

Building and Sustaining the Child Care and Early Education Workforce

IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

One-on-One Center Director Interview

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INTRODUCTIONS

Let's begin with brief introductions! Can you please share a little about your current role at [CENTER NAME] and your educational and professional background? [Example probes to be asked, if necessary:]

- How long have you worked at this center?
- Have you been in the same position the whole time?
- What other positions have you held?
- What training/education did you have before coming to this center?

Note to interviewer: The remainder of this protocol is organized into two main sections. Proceed to the appropriate section that aligns with the interviewee's status:

NON-PARTICIPANTS WHO DIDN'T COMPLETE THE FULL APPLICATION

or

PARTICIPANTS IN THE TREATMENT GROUP

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NON-PARTICIPANTS WHO DIDN'T COMPLETE THE FULL APPLICATION

LOCAL CONTEXT

Thinking back to 2022, can you describe how you learned about the Colorado Teacher Salary Increase Pilot? Where, when, from whom?

Thinking back to this time, can you describe whether your program was encountering any challenges related to recruiting new staff, turnover, retention, or supporting staff advancement?

- If yes, what were the 3 most significant challenges?
- If no, what contributed to your success?

Can you describe the context for child care and early education in your town or county?

- State-pre-kindergarten?
- Head Start?
- Other child care programs?

Can you describe the local labor market? For example:

- Do you compete with other child care programs when hiring teachers? How so? (e.g., What type of child care? Why are these other programs appealing to teachers? What do you do to attract potential employees who may be qualified to work at other nearby programs?)
- Do you compete with industries other than child care when hiring teachers? How so? (e.g., What type of industries? Why are these other industries appealing to teachers? What do you do to attract potential employees who may be qualified to work in other industries?)

DECISION-MAKING

Next, we would like to ask a few questions about your decision-making process around whether to apply for the Colorado Teacher Salary Increase Pilot.

Can you share a little about how you and your colleagues initially felt about the pilot initiative? Probe:

- What was the general attitude among staff who worked directly with families?
- What was the general attitude among program leadership and senior management?

How well did you understand the initiative and the requirements of participating?

What hesitations did you have about applying?

- Concerns for educators?
- Concerns about administrative burden?

- Sustainability of funding?
- Other concerns?

Is there anything the state could have done to convince you to apply?

Did any state or local policies or regulations influence your decision not to apply?

SUPPORTS/RESOURCES

Who did you consult with when making this decision?

**Did you have all the information you needed about the pilot initiative?
Was anything missing?**

Did you feel supported by the state to make this decision?

What suggestions would you have for the state about improvements they could make?

If you had a magic wand to improve how the state is organizing the pilot initiative, what would that be?

NEXT, PROCEED TO WRAP UP SECTION

PARTICIPANTS IN THE TREATMENT GROUP

LOCAL CONTEXT

Thinking back to 2022, can you describe how you learned about the Colorado Teacher Salary Increase Pilot? Where, when, from whom?

Thinking back to this time, can you describe whether your program was encountering any challenges related to recruiting new staff, turnover, retention, or supporting staff advancement?

- If yes, what were the 3 most significant challenges?
- If no, what contributed to your success?

Can you describe the context for child care and early education in your town or county?

- State-pre-kindergarten?
- Head Start?
- Supply for specific populations (e.g., infants and toddlers, dual language, homeless)?

Can you describe the local labor market? For example:

- What other industries are you competing with when hiring teachers?
- What does the unemployment rate look like?
- What does state pre-k look like in your town/county? How does that affect your ability to recruit teachers?

DECISION-MAKING

Can you share a little about how you and your colleagues initially felt about the pilot initiative? Probe:

- What was the general attitude among staff who worked directly with families?
- What was the general attitude among program leadership and senior management?

Can you share a little about why you decided to prepare an application for this initiative?

- Who did you consult with when making this decision?
- What motivated you to apply?
- Did you have all the information you needed? Was anything missing?
- Did you feel supported by the state to make this decision?
- Did you have any hesitations about applying?
- Could anything be improved to help other administrators make this decision?

