



SEATTLE'S PREK-3RD PARTNERSHIP
An Integrated, Aligned System for Educational Achievement

FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN
2010-15



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Creating an Integrated, Aligned System for Education Achievement

Introduction: About the Action Plan

An Exciting New Vision and a Call to Action to Help Children Succeed

In early 2010, Seattle Public Schools (SPS), the City of Seattle, and the New School Foundation came together to design a new system to more effectively align and integrate PreK-3rd grade education in Seattle. This Five-Year Action Plan is the result of many months of brainstorming, dialogue, and strategic focus on improving educational achievement for Seattle's children.

Our Vision is: a future in which all Seattle children are ready for Kindergarten and are at or above grade level by the end of third grade. This Five-Year Action Plan spells out how this ambitious vision will be achieved.

Putting Vision into Action. Research has firmly established that early investment in education can yield powerful results for children, both in short term performance and in longer term educational success. Yet it is not enough to provide quality education for a grade or two in a child's early years of school. We need to commit wholeheartedly to a well-aligned educational continuum that provides children with access to high quality, full-day PreK that is aligned to quality full day Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades.

Powerful Partnerships, Working Together to Help Children Learn and Grow

A successful educational continuum effectively connects PreK to the K-3 grades by creating partnerships between early learning providers and the elementary schools their "graduates" will enter. We need these two worlds to work together toward aligned and powerful practices in curricula, instructional approaches, expectations for students, assessments and the use of student data to inform instruction, planning and continuous improvements. The challenge of creating this continuum is great but the payoffs are enormous.

Investing in early learning can produce another powerful result: over time, we can focus more on prevention than on intervention. By investing in early learning, our community will have children who are more successful overall, with remarkable increases in human potential and reductions in costs for special services.

A Research-Based Plan to Improve Student Achievement

The Action Plan is rooted in compelling research that the years between PreKindergarten and 3rd grade create the foundation for school achievement in later years. Several major longitudinal research studies on PreK-3rd alignment have shown that children who were involved had lower referral and service rates for special education services and reduced behavioral issues. These children also had higher overall school attendance, improved test scores, higher graduation and college participation rates and lower rates of incarceration.



Gaining National Attention as a Collaborative Model

Seattle's Partnership efforts are being tracked with great interest by researchers and practitioners across the country. In August 2010, Seattle hosted a National League of Cities (NLC) symposium on the PreK-3rd Partnership's Action Plan that attracted more than 75 participants. The NLC event brought together Seattle's Mayor Mike McGinn, Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Maria Goodloe-Johnson, State Department of Early Learning Director Betty Hyde, Thrive by Five's CEO Nina Auerbach, and many others, all of whom expressed strong support for the Action Plan. Attendees noted that Seattle has an opportunity to serve as a national model for how to focus and align PreK-3rd education to benefit children and their families.

A Diverse Partnership Helped Create this Plan

Development of this Action Plan was guided by a diverse 16-member Partnership Group that included SPS educators, PreKindergarten providers, staff from Seattle's Human Services Department and the Office for Education, the New School Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Participants worked together to define a Vision for the new system, a framework of Goals and Action Strategies, and expected outcomes for the Plan. In the process, the Group grappled with foundational issues such as defining "quality," the elements of an effective learning environment, what an integrated curriculum would involve, how to share learnings and effective practices across the educational continuum, and how to best engage families in their children's education.

Leadership and Accountability is Needed to Make this Plan a Success

We recognize that strong leadership is necessary to make this Plan a reality. Our community is off to a good start with the work of the Partnership Group and the planning that has been accomplished. In our next phase of work, development of a detailed Implementation Plan, we will delve deeply into the systems, structures, and accountabilities that are needed to make the Plan a success. These include defining opportunities for leadership, and identification of institutional and community roles and responsibilities that will enable each participant to make the maximum possible contribution to the system.

Next Steps

This Action Plan presents strategies to guide Seattle in its deepening efforts to integrate and align the PreK-3rd system. A follow-on project, funded by a grant to the New School Foundation by the Foundation for Child Development, will develop a detailed implementation and funding plan, and will enlarge the circle of community members who are engaged in this work. The implementation plan will delineate specific actions and tasks for the next two years, a detailed timeline, and roles and responsibilities for the partners. Through the creation of the plan, and in consideration of all available data and needs assessments, we will set priorities and a roll-out plan, recognizing that we cannot pursue all of the strategies in this action plan simultaneously. In parallel, the Team will identify estimated costs for each action and the available resources to fund the Action Plan.

How to Read this Plan

The Plan is organized into five goals, with a set of action strategies for each goal.

The goals identify major focus areas for the Plan.

Action strategies are tasks delineating what needs to be done to accomplish each goal. Action strategies should be "SMART": specific, measurable, actionable, results-oriented and timebound.

