NEXT Webinar: Revolutionizing Early Childhood Teaching

Save the date—Friday, June 8, 2012 from 3pm—4:30pm ET—for our next Early Learning Fellows installment in our webinar series. This webinar features Bob Pianta, one of the most influential researchers in the country, responsible for changing how the early childhood field thinks about teaching. His work hones in on what it takes to be a good teacher, the interaction between young learners and their teacher, provides strategies for teachers, and an assessment tool to measure the quality of teaching. Adele Robinson from NAEYC will discuss policy trends and highlights in teacher training. As always the webinar will include presentation and comment by both speaker followed by a lively question, answer and comment portion of the webinar. Please be certain to register to participate by following this link, http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/human-services/revolutionizing-early-childhood-teaching.aspx.

About our speakers—Bob Pianta is the Dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia and an Early Learning Fellow faculty member. Pianta is also the Novartis Professor of Education and Director of the University of Virginia’s Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning. Adele Robinson is the Deputy Executive Director of Policy & Public Affairs at the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Robinson is a leader in the early childhood field with a deep knowledge of teacher and workforce development policy and practice. NAEYC has a long history of working to improve professional practice and programs spanning a membership in the United States and globally.

Highlighting a Fellow

Senator Nancy King of Maryland was successful in sponsoring the Home Visiting Accountability Act of 2012 during this legislative session. Representative Hixon had a companion bill in the Maryland House. King was of course even happier when the legislation was enacted. The bill requires that Maryland fund only evidence-based and promising home visiting programs and requires the development of reporting and monitoring procedures for specified home visiting programs by the Governor’s Office for Children and the agencies of the Children’s Cabinet. While evidence-based is a requirement for receiving federal grant dollars King explains how she personally envisions her state programs to be improved and strengthened due to the language in her bill. King says, “...aligning Maryland with Federal guidelines will enhance the effectiveness and accountability of our programs thereby improving outcomes and increasing the State’s return on its investment”. King continues by mentioning that, “...it’s a win-win for all”!

If you have a piece of legislation or policy work to highlight in the next Fellows newsletter, please email alison.may@ncsl.org.
Legislative Highlights

In the final weeks of many sessions in state legislatures, many bills are still pending in states, including several bills seeking to develop and implement professional standards of the early childhood workforce to improve the quality of state early childhood learning and care programs.

Connecticut and California are among states looking to align early childhood learning credentials and professional development standards to higher education institutions and degrees (SB 39 and AB 1853). Scholarship programs for current early childhood providers and/or teachers are being proposed in New Jersey (AB 1117) as well as California (AB 1923) legislation. Bills in both Tennessee chambers are seeking to establish similar scholarship programs (HB 2694 and SB 3252) and in Minnesota, lawmakers are proposing a reimbursement rate increase for providers that implement approved child development assessments and tracking (SB 1621).

Finally, Washington SB 5715 (enacted in March 2012 as Chapter 149) requires the Department of Early Learning to develop and implement statewide core competencies and standards by December 2012 for all early childhood and youth development professionals in areas such as quality rating, infant and toddler care, child care licensing among others. These standards will be reviewed and updated every five years.

Pre-Kindergarten Participation in West Virginia More than Doubled between 2002-03 and 2010-11

The Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) program recently released a report on Prekindergarten participation rates in West Virginia and found that the statewide participation rate in preK more than doubled between 2002-03 and 2010-11, from 26 percent to 63 percent of eligible students. The REL study compared the quantity of state preK slots to those offered by collaborative partners, and analyzes participation based on socioeco-