



September 25, 2007 Update

The White Center Early Learning Initiative (WCELI) is a partnership of community members and public and private organizations working to create sustainable, integrated and accessible child development and family support services that are reflective of the diverse cultures, strengths, and needs of White Center families. Puget Sound ESD was selected as the intermediary for WCELI planning and has actively gathered community input and assistance in designing WCELI's services.

WCELI Funding and Implementation Plan

Bridgespan Consulting, under a contract with Thrive by Five, has completed the draft of the WCELI funding plan proposal and submitted it to Thrive by Five for review and consideration. Thrive by Five is in the process of analyzing the proposal in the context of their state and regional goals with other potential funders. We anticipate a funding announcement sometime this fall.

Greenbridge Early Learning Center

Work continues on the Greenbridge Early Learning Center (GELC), which will be part of WCELI's Hub services. This center, based on the Educare model, will be located right next to White Center Heights Elementary School. It will provide early learning center-based care for children birth through five from the White Center area. The center will also have training rooms and other space for use by the larger community. The architects have worked with a design work group made up of parents, staff, and other community residents. Public and private funds are being raised to build and operate this center. Groundbreaking is scheduled for 2008 with the goal of opening the center in 2009.

WCELI Executive Director Search

The search is beginning to find an executive director for WCELI. The Puget Sound ESD, with funding support from Thrive by Five, has contracted with a search firm to assist in securing a pool of qualified candidates for this very important position. The job announcement has just been completed and is ready for distribution. You can view it on the WCELI webpage. Applications will be made directly to the search firm.

WCELI Community Advisory Committee

The WCELI Advisory Committee Meeting that was scheduled for September 18, 2007 was postponed. The September 18th date was thought to be too soon for a productive meeting of the Advisory Committee, as Bridgespan was just completing the draft of the funding plan proposal to be submitted to Thrive by Five. There are plans to hold the next advisory committee meeting in conjunction with a retreat, once the new executive director is on board.

Summer Community Preschools

The Gates Foundation, in partnership with Thrive by Five and PSESD, awarded a grant to continue preschool services this past summer for at least 160 children and families enrolled in three White Center Summer Multicultural Preschools. These programs are an important part of the community and help prepare children for kindergarten.

The Refugee Federation Service Center and Pasefika both offered summer preschools for families who live in White Center and have 3- and 4-year-old children. Para Los Ninos offered a summer home visiting program to primarily Hispanic children and families who are transitioning to kindergarten this fall.

The Gates Foundation commissioned a study of these summer community based preschool programs, and the research report is in the process of being written. A summary of the results will be shared when it is made available.

New Contact Information

The WCELI phone number has changed. For questions or general information, please call 425-917-7760.

You can continue to email us at wceli@psed.org, and visit us at www.psed.org by clicking **WCELI** on the Quick Links.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the White Center Early Learning Initiative!

Transitions

Thank you, Lori Pittman!

As WCELI moves from the planning stage to its implementation stage, many PSESD staff members who were temporarily assigned to WCELI are returning to their previous long-term assignments. We want to take this time to thank Lori Pittman, who as WCELI Planning Director has done so much to help launch WCELI. Lori is most responsible for

assuring that there was meaningful community and stakeholder involvement in WCELI's planning process to produce the WCELI Business Plan. She was the inspiration in creating the Community Advisory Committee, and left her mark on aspects of WCELI too numerous to list. Lori will now resume her work as a PSESD Head Start Family Support Coordinator. Please join us in thanking Lori for her incredible WCELI work!

John Bancroft, Executive Director
Puget Sound ESD/Head Start