



June 22, 2009

Dear WSA members:

I am writing to you to provide you with a short update on WSA current and upcoming activities. I wanted to make sure you got a sense of the direction we are hoping to take things over the next year and ways for our members to get involved. At the end of the letter I included a short legislative update.

Four Major Priorities

The WSA board held a retreat the beginning of May to discuss priorities for the organization over the next 18 months. After a lengthy conversation we decided to move ahead with the following:

1. Early Learning Plan. It was determined that WSA needed to be engaged in the development of the state's early learning plan. As a first step we set up a steering committee comprised of both Head Start and ECEAP providers, staff, and parents. The steering committee's role is to help us gather information from our members and to narrow down our policy objectives for the plan. You likely have received and hopefully filled out, a survey asking you for your thoughts on the early learning plan. To gather more in-depth feedback WSA will be convening meetings with members over the next two months through various forums including the upcoming parent ambassadors meeting, the Head Start directors' retreat, and through a conference call with ECEAP providers (time still to be determined). WSA has connected with the folks developing the early learning plan and has been invited to be a steering committee member. [Click here to take the Early Learning Plan survey.](#)
2. Comprehensive Training Plan. Our board determined that we needed to develop a comprehensive training plan for our members. The plan will include our current training offerings and conferences, webinars, and cluster trainings. We will attempt to map out additional opportunities, ensure more credit bearing activities/connections to higher education, and intentionally wrap our training around the specific and long term needs of local programs. We hope that the development of a plan will provide members with a clear roadmap on professional development and allow WSA to be a home for your identified training needs. As a starting point we hope to have an interactive training calendar live in the next couple of weeks. This calendar will include our current offerings, but also provide members with an opportunity to post events you would like to publicize.

3. Updated Web Site. As many of you know WSA overhauled its web site a little over a year ago. Since then we have received numerous requests to build into our web site more social networking opportunities for our members. This may mean creating a place for directors, staff, and parents to talk with each other, share challenges and solutions, and develop close peer to peer relationships. Some of you for example receive great information from the UCLA Johnson and Johnson list serve. But imagine if you could post documents, chat with folks on-line in real time that have a similar issue or share downloads of trainings? For some of you this might be a bit intimidating. Our goal at WSA will be to make this technology easy to use and convenient for our members so that everyone can participate. Contact Katy if you have expertise and want to help in this effort!
4. Engagement. We continue to hear from folks that we need to do a better job of including ECEAP only programs, tribal, and migrant members in our work and truly listening to their concerns and interests. We want to be an association that represents everyone. While there is no “strategy” for conducting this work, please look for us to include more members of these communities in our work from the very beginning and trying our best to make sure that everyone feels heard and respected.

Upcoming Events

1. Summer Institute June 29th to July 1st. We have a very busy next month ahead of us. At the end of June is the Summer Institute—our signature training event. We have an incredible turnout for the conference so far and more folks are continuing to sign up. As you can imagine there is a ton of interest in seeing how Tom Drummond is going to teach folks what to do with children with challenging behaviors. We also have some truly amazing sessions ranging from family support to Early Head Start home based services, all of which attendees will receive college credit. For those that have said on past evaluations you would like more follow up opportunities, this year we are offering this for staff that select this option. This is likely to come in the form of discussion boards and a check in conference call.
2. Parent Ambassadors. Parent Ambassadors will be meeting at the end of June. Ambassadors will learn the latest legislative information, grassroots organizing techniques, presentation skills, and will be developing their plans for the next three months of their work. So far the project has been a great success as ambassadors were very active in preventing significant cuts to ECEAP. Recently they met with Dr. Bette Hyde regarding child care subsidies and shared their experiences with in dealing with DSHS.
3. Collaborative Leadership Institute. The second face-to-face session for our 20 Collaborative Leadership Institute students will also take place in Ellensburg at the end of June. The CLI is an intensive 10-month leadership training course for emerging leaders across the early learning community.
4. Head Start Directors Retreat July 8th to July 10th. In July WSA is holding our annual Head Start Directors Retreat. This year we are being joined by the new Executive Director of the National Head Start Association, Yasmina Vinci.
5. WSA Fall Meeting October 28th to October 30th. Initial planning is under way for the WSA fall meeting in October. Already confirmed as a keynote speaker is Yvette

Sanchez Fuentes, Executive Director of the National Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Association.

