



Washington State Department of
Early Learning

SB 6759

Early Learning Technical Work Group

Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee

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Our presentation today

- Timeline, membership & reporting
- Required components of the plan
- Progress to date
- Legal considerations for basic education



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Membership & reporting

Working group must contain members from:

- Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Early Learning, Thrive by Five Washington and the Office of Attorney General
- Two members of the Early Learning Advisory Council
- Other stakeholders can be appointed by Early Learning Advisory Council

Work group can convene advisory subgroups on specific topics.

Work group is monitored and overseen by the Quality Education Council.



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The final SB 6759 plan must:

Examine opportunities and barriers to at least TWO options:

- Under the program of basic education
- As an entitlement executed by statute or constitutional amendment



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Required components of the final plan:

- Criteria for eligible children
- Program standards (number of hours per school year, teacher qualifications, and transportation requirements)
- Performance measures
- Criteria for eligible providers, including specific recommendations on licensed and/or certified by DEL, and public, private, nonsectarian and sectarian organizations



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Required components to the final plan (cont'd):

- Governance responsibilities for OSPI and DEL
- Funding required (Early learning teachers, professional development, facilities and technical assistance)
- Timeline for implementation
- ECEAP's role in the new program



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Timeline

- April 1, 2010: OSPI & DEL begin work to convene work group
- May 21, 2010: ELAC appoints members to work group
- June 15, 2010: First meeting
- July 1, 2011: Progress report due to Early Learning Advisory Council and Quality Education Council
- Nov. 1, 2011: Final report with plan due to Quality Education Council and Early Learning Advisory Council
- Nov. – Dec., 2011: Early Learning Advisory Council develops and submits feedback to Quality Education Council
- January 1, 2012: Quality Education Council submits report to Legislature, detailing its recommendation for a comprehensive voluntary program of early learning



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Progress to date

Analysis of key issues related to final recommendations:

- Attorney General Opinion
- K-12 basic education
- HB 2731 (Preschool entitlement program)
- ECEAP
- Head Start
- Similarities and differences between Head Start and ECEAP
- National and international universal preschool models
- Tour of White Center Early Learning Initiative Educare site



Progress to date (cont'd)

Decision points:

- Recommendations will focus on 3- and 4-year-old children
- Final plan will provide recommendations for targeted programs serving children at-risk and universal programs serving all children
- Final recommendations will include tiered services
- Entitlement proposal will use framework outlined in HB 2731

Budget reduction:

- Implementation funding eliminated
- DEL and OSPI will complete study within existing resources



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Legal considerations for basic education

Governance

Supervised by OSPI; State Constitution grants OSPI supervisory authority over basic education.

Eligibility

- Individual entitlement
- Could be universal or at-risk
- Anything short of universal requires objectively-defined and legally-defensible criteria to define *risk (as a proxy for educational need)*. Assessment tool could be used to determine risk.

Transportation

Required to provide transportation for eligible students who would be unable to participate without transportation.



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Legal considerations for basic education

Sectarian Influence

State Constitution, Article 9, Sec. 4 would likely prohibit basic education funds going to sectarian institutions.

State Constitution, Art. 1, Sec. 11 prohibits public money from being applied to religious instruction, worship or exercise, but likely allow a secular program to be delivered in sectarian setting.

Where Services are Delivered

Under Article 9, section 2, basic education must be delivered through a general and uniform system of public schools. Could have LEAs or ESDs oversee program locally.