

Board of Education Early Childhood  
Education Work Session

Discovery Center (Greenhouse Classroom)  
1322 Avenue I  
Gothenburg, NE 69138

Monday, December 14, 2015 1:00 PM

## **Agenda**

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

**Rationale:**

The mission of Gothenburg Public Schools, in partnership with the entire community, is to prepare all students within a positive, innovative, learning environment to become lifelong learners in the 21st century.

A copy of the open meetings law is posted on the wall of the Board Room and is available to the public.

2. Approve the Agenda

**Rationale:** The Board reserves the right to rearrange the order of items as needed.

3. Recognition of Visitors
4. Discussion Item: Early Childhood Education
5. Adjournment



*GOTHENBURG EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
LEARNING  
COALITION*

Revised December 14, 2015

# **Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition (GECLC)**

## **BELIEF STATEMENT**

The Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition (GECLC) believes that every child (birth to age five) deserves early childhood learning opportunities supporting the growth and development needed for kindergarten.

This belief will take the commitment of current early childhood learning providers and support services, caring business leaders, school officials, community stakeholders and private individuals.

The Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition Strategic Plan is the product of several months of continuous planning involving a diverse group of community leaders and consists of goals, objectives and strategies that will serve as the roadmap for our work in Early Childhood Learning (ECL) in Gothenburg, Nebraska.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition (GECLC) will assure a coordinated system of community resources and support to assist all Gothenburg families in providing early childhood learning experiences for children from birth to age five.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

- Social Emotional Health & Wellness - Infants, young children and their families are socially, emotionally and physically healthy.
- Child Care and Early Learning - Families have access to high quality early care and education.
- Children with Disabilities - All children with disabilities have equal access to early childhood learning opportunities so they can participate, freely and actively, in all facets of the learning environment.
- Family Support - Families are provided community support through access to evidence based parenting.
- Parenting Leadership - Families support and guide the early learning of their infants and young children.

## GOALS

1. **Public Education and Advocacy:** The Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition will build public support including, but not limited to, parents, community members and policy-makers for early childhood learning through education and advocacy by September, 2016.
2. **Program Coordinator:** The Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition will hire a Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Program Coordinator.
3. **School-Based Preschool, and Community Preschool Partnership:** The Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition will design and guide implementation of a school-based preschool designed specifically to catch those students who are not able to be served in Gothenburg's more traditional, private setting and to coordinate with community-based partner preschools by August, 2016.
4. **Step-up-to-Quality, Pyramid Model Framework and Community Curriculum Selection:** The Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition will utilize "Step Up to Quality" (Nebraska Department of Education) standards and the Pyramid Model Framework for a universal data assessment and accountability measurement (quarterly) and create a list of early childhood curricula to be utilized by all participating ECL entities in order to maintain the Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition's "seal of approval".
5. **Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability:** The Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning Coalition will work with Gothenburg Public School, state and regional early childhood agencies, support services for students with disabilities, local entities and partnerships to define a program that is effective, efficient and sustainable.

**MEMBERS OF THE GOTHENBURG EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING COALITION**

Steering Committee: Dr. Michael Teahon, Allison Jonas, Danette Anderson, Amber Burge, Angie Richeson

Research Committee: Caroline Scott, Kyle Fornoff, Niki Salomon, Katie Beth Kauffman, Robin Stevens

Licensed Providers: Mary Streeter, Casey Madsen, Charity Wyatt, Amber Olsen, Suzanne Holmes, Jill Franzen, Lori Kitzing, Donna Portiner, Sarah Anderson

City Representative(s):

- Joyce Hudson (or designee)

Hospital Representative(s):

- Mick Brant (or designee)

School Representative(s):

- Dr. Michael Teahon, Superintendent
- Allison Jonas, Principal
- Danielle Nguyen, Psych
- Molly Koehn, Teacher
- Melissa Bell, SPED
- Dee Weaver, Child Development Teacher

Board of Education Representatives:

- Amber Burge
- Devin Brundage

GIC Representative(s):

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Community Members) at large:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## **EXTERNAL SCAN (Strengths/Successes, Weaknesses/Challenges, Opportunities, Threats)**

