

Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee (TAOC) Pilot Program-to-Program Articulation Committee (PAC) Project

Early Childhood Education: Pre K–4 Certification PAC

Monthly Report July 1, 2010

Program to program articulation (P2P) projects around early childhood education have operated in Pennsylvania for the past two years for some and year and a half for other groups in several geographic regions. These groups were formed with support of grant funding from the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) and PASSHE and were charged with effort to helping those working with pre-kindergarten children earn essential degrees and credentials.

In the Northeast region, the Bloomsburg University group prepared a common framework but each institution is developing its own agreements. So far, Bloomsburg has signed P2P articulation agreements with Lehigh Carbon, Luzerne, and Northampton Community Colleges.

In the Southeast region, there have been regular meetings with a P2P plan that looks promising between the community colleges and the privates in the region. Although WCU participated in the early meetings, it is not participating at the moment.

In the Central region, Shippensburg University has a P2P articulation agreement with Northampton, and is in process or has signed an agreement with Harrisburg Area Community College.

An exciting development is the outcome of the articulation agreement that was forged in the Western region. This group of five universities (California, Carlow, Clarion Indiana and Slippery Rock) and five community colleges (Community College of Allegheny County, Butler CCC, CC of Beaver County, PennHighlands and Westmoreland CCC) aligned all ten program requirements around NAEYC standards so that early childhood education students in two-year programs who graduate with an adequate grade point average, passing Praxis 1 scores and a completed and approved portfolio documenting learning outcomes around the NAEYC standards, can transfer to early childhood certification programs without losing credits or repeating classes. The P2P articulation agreements will thus allow a transferring student to have the option of any of the five universities without needing to have a special program depending on the intended transfer institution.

A matrix of 30 general education credits and 30 early childhood education credits was developed that would provide a foundation of courses that would constitute the “program” although the specific course was from among acceptable alternatives, and thus would be expressed differently depending on each institution’s guidelines.

Since the required PDE outcomes and competencies are mainly NAEYC aligned, and additionally, since each early childhood program needed to ensure its program was aligned with the new PDE PK-4 certification guidelines, and since each institution agreed that outcomes based on the NAEYC standards ensured a quality program, the portfolio that would be created during the two years of a community college associates degree would suffice, once approved by the community college professors, as a guarantee that the requisite learning outcomes had been obtained by the student.

The matrices have been posted on D2L for discussion and a face to face meeting or conference call will be held to have questions clarified and next steps decided upon.

Press Release from December 7, 2007

HARRISBURG – Pennsylvania’s unprecedented commitment to early childhood education now includes a groundbreaking effort to help those working with pre-kindergarten children earn essential degrees and credentials.

The state’s Office of Child Development and Early Learning and the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education are funding a new pilot program that will enable two- and four-year institutions of higher learning to work on program-to-program articulation agreements for students in early childhood education or child development coursework.

“We are seeing an increased demand for early childhood educators because of a growing recognition of how important early childhood development is to a child’s overall well-being,” said Education Secretary Gerald L. Zahorchak. “If we want these vital programs to thrive, we have to make sure we have enough qualified professionals to meet the demand.”

“Providing future educators with the training and resources necessary to obtain their degree is vital to the success of Pennsylvania’s children,” said Secretary of Public Welfare Estelle B. Richman. “This partnership is the key that will open doors to opportunities for those preparing for careers in education while providing children and their families with quality early childhood experiences that will prepare them to excel in both school and in life.”

Currently, many early childhood educators, especially those in community-based programs, receive a two-year associate degree and begin working in the field while they pursue a four-year degree. These teachers often face difficulties transferring all of their credits to a four-year college or university to continue on the path to a bachelor degree because of a lack of articulation agreements between two- and four-year schools.

To remedy this, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education and other entities developed a pilot articulation project based on recommendations from higher education institutions, professional development institutions, school districts, child care providers, early intervention specialists and others.

“We are pleased that PASSHE is able to partner with the Department of Education in funding this important initiative,” said Dr. Jim Moran, chief academic officer with the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. “With the pending changes in teacher certification, the Governor’s commitment to young children and PASSHE’s desire to facilitate transfer of students from community colleges, the timing is right for developing these strong articulation agreements in early childhood education.”

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning, which is overseen by the departments of Education and Public Welfare, was created under Governor Rendell to bring a stronger focus to helping Pennsylvania’s youngest children develop and learn to their fullest potential.

Three projects are being funded in the pilot program, two by OCDEL through the Pennsylvania Early Learning Keys to Quality program and the third by the State System of Higher Education. The collaborative teams being funded are expected to develop and implement model program-to-program articulation agreements that will be in effect in January, 2009.

The three funded proposals include:

- Bloomsburg University, as the lead institution working with Kings College, the University of Scranton, Keystone College, the Pennsylvania College of Technology, Luzerne County Community College, Harrisburg Area Community College, Penn Highlands Community College and Lehigh-Carbon Community College.
- Shippensburg University, as the lead institution working with Millersville University, Messiah College, Harrisburg Area Community College, Reading Area Community College and Pennsylvania Highlands Community College.

- West Chester University, as the lead institution working with Chestnut Hill College, Eastern University, Manor College, Harcum College, Esperanza College, Community College of Philadelphia and Montgomery County Community College.

Zahorchak said well-designed articulation agreements benefit not only the students and the institutions, but also the state's children.

“Quality early childhood education offers tremendous, long-term social and economic benefits to our state,” he said. “By working with the higher education community to build an effective model for articulation, we can give our children greater opportunities for learning and a brighter future.”

For more information on the state's early childhood programs, visit www.pde.state.pa.us or www.dpw.state.pa.us.