Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

Washington's Bold Plan

Overview of Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) is a $500 million federal grant program created to help states develop high-quality, comprehensive plans to improve early learning and development programs around five key areas of reform:

- Establishing successful state systems.
- Defining high-quality, accountable programs.
- Promoting early learning and development outcomes for children.
- Supporting a great early childhood education work force.
- Measuring outcomes and progress.

In 2011, the U.S. Department and Education and the Department of Health and Human Services jointly issued a competitive grant application that encouraged states to build upon the existing strengths of their early learning systems. Elements of the application included strong governance, clear early learning standards, a statewide Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), data systems, family engagements, and kindergarten assessments.

Washington's application was lead by the Department of Early Learning (DEL) in partnership with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Thrive by Five Washington (Thrive). On December 16, 2011, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius announced the nine state winners, including Washington. Our state will receive $60 million over four years to support our plan.

Recent history of early learning in Washington

Washington was uniquely prepared to respond to the RTT-ELC application because of our strong efforts to build an early learning system. Most important to Washington's success was the 2010 Washington Early Learning Plan, which contains goals, strategies and measures for an early learning system that supports ready children, ready families, ready professionals, ready schools, and ready systems and communities. The Early Learning Plan was the backbone of Washington's RTT-ELC application, and while the RTT-ELC funding does not allow for the implementation of the entire plan, it enables the state to move forward key strategies from the plan.

Also important to Washington's application was the strong governance structure already in place. Washington was the first state to have a governor's cabinet-level early learning department, bringing together Washington's early learning programs so that programs work together to maximize outcomes for kids. In addition, Thrive, Washington's public-private partnership for early learning, enables the public

More information

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge:
www.del.wa.gov/government/racetotop

Early Learning and Development Guidelines:
www.del.wa.gov/development/guidelines/Default.aspx

WaKIDS:
www.k12.wa.us/WaKIDS

Professional development:
www.del.wa.gov/requirements/professional/Default.aspx

Washington Early Achievers (QRIS):
www.del.wa.gov/care/qris/Default.aspx

Washington State Department of Early Learning

and private sectors to work together for common purpose. Finally, Washington's plan is consistently focused on improving child outcomes.

Wide participation at both the state and local levels demonstrated Washington's ability to bring together stakeholders around the state including:

- An active 23-person Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC).
- A solid partnership between all participating agencies/organizations through a coordinated State Leadership Team, including the DEL, OSPI, and Thrive.
- Partnership with higher education to evaluate impacts and provide professional development/coaching: University of Washington (UW), Washington State University, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), and Harvard University.
- Strong state-local partnerships that inform implementation at all levels.

Figure 1: *Washington's Theory of Change*

Building an early learning system

Washington's RTT-ELC focuses on building an early learning "system" for the state. Building a system means that early learning programs, providers, and policy-makers work together to ensure the strongest outcomes for children. A strong system includes strong leadership and oversight; clear and consistent standards applied statewide; tracking outcomes and data to ensure progress; connecting programs and services to ensure seamless support for families; and making sure programs are of the highest quality.

Figure 1 shows how the key elements of our early learning system work together, are aligned, and will drive better outcomes for kids.

From pilots to scale

Washington has developed, tested, and piloted many important early learning systems elements, including our quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), our kindergarten readiness process (the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills, or WaKIDS), and the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines. This process has enabled Washington to learn a tremendous amount about what works for improving quality and how this work can expand to include more programs and reach more children and families. RTT-ELC has provided the critical funding to bring many of the pilot programs to scale in Washington. This briefing paper outlines our plan to accomplish this work.

I. Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS)

WaKIDS offers information about where children are in their development—cognitively, linguistically, physically and socially/emotionally—at the start of kindergarten. WaKIDS supports school readiness by:

- Informing K-12 instruction.

- Aligning programs and practices of early learning professionals and kindergarten teachers.
- Involving families as partners in their children's education.
- Providing data to inform state and local policy.