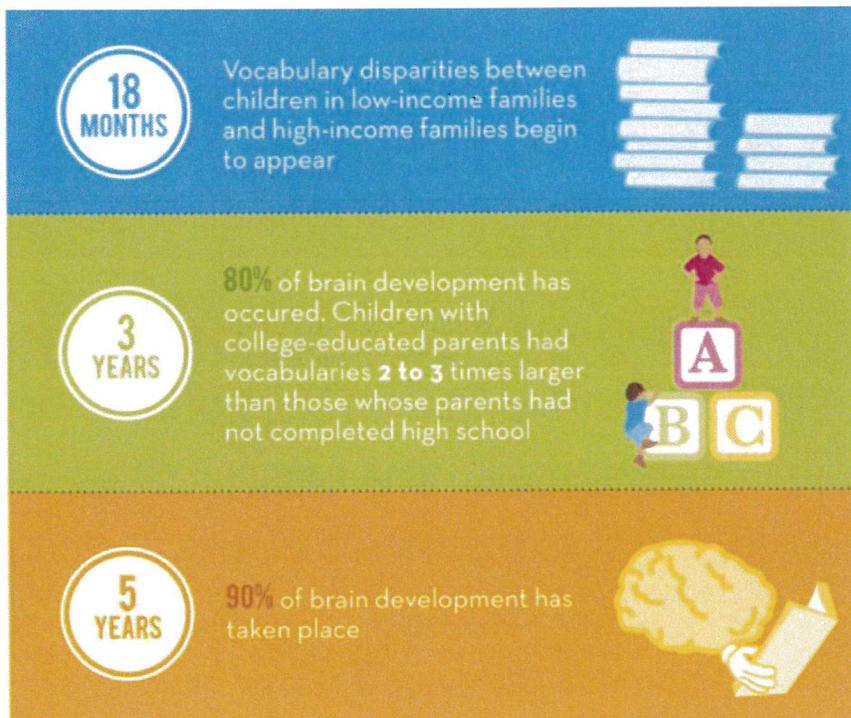
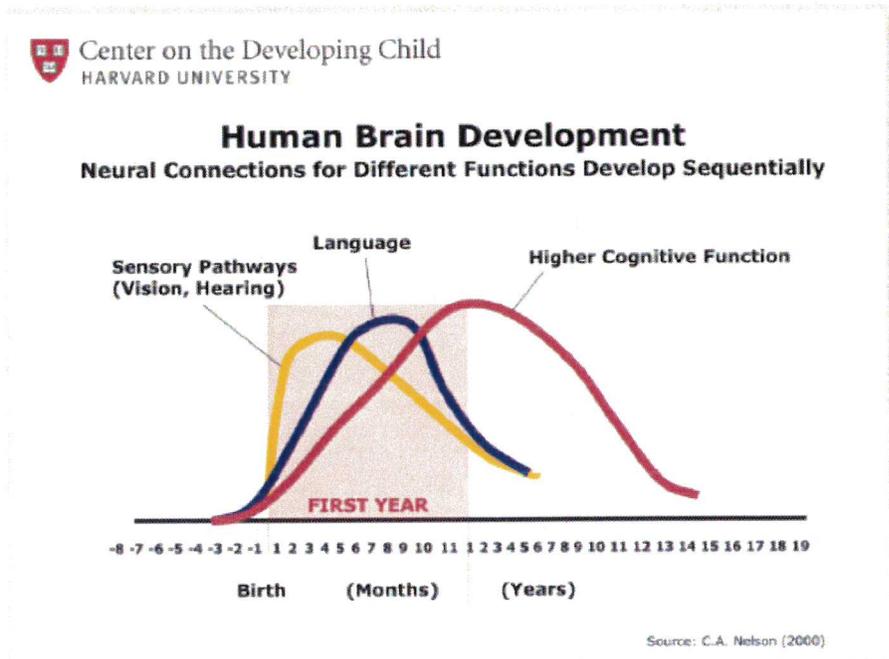
Gothenburg has a long history of working collaboratively to achieve common goals that are focused on improving the quality of life in the community.

The Gothenburg Improvement Company (GIC) was made aware of the need for more daycare in November, 2014. At that point, the GIC Way of Life Committee formed a subcommittee (Early Childhood Learning Research Committee) to begin researching the existing opportunities in Gothenburg. A lack of “capacity”, specifically for infants, was at the forefront of the initial issues.

