

**August 15, 2007**

*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 been in the process of gathering community input and assistance in designing WCELI's services.*

## **Update**

Since our last update, Thrive by Five (Tb5) hired Bridgespan Consulting Group to design a strategic plan for their organization, and to assist in the development of a one-year funding plan to launch WCELI services.

Bridgespan is strongly committed to the success of WCELI as a community initiative of Thrive by Five. They have analyzed the WCELI Business Plan in detail, and demonstrate a strong understanding of the vision we all worked hard to create for the children and families of White Center.

Thrive by Five and the Gates Foundation asked PSESD and its partners to respond to Bridgespan's request for information and analysis to assist their design of the funding plan. Bridgespan is managing this stage of the work, while PSESD and other community stakeholders are facilitating design of the funding plan by providing information, data and clarification as needed.

During the month of July, Bridgespan gathered additional budget, program, and community information. Throughout August, Bridgespan will combine elements of the WCELI Business Plan and other information they have gathered into a short term funding and implementation plan. PSESD, the WCELI Collaborative Planning Team and Thrive by Five will be focusing on prioritizing and sequencing key~activities for the first year and setting benchmarks and milestones for year one.

All of this work will lead to submission of a funding and implementation plan to Thrive by Five on August 30, 2007. Thrive by Five will analyze and refine this plan and then take it to their board and other private and public funders. Thrive by Five plans to make a funding announcement within sixty days of August 30, 2007.

## **WCELI Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting**

The WCELI Community Advisory Committee met on Tuesday, July 24, 2007. Brenda Blasingame of Thrive by Five was present to share an update on the work of Bridgespan and the funding plan. Both Monte Bridges, PSESD Superintendent and Lori Pittman, WCELI Planning Director, reported on PSESD's continuing work on WCELI planning and development.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday 9/18/07 from 5:00-7:30pm at White Center Heights Elementary School**. While the meetings are meant to be a working session for Community Advisory Committee members, they are open for anyone to come and observe. If you plan on attending, please call Linda Norkool at 425.917.7750 or Lori Pittman at 425.917.7759

## White Center Summer Preschool

The Gates Foundation, in partnership with Thrive by Five and PSESD, awarded a grant to continue preschool services for at least 160 children and families enrolled in three White Center Summer Multicultural Preschools. The Refugee Federation Service Center and Pasefika both offer summer preschool for families who live in White Center and have 3- and 4-year-old children. Para Los Ninos is offering a summer home visiting program to primarily Hispanic children and families who are transitioning to kindergarten this fall.

## Quality Improvement and Rating System (QIRS) Readiness

QIRS, is a *voluntary* system offering assistance and incentives to providers to increase the quality of care for children in child care centers, school-age programs, and family child care homes. Head Start, ECEAP and certified tribal programs can also participate. QIRS provides a way to measure the quality of participating programs in order to provide ratings for families looking for care.

To help providers prepare for QIRS, Thrive by Five and the Department of Early Learning (DEL) awarded WCELI and the East Yakima Early Learning Initiative (EYELI) \$75,000 each to design and implement informational forums and surveys for licensed child care and home-based family child care providers. WCELI partnered with Child Care Resources (CCR), the lead for QIRS in King County.

CCR and PSESD have completed the informational forums and provider surveys. This work engaged many providers at focus groups; many providers then went on to participate in one-on-one interviews with CCR staff. This work has been submitted to Thrive by Five and DEL for their consideration and next steps. WCELI will continue to participate in conversation and activities that help prepare child care and family child care providers for the developments of QIRS and the early learning initiative.

White Center Early Learning Initiative was identified by the state legislature as a QIRS pilot site during the last session. WCELI will be working in close partnership with Thrive by Five, Department of Early Learning and White Center providers on the development and implementation of this pilot.

For more information about QIRS, click <http://www.childcarenet.org/providers/tools-for-quality/articles>.

## Past Updates and Newsletters

If you have not received past updates and newsletters, they are available on our web-page: [www.wceli.org](http://www.wceli.org).

*If you or anyone else would like to be added to our email list or receive hard copies of WCELI updates and newsletters, please contact Linda Norkool at 425-917-7750 or [lnorkool@psed.org](mailto:lnorkool@psed.org).*

*For all other general communication or questions, please call Lori Pittman, WCELI Planning Director at 425-917-7759 or email [wceli@psed.org](mailto:wceli@psed.org).*