

Rhode Island Early Learning Legislative Efforts



Senator Hanna M. Gallo

Chairperson, Senate Education Committee

December 7, 2013

Background

- Rhode Island was one of nine states to be awarded a Race to the Top grant for Early Learning Challenge
- \$50 million dollars over 4 years

RI Legislative Input in Early Childhood Education

- **Budget**
 - The most direct way the General Assembly has impacted early childhood education is through the budget process and supporting early childhood initiatives.
- **Statutes**
 - Full day Kindergarten incentive legislation



Budget:

Early Learning Education Funding

- Beginning in FY2013, a program for early childhood education was enacted.
 - Purpose is to increase access to voluntary, free, high quality pre-kindergarten programs.
 - Program is administered by RIDE through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process.



Budget

- FY 2013
\$1.5 million
- FY 2014
\$2.0 million
- FY 2015
Governor's budget due January 24,
2014

Full Day Kindergarten Incentive Program

- After the announcement of the RTTT grant for early learning, I submitted and the GA passed an incentive program to encourage all school districts operate full day kindergarten.
- RI has 36 school districts with 19 school districts providing full day kindergarten, including all but one of our urban core cities.

Full Day Kindergarten Incentive Program

S 2534 (2012 Gallo) created an incentive program for school districts to operate a full day kindergarten program by allowing them to recoup one time start up costs.

- Administered by RIDE
- Not funded

Full Day Kindergarten Incentive Program

- S 1035 SUBA (2013 Gallo) refined the language of S 2534 by including ancillary costs for school districts such as relocation and professional development courses and fixed per pupil funding.
 - Average number of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch.
 - Full day funding in the first year of operation. Previously school districts received half day funding for the first year due to funding formula based on last year's half day program.

Funding of the Full Day K Incentive Program

- FY 2013
\$0
- FY 2014
\$250,000 - up to four school districts
- FY 2015
Governor's budget due January 24,
2014

Full Day Kindergarten Incentive Program Current Status

- Four school districts will receive funding through this incentive grant.
- Number of school districts without full-day Kindergarten will drop to 13; 2 districts that did not receive the grant have indicated they will proceed with the implementation.

Other Legislative Victories

- **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)**
 - FY2014 budget created a 12 month pilot to allow families to remain eligible for CCAP as the family income increases to 225% poverty level from 180%.
- **Paid Family Leave**
 - This bill expands state TDI to allow employees who need to take time off work to care for a seriously ill family member or a new child through birth, adoption, or foster care.

Thank You



Senator Hanna M. Gallo

sen-gallo@rilin.state.ri.us