- **Strengths/Successes**
  - Providers are able to have one-to-one interaction with children
  - Kids want to come back the next day
  - Routine / schedule
  - Lightbulb moments
  - When kids want to show their parents what they did that day
  - “You” are their everything as their provider
  
- **Weaknesses/Challenges**
  - Lack of available funding.
  - Facilities
  - Inability to provide a full-day, full-year program
  - Providers have a fear of the unknown
  - Will another center / provider affect me financially?
  - In-home providers are “alone” all day long (no breaks)
  - Developmental levels of kids / Disabilities (makes it hard to follow a curriculum)
  - The definition of curriculum
  - Income vs. outcome (Can I afford it?)
  - Resources (Who do I contact for various types of information?)
  - Parents
  - Behaviors / Mental Health
  - Training for staff that is close / affordable / available during “good” times
  
- **Opportunities**
  - List of support / resources
  - Group training opportunities (all providers in Gothenburg)
  - Rooted in Relationships / Step Up to Quality
  - Volunteers / Support services coming in to help
  - Monthly “Coalition” meetings (talk through problems / issues / questions)
  - School - could provide community-wide curriculum
  - Provide resources to non-state-licensed in-home providers
  
- **Threats**
  - Loss of private providers because they cannot compete.
  - Unwillingness of privates to work within the coalition.
  - Making a deficiency public without financial resources to adequately address the problems.

## CURRENT STATUS of Early Childhood Learning

### A. National Statistics



**B. State Statistics** (\*from First Five Nebraska)

\*153,612 children in Nebraska ages 0-5 / 42% or 64,427 at risk of school failure.  
3,227 children in Legislative District 36 / 54% or 1,739 at risk of school failure.

\*"It is critical that we invest funds where they will have the strongest fiscal returns. High-quality early childhood programs, especially those targeting children at risk of failing in school, have the potential to pay for themselves many times over and produce as much as a 7% to 10 % annual return for each dollar invested."

\*These children are likely to arrive at kindergarten 1-2 developmental years behind their more advantaged peers, requiring school districts to spend extra resources to help them keep pace in the K-12 system.

\*Among the barriers school districts face in meeting this need are funding and available space. Schools cannot (and should not) solve this problem on their own. LB 547 brings new resources and addresses funding shortages and space issues between schools and the child care community that is or will be at the same level of quality that school districts offer.

LB 547 equips Nebraska communities to reduce the achievement gap by supporting the healthy development of their youngest children at risk at precisely the time it is most effective and least expensive to do so.

**QUOTE:** *"The problem: Too many children arrive at Kindergarten already behind. What is worse, far too many children keep falling further behind — and never catch up.*

*By the time a child enters Kindergarten, she or he already has been learning for 5 or 6 years. In fact, sound science and everyday experience show that children are born learning. However, our country's policies, programs and practices typically don't take this knowledge seriously. Instead, we wait to respond to a child's earliest learning until the first day of school. Is that really too late?*

**Yes. Because the achievement gap we struggle to narrow in elementary school and too often fail to close in high school is actually an "opportunity gap" rooted in those very early years."**

*-Susan A. Buffett, Omaha, Nebraska*

## C. Local Statistics

### Curriculum implemented in current preschools:

- Charity Wyatt, Joyful Noise Preschool - High Scope / Handwriting Without Tears
- Amber Olsen - Handwriting Without Tears
- Donna Portiner, Building Blocks - Mother Goose
- Casey Madsen, Learning Adventures -
- Jump Start -

### Current Status of Gothenburg Early Childhood Learning

- 1 Child Care Center (Building Blocks)
  - Licensed for 88
  - Serving approximately 80
  - Current waiting list (infants especially)
- 1 Child Care Center in Start-Up
- 8 In-Home Providers
  - Licensed for 74
  - Most with a waiting list
  - One provider retiring in August
- Pre-School
  - 4 private providers
  - Head Start in homes (8 children?)
- After School
  - No afterschool program

### Kindergarten Assessment Statistics

· Three assessments are given to all Kindergarteners before the end of September in their Kindergarten year to get an understanding of baseline knowledge.

- Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)
- First Sound Fluency (FSF)
- Basic Mathematics (Math)
- A "Benchmark Ratio" was calculated for each score by calculating the difference between the individual score and the benchmark score divided by the benchmark for each assessment. This determines the relative success on each assessment for each student. (Mean and SD Ratios were considered.)

## **Demographics Considered**

- Demographic and kindergarten assessment data were compiled for all students in K, 1, & 2.
- Demographic factors considered through multiple regression method of analysis.
  - Age in days when assessed
  - Poverty level of family (NSLP)
  - Gender
  - Ethnicity (sub-n too small to analyze)
  - Pre-school
  - Jump Start
  - Provider

## **Assessment Analysis (basic demographics)**

- AGE \* (by day) – Absolutely the highest correlation.
  - 19.1% relative effect on benchmark ratio
  - Impact per day is .00084 (impact on one-unit change)
  - 2.52% per month
- Poverty \* (NSLP qualified)
  - 14.9% relative impact on benchmark ratio
- Gender (Not statistically significant)

## **Analysis of Access**

### **Pre-school**

- 80.5% of children (177/220) attended preschool of some sort.
- 19.5% of children (43/220) did not attend preschool.
  
- 32.3% of children (71/220) in study qualify for NSLP.
- 19.5% of children (43/220) did not attend preschool.
- 35.2% of children in poverty (25/71) did not attend preschool.
- 12.1% of children (18/149) living above poverty line did not attend preschool.

### **Jump Start**

- 70.9% of students (156/220) attended Jump Start
- 38.0% of children in poverty (27/71) attended Jump Start
- 24.8% of children (37/149) living above the poverty line did not attend Jump Start.

## **Assessment Analysis (preschool / Jump Start)**

- Preschool (not attending)
  - 16.6% relative effect on benchmark ratio.
- Jump Start (attending)
  - 7.4% relative effect on benchmark ratio.
- Preschool by provider.
  - Ranges from 25.2 % to - 7.1% relative effect.
  - Note: other factors such as age and poverty level are NOT included in this regression.

## Strategic Plan Summary Statement

Gothenburg Public Schools is currently addressing needs for advanced early childhood education, and specifically options for at least one section of school-based preschool, in the near future. While it is anticipated that some level of preschool may be mandated by the state in the near future, the real fact is that we currently have a gap in our educational programming in this area. Approximately 194 of the 245 Nebraska School Districts have school-sponsored early learning centers including neighboring schools such as Cozad, Lexington, North Platte and Kearney.

Implementation of a school-sponsored preschool has been discussed for many years with the Jump-Start program, a three-week summer program prior to the start of the school year, serving as an intermediate step between no services and a school-sponsored preschool. An effective step, Jump-Start was never intended to be a permanent solution to meet the needs of our families.

In addition, national, state and local research all validate the importance of providing effective opportunities for early childhood education. Learning does not begin at kindergarten. A study from Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, found that a human's "neural connections for language development and higher cognitive function occur most extensively within the first five years of life." More specifically, the study found that "80% of brain development occurs by age three and 90% by age five".

Nebraska statistics published by First Five Nebraska found that 42% of children in Nebraska, age's birth to five, risk school failure. "High quality early childhood programs, especially those targeting children at risk of failing in school, have the potential to pay for themselves many times over and produce as much as a 7% to 10% annual return for each dollar invested." Children that do not have exposure to effective early childhood programs are likely to arrive at kindergarten one to two developmental years behind their peers.

Nebraska feels strongly about the importance of early childhood education even prior to formal pre-school as evidenced by the legislature's passage of LB 547 earlier this year. The goal of the legislation is to help communities reduce the achievement gap and support the healthy development of the youngest children at risk at precisely the time it is most effective and least expensive to do so. School district's primary barriers faced in meeting this need are funding and available space. Legislators have stated that schools cannot (and should not) solve this problem on their own.

A study of preschool data for local students revealed similar findings in accessibility and potential risk factors. In a typical year, around 30% of students attending Dudley Elementary qualify for the National School Lunch Program. Approximately 20% of students currently in grades Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade did not attend a preschool representing one in every five students in the elementary. Children who did not attend preschool scored an average of 16%

below their peers on reading fluency, first sound fluency, and basic mathematics assessments given early in their kindergarten year. Age, by days of the child when assessed, had the highest correlation to success, or lack of it, on the assessments. Finally, data indicated a difference of up to 32% relative effect based upon the actual preschool attended.

