

Building Cross-Sector P-3 Leaders:

The Washington
P-3 Executive Leadership
Certificate Program

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NATIONAL  P 3 C E N T E R

DECEMBER 2018

In 2012, the National P-3 Center (NP-3C) at the University of Washington's College of Education embarked on an innovative endeavor to increase the capacity in local school districts and communities around the state of Washington to implement high-quality P-3 (pre-school through 3rd grade) reforms. Central to this effort was a focus on administrators: elementary school principals and assistant principals, as well as directors and managers from Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP, Washington's state-funded PreK program), Head Start, and community-based child care programs. NP-3C designed a program with several key features:

- Cross-sector, team-based enrollment, ensuring that administrators from both the early care and education (ECE or 0-5) and K-12 systems learned side by side, and were provided ample opportunities to build and strengthen relationships;
- An executive-style delivery calendar that maximized time together, built social capital, and enabled administrators with full-time jobs to enroll;
- A curriculum that aligned with national and state professional standards and competencies for both 0-5 and K-12 leaders;
- Emphasis on increasing participants' content knowledge and leadership skills;
- Course lectures and experiences that engaged national and local experts in research, practice, and policy; and
- Incentives tied to participants' career pathways that ensured participation would "count for something" and be more than just another interesting professional learning opportunity.

With generous funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in February 2014, the *Washington P-3 Executive Leadership Certificate Program* (P-3 ELCP) enrolled its first cohort. The P-3 ELCP was offered in three subsequent years, and as of the end of 2017, 162 administrators from ECE and K-12 completed the program. This report presents an overview of the unique design features of the P-3 ELCP and an evaluative summary of what was learned during the four years the Program was offered.

BACKGROUND

Beginning in approximately 2007, P-3 approaches – while sparsely scattered across the state – began to take hold in Washington. With the support of public and private funding, P-3 efforts in Washington matured over time and, by 2012, the state was considered a national leader in innovative district- and community-led approaches to improve learning opportunities from birth-through-3rd grade.

During this timeframe, the state enjoyed consistent legislative support for early learning and the early grades of elementary school, which contributed toward implementation of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) known as Early Achievers, a Kindergarten Entry Assessment known as the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS), and state-funded full-day Kindergarten in all school districts. Washington also implemented a comprehensive Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP), adopted the Common Core State Standards, and instituted mandatory K-3 class size reduction. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI, the state education agency); the Department of Early Learning (DEL, the state-level agency with governance over the majority of 0-5 programs/services); Thrive Washington (the statewide public/private intermediary); statewide associations of school board members, K-12 administrators, and early learning leaders and providers; as well as individual regional- and district-level K-12 and ECE leaders all contributed in their own way toward traction on P-3.

In spite of all of this support and influence, a wide gap existed between the goals of those reforms and the realities of their implementation. In 2012, voices from the field expressed need for a more intentional, structured way to bring along administrators – from both ECE and K-12 – as P-3 approaches became more widely implemented. With urging and input from Washington's P-3 stakeholders, and with grant support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Kristie Kauerz, director of the National P-3 Center and research faculty at University of Washington's College of Education developed the Washington P-3 Executive Leadership Certificate Program (P-3 ELCP). Throughout the design phase, Kauerz collaborated with her faculty colleague, Gail Joseph, as well as a former elementary school principal, Kimberly Kinzer. BMGF's program officer, Jodi Haavig, was another critical friend and intellectual contributor to the Program's design. The University of Washington's

professional and continuing education division, Continuum College, played a central role in the logistical design and delivery of the Program and Mona Murr Kunselman, Director of Academic Programs, was instrumental in launching the P-3 ELCP.¹

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The goal of the P-3 ELCP was to build and support a cadre of administrators—in early learning and elementary education—who ensure that Washington's young children have a high-quality continuum of learning that begins at birth and extends through elementary school, regardless of race, class, culture, or zip code. From the outset, the intent was to design a program that crossed sectors in terms of enrollees and content. The Program needed to be equally relevant and compelling to ECE and K-12 stakeholders. In addition, the Program needed to elevate the importance of participants improving and increasing their:

- *Knowledge* of relevant P-3 pedagogy, equity-driven decision-making, and organizational/policy change
- *Skills and dispositions* to lead change – at individual, organization, and system levels
- *Behaviors and actions* to implement comprehensive P-3 approaches in their own local contexts.