Outcomes are the big-picture results expected from working to achieve the goals.

FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN: 2010-15

VISION

All children in Seattle will have learning experiences that prepare them to enter Kindergarten ready for school and to perform at or above grade level by 3rd grade. A successful PreK-3rd system requires that families, providers, schools, and community members actively collaborate and share resources. Success will be achieved when:

- Every child in Seattle has access to a quality PreK -3rd education
- The achievement gap is eliminated and prevented for future generations of students



SUMMARY OF GOALS

GOAL 1: Expand Access to Quality PreKindergarten and Full-Day Kindergarten

A starting point for achieving the Vision is providing access to high quality PreK and full day Kindergarten for all children in Seattle.

GOAL 2: Increase the Quality of Education Across the PreK-3rd Continuum

Investment to improve the quality of PreK-3rd education is a foundation of this Action Plan. Quality has many dimensions, including child-teacher interactions, instructional practice, classroom environment, family engagement, and targeted professional development.

GOAL 3: Develop and Implement Aligned Learning Standards, Assessment Tools, and Data Systems

A successful system will be informed by data and assessments, collected and used across the PreK-3rd continuum to provide information and feedback on student achievement and system performance.

GOAL 4: Create Seamless Transitions for Children Across the Learning Continuum

Points of transition provide rich opportunities to support children and families in their educational experiences. The Plan provides a systematic approach for defining and structuring transitions across grade levels.

GOAL 5: Increase Support and Intervention for Children with Greatest Needs

The Plan provides strategies to identify and reach children early and provide critical support to prevent or minimize impacts on learning outcomes.

GOALS AND ACTION STRATEGIES

GOAL 1: Expand Access to Quality PreKindergarten and Full-Day Kindergarten

Action Strategies

A. Expand the number of community-based, childcare-based, and school-based PreKindergarten providers participating in the Seattle Early Education Collaborative (SEEC) quality improvement system

- Conduct outreach with childcare providers who serve PreKindergarten children to encourage participation in SEEC and partnerships with their local school(s)
- Encourage providers to participate in the Washington State Quality Rating and Improvement System when it is available in Seattle
- Offer support to providers to prepare for SEEC quality standards and assessments



B. Blend and braid funding sources to ensure PreK integration of all children regardless of income

- Remove barriers, create incentives, and provide technical assistance to programs for blending or braiding federal, state, local, and private early learning funding
- Develop and implement sliding scale PreK fee structures to create more mixed-income classrooms

C. Increase the number of three- and four-year-olds attending high quality PreK and five-year-olds attending full-day Kindergarten

- Provide high quality PreK to three- and four-year olds who are most at risk
- Increase the number of children who benefit from full-school-day PreKindergarten (instead of half-day PreKindergarten) through subsidies and scholarships
- Advocate with the State regarding Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) entitlement legislation, including provisions that foster quality programs
- Advocate for full implementation of legislated State funding for PreK and full-day Kindergarten
- Advocate for Working Connections childcare subsidy funding to reflect true cost of quality and continuity of care, and establish continuous eligibility for 12 months

GOAL 2: Increase the Quality of Education Across the PreK-3rd Continuum

Action Strategies

A. Identify and adopt key elements of quality PreK-3rd education to increase continuity of learning experience and skill building that results in students performing at or above grade level

- Ensure PreK-3rd approach includes developmentally appropriate and effective instructional practices, focuses on adult-child interactions, social and emotional development, cultural competency, comprehension, early support and intervention for struggling students, and critical thinking
- Develop and execute a curriculum mapping process and align instructional approaches



B. Deliver high-leverage professional development for PreK-3rd teachers/caregivers to implement aligned curricula, instructional practices, and standards based on areas identified in assessment data

- Implement and use Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) as a reflective practice tool across the PreK-3rd continuum
- Use data collected through reports from state funded full-day Kindergarten, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), CLASS, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), and the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) to inform planning for professional development
- Develop and implement regular institutes and coaching for PreK-3rd staff based on key elements of quality PreK-3rd education
- Provide professional development for leaders (including principals, directors, and other administrators) and instructional support staff (including coaches) to develop a shared understanding of all facets of a PreK-3rd aligned education
- Amend the Community Alignment Initiative agreement and renewal process to reflect the district's enrollment and early learning goals and specific funding (Title I or braided funding) requirements, enhance participation in SEEC, and support the goals of the PreK-3rd Action Plan

C. Conduct outreach to Family, Friends and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers and provide information on how they can help with learning and development of young children in their care

- Conduct outreach to FFN caregivers to build connections to SEEC and link FFN caregivers to the schools the children they care for will attend
- Provide FFN caregivers with training in child development and developmentally appropriate practices
- Encourage parents to enroll their children in a PreK program for at least part-day



