



Seattle Preschool Program

voluntary, high-quality, affordable

# Setting the Context

# Overview

1. Local and national preschool expansion
2. Seattle City Council legislative guidance
3. Our topic today (and why it matters)

# **Local and National Preschool Expansion**

# How do we know things are changing?

- Preschool expansion across US
- President Obama announces "Preschool for All" Plan
  - High-quality preschool to all four year olds
  - Well-trained teacher, paid comparably to K-12 staff
  - Rigorous curriculum
- Emerging research on positive effects of high quality preschool



# Early Learning Movement Building

	<b>Financial Investments</b>	<b>Policy Changes</b>
<b>National</b>	Race to the Top Funding (Early Achievers)	Obama Preschool Plan
<b>State</b>	ECEAP Expansion	ECEAP Expansion
<b>Local</b>	Property Tax Levy	Seattle Preschool Program

# Local Movement Toward Quality

Summer 2011: Early Achievers—quality improvement funding, parent knowledge of ratings



Spring 2013: UW creates low-cost, online BA degree in early childhood



Fall 2013: City of Seattle creates Early Learning Academy



Winter 2014: Washington State Early Start Bill introduced



Summer 2014: Seattle Preschool Program Action Plan



Fall 2014: City of Seattle creates Department of Education and Early Learning



Fall 2014: Seattle Voters approve Seattle Preschool Program

# **Areas of Focus**

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1. Family Engagement
2. Dual Language Programs
3. Teacher Pathways to Certification
4. Curriculum
5. Teacher Training & Coaching
6. Provider Contracting & Student Enrollment

# Family Engagement

## Meeting Objectives

- Identify best practices for family engagement
- Share community partnership strategies

# Dual Language Programs

## Meeting Objectives

- Define elements of a quality dual language program
- Identify key dual language supports

# Teacher Pathways to Certification

## Meeting Objectives

- Discuss components of teacher waiver process
- Identify key components for teacher certification

# Curriculum

## Meeting Objectives

- Identify supports for approved curriculum
- Influence curriculum waiver process

# Teacher Training & Coaching

## Meeting Objectives

- Brainstorm teacher training opportunities
- Incorporate teacher voice and feedback into the program

# Provider Contracting & Student Enrollment

## Meeting Objectives

- Define contracting priorities
- Inform student enrollment system

# **Legislative Guidance**

# Family Engagement

- **Prioritize a universal family engagement approach** that integrates intentional parent/child activities and promotes academic, social, and emotional school readiness.
  - Families will be provided with evidence-based activities, which could include proven home-learning activities, tied to the chosen curriculum models.
  - Providers will host events throughout the school year to connect families to resources and information on topics such as child development and nutrition.
- **Build on Early Achievers Strengthening Families framework** to increase providers' foundational knowledge about the importance of parents and families in children's lives and the family's impact on child outcomes.
- **Create a family engagement grant fund** that could be used by providers to design, develop, and provide family engagement activities. (Seattle Preschool Program Action Plan, 2014)

# Dual Language Programs

- Dual language programs that meet the qualifications of the Seattle Preschool Program and are **representative of Seattle's linguistic diversity will receive funding priority.**
- Bilingual lead teachers and instructional assistants who meet the competency criteria developed in the Implementation Plan will be **fairly compensated for their expertise.**
- Students will be assessed in languages of instruction when feasible. (Seattle Preschool Program Action Plan, 2014)

# Teacher Pathways to Certification

- **All newly hired staff will be required to meet the following standards:**
  - **Director and/or Program Supervisor:** Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or a BA with college-level coursework in Early Childhood Education. Expertise or coursework in educational leadership and business management is also required.
  - **Lead Teachers:** Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or a BA and a State Teaching Credential with a P-3 Endorsement.
  - **Assistant Teachers:** Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education or two years of coursework in Early Childhood Education meeting Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Educational Professionals.
  - **Coaches:** Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or a BA and a State Teaching Credential with a P-3 Endorsement. "Endorsements" in selected curricula are also required.
- **Current staff will be given 4 years** to meet these requirements.
- **The City will work with local colleges and universities to develop an alternate route program** for teachers with Bachelor's Degrees in fields other than Early Childhood Education.
- **The City will also develop an alternative process** through which experienced, high-quality lead teachers — as defined in the Implementation Plan — may be granted **waivers**. (Seattle Preschool Program Action Plan, 2014)

# Curriculum

- Providers will be required to adopt the approved curricula as detailed in the Implementation Plan (Seattle Preschool Program Action Plan, 2014).

