



## Mayor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Early Childhood Education

### Summary of Policy Committee Recommendations

September 30, 2014

On August 25, 2014 City of Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto declared, by Executive Order, the formation of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Early Childhood Education (MBRPECE).

In summary findings, the panel calls for early childhood programming that will:

- **Increase Quality Levels of Current Providers:** Currently only 13.4 percent of providers registered in the Keystone STARS program have achieved the high quality rating of 3 or 4 STARS. The City should focus on eliminating the barriers that limit a STARS 2 provider from rising to a STARS 3 designation.
- **Ensure Continuity of Care and Maximize Impact of Public Funds:** Providing support to child care providers would strengthen their ability to offer wrap-around services that allow for continued care when pre-K programs are not in session.
- **Role of City Government:** The Office of the Mayor possesses the unique capability to create a collective plan through the work of the MBRPECE that adds value to the work already being done in the City of Pittsburgh. Additionally, the Mayor's Office will focus all sectors of city government towards a unified commitment to early childhood.
- **Establish an Early Learning Investment Commission (ELIC):** Continued and sustainable financial support for early childhood initiatives is essential for the long-term success of programming.
- **Workforce Compensation:** High quality professionals are the cornerstones of high quality programs. The MBRPECE derived strategic plan will focus on the recruitment, retention, and compensation of these professionals.
- **Targeted Implementation of a Universal Program:** The MBRPCE derived strategy will focus not only on at-risk children, but instead incorporate all children, via Targeted Access, Income-Based Family Cost Share, and Fully Subsidized programs
- **Healthy and Green Early Learning Facilities:** Young children are extremely vulnerable to environmental toxins and highly susceptible to environment-related medical issues, such as asthma. Green building design is shown to protect the health of children, reduce operating costs, and improve the satisfaction and productivity of adults.
- **Neighborhood Safety:** The City of Pittsburgh seeks to ensure that neighborhoods are safe for young children and families. MBRPECE supports and recommends strong liaisons among the police, the community, and early childhood programs.
- **Optimize Small Business Resources:** Many child care providers are for-profit entities that require quality business planning, and they need support to survive.
- **Digital Media-Literacy (DML):** The Pittsburgh Region, in collaboration with ReMake Learning and the Kids and Creativity Network, is leading the Commonwealth's efforts on Digital Media Literacy in children. MBRPECE recommends that the City of Pittsburgh utilize existing resources and build on the momentum of the strong tech industry to ensure all early childhood programs have DML access and resources.
- **Early Childhood Data System:** High quality programs are supported by high quality decision-making. MBRPECE recommends the formation of a data collecting, analyzing, and sharing system that will examine early childhood indicators across the city's neighborhoods.