



Washington State Department of
Early Learning

Professional Development Consortium

Update to the Governor and Legislature
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Kids' Potential, Our Purpose



Background

The following is a brief status update on the work of the Professional Development Consortium (PD Consortium), as required in Substitute House Bill 1943. More information, including minutes from PD Consortium meetings, is available on DEL's Web site at:

<http://www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/development/consortium.aspx>

SHB 1943 directs the Department of Early Learning (DEL) and the PD Consortium to report to the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature with recommendations for the creation of an integrated system of preparation and continuing education for early learning and school-age program work force.

The legislation and the work of the PD Consortium are important to help ensure quality early learning programs around the state. As stated in the bill, "...well-prepared and appropriately supported teachers and caregivers are essential to improving the quality of early programs and enhancing the nature of children's experiences in those programs."

From SHB 1943:

"The professional development consortium shall map current professional development resources and strategies across the state to identify gaps in the current system and make recommendations for improving the coordination of existing resources and strategies; define core competencies or core knowledge area for early learning professionals; and develop recommendations for a plan to implement a statewide, comprehensive and integrated pathway of preparation and continuing professional development and support for the early learning and school-age program workforce. Recommendations for the plan shall include but not be limited to:

- *Creation of a coherent system of professional development, including delineation of core competencies for early learning and school-age program staff, directors, and administrators;*
- *Requirements for articulation agreements between certificate and credential programs, degree granting programs, professional development programs, and community-based training programs to enable students to transition effectively between two and four-year institutions of higher education and to apply approved training programs toward credit-based learning; and*
- *Creation of a comprehensive, integrated-registry designed to capture information, including workforce and professional data, for all early learning and school-age programs that is easily accessible, to the extent allowed by law, by early learning and school-age professionals, directors, trainers, researchers, resource and referral*

networks, and the department of early learning. The report from the professional development consortium shall also include:

- *An analysis of gaps in available professional development programs and recommendations for programs to address the needs of early learning and school-age providers who serve children with physical or developmental disabilities, behavioral challenges, and other special needs;*
- *A discussion of evidence-based incentives and supports for the early learning and school-age program workforce to obtain additional training and education;*
- *An analysis of evidence-based compensation policies that encourage and reward completion of professional development programs; and*
- *An exploration of strategies for providing professional development opportunities in languages other than English, and incorporation of these opportunities into the comprehensive pathway for preparation and professional development.”*

The PD Consortium’s final recommendations are due by December 31, 2010. The PD Consortium was initially convened by DEL and the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) in 2008 in response to the Early Learning Partnership Resolution between DEL, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Thrive by Five Washington. A sub-group of ELAC, the PD Consortium was charged with developing an integrated statewide system of professional development that prepares and supports educators and caregivers in offering rich early learning environments that help prepare children for school.

PD Consortium Membership and Guiding Principles

Invited members include representation from the following organizations/entities:

- DEL
- OSPI
- Thrive by Five Washington
- Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network (CCR&R)
- Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP
- School’s Out Washington
- Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Higher Education Coordinating Board

- Washington State Family Child Care Association
- Foundation for Early Learning
- ELAC
- Service Employees International Union
- Economic Opportunity Institute
- Department of Health
- Educational service districts and school districts
- Two- and four-year institutions of higher education
- Family and center child care representation
- Other organizations that represent research or provide professional development to the early learning and school-age program work force.
- The PD Consortium is working on securing tribal representation.

In October 2008, the PD Consortium adopted the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) policy blueprint *Workforce Designs: A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems* to guide the process of systems building and development. Guiding principles of the Blueprint are integration, quality improvement, diversity, inclusion and access, and compensation parity. Further, the NAEYC Policy Blueprint focuses on six policy areas:

- Professional Standards
- Career Pathways
- Articulation
- Advisory Structure
- Data
- Financing

The PD Consortium envisions a system that trains, educates and prepares professionals to serve children from newborn to age 12. The PD Consortium is focusing on policy and program design that serve children up to age 8, while considering the necessary linkages between systems as children progress through the educational setting(s). The age group focus aligns with community and technical college degree programs that prepare many early educators to serve young children.

The PD Consortium meets monthly as a large group and within identified work groups.

Ongoing Work

As detailed in the September 15, 2009, update to the Governor and Legislature, three work groups are currently meeting in conjunction with the large group meetings. The three work groups are: *Professional Standards*, led by Sally Holloway of Whatcom Community College, *Mapping and Gap Analysis*, led by Susan Yang-Affolter of CCR&R and *Communications and Connections*, led by Joel Ryan of the Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP.

To steer and coordinate the work groups' efforts, we have built upon the NAEYC policy blueprint. *Work Group Session-Guidance for Tasks*, created by the PD Consortium, guides each work group in identifying their goals and objectives, products to be developed, deliverable dates and prioritized next steps. All work groups will follow the guidelines identified in *Criteria for Design and Development of Products*, also created by the PD Consortium. Each work group reports to the large group on their progress and with recommendations for product distribution.