To achieve these aspirations, the Program was designed with several key features in mind, each discussed in greater depth in the following sections:

1. Focus on administrators, not classroom teachers, and a balanced enrollment of administrators from the ECE/0-5 system and from the K-12 system.
2. Cohort structure that engaged in a year-long course of study together, thereby building social capital among participants, establishing a professional community of learners, and providing ample time to immerse in the content.
3. Innovative evidence-based and practice-informed curriculum that focused on key dimensions of P-3 approaches and emphasized the importance of increasing administrators' knowledge and improving their skills.
4. Coursework that “counted for something” in each attendee's professional pathway.
5. Action Research Projects that participants completed in their home districts/communities, engaging key stakeholders and expanding the dissemination of effective P-3 strategies and activities.

¹ Along the way, other staff members of the National P-3 Center contributed greatly to the implementation and refinement of the Program. Gratitude goes to Jasmine Bucu, Heather Newman, Laura Pflum, Mari Taylor, and Molly Branson Thayer for their invaluable contributions.

Focus on Administrators Across Sectors

Administrators are critical to the creation and sustainability of meaningful and effective P-3 approaches. They hold responsibility for creating an organizational culture, setting an inspiring and shared vision among diverse stakeholders, supervising teachers and staff, and supporting key priorities in which to invest both human and financial resources. While there is general agreement in both ECE and K-12 education about the importance of strong leadership, only a handful of administrator training programs exist nationwide that address the qualities, skills, knowledge, and behaviors that matter most when leading efforts to support young children's learning and development.

Over the past decade, there has been growing interest in increasing elementary principals' leadership on behalf of young children (see, for example, National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2014). These efforts, however, tend to focus on increasing principals' knowledge of the PreK year alone (the year prior to Kindergarten) and emphasize principals' engagement with classrooms co-located at elementary schools. They lack focus on the crucial contributions of the comprehensive ECE system and often shortchange the importance of reforming the K-3 grades to be more reflective of developmental science, inquiry-based instruction, and a balanced curriculum that builds cognitive and social-emotional skills.

Similarly, the number of leadership programs for early childhood educators has grown over the past decade (Goffin & Daga, 2017). These programs tend to focus on individuals' leadership knowledge and skills, specific to working within discrete programs, and to increasing early childhood educators' advocacy efforts. They lack focus on building understanding of K-12 policies and infrastructure and often shortchange the challenges of navigating school district bureaucracies to effect change in instructional priorities.

The P-3 ELCP embraced both of these trends – leadership development for ECE leaders and elementary school principals – and joined them together into an innovative, cross-sector approach. The P-3 ELCP recognized that comprehensive P-3 approaches rely on capable administrators *across* the ECE and elementary school continuum. These leaders must share common understandings and motivations to support young children's learning and development. While there might exist occasional opportunities for ECE and K-12 leaders to meet together, most often those instances are for one-shot professional development experiences that are generic, not linked to actual practice, and not tailored to the specific

standards, contexts, and systems in Washington State. For these reasons, the P-3 ELCP established a shared professional learning experience that co-enrolled administrators from ECE and K-12. Across the four cohorts, 37.5% considered their role as “mostly ECE,” 25% considered their role “mostly K-12,” and 37.5% considered their role “truly P-3” (these included principals with on-site PreK classrooms).

Build Social Capital and a Community of Learners

One of the core tenets of P-3 approaches is that the work cannot be done alone. By definition, P-3 requires people who do not traditionally work together to find common ground, align their intentions, and deliver coherent experiences to children and families. As such, the P-3 ELCP embraced a cohort model and a course of study that lasted for ten months (February through November, including summer months, each calendar year). Altogether, the Program required completion of 100 contact hours of coursework delivered executive style, including classroom-based and online learning. Notably, 40 of those contact hours were provided during a week-long residency at the beginning of the Program year. The remaining hours were divided across three weekend sessions that began late Thursday afternoon and ran all day Friday and Saturday, as well as a handful of asynchronous online modules.

