



November 7, 2008

Dear WSA Members:

I am writing to you to provide you with a brief update on WSA's activities and to give you a sense of the projects we are working on.

### **WSA Conference well attended and good reviews**

Let me start by thanking everyone who attended the WSA conference in Kennewick. We had a very good turnout and the conference received good reviews. Attendees particularly seemed to enjoy the Foster Care Special session sponsored by the Casey Foundation, the session on managing transitions, and the many educational workshops where parents and staff got practical information. Overall, the conference received a 3.4 rating out of 4. Katy and I feel really good about the results of this conference.

### **Advocacy Goals for 2009**

The WSA Board approved the 2009 advocacy goals at the fall meeting. The goals include:

- Increasing funding for ECEAP by \$2.5 million.
- Reforming the child care subsidy system.
- Increasing funding for home visiting programs including new dollars for the creation of a state home based Early Head Start program.
- Increasing funding for the federal Head Start program.

Please download a copy of the advocacy goals at [www.wsaheadstarteceap.com](http://www.wsaheadstarteceap.com). This is a great time for members of our community to begin having conversations with state lawmakers and the Governor about our advocacy goals for 2009. Another good opportunity are the assembly days the week of December 1<sup>st</sup>. Lawmakers will be in Olympia and a hearing on the QRIS is scheduled.

### **Quality and Training Committee meets for first time**

During the conference WSA also met with the Quality and Training Committee for the first time. We discussed several ideas for upcoming webinars such as training on blood borne pathogens, child abuse and neglect, and several other needed trainings. WSA plans on holding our first webinar in late December or early January. If you have suggestions for a good webinar please e-mail them to [Katy@wsaheadstarteceap.com](mailto:Katy@wsaheadstarteceap.com). The Quality and Training Committee members also reaffirmed the concept of "cluster trainings" in which WSA would come into a local community and put on training relevant to that area at very little cost. WSA will be getting into touch with members of the Quality and Training Committee to set up our next meeting very shortly. I want to thank those that agreed to participate. We believe this will substantially strengthen the quality of training programming.

### **WSA Board/Membership Decisions**

At the WSA meeting several things were approved by both the board and/or the membership:

- The budget for 2008 to 2009 was approved. The budget includes the new ECEAP Directors meeting, the new policy council conference, and new cluster trainings. The budget is very lean due to the current freeze on personal services contracts put into place by the Governor.
- The final strategic plan was approved by both the board and membership. A copy of the strategic plan is available on our website. The strategic plan lays out very specific things that WSA will accomplish over the next three years, and is geared heavily toward more engagement with our membership, and a ramped up training program.
- The board also formed two new committees: a committee to help WSA develop a fundraising plan and a committee to look at how to establish an honorary business and community board.

### **Early Learning Action Alliance and Collective Bargaining**

At the WSA meeting we updated our membership on the new Early Learning Action Alliance—a coalition of more than 40 early childhood advocacy organizations. The coalition is being convened by the Children's Alliance and funded by the Gates Foundation. WSA has been very active in the coalition and has served on the steering committee and other key policy committees.

At the WSA meeting the collective bargaining legislation proposed by SEIU and AFT was discussed. WSA let folks know that the coalition decided that they would put together a list of 3 key legislative priorities that everyone could agree to. The list included professional development funding attached to the QRIS, home visiting, and child care subsidy reform. The collective bargaining proposal would not be a top 3 priority, but would be added at the bottom of the advocacy agenda as a separate stand alone item. The goal of the coalition was to allow organizations like WSA to support the top 3 legislative priorities of the coalition, without endorsing the collective bargaining legislation. WSA has taken a neutral position on the collective bargaining legislation.

During the WSA meeting it became clear that the arrangement proposed by the coalition would not be workable with our members. Many folks felt that it would be too difficult for lawmakers to decipher which organizations clearly support the collective bargaining legislation and which organizations are neutral and only support the top 3 legislative priorities. After several internal meetings, WSA communicated to the Early Action Alliance leadership we would not be able to be on the advocacy agenda at all due to the collective bargaining legislation. The Early Learning Action Alliance has agreed to take our name off the agenda and has assured us that WSA will continue to have a seat at the coalition table.

### **Policy Council Conference November 20-21**

There is still some time to register for the policy council conference taking place November 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> near SeaTac. This training will be informative for policy council members and will include the absolute latest information available on the authority of the policy council and the governing body. There are also sessions on leadership development, advocacy, and understanding a budget. Finally, if you are an ECEAP only program feel free to send parents to this training. We are going to run two tracks—one for ECEAP parents and one for Head Start parents—when we delve into the specific standards.

### **Special Training Projects - CLI and Tobacco Cessation**

Next week WSA is holding the last session of the Collaborative Leadership Institute, the 10-month intensive leadership program for early learning professionals from across the state. The CLI is a great opportunity for emerging leaders in our field to develop their leadership skills and make a significant impact on early learning in their own communities, and applications are now available for the 2009 cohort at [www.wsaheadstarteceap.com/cli.html](http://www.wsaheadstarteceap.com/cli.html).

WSA has also been partnering with the Washington State Department of Health, the Legacy Foundation and Puget Sound ESD to expand the very successful Pierce/King County tobacco cessation pilot project to ECEAP, Head Start and EHS programs across the state. Thanks to the generosity of our partners and a grant from [PhRMA](#), we have been able to offer next week's training for free, and with most expenses reimbursed to participating programs. We're delighted to report that 10 programs outside the Puget Sound area will be participating.

### **WSA Directors Meeting (December 2-4)**

We look forward to seeing ECEAP and Head Start directors at the Directors meeting in December. Already confirmed is Director Jone Bosworth from the Department of Early Learning, program officers from the Gates Foundation, Nancy Hutchins from the Region X Head Start Office, and an immigration policy expert from the Washington Community Action Network. On the second day of the conference we will be also hosting the Washington Head Start study summit in partnership with DEL. The summit will begin the process of examining the differences between Head Start and ECEAP standards as required by HR 3168 (Washington Head Start study).

### **Strategic Plan: Moving Ahead**

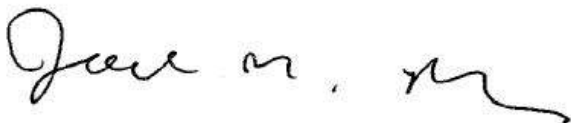
WSA is in the process of reviewing the strategic plan approved by the membership and deciding on the best course of action for completing priority projects. Already, we are moving out on many of the key action items. Look for the first parent newsletter to come out in December, the first webinar in December/January, and a cluster training to take place in January/February.

### **Visiting Local Programs**

WSA has made it a priority to meet the directors, staff, and parents we are serving. While we haven't had the chance to visit with everyone we want to come out and see as many programs as we can. This week WSA provided some training for ECEAP parents in Everett and on Monday we are going out to Moses Lake to meet staff and parents. If you would like us to come out and visit with you please e-mail me at [Joel@wsaheadstarteceap.com](mailto:Joel@wsaheadstarteceap.com).

I want to thank you for all the support you have given to the association. I am very excited that folks are actively engaged with us and contributions to our training consortium are increasing as our members realize its benefits. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us.

Many thanks!



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