Washington piloted and evaluated WaKIDS during the 2010-11 school year with about 3,000 incoming kindergartners. In school year 2011-12, 11,000 incoming kindergartners in 165 schools are participating in WaKIDS. OSPI and DEL partner to administer WaKIDS, in collaboration with Thrive.

WaKIDS is unique among kindergarten entry assessments around the nation. Rather than just an assessment, WaKIDS involves the people who know the child best: parents, early learning providers and kindergarten teachers. In addition, WaKIDS has been reviewed and evaluated to ensure it is culturally responsive and focuses on child development across several domains. WaKIDS includes three parts:

1. **Whole child assessment.** The assessment is comprehensive of the whole child. WaKIDS gathers information on a child's skills, abilities and areas for growth. When compiled, it provides data on all the Essential Domains of School Readiness of entering kindergartners. Teaching Strategies GOLD (GOLD) is the assessment tool used in WaKIDS to gather data on the essential domains of school readiness of incoming kindergartners. OSPI is compiling this school readiness data and will be reported to Washington's P-20 Longitudinal Data System.
2. **Family connection.** Kindergarten teachers meet with families at or before the beginning of the school year. This meeting goes beyond a back-to-school open-house format. It is a one-on-one or small group conversation where families share information with teachers about a child's individual strengths and challenges and to set expectations for the school year. This component ensures that family engagement strategies used throughout the early learning system—in QRIS, Head Start/ECEAP, home visiting and other programs—continue to be used in the early elementary years.
3. **Early learning collaboration.** Collaboration between early learning providers and kindergarten teachers improves information-sharing and smooth the transition of students from early learning environments to kindergarten. Early learning providers have valuable information to share with kindergarten teachers about children's learning and how entering kindergartners function in peer group settings.

The state is moving forward with a rolling implementation of WaKIDS and will reach all incoming kindergartners by the 2014-15 school year.

Key Targets for WaKIDS

2011- 12 SY	2012-13 SY	2013-14 SY	2014-15 SY
• 14% of children in the highest need schools served • 15% of kindergarten teachers trained	• 34% of children in the highest need schools served • 35% of kindergarten teachers trained	• 75% of children in the highest need schools served • 82% of kindergarten teachers trained	• 100% of children in the highest need schools served • 100% of kindergarten teachers trained

II. Washington's System of Infrastructure

Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines (Guidelines)

Washington recently published a common set of early learning and development guidelines for children, one of the very few sets of standards in the nation that align development from birth through third grade.

The guidelines are user-friendly, culturally competent standards that inform parents and caregivers about expectations for children's development and learning. The guidelines are structured around developmental areas: physical well-being; health and motor development; social and emotional development; approaches toward learning; cognition and general knowledge; and language, literacy and communication. The guidelines are structured to promote individualization based on the needs of children. Each developmenal area introduction includes emphasis on the variability of children's development based on culture, special needs, and basic differences between individual children. Within the guidelines, there is information and indicators specific to dual-language learners. The guidelines will be available in a variety of languages.

The guidelines are the foundation for all of the elements of the RTT-ELC application, including QRIS, WaKIDS, and professional development. They form the backbone of Washington's early learning system.

Community engagement

Community engagement is an essential part of the RTT-ELC application. Ensuring that communities and local implementation partners have access to information and supports will be critical to the success of all of RTT-ELC work. Even more important, however, will be ensuring clear and strong feedback loops from communities that can inform the state about best practices, implementation issues and needed policy reform. DEL is partnering with Thrive, libraries and parent-teacher associations to build a strong community engagement effort in support of this work.

Data and Accountability Systems

A major emphasis of the state's Early learning Plan and the RTT- ELC grant is to build a sustainable early learning longitudinal data system. We do so by building on the child and family data gathered in ECEAP (and ultimately Head Start as well) with information we collect about child care services and Home Visiting. Then we will collect data about children who participate in WaKIDS through third grade reading and math scores, and ultimately graduation rates. This work is supported by RTT-ELC and other federal funding.

