

A Pivotal Meeting to Transform CA–QRIS into a Sustainable System of Quality Early Learning Programs

Tuesday, September 12, 2017
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tsakopoulos Library Galleria
828 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Topic/Process
Welcome & Overview Camille Maben, First 5 California, and Sarah Neville-Morgan, California Department of Education, welcomed participants and outlined the meeting agenda.
Opening Keynote YOU TALKED AND WE LISTENED: VISION, SUSTAINABILITY, AND GOVERNANCE Dr. Abby Thorman, University of Florida, presented on the elements needed to improve the QRIS system and take quality to scale in California. In her opening keynote, Dr. Thorman shared lessons learned for QRIS using an analogy for dealing with the current hurricanes situation. Notable items: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● “Don’t shoot into the hurricane” in the midst of the storm, don’t form circular firing squads and shoot at each other as the bullets go nowhere but back into us. Pivot the work in a way that makes it more efficient and builds upon our knowledge.● We all need each other. What we have done in California has been important – larger, smaller, rural, urban, suburban counties – we can learn from each other. It is not one size fits all in our state.● MOVE with urgency. Children are entering kindergarten without the skills they need for success. THAT is the hurricane at our backs.● Build on strengths. The work at the local level has been impressive considering the diversity. Locals have figured out complicated solutions for hard decisions.

Setting the Course for a Sustainable QRIS: Clarified Vision, Roles, and Responsibilities -

Dr. Gerrit Westervelt, WestEd, and Dr. Thorman discussed what is the appropriate balance between local innovation, flexibility, and statewide consistency? Dr. Westervelt and Dr. Thorman conducted interviews with state and local leaders to capture innovation going on within California. The feedback they received included:

- Roles in terms of implementation and decision making.
- A plan identifying priorities and sustainability is needed for moving forward.
- Clarity is needed on the vision addressing state, regional, and local responsibilities.

The State Support Team draft of a five-year sustainability framework and draft visuals capturing the QRIS vision were presented. The draft included the State Team's first best-thinking of what the roles and responsibilities are on the systems, rating, and quality front. The goal focused on outcomes, integrated systems, and services.

Activity: Small breakout groups to discuss the draft visuals (Five-year Framework and QRIS Vision)

Feedback included:

- Visuals are colorful, clear, and captured the integration and interconnectedness of the system – the interaction between the Hubs, focus on data, and capturing the goals/children.
- The families, advocacy, and the rating/assessment at the local level is missing.
- What is the timeline and process? What does it look like when we have local sharing and communication?
- We are all different sizes and shapes – small and more complicated. How do we ensure it is operational throughout California?
- Transparent policy priorities aligned across state agencies
- A focus on sustainability
- Re-commit the focus to a “whole child” view of system

In closing: This starts to tell the statewide AND local story, and builds the QRIS case for needed funding and policy changes in order to “take millions of dollars and turn it into miracles.”

Governance, Decision-Making, Communication – Camille and Sarah

The CA–QRIS Consortium voted 18 months ago to implement three votes per region, aligned to the First 5 IMPACT Hub regions. Workgroups were created for structure and to move the work. The Consortium decided to revisit the decision a year later.

Feedback on this structure included:

- Decision-making versus input is not always clear
- There needs to be a better balance between voice and action
- Clarity of vision and roles
- More effective, faster decision-making

Streamlining the decision making process

The State Support Team went back to the *Education Code* associated with the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) QRIS Block Grant to see what language was included.

Result:

- Voting is only required for changes to the Rating Matrix.
- The Planning Committee's role and purpose will be reevaluated to more effectively gain feedback on important issues.
- The current workgroups, including CQI Pathways, Communications, and Evaluation will meet until their work is complete. The work will then move to a model of short-term task teams. These will be nimble, focused on a specific problem, and time-limited. The process for a task team will:
 - Identify best practices based on the task in California and nationally.
 - Facilitate peer learning.
 - Plan how to scale what works and where state support is needed.
 - Identify desired policy changes, and establish a clear work plan to accomplish these items in a specific timeline.

California *Education Code* Section 8203.1(b)(3) states, "Changes to the common tiers shall be approved and adopted by all participating local consortia."

The following decisions have been made:

- The state will abide by the *education code* in a one vote per consortium system for addressing decisions on the Rating Matrix.
- Language from the QRIS Block Grant will be used as the definition for “participating local consortia”.
- In consortia that do not have a QRIS Block Grant, IMPACT Lead Agencies will be provided a vote.
- Voting will no longer be regional.

Benefits of this voting structure include:

- Regional Hub leaders will not be required to gather votes from every county and roll them into three votes.
- The state gets a clearer sense of where each consortium stands on a particular Rating Matrix issue – helping target the support provided to local consortia.

Topics of Small Group Discussions – Gerrit and Abby

Small groups were asked to consider the following questions:

- What are topics you want to see for Task Teams?
- What are some outreach and communications strategies that work for you?
- How can CDE/F5CA best support you?