D. Build relationships and trust between families, providers, and schools along the educational continuum

- Develop a framework and opportunities for PreKindergarten providers, school leaders, and teachers to work in partnership throughout the school year to support them in developing effective relationships with families



- Update and publish information for families that shares what children need to know and be able to do in PreKindergarten and each grade; and ensure this information is translated into multiple languages
- Strengthen and increase family-friendly communication materials, translated into multiple languages, that explain assessment tools used, how the tools are administered and scored, and the meaning of the child's assessment performance
- Expand opportunities for and use of home visits as a strategy to support family engagement
- Reach out to communities who historically have lower participation and/or attendance rates to promote the importance of attending PreK and Kindergarten and the importance of daily attendance of school

GOAL 3: Develop and Implement Aligned Learning Standards, Assessment Tools, and Data Systems

Action Strategies

A. Align learning standards across the PreK-3rd continuum

- Develop and communicate an integrated set of culturally relevant PreK-3rd learning guidelines and align with those for 4th - 12th grade. These guidelines include Seattle's learning standards, new national standards, SEEC PreK standards, State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks, and State K-3 standards.
- Weave these integrated standards into SEEC's, School's Out Washington's, and Seattle Public Schools' (SPS) professional development efforts



B. Implement a comprehensive suite of assessments for PreK-3rd students and programs, to measure student progress and inform professional development and instruction

- Align current assessments in use by SEEC and Seattle Public Schools
- Review the alignment of the WAKids Kindergarten Assessment Pilot with assessments used by SPS and SEEC and share the findings with the state
- Ensure that assessment tools and data collection strategies take into account cultural and linguistic relevance as well as measure academic progress and social/emotional development
- Provide training for PreK-3rd staff on how to administer and analyze assessments and how to use assessment data to inform instruction



C. Ensure that PreK-3rd educators have the data management tools, support, and expertise to maintain, analyze, and effectively use data to continuously improve teaching and instruction

- Develop and implement data management systems across the PreK-3rd continuum
- Establish a process for sharing student data across levels to enable teachers to know each child's prior performance and learning styles and how they perform in later grades
- Determine how and what data will be shared with after-school providers serving PreK-3rd children to ensure that they are a part of the team that is supporting children to succeed
- Participate and support state efforts to build an integrated PreK-20 data system

GOAL 4: Create Seamless Transitions for Children Across the Learning Continuum

Action Strategies

A. Build relationships among PreK-3rd educators and administrators along the educational pathway

- Create regular opportunities for PreK teachers, K-3 teachers, K-3 after-school providers, summer learning and enrichment providers, and coaches to work and learn together
- Foster relationships among family advocates working with PreK programs (Head Start, ECEAP, licensed childcare, and others) and family support professionals in PreK, Kindergarten, and community-based organizations
- Encourage communication and foster relationships between Birth to Three programs and the PreK-3rd system, and between the PreK-3rd system and intermediate elementary school grades



B. Establish information sharing protocols and tools for use in PreK-3rd grade student transitions

- Develop a common transition framework and tools to support schools and providers to engage families and to implement effective transition practices
- Develop and implement a transition profile for students in PreK-3rd that includes family input, developmental and academic information, approaches to learning, and participation in early learning programs
- Develop a tiered approach to transition support for families and children according to need

C. Improve communication with families to help them prepare for and successfully navigate key transitions

- Expand outreach to families with four-year-olds to increase on-time Kindergarten enrollment and ensure that all families are aware of school options available to them
- Meet with families and community leaders to share about early learning, PreK programs available, and how to access and enroll in PreK and Kindergarten
- Engage the broader community, the Early Childhood Communication Roundtable, and language-specific media as partners in getting the word out about Kindergarten registration and how families can prepare their child for school
- Provide communication materials to parents at each transition point throughout the elementary school years

GOAL 5: Increase Support and Intervention for Children with Greatest Needs

Action Strategies

A. Provide early support for children with learning and behavioral challenges that affect academic performance

- Establish a consistent multi-tiered system of assessments, support services, and interventions for PreK-3rd to identify and support children with challenging behaviors, learning difficulties, and children with special education needs
- Provide training and support for staff on how to support children with special needs
- Provide training and support for staff on how to effectively communicate with families about available interventions
- Support capacity building and timeliness of Child Find screening and early connection of children to services
- Provide consultation to staff and pre-referral behavioral interventions and support for children identified as having challenging behaviors and special needs
- Establish connections with before and after-school providers to include them in support and intervention plans



B. Support children in retaining their home language and culture while becoming proficient in English



- Build capacity within the PreK-3rd system to effectively support students who are English Language Learners (ELL) and their families
- Increase the number of dual language (bilingual) PreK programs and explore the feasibility of adding programs in K-3rd schools
- Partner with community-based organizations to provide culturally appropriate before and after-school programs for ELL children
- Strengthen and increase opportunities for parents of ELL students to communicate and participate with their child's school in their home language