The question being discussed by the Gothenburg Public Schools Board of Education and district leadership is how to most effectively implement a solution or solutions to this challenge. The school, with limited resources and limited physical space, will address the needs of children with the highest need. However, the district is also researching grants and other partnerships throughout the community in order to use limited resources to impact more children and programs.

The possibility of creating partnerships with existing private preschools and childcares is an exciting opportunity allowing the district to potentially make a difference with more kids with the same amount of resources. Further, conversations with members of the community, hospital officials and city officials, provides for potential synergies allowing the community to provide opportunities for all kids and families. These partnerships will allow Gothenburg Public Schools to address early childhood education more effectively regardless of their economic status, and more efficiently, combining the intellectual and financial resources of many.

## TIMELINE FOR VISION

\*\*\*\*\* DRAFT \*\*\*\*\*

### Phase I: November 2015 through January 2016

#### **GOAL 1: Public Education and Advocacy**

- A. Finalize vision and develop public relations strategy.
- We must have a firmly defined vision at three levels.
    - Summary Statement (completed 12/11/15)
    - Surface level - three paragraphs (completed 12/11/15)
    - Detailed - a front & back bulleted but concise informational document.
    - Comprehensive strategic plan including FUNDING and sustainability.
- B. Introduce plan to the Board of Education and to the general public
1. Present to Board of Education on Nov. 9, 2015 for informational purposes and to take the conversation public through the Gothenburg Times. (completed 12/11/15)
    - Introductory Video
    - Powerpoint
    - Strategic Plan
    - Discuss financials including expenditures and resources.
    - Discussion
- C. Follow-up with Board of Education on Dec. 14 with detailed information..
- The board will have a more in-depth conversation held in a retreat setting which will delay approval until January.
    - Strategic Plan
    - Option Matrix
    - Budget Options

#### **GOAL 2: Program Coordinator**

- A. Finalize the roles of the GECLC Program Coordinator, define the job description and determine strategies for funding the position.

Questions to be answered:

- Staffing
  - Split position with teaching role or separate position?
  - Full-time or half-time?
  - school year or year round?
- Funded by school or funded by coalition?
- Permanent or transitional?

The GECLC Coordinator will:

- a. Partner with willing early childhood learning sites in Gothenburg to establish consistency and ensure a standard of quality of care
- b. Be the learning sites curriculum coordinator
- c. Establish a business plan for a potential future early childhood learning center
- d. Find and secure outside funding for long-term sustainability
- e. Maintain an online presence to keep the community engaged
- f. Facilitate a parent-advisory council
- g. Be the community liaison / sounding board for parent needs / concerns
- h. Facilitate professional development / training opportunities for community early childhood personnel.
- i. Work in partnerships with local and statewide early childhood entities such as First Five Nebraska, Educare, Rooted in Relationships, Circle of Security, Head Start, Step Up to Quality, etc.
- j. Research a Gothenburg After-School program

**GOAL 3: School-Based Preschool and Community Preschool Partnership**

- A. Develop the structure of initial school-based preschool classroom(s) to be implemented in Fall of 2016 to be included in NDE Early Childhood Grant due in February. (see 3B)

Questions to be answered (see decision making matrix)

- Number of Children?
  - 4-year olds, 3 and 4 yr-olds, at-risk only, peer models.
- Sections?
  - 1, 2, 3, or more
- Structure?
  - half-day, full-day, alternating days, start-time, transportation
- Location?
  - Elementary, Building Blocks, churches, other?
- Staffing?
  - full-time, half-time, split with SPED,
- Funding Sources?
  - Taxes, partnerships, philanthropy, corporate, NDE grant, Sixpence, Fee-based, scholarships
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### **GOAL 4: Step-up-to-Quality, Pyramid Model Framework and Community Curriculum Selection**

- A. Invite representatives from NDE's "Step Up to Quality" and Rooted in Relationships "Pyramid Model Framework" to facilitate an initial program training session for GECLC including, but not limited to, steering committee, licensed private providers, and staff from Gothenburg Public Schools.
- B. Coordinate goals, timeline, and strategies for moving partnerships towards high quality preschool and childcare.