6. Howard Gesbeck Training November 3rd to November 5th. Aren't you tired of flying to warm and exotic destinations for Howard Gesbeck's training? I knew it. So now Howard is coming to little old Seattle to provide Head Start directors and staff with first class training.
7. Policy Council Leadership Conference November 17th and November 18th. Back by popular demand is the policy council leadership conference. This year we are in Chelan and hope to have another big turnout for this event. This conference was the highest rated conference of the past year. We hope you will be able to join us
8. Directors Meeting December 1st to December 3rd. Like last year the first day will be devoted exclusively to issues impact ECEAP directors, the second day will include programming for both ECEAP and Head Start directors, and the last day will be just for Head Start folks.

Other Activities

WSA is also involved in something called the Professional Development Consortium. The PDC is managed by DEL and the objective is for the group to lay out the collective vision for professional development in the early learning field. As the PDC starts delving deeper into their work, WSA will be communicating with our members about specific opportunities to provide feedback and comment.

Many of you participated in our Early Head Start webinars. We received very good reviews for the webinars and we hope some of the information was helpful as you put your grant proposal together. We would like to hold another webinar at the end of August to assist programs with their pre-service activities. If you have a good topic idea please e-mail Katy at Katy@wsaheadstarteceap.com

Short Legislative Update

ECEAP funding

I am so proud of the work of our directors, staff, and parents in our combined efforts to ensure that any cut to ECEAP would be minimal. During the session I heard from several sources that cuts to ECEAP were going to be at least \$15 million. Through our work together the cut was just \$3 million. An incredible feat! I wanted to take a minute to thank each and every one of you that participated in this campaign. We want to let you know how much we appreciate the time and energy everyone put into this. It was our #1 priority this year and we feel good about the work we did together to prevent deep cuts to a program that is so important to low income children and families.

New Legislative Information

Here's is what is on the horizon:

- On the federal front WSA has been communicating with Senator Murray's office about the continued need for Head Start funding. There is an outside possibility that the Labor HHS appropriations committee (our funding committee), which Murray is a member, will try to put together a bill before the August recess. If you recall the President's budget proposal was to increase Head Start funding by \$123 million on top of the \$1 billion increase for 2010.

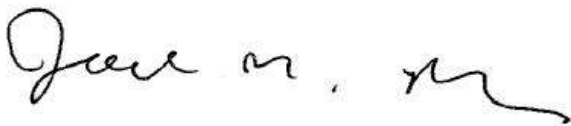
- Cathy Garland, WSA President, has been extremely active in the home visiting coalition. Not only did she work to prevent cuts to home visiting at the state level, but Cathy has been instrumental in helping to move home visiting legislation at the federal level. Recently, Rep. Jim McDermott introduced legislation that we hope will be included within the health care reform package.
- We want to thank both DEL and ECEAP providers for working out as fair and transparent way to reduce 173 slots as required by the 2 percent budget cut. WSA is committed to fighting for increased funding for ECEAP in the next year's supplemental budget session. We will do all we can to restore the cut that programs had to make.
- While legislation that would have included early learning in the definition of basic education was vetoed, Dr. Hyde and Superintendent Dorn are expected to develop a new comprehensive early learning proposal over the summer. When a draft is available we will share it widely with our community.

Feedback and thoughts

Please feel free to e-mail or call us with any questions, concerns, or compliments. As you can imagine we don't have too many people calling to throw compliments our way, but if you are so inclined we are all ears. If you would like to be involved in our work or you have a great idea just give us a call. We hope to start setting up some times to visit programs in the fall. If you would like us to visit your program let us know. To reach me via e-mail you can do that at joel@wsaheadstarteceap.com (I assuming by the number of e-mails I send people have that e-mail), by phone at (253)373-9100 or by cell phone at (253)486-9077. To reach Katy you can e-mail her at Katy@wsaheadstarteceap.com

I wish everyone the very best and look forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joel M. Ryan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joel M. Ryan
Executive Director
Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP