

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

February 2015 update from the Department of Early Learning

Washington has just entered the fourth and final year of our RTT-ELC grant. As everyone involved in this work knows, the past three years have been a whirlwind of activity. Since receiving the grant Washington has launched and scaled Early Achievers, which now reaches nearly 50% of child care providers and operates in every region of the state. WaKIDS has been scaled to reach 52% of children in schools across the state. And new data systems have been created to inform practice and policy throughout the field of early learning.

Across the country, state and federal leaders want to know more about the impact of the RTT-ELC work. The BUILD Initiative, funded by a consortium of private foundations, conducted an independent evaluation to examine Washington's progress in carrying out the plan that was submitted, stakeholder perceptions of early impact of the RTT-ELC, and opportunities to strengthen and build on early accomplishments. The evaluation analyzed data and collected qualitative input from over 40 stakeholders in Washington through interviews, focus groups and surveys.

Summary of the Evaluation

1. RTT-ELC prompted statewide scale up of Early Achievers and increased agreement about quality early learning
2. RTT-ELC has resulted in increased alignment and coordination
3. Washington has created a cohesive system of professional development
4. WaKIDS has expanded and is impacting policy and practice
5. State has used RTT-ELC to engage families and communities
6. Progress has been made on all longer-term outcomes

The report also used an analysis of quantitative and qualitative evaluation data that revealed consensus from stakeholders on three recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1.** The State should support the investments that were initiated through the federal grant.
- **Recommendation 2.** Early Achievers should retain the highest-quality bar and ensure that supports are available to help providers achieve the bar.
- **Recommendation 3.** The state should continue to support a framework of using data to engage in continuous improvement.

DEL is working with stakeholders across the state to make sure these recommendations are put into action. The [full evaluation report](#) and [executive summary](#) can be found on DEL's website.

“The federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) award of \$60 million to Washington has, after three years of implementation, achieved all short-term outcomes and made substantial progress toward longer-term outcomes. Analysis of survey data collected from Washington stakeholders, secondary data, and documents provides evidence that Washington has used the federal RTT-ELC to achieve desired outcomes.” (See figure 1 below)

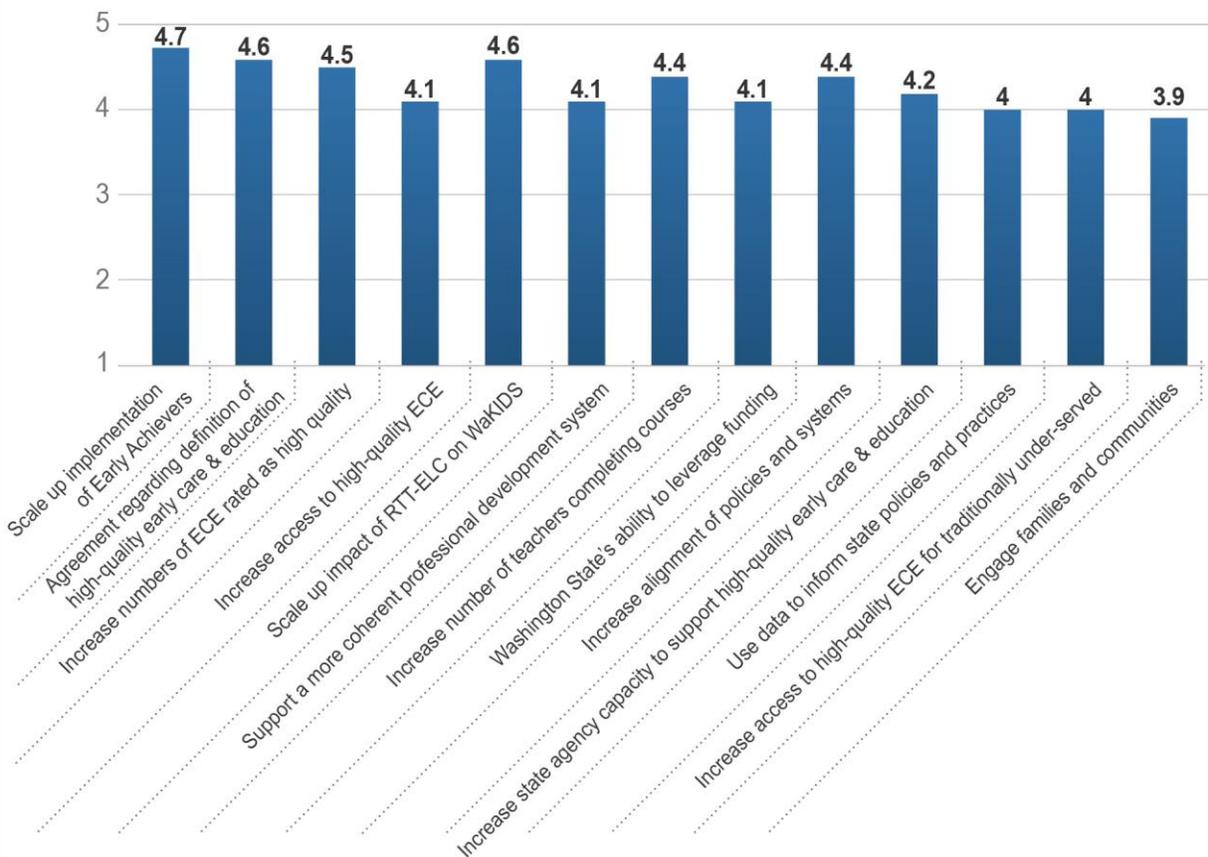
~Washington State Race to the Top—
Early Learning Challenge, 2015
Evaluation Report Results in Brief, BUILD,
January 2015