#### **GOAL 5: Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability**

- A. Alternative Funding Sources
1. Begin process of finding additional and alternative funding sources
    - Grants
    - Foundations
    - Corporations
    - Local philanthropy
    - Hospital / City partnership
    - Does the "Center" project tie in at this point? If not, when?
    - \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Complete and submit NDE preschool grant by mid February.
  3. Sixpence Community Partnership Grant Application
    - Nebraska's Step up to Quality for Sixpence Child Care Partnerships
    - Review TIMELINE and place on ALL calendars
    - Split tasks into an action plan and set deadlines.
    - **Mandatory Bidder's Conference Webinar - Dec. 1, 10:00 a.m.**
    - **Letter of Intent due on December 15**
    - **Application due on Jan. 28**

**Phase II: January 2016 through May 2016 (Spring 2016)**

\*The tasks defined in the Spring of 2016 may be implemented incrementally throughout the upcoming years.

**GOAL 1: Public Education and Advocacy**

- A. Develop a concrete strategy to engage the entire community in overall education and wellness for ALL children and families for B-3.
- Scholarships
  - Structure for family support.
  - P.R. and extensive education of the importance and need.
  - Head Start
  - Parenting Classes
  - Churches
  - MOPS?
  - \_\_\_\_\_

**GOAL 2: Program Coordinator**

- A. Select Executive Director / Family Services Coordinator
- Funded and supervised by school?
  - Coordinate with Privates
  - Make a Community Connection (Head Start/EDN/Medical Profession) (Funding?) Implement and Coordinate the Details of the Vision (Community “stamp of approval” - Certification) - Curriculum, Management, Lunch Services, Professional Development, Scholarships (Step Up to Quality)
  - \_\_\_\_\_

**GOAL 3: School-Based Preschool and Community Preschool Partnership**

- A. Finalize the structure of initial school-based preschool classroom(s) to be implemented in Fall of 2016 to be included in NDE Early Childhood Grant by Feb. 8, 2016.

**GOAL 4: Step-up-to-Quality, Pyramid Model Framework and Community Curriculum Selection.**

- A. Structure partnership with private providers.
- Curriculum
  - Management
  - Assessment (GOLD?)
  - Nutrition services
  - Professional development
  - \_\_\_\_\_

**GOAL 5: Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability**

- A. Complete and submit SixPence grant and NDE Early Childhood grant.

**Phase III: 2016-17 School Year (year 1)**

**GOAL 1: Public Education and Advocacy**

**GOAL 2: Program Coordinator**

**GOAL 3: School-Based Preschool and Community Preschool Partnership**

**GOAL 4: Step-up-to-Quality, Pyramid Model Framework and Community Curriculum Selection.**

**GOAL 5: Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability**

- A. Implementation of Year 1 Plan.
- B. Establish a timeline for each of the four areas.
- C. Determine an evaluation process to determine the level at which goals were achieved.
- D. Plan for 2017-18
  - 1. Expand budget - how will it be funded?
  - 2. Increase number of sections of school-based classrooms in 17-18.
    - 2nd section only or all 4-year olds?
  - 3. repeat tasks from Spring 2016.
    - Funding and location are KEY QUESTIONS
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_

**Phase IV: 2017-18 & 2018-19 School Years (years 2 & 3)**

**GOAL 1: Public Education and Advocacy**

**GOAL 2: Program Coordinator**

**GOAL 3: School-Based Preschool and Community Preschool Partnership**

**GOAL 4: Step-up-to-Quality, Pyramid Model Framework and Community Curriculum Selection.**

**GOAL 5: Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Phase V: 2019 - 2020..... (year 4 into future)

**“Ultimate Vision”**

**GOAL 1: Public Education and Advocacy**

**GOAL 2: Program Coordinator**

**GOAL 3: School-Based Preschool and Community Preschool Partnership**

**GOAL 4: Step-up-to-Quality, Pyramid Model Framework and Community Curriculum Selection.**

**GOAL 5: Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability**

A. Students will qualify for TEOSSA dollars IF equalized. Not currently equalized.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

B. \*Full Center-Based Early Childhood Learning Center.

\*Continued support services to private providers.

- It is critical to determine how a center-based preschool works in conjunction with private providers to keep options available for parents and excellence available for children. The ultimate vision only works if everyone is involved.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_