Potential enrollees completed a brief application process that included short statements about their past, current, and future P-3 efforts, as well as letters of support from their employers that expressed willingness to provide the necessary time and resources for enrollees' full participation in the ten-month program of study. At its inception, the P-3 ELCP was expected to enroll exclusively elementary school principals and site-based ECE directors (e.g., Head Start and PreK directors or program managers, child care or preschool directors, family child care owners, and others who supervise the operation and management of early learning programs). During the first year of implementation, 2014, applicants were encouraged to apply as pairs – one elementary principal with one ECE administrator.

As cohort recruitment began for the second year of the Program's offering, enrollees encouraged P-3 ELCP leaders to expand the pool of participants and accept applications from district central office administrators, and ECE and K-12 stakeholders in administrative leadership roles at local and regional levels, provided they co-enrolled with an elementary principal and/or early learning director. Ultimately the P-3 ELCP enrolled ECE and K-12 administrators from across Washington, representing a mix of age, experience, degree acquisition, and

Table 1: State and National Leadership Standards Cross-walked to Inform Washington P-3 Executive Leadership Certificate Program

	0-5 LEADERSHIP	K-12 LEADERSHIP	P-3 ALIGNMENT
Washington State standards	Department of Early Learning, Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals	Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP), The AWSP Leadership Framework to Support Principal Development	Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches (2013)
National standards	National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Standards for Advanced Early Childhood Professional Preparation (2010)	National Policy Board for Educational Administration, Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (2015) — formerly known as ISLLC, 2008	

tenure in the field. Twenty-five school districts², three educational service districts (ESDs)³, and numerous public- and private-funded ECE programs from across Washington were represented in the P-3 ELCP, with the highest concentration of alumni coming from the Road Map⁴ region of South King County. Roles of the 162 P-3 ELCP alumni at the time of their enrollment were:

- 30% School District and ESD Central Office Administrators
- 22% Elementary School Principals
- 17% Publicly funded ECE Partners
- 15% Private ECE Partners
- 12% Assistant Principals in Elementary Schools
- 4% School Board Members

The rationale for expanding eligible enrollees rested on the need to include a broader set of stakeholders who hold authority within school districts and organizations to effect meaningful change. The consequence of this change was to deepen a team-based enrollment strategy. In most instances, districts or communities sent cross-sector teams comprising a mix of central office administrators, elementary school principals or assistant principals, and ECE directors/managers from district, community, or regional programs. In each year of the Program’s offering, a small number of “singletons” (those without team members) were accepted.

The team-based approach became a centerpiece of the Program’s design. During the residency week and weekend sessions, “team time” was a prominent part of the schedule. This time was designed to build relationships among team members and to provide time and space to co-create Action Research Projects. Across the four cohorts, 81% of participants enrolled as teams; the remaining 19% enrolled as “singletons” and worked with one another during team times.

Deliver an Innovative Curriculum Focused on Knowledge and Skills

To design the curriculum, it was important to ensure that the P-3 ELCP content complemented extant leadership standards in the fields of ECE and K-12. A crosswalk of Washington State and national leadership standards for ECE and elementary administrators (see Table 1) provided a foundation for the curriculum’s development. Following this analysis, three major foci emerged:

