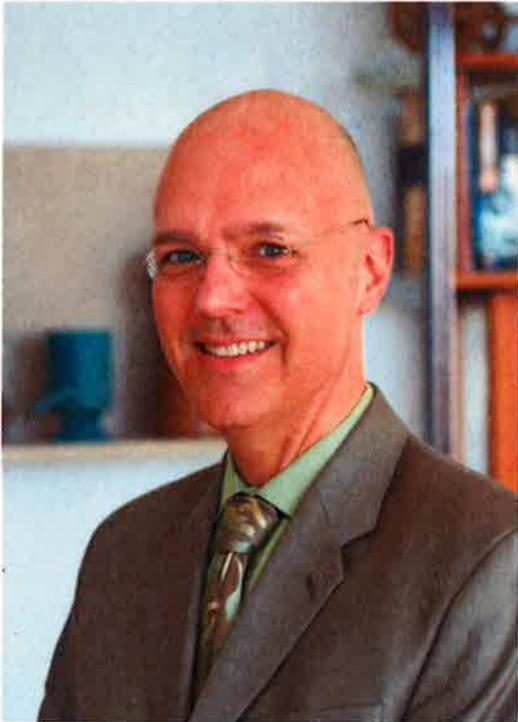




Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)

Bio Sheet



Sam Whiting

ELAC Representation: Thrive by Five Washington

Occupation: CEO

City/Region: Statewide

Getting to know YOU:

What drew you to early learning?

I first worked in early learning in the 1990s, running Head Start, Early Head Start and other programs in South King County. I got that job when my kids were all pretty young and I saw the difference between their preparedness for school and the kids we were serving in our programs. I have worked on social justice issues for quite a long time and came to see how inequities are best addressed by starting as early as possible.

How do you hope to influence a stronger early learning system for Washington?

It's an exciting time in our state as we build an early learning system while simultaneously addressing issues of quality and access. I am particularly interested in how we build the system to address the whole early learning continuum (birth to five) and create seamless pathways into school (and beyond). I am fortunate to work with so many smart and passionate folks at Thrive, who are focused on how to bring the private sector together with providers and the public sector to innovate and expand our reach.

What was your first job?

I was an elf for a shopping center Santa when I was nine or ten years old. I don't remember how much I got paid, but I do remember having to wear tights and eating a lot of peppermint sticks.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A performer.

What is your favorite childhood memory?

My mother would make me take naps with her and my older siblings would play right outside the bedroom window to taunt me. We would lie facing each other and she would cup her hands around mine so I couldn't sneak away after she'd fallen asleep. Hard as I would try to slide my hands out, she would always stir and I'd give up my escape attempt.