

## **Early Learning Plan Community Outreach Meeting Summary** **Bellingham**

*Note: This is intended as a high-level “snapshot” of the conversation from the meeting. More detailed information was captured at the meeting and will be incorporated into the planning process.*

**Wednesday, November 4**

**7 to 8:30 p.m.**

St. Luke’s Community Education Center  
3333 Squalicum Parkway, Bellingham

Hosted by the League of Education Voters, MomsRising.org, Foundation for Early Learning and Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP

Attending: Dr. Bette Hyde, Director, Department of Early Learning

Nina Auerbach, President and CEO, Thrive by Five Washington

- Need to speed up full-day kindergarten phase-in.
- Cultural competency is reflected in the draft vision statement, but missing from the draft outcomes and strategies.
- How would voluntary universal preschool affect other programs for birth to 5-year-olds?
- A child “being successful” means different things in different cultures. All cultures want kids to flourish.
- The plan needs to influence elementary years—schools are ready and honor all children and families.
- How will the elements of the plan be prioritized and how will it be funded?
- Special education must be addressed. Delays and disabilities—supports for families.
- Maternal/mother emphasis. Where are the supports for fathers?
- Transition between preschool and kindergarten needs to be developed.
- Worry about creating a system focused on kids getting “ready” for tests and standards.
- Middle-income families are squeezed out of services—not fair and affordable.
- Kids and families are especially vulnerable at transition points. Need support coping with change.
- Professional development and compensation are key.
- Pilots make system building hard.

- Need more around public awareness. Emphasize early learning is for all kids.
- Libraries want to be involved and have lots of resources.
- Want the plan to be child-focused, family-focused, community-focused and flexible.
- Want more details about how we use/implement the plan when it's finished.
- Teen parents need special attention.
- Benchmarks—what's happening? Need to be aligned with K-3.
- Struggling to reach parents who need services most but who are hardest to reach.
- Parents want to be part of the “we,” not part of the “them.”