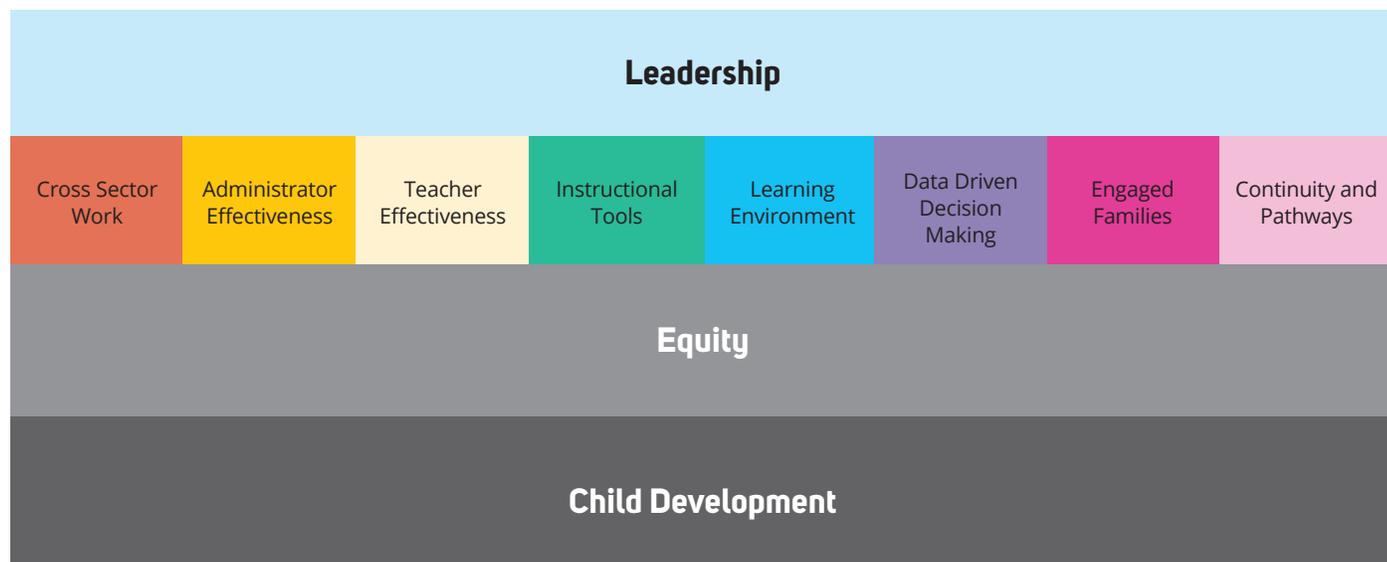
- *Pedagogy and instructional leadership tailored specifically to support young learners:* Effective instruction, instructional coherence, and meaningful learning opportunities are central to comprehensive P-3 approaches. This curricular focus highlighted instructional leadership techniques that support adult and child learning; improve student engagement; align standards, instructional strategies, and assessments; and critique the overall educational endeavor to focus on developmental science.

² There are 295 school districts in the state of Washington.

³ Washington is divided into nine Educational Service Districts (ESDs) which provide coordination of services and other supports among public and private school districts and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

⁴ The Road Map Project is a Collective Impact initiative to boost student success from early learning to college and career in seven King County, Washington school districts: Auburn, Federal Way, Highline, Kent, Renton, (South) Seattle, and Tukwila.

Figure 1: Core Content Standards of the Washington P-3 ELCP



- *Policy and leadership:* Administrators must be grounded in the historical and current context of ECE and K-12 in Washington State and the United States. This curricular focus illuminated the need to reflect on differences in the two systems’ core values, vision, governance, organizational infrastructure, and actionable strategies. By bringing an explicit policy and system-level focus, the curriculum provided opportunities to examine the conceptual and practical challenges that require cross-sector thinking and collaboration.
- *Equity driven decision-making:* Shared beliefs and a common commitment to the achievement and success of all children rest in the leadership of administrators. This curricular focus prioritized how to sustain cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity in daily practice in schools and early learning programs with an eye toward equitable access and opportunities for all children, especially those who have been traditionally underserved and underrepresented, and elimination of achievement gaps and disproportionate academic outcomes. It also capitalized on the positive benefits of a diverse population while learning how to effectively involve parents and families in supporting their children’s development and learning.

After identifying major themes for the P-3 ELCP curriculum, a set of program standards was developed. The 11 program standards that guided the curriculum are best envisioned as a layer cake (see Figure 1).

Standards of child development and equity serve as the foundations for the Program. What makes P-3 different from other education reform efforts is its explicit focus on the birth-through-3rd grade continuum, which corresponds with the period of growth and human development that many developmental theorists, neuroscientists, and economists deem as a critical phase that sets either a sturdy or fragile stage for all subsequent learning and development. As such, a current and comprehensive understanding of child development, from birth through age eight, is essential to administrators’ ability to effectively engage in and lead P-3 approaches.

Disadvantage and disparities play particularly potent roles during the first eight years of life. Family income inequality, systemic racial inequities, and the ever-changing circumstances of children who immigrate to the United States and speak languages other than English have profound impacts on both the quantity and quality of learning opportunities from which children benefit. To this end, the Program emphasized historical, institutional, and social inequities that affect young children’s development and learning and which exert long-term influence on children’s ability to engage, thrive, and succeed in education.