“[RTT-ELC has been] critical to building the supportive systems (such as, Early Achievers and WaKIDS) that enable the entire early learning system to become focused on quality. While there is still much work to do to get all programs at a high level of quality, we now have the structure to move to quality, which didn’t exist before RTT-ELC funding. RTT-ELC was essential to building the platforms that are needed to shift all of the work towards quality implementation.” —*Private partner*

“Through Early Achievers we have reached more providers with deeper quality improvement support than ever before in our 25-year history of providing these services as a CCR&R system.” —*Community stakeholder*

“For the first time child care providers in the State of Washington have a clear path to follow as they attempt to improve the quality of care and education in their programs... We now have childcare licensors, technical assistance specialists, Head Start, ECEAP, teachers, family child care providers, and many other representatives regularly learning together at EA institutes as well as in other venues. . . . RTT-ELC has brought us the data and determination that we need as a state to take the next steps towards ending the opportunity gap here in our state and beyond.” —*Professional development provider*

Figure I. ECE Stakeholders' Report of Impact of RTT on. . . (1 = low • 5 = high)



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Thanks for everything you do to support young children in Washington!

Washington's Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Performance Tracker			
EARLY ACHIEVERS: LEVELS 2 TO 5			
As of December 31, 2014	Registered in EA	2014 Year End Targets	2014 Year End Progress
Total # of Programs	2,448	3,483	70%
Head Start and ECEAP Sites	182	483	38%
Licensed Child Care Sites	2,266	3,001	76%
<i>Family Home Child Care</i>	<i>1,381</i>	<i>2,182</i>	<i>63%</i>
<i>Child Care Centers</i>	<i>885</i>	<i>819</i>	<i>108%</i>
Total Children Served by EA	66,413	77,859	85%
Head Start and ECEAP Sites	9,272	16,983	55%
Licensed Child Care Sites	57,141	60,876	94%
<i>Family Home Child Care</i>	<i>9,026</i>	<i>13,996</i>	<i>64%</i>
<i>Child Care Centers</i>	<i>48,115</i>	<i>46,880</i>	<i>103%</i>

[Click here for more data on Early Achievers progress](#)