EXPERIENCES WITH THE PILOT INITIATIVE APPLICATION PROCESS

Next, we would like to learn a little more about your experiences in preparing and submitting the application and navigating the application phases to have your center participate in the pilot initiative.

Please briefly describe who was involved in developing the application?

Probe:

- Other administrative staff
- Teachers/caregivers
- Accountants or other professionals/consultants
- T/TA staff
- State administrators

Please describe what went well and what was most challenging in terms of navigating the application phases?

Did you receive any technical assistance, resources, or other supports to help you with the application phases?

- If so, what were they? How helpful were they?
- What would have been helpful to have?

Once the application was fully submitted, what happened next? Probe:

- To what extent did you have back-and-forth communication with the state? What was discussed or negotiated? Over what period of time?
- How long did it take to learn that you were accepted?

What communication did you have with teachers/caregivers during this time?

- How did you support teachers in learning about the initiative? How did you collect information from teachers about opting in/out?

EXPERIENCES ONCE SALARY INCREASE PAYMENTS STARTED

Next, I'd like to talk more about what happened after your application was accepted.

Once your application was accepted, was it clear to you how to navigate next steps?

- What was helpful in navigating next steps?
- What could have been improved?

Next, can you describe what administrative tasks you complete each month to process the wage payments? Probe:

- Communicating with staff about opting in/out (e.g., as new staff are hired)
- Maintaining and updating staff records of who is opting in/out
- Submitting monthly attestations & other state-required paperwork
- Accounting-related procedures to process wage payments monthly

Can you describe how the pilot initiative has affected your center? How has your center been affected the most?

Has the pilot initiative affected your ability to recruit new teachers? How so? Probe:

- Has it helped you be more competitive with other programs or industries?
- Has it helped you recruit certain types of teachers (e.g., infant/toddler, multi-lingual)

Has the pilot initiative affected your ability to retain teachers? How so?

How has the pilot initiative affected staffing configurations? Is there any more consistency now in terms of which classrooms staff work in? Probe:

- Changes in staffing within classrooms or at the leadership-level
- Configurations in infant/toddler vs. preschool classrooms
- Other staff characteristics

How has the pilot initiative affected your job (if at all)? For example:

- Job-related stress
- Job satisfaction
- Time spent hiring new staff
- Time spent onboarding/training new staff
- Time spent on resolving staffing challenges
- Time spent in the classroom as a substitute teacher
- Time spent doing administrative paperwork

How has the pilot initiative affected the program culture/climate? Probe about their perceptions of:

- Staff members' attitudes toward their job and collegiality
- Staff members' job-related stress
- Staff members' job satisfaction
- Amount of staff turnover
- Staffing challenges and conflicts

How has the pilot initiative affected your ability to serve children/families? Probe:

- Capacity to open classrooms or serve more children
- Capacity to improve teacher-child ratios

How has the pilot initiative affected your participation in the CCEE subsidy program?

How has the pilot initiative affected the sustainability of your program (if at all)? For example:

- Other funding sources for your program
- Risk of closure
- Daily operations/management tasks (other than the ones you do for your job)

Have there been any unintended consequences of the pilot initiative?

- Exacerbating inequities among certain groups of staff
- Freeing up resources
- Necessitated changes to center policies
- Impacts on staff who were not eligible to receive the salary increase

LOOKING AHEAD

What is your outlook on the future with respect to the salary increase, given that this is a 2-year pilot, ending in [insert date]?

- What concerns you?
- What makes you feel optimistic?

Do you have any suggestions for how Colorado could improve the pilot initiative?

- Improvements that would support directors?
- Improvements that would support educators?
- Improvements that would better align this initiative with other initiatives, policies, or funding streams?
- Other improvements?

If you had a magic wand to improve how the state is organizing the pilot initiative, what would that be?

WRAP-UP

Is there anything we didn't get to discuss that you think would be important for us to know about the pilot initiative?

Thank you for sharing your time and expertise with us today. On behalf of our whole team, we are grateful for your contribution to this study.