Work Group Progress

1. Professional Standards Work Group

Objective

Identify and develop Core Competencies and Core Knowledge Areas for early learning and school-age professionals.

Progress

The group has reviewed existing Core Competencies and Core Knowledge Areas from various states using the *Criteria for State Selection* to guide the selection process. The states reviewed included Kansas and Missouri, Illinois, Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, and New York. The Professional Standards work group selected competencies from Kansas and Missouri and Ohio to present to the PD Consortium for consideration.

The PD Consortium selected the *Kansas/Missouri Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* as a framework to guide the work of competency development for Washington at the October 7, 2009, PD Consortium meeting. Further, School's Out Washington selected the *Kansas/ Missouri Core Competencies for Youth Development Professionals* as their framework for the school-age and youth development work force. The selection of Kansas and Missouri by both entities will help ensure alignment and integration between the two systems.

Following the selection of *Kansas/Missouri Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* and using the *Criteria for State Selection*, the Professional Standards work group identified gaps within the *Kansas/Missouri Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* that need to be addressed to ensure the document meets the unique needs of early learning and school-age professionals in Washington.

The *Kansas/Missouri Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* can be found online at www.openinitiative.org/content/pdfs/CoreCompetencies/EC-CoreCompetencies.pdf.

Next steps

Although the PDC determined that the *Kansas/Missouri Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals* most closely aligns with Washington's goals and values for early learning professionals, one important component is missing from the document: comprehensive competencies specific to those working with infants and toddlers. Creating competencies specific to professionals working with infants and toddlers is a priority for the PD Consortium. These will be developed using national research, best practice as defined by early learning experts and existing state examples that align with PD Consortium priorities.

Other areas to be addressed include; development cultural competency, inclusion and special needs; alignment with Washington licensing standards; and alignment with higher education.

2. Mapping and Gap Analysis Work Group

Objective

Look holistically at statewide and county-level data and identify current resources and gaps in the professional development system. As specified in SHB1943, a special focus will consider resources and gaps for early learning and afterschool work force who are English language learners and for those working with children with special needs.

Progress

In the initial phase, which will be completed by December 31, 2009, the work group is gathering information on existing professional development resources for early learning and afterschool professionals, which include:

- a. estimated work force numbers
- b. special needs data (e.g. Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program, OSPI data, children receiving special needs subsidy)
- c. English language learner data
- d. credentialing opportunities (e.g. Child Development Associates)
- e. certificate programs (e.g. short-term and specialized certificates)
- f. degree granting programs (e.g. two- and four-year degrees)
- g. Integrated Basic Education Skills and Training (IBEST) programs in early childhood education at two-year colleges
- h. early childhood, early childhood special needs endorsements
- i. professional development programs (e.g. tech prep, apprenticeship program)
- j. community-based training (e.g. STARS training)
- k. evidence-based incentives (e.g. Career & Wage Ladder, WA Scholarships)

Next steps

In early 2010, the work group will begin identifying the strengths and gaps in our current system. Members plan to provide draft recommendations on how to strengthen our existing professional development system to the full PD Consortium by March 2010.

The end goal is to ensure that all early learning and afterschool professionals have access to:

- a coordinated, integrated and comprehensive professional development system of preparation,
- a system of articulated higher education and community-based training, and
- ongoing development and support.

3. Communications and Connections Work Group

Objective

Communicate about the work of the PDC and gather input from stakeholders, policy makers, and the public. Additionally, the work group strives to make linkages between the PDC's work and other relevant system work, such as the Early Learning Plan development.

Progress

In November, the work group provided a status report to ELAC and submitted recommendations to the December 1st Drafting Team and the Early Learning Plan Steering Committee.

Next steps

Currently, the work group is developing communication materials about the PDC's work and a message about the PDC's work related to core competencies.

Registry Development

SHB 1943 requires DEL to create “a comprehensive, integrated-registry designed to capture information, including workforce and professional data, for all early learning and school-age programs that is easily accessible, to the extent allowed by law, by early learning and school-age professionals, directors, trainers, researchers, resource and referral networks, and the department of early learning.”

DEL is working to update and enhance the existing STARS database to ensure a more interactive tool that is accessible for all the parties listed in the legislation, and that yields more robust data for decision-making. More information on this project will be available on DEL's Web site in the coming months.

Next Steps/Issues to Be Addressed by the PD Consortium

Immediate next steps are as follows:

- Developing recommendations for preparing professionals who serve children with special needs and addressing the needs of English language learners – February 1, 2010
- Initiation of the *Career Pathways and Articulation Work Group* – February 1, 2010
- Regenerate the *Compensation and Incentives to Support Professional Growth Work Group* – March 1, 2010
- Community feedback and review of completed products – March 1, 2010
- Completion of Core Competencies and Core Knowledge Areas - March 31, 2010
- Developing an outline for qualifications, credentials and standards – April 1, 2010

The PDC's final report and recommendations will be delivered to the Legislature and Governor by December 31, 2010.

For more information, visit the PD Consortium page on DEL's Web site at:

<http://www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/development/consortium.aspx>