

## **SB 6759 Early Learning Workgroup Recommendations** Quality Education Council Recommendation Options

The Early Learning Workgroup presented its recommendations for improving the quality and access of preschool programs in Washington to the Quality Education Council on October 26, 2011.

Presented below is a summary of the recommendations and a number of decision options that the Council could choose to take with regard to the work group recommendations.

The work group's report may be accessed at:

[http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2011documents/Preschool\\_Nov11.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2011documents/Preschool_Nov11.pdf)

### **Summary of Recommendations**

1. Establish the Washington Preschool Program
2. Major components and program standards of the new program would include:
  - i. Eligible children
    - i. Voluntary for all three and four-year children
    - ii. Graduated co-pays for families over 250% of the federal poverty-level
  - ii. Transportation
    - i. Limited funding provided for transportation
    - ii. Allowable expense, but transporting children not required
  - iii. Classroom hours
    - i. Minimum of 450 classroom hours per year
  - iv. Teacher qualifications
    - i. Lead Teachers
      1. BA Degree in Early Childhood Education or related field; or
      2. BA Degree and demonstrated competency
  - v. Class size
    - i. Maximum class size: 18 children
  - vi. Maximum Teacher:child ratio
    - i. 1:9, plus funding for additional staff for high risk children and children who are homeless, in foster care, are eligible for Special Education services, and who are English language learners
  - vii. Professional development requirements
    - i. 100 approved hours of continued education and/or equivalent academic credit must be completed by lead teachers every five years
  - viii. Child health and family support services
    - i. Initial screening with tiered child health, family support and engagement based on child and family needs
3. Accountability
  - i. Conduct classroom quality assessments and child outcomes evaluation to inform implementation and provide accountability

- ii. Establish performance goals for preschool assessments, Kindergarten readiness as measured by the WaKIDS, and for students at, or above, grade-level by end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
  - iii. Reduced grade-level retention and special education placement
  - iv. Outcome data would be included in the P-20 data system administered by the Educational Research and Data Center located in the Office of Financial Management
- 4. Eligible providers
  - i. Allow a wide array of public and private entities to serve under contract, providing that the program is free from religious instruction, activities or symbolism.
  - ii. Eligible providers could include, but would not be limited to, nonprofit, profit and faith-based organizations, licensed child care centers and family homes, private schools, ECEAP and Head Start providers, school districts, educational service districts, community and technical colleges, local governments, tribes, and tribal organizations
  - iii. Providers would be approved by the Department of Early Learning (DEL) through an application process and establishment of a contract for services
- 5. Relationship to the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)
  - i. During the phase-in period, ECEAP and the Washington Preschool program would be operated side-by-side. Existing ECEAP programs would apply to become Washington Preschool programs.
  - ii. At full-implementation, all ECEAP slots would be converted to the new program
- 6. Governance and administration
  - i. The Department of Early Learning would administer the program
  - ii. The Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) would establish a subcommittee with appropriate expertise to guide development of the program
- 7. Funding for providers
  - i. Funding would be based on an allocation model that considers the characteristics of the students in the schools, including, but not limited to, the income of the parents, eligibility for special education services, home language, and whether the child is in foster care or homeless
- 8. Entitlement
  - i. As was authorized in HB 2731, the availability of preschool services for three and four-year olds would be an entitlement at full implementation
- 9. Phase-in
  - i. In FYs 2012-13 and 2013-14, DEL to develop program standards, evaluation plans, and data systems; study availability and need for facilities; issue a competitive Request for Proposals; select Phase 1 providers; and provide funding for site planning, start-up costs, and facilities (as determined in facility study)
  - ii. Begin Phase 1 in the 2014-15 school year with approximately 935 children
    - i. May include new sites and existing preschool programs, including, but not limited to, ECEAP, Head Start, and other private or non-profit preschools
  - iii. Link phase-in of the program to geographic areas served by state-funded full-day Kindergarten programs
  - iv. Fund full-implementation in the 2024-25 school year
    - i. Current law (2SHB 2731) specifies that full-implementation is to be achieved in 2018-19 school year

### **Decision Options**

The Quality Education Council could choose to take one of the following options with regard to the work group's recommendations:

- 1) **Recommend Recommendations as Submitted:** Recommend to the Legislature that the full-recommendations of the workgroup, as specified above, be adopted by the Legislature;
- 2) **Recommend Selected Recommendations:** Recommend to the Legislature that selected work group recommendations, or amended recommendations, be adopted by the Legislature.
  - a) The council would need to identify which recommendations to include, not include, and whether specific recommendations should be amended.
- 3) **Take no Action:** Do not recommend that the Legislature adopt a new preschool program.