Professional development

Our RTT-ELC grant will support Washington early learning professionals in advancing their training and education. This is part of Washington's efforts to build a statewide professional development system. Prepared and knowledgeable professionals are better able to provide high-quality care and instruction to children, which results in increased school readiness.

MERIT

Our state professional development registry, the Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT), helps professionals find training opportunities, access information on career pathways, and track individual career progress. MERIT also identifies approved trainers who provide education to professionals according to a new quality assurance process. This trainer approval process ensures the workforce receives high-quality training

that is linked to the state Core Competencies, which define what professionals need to know and be able to do to provide high-quality care and education for young children.

Washington's goal is to ensure 100 percent participation in the state registry. While still in development, other goals for MERIT include placement of individuals on the career lattice based on verified training and education accomplishments, assisting DEL child care licensing staff to ensure that state requirements for individuals and facilities are met, connecting directly to the QRIS data system, and data collection on the early care and education and school-age workforce in order to identify trends and inform decision-making related to policy and investments. This data will also inform how resources are targeted through scholarships and opportunity grants to move professionals along a continuum of career development in addition to the creation of a statewide salary structure.

Career lattice

Following the adoption of the Core Competencies, a career lattice was submitted with the final PDC report in draft form in 2010. The Core Competencies form the career lattice's base as the education and training matrix that identifies a career development pathway. The lattice serves beginning professionals who meet minimum licensing standards up to professionals who have obtained advanced degrees and are administrators, mentors and professors of higher education. A key goal for the career lattice is to be inclusive of all early learning programs. The career lattice reflects opportunities available in licensed child care, ECEAP and Head Start programs, in addition to other roles that support family engagement, higher education and community-based training. The career lattice has 15 levels that are grouped into five education benchmarks that align with the levels in the Core Competencies.

Washington State Career Lattice
Early Care and Education Professionals and School-Age Professionals

Washington State Department of Early Learning
Professional Development Pathways

Core Competency Level	Step	Education Mastery	Requirements	Career opportunities
1	1 (1)	Entry-Level Professional	Meets minimum child care licensing standards or registered apprentice in high school	FCC Assistant CCC Assistant School-Age Care Assistant
	2 (2)		High school or equivalent and 20 Hour Basic STARS training or 2 college credits in Basics of Child Care course	FCC Owner/Primary Provider CCC Lead Teacher School-Age Lead Teacher
	3 (3)		At least 2 hours of training in each of the Core Competency areas (level 1 trainings) or Introduction to Early Childhood Education 5-credit class	
2	4 (1)	Statewide Credential	80 hours of approved training toward the Child Development Associate (CDA) or 8 approved ECE or school-age college credits.	Head Start Teacher Assistant ECEAP Assistant Teacher CCC Director CCC Program Supervisor
	5 (2)		CSEFEL Training – Completion of 1 module training for infant/toddler or Preschool and Initial State Certificate (12 credits) **or** Child Development Associate (CDA) or Apprentice Journey-level Associate I	
	6 (2)		CSEFEL Training – Completion of 2 module trainings for infant/toddler or Preschool and Short-term State Certificate (20 credits)	
	7 (3)		CSEFEL Training – Completion of 3 module trainings for infant/toddler or Preschool and State Credential in ECE (44 credits)	
3	8 (2)	Associate Degree	65 college credits with 30 approved ECE or school-age college credits	CCC Director (without program supervisor) CCC Program Supervisor School-Age Program Director School-Age Site Coordinator
	9 (3)		ECE or related Associate degree with 30 or more approved ECE or school-age college credits **or** Apprentice Journey Level Associate II	ECEAP Lead Teachers ECEAP Family Support Specialist Head Start Lead Teacher (alternative pathway) Apprentice Trainer
4	10 (1)	Bachelor's Degree	120 credits towards Bachelor's degree with 20 or more approved ECE or school-age college credits	Head Start Teachers Head Start/ECEAP Education Coordinators CC Licensor Intermediate Trainer
	11 (2)		150 credits towards Bachelor's degree with 30 or more approved ECE or school age college credits	
	12 (3)		ECE or related Bachelor's degree with 30 or more approved ECE or school-age college credits	
5	13 (1)	Graduate degree	20 credits towards Master's degree in any field with 30 or more approved ECE or school-age college credits at any level of coursework	Administrator/Manager
	14 (2)		40 credits towards Master's degree in any field with 30 or more approved ECE or school-age college credits at any level of coursework	
	15 (3)		Master's or higher degree in any field with 30 or more approved ECE or school-age college credits at any level of coursework	ECE College Instructor/Professor Advanced Trainer
	① Minimum requirements for the aligned positions. ② Roughly halfway to education mastery. These qualifications can help employers identify position descriptions; quality assurance programs (such as QRIS) communicate staff qualifications; preparation of professional development plans. ③ Mastery of competencies commensurate with and aligned with formal education.		**Notes**: 1. Core competencies reflect the Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education and the Washington State Core Competencies for Child and Youth Development Professionals. 2. Approved and related degrees/college credits refer to ECE and school-age content and coursework that is recognized by DEL.	**Acronyms** **FCC**: Family Child Care **CCC**: Child Care Center **ECE**: Early Childhood Education **ECEAP**: Early Childhood Education Assistance Program **CSEFEL:** Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning

Figure 4: *Career lattice*

The career lattice supports quality training and degree attainment in professional practice. Professionals progress from one level to the next through a combination of training and education accomplishments. At lower levels of the lattice, state-required training is reflected with options for state-approved training. Professionals also have the option of obtaining level advancement by joining the early care and education state apprenticeship program through Washington State Department of Labor & Industries. This program provides on the job training in selected child care sites while completing community college-level coursework in early childhood education at a reduced tuition.

The integration of the career lattice into MERIT allows for the strategic implementation of practitioners' professional development plans and encourages their participation in the state system. With RTT-ELC funding, participants receive a one-time $100 reward for registering in MERIT and creating a professional record. This record will include verified education and training accomplishments. In addition to participation awards, providers can achieve monetary awards for achieving and advancing levels on the career lattice. The level awards will be granted over a three-year period in order to reduce turnover in the field and fulfill budgetary requirements.

2	High School or Equivalent and 20 Hour Basic STARS training	$150
4	Initial State Certificate (9-13 credits) or CDA or Apprentice Journey Level Associate I	$150
5	Short Term Certificate (19 credits)	$150
6	State Credential in ECE (45 credits)	$200
9	Associate Degree with 30 ECE or related credits or Apprentice Journey Level Associate II	$300
12	Bachelor's Degree with 30 ECE or related credits	$400
15	Master's Degree with 30 ECE or related credits	$500

Figure 2: *Breakdown of level awards on career lattice*

Key Targets for Professional Development

2012	2013	2014	2015
• Participants in MERIT: 10,000/50%	• Participants in MERIT: 20,000/100%	• Participants in MERIT: 20,000/100%	• QRIS participants in MERIT: 17,445/87.2% • Participants in MERIT: 20,000/100%

Washington State Department of Early Learning
Professional Development Pathways

III. Early Achievers: Washington's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

DEL, Thrive and UW completed the first two years of QRIS implementation in June 2011. This first phase of statewide implementation focused on field testing, evaluating, validating and refining the QRIS model. With RTT-ELC funding, Washington will take QRIS to scale so that more families around the state have access to high-quality child care.

Because of this careful testing and refinement, Washington's QRIS is thoughtfully designed and built on clear, consistent and measurable standards that enable child care providers to improve their quality in ways that most impact child outcomes. Our QRIS standards:

- Measure the quality of the child care environment and the adult-child interactions.
- Include developmental screening for children upon enrollment.
- Align with our state early learning guidelines.
- Include family engagement, health services and other services to support families and children.
- Include professional development and training for early learning professionals to support them in offering high-quality care.
- Measure child outcomes.

Five Quality Levels

Level 1: Licensing or certification that includes licensed child care centers, family home child care programs, military child care, tribal child care, state- and federally funded preschool programs, and other state-funded programs. Beginning in 2012, all licensed and certified programs are automatically enrolled in the QRIS system at Level 1. Programs voluntarily decide whether they want to participate in QRIS and attain higher ratings. (Programs that do not choose to participate in QRIS are not publicly identified as Level 1).

Level 2: Professional development and program management is focused on ensuring that child care program directors and owners understand the QRIS standards and requirements, and the child outcome and school readiness goals of the system (see Figure 3). To attain Level Two, programs have to complete a self-assessment and complete no-cost trainings that support program improvements and policy development. Finally, programs must use DEL's statewide professional development registry (MERIT) to enter program profiles and ensure their staff have active records of their educational achievements.

Level One: Licensing or Certification

Facility must be currently licensed or have recognized, approved certification (Military, Head Start, ECEAP, Tribal)

Level Two: Professional Growth and Facility Management

Facility must meet all Level One requirements in order to apply for Level Two

Level Two Application Process
(must complete prior to beginning Level Two Activities)

- ☐ Complete and submit QRIS Level Two Application
- ☐ Attend QRIS Orientation
- ☐ Ensure all facility staff caring for children have an active 'Professional Record' in MERIT

Level Two Activities

Documentation

- ☐ Complete Facility Profile in QRIS Data Base
- ☐ Complete and submit Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Self Assessment

Professional Training Series (director/owner/program supervisor)

- ☐ Complete QRIS Professional Training Series:
  - Washington State Early Learning Guidelines
  - Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals
  - Introduction to Cultural Competence
  - Strengthening Families
  - ERS/CLASS Overview
  - School Readiness

Requirements to Achieve Level 2 Rating

- ☐ Completion of all training and documentation requirements within one year
- ☐ Must be fully licensed (no initial licenses)
- ☐ Cannot be on suspension, revocation, or probation

*** Professional Training can be completed in any order, although the QRIS Orientation must be completed prior to beginning the Professional Training Series.**

***Facility must meet all of the above requirements and have been awarded a Level 2 rating prior to applying for a Level 3 – 5 rating.**

Figure 3: *QRIS levels 1 and 2*

Levels 3 through 5: Points-based levels in which the program is evaluated for:

- Child Outcomes
- Curriculum
- Learning
- Environments and Interactions
- Professional Development and Training
- Family Engagement and Partnership

The *Child Outcomes Standard* awards up to 10 points for implementing screening and assessment as part of a Comprehensive Assessment System. Providers earn points for conducting a developmental screening of children within 90 days of enrollment and are required to share results with families. Providers choose a screening from an approved list, allowing for flexibility and the unique needs of each program. Further, providers must assess children on an ongoing basis, using formative assessments to develop individualized learning plans and classroom instruction. Programs that demonstrate alignment by using the WaKIDS kindergarten assessment tool (Teaching Strategies GOLD) will be awarded points to increase their rating. Assessment results must be shared with families.

We ensure children and classrooms are directly impacted by quality improvements through Washington's unique "Focal Child" measure. One child per assessed child care classroom is selected during each rating/evaluation. For this measure, UW evaluators:

- Review individual child records to ensure the child's progress is monitored through an initial developmental screening and ongoing assessments.
- Talk to families to ensure they are receiving information about the child's progress/ transition support.

- Review daily experience of quality and compare it to overall program assessment results.

Levels Three – Five

Levels 3 – 5 are based on points. Your total rating will be determined by the number of points earned via program evaluation by a third party entity. Each assessed classroom/focal child must score at least a 2 on Instructional Support in the CLASS, a 3.5 on Emotional Support and Organization in the CLASS and a 4 on the ERS to achieve a Level 3 – 5 rating. Facilities that do meet these minimum thresholds will receive a Level 2 rating. For assessment purposes, family child care must serve a minimum of 4 children outside of their immediate family.

