State Board Insight Analysis- Quarter 2 (April-June 2017)

The second quarter of 2017 indicated the presence of many relevant early childhood education (ECE) items in the meeting minutes of 25 state boards of education. The five topics most frequently discussed included school readiness, literacy, the workforce, grant funding, and English language learners (ELL).

The agenda items regarding school readiness can be illustrated via the following examples:

- In California, 16 school districts requested that the State Board waive Section 37202(a) of the California education code’s timing requirements for transitional kindergarten programs.
- Colorado’s State Board of Education began the voting process to approve additions to the kindergarten school readiness assessment menu.

In addition, early childhood literacy initiatives were mentioned, and included these results:

- The Arizona K-3 Literacy Committee recommended updated State Board provisions to the K-3 reading program, which includes further specifications for school districts or charters to be granted additional money.
- The New York Board of Regents was provided an updated report on the progress of the State’s Ready To Read initiative, which is designed to improve and expand the availability of quality public library early literacy and early learning services in local communities throughout New York.

The ECE workforce was mentioned in the context of educator training and development, as evidenced by these resulting actions:

- The Illinois State Board of Education authorized the state superintendent to continue providing Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) training and coaching for educators through the efforts of professional development consultants.
- Indiana’s State Board of Education approved the an Educator Preparation Program for Early Childhood Education (Preschool-3rd grade) and Elementary Education (Kindergarten- 6th grade), which will be created by Martin University.

In terms of grant funding assessment and approval, the following actions were taken:

- In Utah, the Utah Legislative Session granted the State Board of Education the ability to solicit new and renewal proposals from qualifying public school early childhood education programs for quality school readiness grants, which are utilized to help strengthen preschools and ensure that they are serving vulnerable populations.
- The Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education requested that the State Board approve an increase of $101,328,010 for the Arkansas Better Chance program, which supports high-quality education programs for children birth through age five.

The English language learner (ELL) considerations mentioned by state boards included these examples:

- The New York Board of Regents was provided an update on the use of an “Emergent Multilingual Learners Language Profile for Prekindergarten Students” as a tool to identify whether a prekindergarten student’s primary language is English.
In West Virginia, the State Board approved revisions to Policy 2417, which redefines common statewide exit criteria for reclassifying an English learner; in addition, the Policy specifies the obligation and timelines for local districts to notify parents and guardians regarding the identification of a student for EL services.