

June 22, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: M. Katherine Banks, Ph.D.
President

FROM: Susan Ballabina, Ph.D. *Susan Ballabina*
Vice President for Academic & Strategic Collaborations
Working Group Chair

SUBJECT: Implementation Memo – Working Group #5 – Early Childhood Sub-group

Recommendation to be Implemented: Incorporate campus units that fit the mission of the Academic & Strategic Collaborations Division

Strategic Considerations:

The primary charge of the Early Childhood sub-group was to create a vision for a nationally recognized early childhood development program and laboratory. There are four recommendations from the sub-group that are all inextricably interdependent:

1. Seek Board of Regents approval to establish an Institute for Early Childhood Translational Research. The institute will be administratively housed in the School of Education and Human Development. It will include faculty across disciplines and throughout the university with research interests in early childhood development and education. Affiliate members of the institute will include: The Becky Gates Children's Center, Charlotte Sharp Children's Center, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and potentially other system universities with an interest and emphasis in this area. This will be a solutions-orientated institute that seeks to impact the field through cutting edge research collaborations and outreach. The two lab schools, as well as the outreach capacity of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Child Care Provider programming, provide a unique opportunity for research and impact.
2. Engage Hanover Research to conduct an analysis of the leading early childhood development and education academic programs in universities across the country. This analysis will assist the School of Education and Human Development as they determine the best administrative structure, faculty needs, and program emphasis. This analysis has already begun and is being funded through one-time funds available within Academic & Strategic Collaborations.
3. Engage MGT Consulting Group to conduct an analysis of the top early childhood laboratory schools both nationally, and internationally. MGT consultants have been briefed on the unique opportunity associated with having two schools in proximity. They will provide recommendations for creating a unified, relevant, and impactful lab school strategy. This analysis will result in a strategy to develop meaningful faculty engagement, a living learning laboratory for students, and a resource that enriches our campus and

community. This analysis has already begun and is being funded through one-time funds available within Academic & Strategic Collaborations.

4. A comprehensive marketing and communications strategy will be needed for the institute, the academic program, and the lab schools. Our group recommends engaging with marketing and communications in the fall to begin this process.

During sub-group meetings, there were presentations from both early childhood centers, the School of Education and Human Development, and an early childhood education graduate student perspective. All the presentations were critical in helping us form solid understanding of current assets and future opportunities.

Logistical Issues Addressed:

The Becky Gates Children's Center will move into the Division of Academic & Strategic Collaborations on June 1, 2022. The Hanover Research and MGT Studies are both expected to be completed by August 1. The formation of the Institute for Early Childhood Research and Practice will require start-up funding.

Major Challenges Encountered and Resolutions:


Developing a unified strategy for the two lab schools is the most challenging aspect of this opportunity. One center is owned by the university and the other is not. They use different curricula. They have different resource needs. They are currently competitors. However, our sub-group was successful in identifying many common areas of emphasis and philosophy. We believe the MGT analysis and recommendations will be instrumental as we examine the best lab schools in the world and how they are structured. MGT will also engage our local community in focus groups. MGT will ultimately put forward options to consider in creating a unified living laboratory that will serve faculty, staff, students, and the community.

Key Logistical Issues to be Completed and Timeline:

- The Becky Gates Children's Center will move into the Division of Academic & Strategic Collaborations on June 1, 2022. The transition memo has already been signed with agreement between the two impacted divisions.
- There are ongoing conversations with the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center to determine whether the University will purchase the building and business. Those negotiations will continue. Regardless of the outcome, the University and the Charlotte Sharp Children's Center have indicated willingness to collaborate to create a unified lab school strategy.
- The Hanover Study of Early Childhood Education Programs has been commissioned and will be complete by August 1, 2022.
- The MGT study of Early Childhood Lab Schools has been commissioned and will be complete by August 1, 2022
- The proposal for the Institute for Early Childhood Translational Research is a draft and will be further developed as the two studies are complete.
- As both studies conclude, the sub-group plans to come together as needed to discuss outcomes and continue planning for implementation of the overall effort to become the leader in early childhood development and education.

- Our work group continues to be interested in intergenerational research and an elder care facility partnership. We will continue to work with the University, the System, and partners on the feasibility of this added component.

Approved:



M. Katherine Banks, Ph.D.
President

August 12, 2022

Date