Your overall points in each area will determine your final rating. The points are as follows:

Child Outcomes	**Total: 10 points**
Facility Curriculum and Learning Environment and Interactions	**Total: 70 points**
○ Classroom/FCC Home Environment (CLASS/ERS)	55 points
○ Curriculum, Learning and Assessment	15 points
Professional Development and Training	**Total: 10 points**
Family Engagement and Partnership	**Total: 10 points**
	Grand Total: 100 points

Figure 4: *QRIS levels 3 through 5*

The *Curriculum and Learning Environment Standard* awards up to 70 points. Programs can earn up to 15 points based on the strength of their curriculum and teacher supports. Programs must demonstrate they are effectively addressing the developmental needs of all children at both the group and individual levels through administration of assessments and by using a curriculum that aligns with the state early learning guidelines. Programs also get points if staff get training and support around implementing curriculum, such as dedicated lesson/classroom planning and reflection time.

Programs get up to 55 points though assessments conducted by the UW evaluation team, which uses two comprehensive national assessment tools, the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

The Professional Development and Training Standard is worth 10 points. It is designed to align with the education levels identified in the Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals, which was completed in December 2010.

Beginning with the Child Development Associate, providers can earn points for having staff who achieve high levels of education continuing through the master's degree level. To help programs advance in this standard, QRIS provides supports such as tuition reimbursement, scholarships, and other awards to encourage early childhood educators to attain higher levels of education.

Family Engagement and Partnership Standard is worth 10 points. Washington has embedded the research-based Strengthening Families Framework into the Family Engagement and Partnership Standard. The Strengthening Families Framework promotes five "protective factors":

- Parental resilience.
- Social connections.

- Concrete support in times of need.
- Knowledge of parenting and child development.
- Social and emotional competence of children.

Studies show these factors create a strong family environment that optimizes child development.

Programs complete the Strengthening Families Assessment and develop a plan of action based on specific areas of need. Programs also earn points for implementing a parent support and education program, and providing family resources and supports such as health, nutrition, and medical and dental resources in the languages spoken by families.

Total Scores and Minimum Quality Thresholds: QRIS participants can receive up to 100 points in Level Five (see Figure 4). The total score/rating programs receive is based upon the UW evaluation as well as the other requirements in each standard area, described above. The ERS and CLASS scores make up 55 percent of a facility rating, with 40 percent determined by CLASS scores, and 15 percent from ERS.

To ensure consistent quality for Levels 3 through 5, programs must meet minimum threshold scores on the ERS and CLASS. Each assessed classroom/focal child must score at least a 2 on Instructional Support in the CLASS, a 3.5 on Emotional Support and Organization in the CLASS and a 4 on the ERS to achieve Level 3 through 5 rating. Facilities that do meet minimum thresholds will receive a Level 2 rating.

The remaining 35 percent will be based on points awarded for screening and ongoing individual child assessment to inform practice; curriculum implementation and alignment with the state early learning guidelines; professional development/staff qualifications; and effective engagement of families and child outcomes.

Supports for Quality Improvement

Providers in QRIS get targeted support and awards to promote high quality. The two-year QRIS field test gave us useful data on the type and level of support and awards that maximize progress toward quality and lead to increased scores on standardized measurements embedded in the QRIS standards.

In Washington's QRIS, the support and awards include coaching, quality improvement awards, and professional development opportunities, funds, and supports.

1. Coaching

Research shows that one-on-one on-site coaching is one of the best ways to improve child care quality. Using active inquiry, observation and documentation skills, the coach uses data to help providers put research-based teaching practices into daily use. Coaches focus on improving the quality of teacher-child interactions and the learning environment; ongoing child assessment; implementing research-based curriculum and teaching strategies; and individualizing teaching and learning, especially for children with special needs or who are having difficulty progressing in certain developmental domains.