# Teacher Training & Coaching

- **The City’s professional development model is coaching intensive.** Coaches who have been “certified” or “endorsed” in the selected curricula will provide:
  - **On-site curriculum support (reflective coaching)** to teachers, center directors, and program supervisors.
  - **Off-site training.**
  - **Additionally, training will be provided in areas of need,** likely including:
    - Best practices in inclusion, bilingual education, cultural relevancy, and classroom management for Lead Teachers and Instructional Assistants.
    - Best practices in reflective coaching, educational leadership, and business management for Directors and Program Supervisors.
- **Additionally, the City will coordinate with the Washington State Department of Early Learning** to leverage professional development resources available to providers through the Early Achievers Program. (Seattle Preschool Program Action Plan, 2014)

# Provider Contracting and Enrollment

- **Contracting with Seattle Public Schools will be a priority.**
- Additionally, priority will be given to qualified organizations meeting the standards listed herein that:
  - **Have the capacity to provide more preschool classrooms** for the program.
  - **Make care available before and after preschool classroom hours**, on holidays, and over the summer.
  - **Provide dual language programs.**
  - **Have higher ratings in Early Achievers** and higher scores in CLASS and ECERS-R.
  - **Are located in areas with the lowest academic achievement** as reflected in 3rd grade reading and 4th grade math performance on Measures of Student Progress (MSP) or subsequently adopted assessments, as well as those with high concentrations of low-income households, English language learners, and incoming kindergartners.
  - **Provide preschool services through Head Start or ECEAP** (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program).
  - **Have existing contracts with the City** to provide preschool services. (Seattle Preschool Program Action Plan, 2014)

# Provider Contracting and Enrollment (cont'd)

- **The program will be open to Seattle residents who:**
  - Are 4-years-old on August 31st prior to the beginning of a school year of enrollment, or
  - Are 3-years-old on August 31st from families with income equal to 300% of Federal Poverty Level or below.
- As the program is ramping up, priority will be given to:
  - **Children who are currently enrolled in preschool** with a contracted organization.
  - **Children whose sibling is currently enrolled** in the Seattle Preschool Program and would be concurrently enrolled with the sibling in the year of enrollment.
  - **Children living in close proximity** to available program classrooms.
  - **Children who are 4-years-old** relative to children who are 3-years- old, both during the initial enrollment process and when there is a wait list.

(Seattle Preschool Program Action Plan, 2014)

# Why Family Engagement Matters

- **Learning activities done in the home** have positive impact on children's school readiness.
- **High-quality trainings for parents** to strengthen parent/children interaction, with opportunities for modeling, practice, and feedback have a positive impact on children's cognitive skills.
- **Family-to-family networks** have shown promising results for children.

# Why Dual Language Matters

- **Bilingualism has multiple strong benefits** on children's cognitive functioning.
- **Children who start kindergarten proficiently bilingual** perform as well or better than those who begin with only English.

# Why Teacher Pathways Matters

- Early childhood programs that have provided the **strongest evidence of large long-term effects have all employed teachers with at least BA degree** and teacher certification, and corresponding pay.
- **Research links teacher education** and specialized training in early childhood **to quality and the learning of students.**
- **Teacher early childhood education training is necessary** but not sufficient; other supports for preparation and ongoing professional development are needed.

# Why Curriculum Matters

- Curriculum models should be:
  - **Research based**
  - **Provide adequate support to teachers**
  - **Include professional development**
  - **Adaptable to different populations**
  - **Implemented with fidelity**
- When a curricula that hold the following criteria they are linked to successful outcomes for children:
  - Intentional teaching
  - Small group and individual instruction
  - Comprehensive domains

# Why Teacher Training Matters

- **Regular and intensive coaching of teachers** is increasingly recognized as a necessary component of professional development to improve classroom practices.
- A “**Practice-based Coaching Framework**,” cyclical process for supporting providers’ use of effective practices, has led to positive outcomes for children.
- **Training in culturally appropriate practices is key** to developmentally appropriate practice.

# Why Provider Contracting & Student Enrollment Matters

- Studies in the US and abroad tend to find that **preschool education has larger benefits for low-income children**, but that high-quality programs still have substantive benefits for other children.
- Several studies find substantial preschool education effects for children from all economic strata.
- Research in the US and abroad found **larger gains for low income children when programs contained more children from middle income families.**

# Implementation Planning Process

