunities.
- Shared professional development - Include private early ed. partners with public school opportunities.

General

- Think outside the box.
- Find low hanging fruit - examine changes to existing regulations and policies.
- Be equitable throughout: resources, professional development, salaries, etc.
- Pay attention to the different costs/prices of private providers.
- Reliance on vouchers can be inconsistent – vouchers aren't paying centers enough.
- High school program facing cuts – advocacy needed.
- Align with Kindergarten.

**7. Summary and conclusion.**

The needs assessment was extremely valuable to the planning team and the overall planning effort. The data and information gathered provide a shared understanding of the needs of children, families, and programs in the four-town region. This document has informed the team's ideas for program design. In the months and years ahead, the needs assessment will provide a baseline of data and a common shared understanding of need for the many diverse stakeholders involved in the preschool planning process.

## Appendix Two

### *Sample MOA/MOU between Private Early Child Education Programs & Public School Districts*

#### POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN A SCHOOL DISTRICT AND A PRIVATE PRESCHOOL

Drafted: Dr. Joe Gilbert

(Note: This document is not proposed as definitive and could be modified in any manner to accommodate any school district or private preschool needs)

#### PREAMBLE

This Memorandum of Understanding supports three fundamental constructs of the \_\_\_\_\_ School District's Primary/Early Childhood Education program:

1. that this school district supports the principle of universal access to high quality preschool education for all 3 and 4 year olds residing in the towns that comprise the district
2. that this school district believes that high quality preschool education for all 3 and 4 year olds will significantly assist in achieving the district's goal of reading/language arts proficiency for all students by grade 3
3. that this school district, as one option for expanding access to universal preschool for its 3 and 4 year olds, desires to formally partner with high quality private preschools/agencies in our locale

#### STANDARDS OF COMMITMENT

##### Public School District

The Public School District of \_\_\_\_\_ agrees to the following:

- provide a designated school district administrator known as "public/private early childhood liaison" who will act as a facilitator for communication between the school district and the Director/Owner of this private preschool
- include private school staff in planning appropriate PreK professional development activities to be implemented by the school district during the school year
- schedule partnered PD, to the extent possible, that accommodates the schedules of the private school staff
- provide opportunities for private school staff input and as part of the School District's annual PD planning
- utilize this private school at a fee of \_\_\_\_\_ for day placement of preschool students when needed (School Year\_\_\_\_)

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- utilize this private school at a fee of \_\_\_\_\_ for placement in extended day services when needed (School Year \_\_\_\_\_)
- include all enrolled preschool students in this private facility in the District's State required Pupil School Attending Reports including the Chapter 70 School Foundation report
- include this private preschool as a partner in EEC grant submissions having to do with expanding and enhancing professional development (PD) for early childhood educators
- include this private preschool as a partner in grant submissions to EEC should grant funds targeted for "close the gap" compensation funding become available

**Private School**

The privately operated Preschool known as \_\_\_\_\_ agrees to:

- meet all EEC requirements for licensure as a private preschool and make available the documentation of such to the School District
- meet or be in the process of meeting QRIS requirements and make available such documentation to the School District
- share all current curriculum and "learning continuum" appraisal documents with the School District
- provide input and follow through with a school district "driven" data analysis design for reporting on annual growth of each student's learning
- provide access for designated public school administrator(s) to visit classrooms for purposes of observing/consulting relative to curriculum/instructional implementation
- formally dialogue with the school district EC administration relative to the implementation of curriculum and instructional practice
- provide access to curriculum assessment (not teacher assessment) materials to school district EC administration
- send administrator staff and teaching staff to curriculum/learning meetings "called" by the school district's EC Administration
- utilize the newly designed Cape Kindergarten Transition document
- will give priority to the school district's requests for "slots" in the preschool's day program and or extended day program if such "slots" are requested by the school district
- inform its clients/parents of the contents of this document

### **Appendix Three**

#### **2009 Articles/References regarding the New Jersey Abbott Preschool Project**

*Teachers College Blog, Columbia University*  
**September 30, 2009**

Link to the following URL [right click, open hyperlink]:

[http://blogs.tc.columbia.edu/transitions/files/2010/09/30.New-Jersey\\_Abbott-Preschool-Program\\_profile\\_.pdf](http://blogs.tc.columbia.edu/transitions/files/2010/09/30.New-Jersey_Abbott-Preschool-Program_profile_.pdf)

#### **Education Reform Starts Early: Lessons from New Jersey's PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> Reform Efforts**

**Sara Mead, New America Foundation**  
**December 11, 2009**

Link to the following URL [right click, open hyperlink]:

<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/policy-papers/education-reform-starts-early/>



## Appendix Four

### *2013 Articles/References regarding the New Jersey Abbott Preschool Project*

**Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study: Fifth Grade Follow-Up**  
**National Institute for Early Education Research**  
**March 2013**

Link to the following URL [right click, open hyperlink]:

<http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/APPLES%205th%20Grade.pdf>

**New Jersey Pre-K Holds Lessons for Mass.**  
**Irene Sege, in *CommonWealth Magazine***  
**March 21, 2013**

Link to the following URL [right click, open hyperlink]:

<http://commonwealthmagazine.org/education/004-new-jersey-prek-holds-lessons-for-mass/>