Coaches are highly trained early learning professionals with experience and education in early childhood education. The Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network (Wa State CCR&R Network) coordinates coaching efforts and coaches are hired locally, ensuring they know the community of providers they are working with and have knowledge of local resources and supports. Coaches serve as the point person between individual facilities and the broader system within local communities. Each rated facility will receive an average of eight hours of coaching per month based on facility size and need. UW is creating a "train the trainer" model for expanding coaching and ensuring that there both sufficient capacity and fidelity in implementation.

2. Quality Improvement Awards

Washington encourages programs to increase their quality and make a positive impact on child outcomes by investing in quality improvement grants for facilities that reach higher QRIS quality rating levels. The quality improvement awards specifically address an individual facility's needs measured by data on the standardized assessments embedded in the QRIS model: ERS and CLASS. In combination, these assessments measure high-quality practice as defined by Washington's QRIS. After a facility is rated and scores are obtained on these assessments, coaches use the data to develop individualized quality improvement plan to address gaps and areas of growth identified by assessment scores. Coaches help programs use quality improvement awards strategically and flexibly to make progress on quality improvement plans, and increase assessment scores and overall QRIS rating. Award levels increase as QRIS ratings increase and range from $1,500 to $9,000. The awards could be used for such things as classroom educational materials, teacher training, wage supplements, release time, curriculum materials, and parent trainings/supports.

3. Professional Development Opportunities, Funds, and Supports

QRIS supports programs in helping staff attain a child development associate certificate or higher degree, which help them earn points toward the QRIS Professional Development standard.

- Scholarships and Opportunity Grants are provided to support participants' ongoing professional development goals once they reach Levels 3 through 5. Funding is evenly split between two results-based programs: Washington Scholarships (implemented by Wa State CCR&R Network) and Opportunity Grants (implemented by SBCTC).
- The Professional Training Series includes seven trainings: Introduction to ERS and CLASS, Washington Early Learning Guidelines Overview, Introduction to the Core Competencies, Introduction to Cultural Competency, Promoting School Readiness Strengthening Families and QRIS Orientation.
- Training Hub Incentives. Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) programs get an annual incentive for becoming local training hubs for their community, providing leadership and support to local licensed child care facilities participating in the program. The training hubs will create QRIS communities of practice, sharing resources and improvement efforts on a community basis.

Key Targets for QRIS

2012	2013	2014	2015
100% of all programs in QRIS Level I 11% of all programs in QRIS II-V 14% of licensed child care centers in QRIS II-V 9% of licensed family child care homes in QRIS II-V 23% of Head Start/ ECEAP programs in QRIS III-V	30% of all programs in QRIS II-V 35% of licensed child care centers in QRIS II-V 25% of licensed family child care homes in QRIS II-V 58% of Head Start/ ECEAP programs in QRIS III-V	47% of all programs in QRIS II-V 52% of licensed child care centers in QRIS II-V 42% of licensed family child care homes in QRIS II-V 72% of Head Start/ ECEAP programs in QRIS III-V	54% of all programs in QRIS II-V 60% of licensed child care centers in QRIS II-V 50% of licensed family child care homes in QRIS II-V 73% of Head Start/ ECEAP programs in QRIS III-V

IV.Budget

The federal RTT-ELC application required states to demonstrate their existing commitments to early learning, and to verify their intentions to maintain existing funding levels. RTT-ELC funds may not be used to replace, supplant, or substitute for prior state commitments to early learning and states. In addition, the application required Washington to demonstrate how RTT-ELC funds would build upon and support its existing work in early learning. Any significant changes to these existing funding streams may require Washington to renegotiate its RTT-ELC award.