Ideas gathered include:

- Quarterly updates on the status of key elements of the system such as best practices in coaching or provider outreach and recruitment
- Posting a Smartsheet project plan and update that at least quarterly so you can see where we -- the collective "We" -- are making progress and where we need to intensify our efforts
- Hosting informal peer learning and Q&A sessions where you serve as faculty along with state and national experts
- Conducting regular outreach by phone and in person to take pulse checks and adjust our work with you as needed.

Based on the feedback, the State Support Team announced a draft plan for personalized T&TA through professional learning communities and other tools. The voting structure will be revisited in one year.

Sustainability Planning: Five-Year Framework (5YF)

Camille Maben shared small group feedback, which included:

- Positive response to one vote per consortium
- Additional clarity regarding lines of communication was requested. Specifically:
 - When/how/what communication should look like
 - What is the specific definition of “consortium”?
 - What is in the future regarding funding and sustainability
 - Requests for more detail regarding Task Teams

The CA–QRIS Consortium voted in July 2017 to approve a new name and tagline for California’s QRIS:

“Quality Counts California – Raising the Quality of Early Learning and Care”

- The new name and tagline is effective immediately
- The new QRIS website will be launched in Winter 2017

Activity

Tables discussed the question: What should the state be doing to support QRIS?

Local planning time: Pivoting to the local work – thinking about local goals, sustainability and scaling. SWOT: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
How can the state help you?

Results: An analysis of the qualitative data will follow, with a high-level summary on day two of the consortium meeting.

Closing Comments

Dr. Westervelt and Dr. Thorman reflected on the work of Day 1:

- Systems building is hard work but good work.

- Great work was accomplished regarding the Five-year Framework.
- The productive and constructive work accomplished will make an impactful change for the better.
- The Consortium is moving from scrappy start-up to a maturity phase, asking good questions, and building great partnerships.

MOVING TO ACTION: Planning the Essential Next Steps Toward a Sustainable CA-QRIS

Wednesday, September 13, 2017
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Topic/Process

Welcome & Overview

Camille Maben provided a high-level summary of the feedback from day one, including:

- Counties requested additional information on the voting structure. While the majority of the feedback was positive, concerns were heard regarding equal representation.
- The state will work to address communication issues regarding how information at the state and local level is disseminated, as the state is committed to complete and total transparency.
- The Rating Matrix Workgroup will continue to do their work with representation from all regions; we don't want to derail any of the momentum the workgroup has generated.
- The state will not water down the QRIS to the lowest common denominator.
- Our promise: To make sure the QRIS system works for EVERYONE.
- Trust is key. We will need to trust each other and honor the work we do to best serve all kids.

MOVING TO ACTION: Planning the Essential Next Steps Toward a Sustainable CA-QRIS

Feedback received from the Five-year Framework indicated more information is needed around:

- Task Teams
- Sustainability
- Communication

Suggestions for Task Teams include:

- Family engagement
- Communication
- Coaching
- Training
- Data

- Sustainability

Questions that will be answered

Communication:

- State and local branding
- Messaging templates
- Multiple entry points
- Reaching parents

Rating:

- Clarity on implementation of the Rating Matrix – where does local flexibility lie?
- Balance between rating and quality improvement
- Addressing FCC needs and on ramps
- Folding more funding streams into the works
- Not letting the ratings work monopolize the system

Quality Improvement:

- Proprietary tool issues
- Training compensation
- Training registry
- QI funding

System:

- Increased funding for internal capacity building and quality professionals
- Compensation
- Future investments (HS, tribal)
- Regional and local sustainability
- Telling the story in a compelling way with solid data – with effective messengers “teed up” to deliver the right info

Work We Did Yesterday and Next Steps

The visuals will be updated and posted by the end of September with a timeframe for collecting feedback. Consortium feedback will be incorporated with a revised draft version posted in November, and a final document posted in December.

Planning Time: Aligning Local Leadership and Statewide Vision

Local Planning Time

What does this conversation and direction mean for your local community? How well does your local work and the state vision align? What are you excited about? Where would more information be helpful? What can you do to strengthen your local work to move toward scale and sustainability? What support can F5 CA and CDE provide to support your success?

Two-way Communications

The state shared a working graphic regarding two-way communication between local and state, including:

Local

- Regularly channel local preferences to state
- Shared Google Drive for document sharing and collaboration
- Collaboration in Common: topic-specific, peer networking forum
- Professional Learning Communities (Hubs, regions, topical focus areas)
- Task Teams
- Statewide Consortium Meetings

State

- Monthly QRIS updates: big goals and progress towards them
- Shared Google Drive for shared document editing
- Collaboration in Common: topic-specific, peer networking forum
- Professional Learning Communities (Hubs, regions, topical focus areas)
- Task Teams
- Statewide Consortium Meetings
- Revamped Liaison System
- Regular phone contact

Dr. Thorman shared a short video about “Scootle”, a professional/peer networking site that could assist with connecting our community.

Summary Comments

The story we collectively tell is the most interesting QRIS story in the nation today. There is powerful and extraordinary opportunity to participate in all of this.

New Mantra: One system, no wrong door, continuous improvement!

Notes from the Family Engagement and Registry proceedings will be posted separately.