C. Enhance access to extended and summer learning to children that need it most

- Create an integrated process for gathering the data and resources needed to identify children in PreK-3rd who need additional learning time, including during the summer
- Align the City, District, and community resources and planning to offer academic support, extended learning opportunities, and summer enrichment



D. Provide specialized support for children in challenging family situations, including homelessness, child protective services, foster care, and poverty

- Collaborate with community partners to ensure that every child in need has a primary coordinator to prioritize and mobilize supportive services
- Provide professional development to staff who work with families, such as family advocates, counselors, instructional assistants, or family support workers to help them identify children and family situations that can affect academic achievement and build their capacity to quickly initiate services and support needed



Measurable Outcomes and Indicators

Outcome #1: Increased academic achievement and reduction of the achievement gap

- Percentage of PreKindergarten students in each population group who meet or exceed the standard on the PPVT & curriculum-embedded numeracy assessments
- Percentage of Kindergarten through third grade students in each population group that meet or exceed math standards as measured by MAP
- Percentage of Kindergarten through third grade students in each population group that meet or exceed reading standards as measured by MAP

Outcome #2: More children attend high quality PreKindergartens

- Percentage of children attending programs that meet SEEC quality standards

Outcome #3: More children attend full-day Kindergarten

- Percentage of children attending full-day Kindergarten

Outcome #4: More children attending school regularly

- Percentage of students in PreKindergarten and each grade level attending at least 90% of school days

Outcome #5: Children continue to perform at grade level after the 3rd grade

- Percentage of fourth and seventh grade students in each population group that meet or exceed math standards
- Percentage of fourth and seventh grade students in each population group that meet or exceed reading standards

Outcome #6: More PreK-3rd learning environments that meet quality standards

- Number of learning environments as defined by ECCRS and other indicators

Glossary

Child Find: continuous process of public awareness activities, screening and evaluation designed to locate, identify, and refer as early as possible all young children with disabilities and their families who are in need of early intervention or special education services.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS): observational tool that provides a common lens and language focused on the classroom interactions. Data from CLASS observations are used to support teachers' unique professional development needs and set school-wide goals.

Curriculum: set of courses, and their content, offered at different grade levels and at different PreKindergarten and child care agencies.

Curriculum mapping: a process for collecting and recording curriculum-related data that identifies core skills and content taught, processes employed, and assessments used for each subject area and grade level. The completed curriculum map then becomes a tool that helps teachers keep track of what has been taught and plan what will be taught.

Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP): comprehensive PreKindergarten program that provides free services and support to eligible children and their families, funded by Washington State.

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS): assessment that provides an overall picture of the surroundings that have been created for the children and adults who share an early childhood setting.

Family, Friends and Neighbor (FFN): home-based care – in the caregiver's or child's home – provided by caregivers who are relatives, friends, neighbors, or babysitters/nannies.

Head Start (HS): comprehensive PreKindergarten program that provides free services and support to eligible children and their families, funded by the federal government.

Seattle Early Education Collaborative (SEEC): community collaborative of stakeholders and partners working together to create a shared vision for early learning in Seattle and to achieve greater gains for children. Founding stakeholders and partners include Step Ahead and ECEAP programs and Head Start grantees.

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP): state-aligned computerized adaptive reading and math tests that reflect the instructional level of each student and measure growth over time. MAP is administered 2-3 times per year in all Seattle schools.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT): assessment test that measures verbal ability in standard American English vocabulary in PreKindergarten-aged children.

PreKindergarten (PreK): includes all formal education and care settings serving three and four year olds, which may also be referred to as "preschool" or "child care."

PreK-3rd: encompasses children from PreKindergarten (ages 3 and 4) through the 3rd grade of elementary school

School's Out Washington: an intermediary organization dedicated to building community systems to support quality afterschool and youth development (AYD) programs for Washington's 5-18 year olds through training, advocacy and leadership.

Washington State Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): Washington's voluntary quality rating and improvement system designed to support licensed child care providers in improving the quality of child care they offer children and families. This System is now being tested at five sites around the state.

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC): helps families with low incomes pay for child care while they work or meet WorkFirst participation requirements. The state pays part of the cost of child care. The family is responsible to make a copayment to the child care provider.

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Founded in 1988, BERK is an interdisciplinary strategy and analysis firm providing integrated, creative, and analytically rigorous approaches to complex policy and planning decisions. BERK's team of strategic planners, policy and financial analysts, economists, cartographers, information designers, and facilitators work together to bring new ideas, clarity, and robust frameworks to the development of analytically-based and action-oriented plans.

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