WA State Race to the Top (RTT) Budget Components					
Project	**Federal (RTT)**	**%**	**Other Sources**	**%**	**Total**
TQRIS - Expansion	42,559,797	35%	77,574,569	65%	120,134,366
TQRIS - Infrastructure	9,427,309	56%	7,314,355	44%	16,741,664
Kindergarten Readiness (WA Kids)	2,287,716	29%	5,518,640	71%	7,806,356
Professional Development Incentives	5,725,178	85%	974,407	15%	6,699,585
Total RTT Operational Budget	**60,000,000**	**40%**	**91,381,972**	**60%**	**151,381,972**
Early Learning Plan Funds	0	0%	2,425,084,466	100%	2,425,084,466
Total RTT Budget	**60,000,000**	**2%**	**2,516,466,438**	**98%**	**2,576,466,438**

Figure 5: *RTT-ELC budget components*

There is significant cost-sharing built into the operational budget for most line items. This approach is designed to leverage the commitment of the state, local and private contributions in order to maximize resources and sustainability. For example, DEL received grant funds for one-time infrastructure costs such as IT capital equipment and other activities for tiered QRIS in order to focus its internal resources on paying for ongoing long-term system activities. DEL received RTT-ELC grants funds to initially expand projects, and will share costs with state, local and private funding streams in the later years of the grant.

Overall, 60 percent of DEL's operational budget and implementation plan is financed by state, local, private sources and non-RTT-ELC federal funds, as noted in Figure 6.

DEL is the lead participating state agency and sole agency responsible for executing the RTT-ELC. All other organizations will be intermediaries or subcontractors under the direct authority and supervision of DEL.

DEL also will assess the impact of RTT-ELC on supporting and sustaining a strong early learning system. Figure 6 highlights the impact that Washington expects to have through the successful implementation of the RTT-ELC funds.

V. Outcomes

As a result of the RTT-ELC funding, Washington expects to improve both the quality and availability of early learning programs for young children. In other words, more programs will be providing higher-quality services to more children. Over time, DEL will look at school readiness rates as a measure of the success of Washington's early learning system.

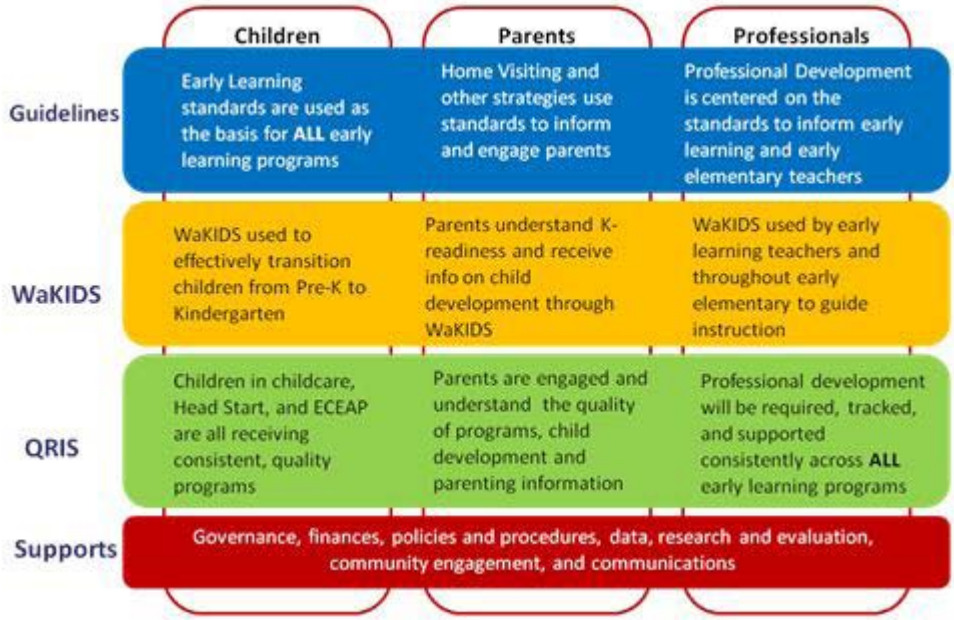

Figure 6: *Model of successful implementation of RTT-ELC funds*

For more information about RTT-ELC in Washington, visit **www.del.wa.gov/government/racetotop**