The colorful middle layer of standards correspond to the eight buckets in the *Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches* (Kauerz & Coffman, 2013), which is widely used across Washington and the nation as a

means to establish common language and shared strategies for alignment within and between ECE and K-12. Grounded in research and evidence-based practice, the Framework addresses the core, practical organizational components that contribute to building comprehensive P-3 approaches (see sidebar).

Leadership sits at the top of the layer cake and the leadership focus facilitated the effective implementation of everything else in the curriculum. The P-3 ELCP recognized that leadership skills must be developed, honed, and exercised at three distinct levels: individual, organization, and system. As individual leaders, enrollees considered their own will and skill in the P-3 space, exploring their personal values, capacities, and resilience. Here, the curriculum included a personalized profile of how each enrollee thought and behaved, as well as a focus on health and wellness. As organizational leaders, enrollees considered their roles and responsibilities inside their schools and programs – how they inspired staff and supported teamwork, how they set and sustained a vision for their organizations, and how they managed competing priorities. As system leaders, participants examined how to engage in and enact change without clear authority, deepening their understanding of bigger system issues that transcend their programs and sectors.

Contribute to Professional Pathways

Prior to launching the P-3 ELCP, focus groups were conducted with ECE and K-12 administrators across Washington. One of the clear findings was that the Program needed to “count for something.” Administrators were overwhelmed by the volume of requests for their time and professional focus. To address this, multiple incentives were built into the design of the Program. By completing the P-3 ELCP, students could earn:

- Ten University of Washington course credits that could be applied toward degree pathways in bachelor, master, or doctoral programs, OR
- Ten continuing education units (CEUs) or clock hours that are accrued by Washington State educators for salary advancement and/or teacher recertification.

Over the four years that the Program was offered, 52% of enrollees opted to earn University of Washington credits and 48% opted to earn CEUs. In addition, enrollees could earn credits in the State Training and Registry System (STARS), the state’s professional development system for ECE teachers and administrators.

Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches

(Kauerz & Coffman, 2013)

The Framework is designed to address key questions facing those who are developing and implementing comprehensive P-3 approaches in their school, district, or community. The Framework is divided into eight major “buckets” or categories of effort that require alignment within and between ECE and K-12:

- Cross Sector Work
- Administrator Effectiveness
- Teacher Effectiveness
- Instructional Tools
- Learning Environment
- Data-Driven Improvement
- Engaged Families
- Continuity and Pathways

Specifically, the Framework guides users to consider:

- What does a comprehensive P-3 approach include?
- The word “alignment” is used often; but what needs to be aligned?
- What kinds of changes need to take hold in adults’ knowledge and behaviors before we can expect to see improvements in child outcomes?
- What responsibilities need to be shared among ECE/0-5 programs, K-3 grades, families, and communities?

It should be noted that the P-3 ELCP began the process to become an approved program for elementary principals to be re-certified by the state's Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). Until 2016, Washington was one of a handful of states that required principals to be re-certified after five years of service. Re-certification ("Administrator Professional Certification" or Admin Pro-Cert) could only be achieved by completion of a PESB-approved program. Months before the P-3 ELCP was scheduled for final approval by PESB, a moratorium was placed on the approval of new Admin ProCert programs. The reasons behind this were many, including concern from administrators that the process was onerous and duplicative of requirements in the state's recently adopted Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program. So, while ultimately not secured, efforts to become a state-approved principal re-certification program were another strategic effort to ensure the P-3 ELCP was not "just another" professional development offering, but a meaningful contribution to principal participants' professional pathways.

Support Action Research Projects in Communities Around the State

A significant feature of the *Washington P-3 Executive Leadership Certificate Program* was the Action Research Projects (ARP) that were collaboratively designed and implemented by participants in the Program. The primary goal of Action Research is to support and nurture local leaders to take responsibility for the change process themselves and not to be reliant on external researchers or consultants. The intention was for cohort members to apply the knowledge, skills, and collaborative processes gained through the curriculum in their "home" programs, schools, districts, and communities.

The Program curriculum included a scaffolded approach to Action Research, providing resources, tools, and methods that supported strategic thinking and iterative planning. For example, throughout the ten-month Program, participants used tools designed by the National P-3 Center to align with the *Framework* and to support action planning. These tools included: Identifying Feeder Patterns, Community P-3 Self-Assessment, Priority-Setting, Crafting a Vision, Theory of Change, and Marshaling Resources. Specifically, the ARPs enabled Program participants to:

- Apply knowledge, skills, and leadership to their real-world contexts;
- Directly influence and improve their own districts, schools, programs, and communities;

- Extend the impact of the Program by engaging others in P-3 efforts; and
- Add to the growing body of promising P-3 approaches in the State of Washington.

A full listing of ARP titles, organized by cohort, is provided in Appendix A.

INTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

In 2017, the National P-3 Center undertook an internal evaluation to better understand the influence of the P-3 ELCP on the knowledge, dispositions, and work of program alumni, specifically: (a) individual leadership; (b) knowledge of child development and equity; (c) experience designing, implementing, and sustaining Action Research Projects; and (d) ability to enact ongoing P-3 change at organizational and system levels in their local contexts.

NP-3C conducted a survey and interviews with the first three P-3 ELCP cohorts: 2014, 2015, and 2016. The program evaluation survey was distributed online in May 2017 to the 125 alumni in the first three cohorts, and had a 46% response rate. The last question of the survey asked if respondents would be willing to participate in a 20-minute follow-up interview. Interviews were subsequently conducted with 17% of alumni from the first three cohorts. For both the survey and interviews, participants were instructed to consider all P-3 ELCP elements, including: 1) the cross-sector, cohort-based model; 2) the multi-day in-person sessions which included lectures, team time, and discussions; 3) online, asynchronous webinars; and 4) content and guidance to understand P-3 implementation, including the *Framework for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating PreK-3rd Grade Approaches* and its accompanying tools (e.g., Self-Assessment, Priority-Setting, Theory of Change, Marshaling Resources).

In November 2017, the fourth cohort completed the Program and 37 additional students graduated, bringing total Program

"I work in a large complex system and as a result of the program I honed my ability to lead and leverage influence to achieve outcomes within this system and with sectors outside of my system."

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

participants to 162. At the culmination of the Program year for the 2017 cohort, the NP-3C developed and conducted a single-year program evaluation survey incorporating questions from the survey and interview protocols used with prior cohorts. Findings from all four P-3 ELCP cohorts are discussed in the following sections. In summary, the evaluation found that:

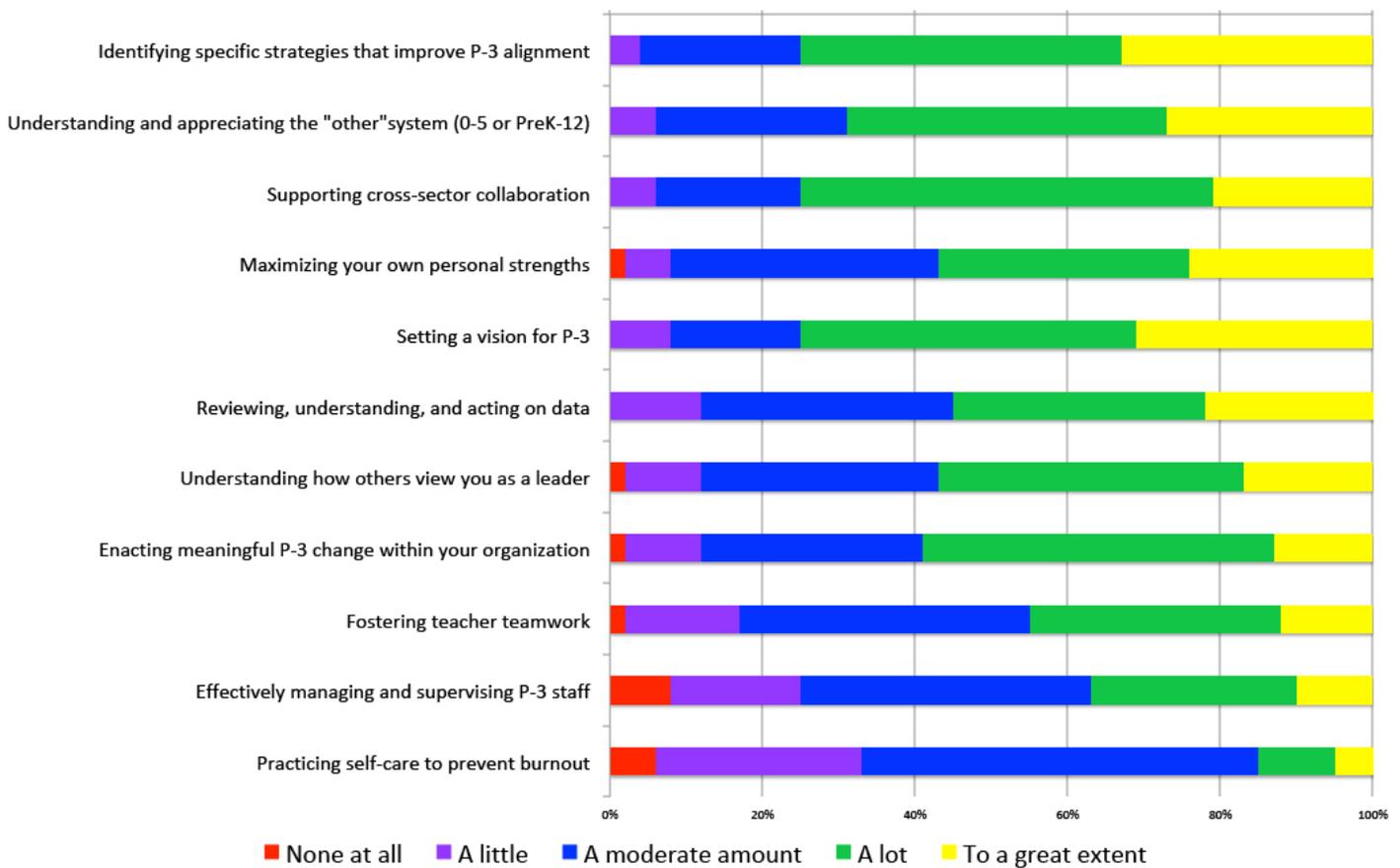
- Participants gained knowledge and confidence specifically in their individual leadership skills, which were often leveraged to engage in organization and system leadership.
- Child development and equity grounded the learning of participants, preparing them for meaningful engagement in Action Research Projects, and integrating ARP learnings into their local contexts.
- Cross-sector work expanded to engage the larger community to the extent that P-3 has become a meaningful value in local contexts – organizations, districts, and programs – including increased P-3 vocabulary and “P-3 cultural awareness.”
- Many Action Research Projects were (at least partially)

institutionalized within participants’ organizations.

Increased Leadership Skills

As noted above, the top of the standards “layer cake” focused on leadership and was designed to support participants’ growth in skills, knowledge, and behaviors related to individual, organizational, and system leadership. To begin to explore the Program’s impact, alumni were asked to rate the extent to which the P-3 ELCP helped them to build and improve specific leadership skills. In the survey, alumni identified growth in every category (see Figure 2). The leadership skills identified as the most effectively supported and improved included: Supporting cross-sector collaboration, Identifying specific strategies that improve P-3 alignment, and Setting a vision for P-3 work, for which 75% of respondents marked “a lot” or “to a great extent” and Understanding and appreciating the other system, for which 69% marked “a lot” or “to a great extent.” Effectively managing and supervising staff and Practicing self-care in ways that prevent burnout were reported as the skills least

Figure 2: The extent to which the P-3 ELCP improved leadership skills



“The greatest way I expanded my leadership skills was when we looked at our own strengths and values. I was able to also look at my colleagues and understand better their strengths. It helped me to enter into leadership conversations with an understanding of how that person on the team works and their strengths. This has helped me in all aspects of my work.”

ECE ADMINISTRATOR

influenced, with respondents rating “a lot” or “to a great extent” at 37% and 15% respectively.

The specific application of learning to practice in local settings was critical for building and maintaining leadership skills. Regarding knowledge-building about the “other” system, a participant who came from the K-12 sector shared, “The program enabled me to further understand the early childhood education experience and how a K-12 principal could effectively support inclusion of a preschool in the K-12 spectrum in a meaningful way. It helped

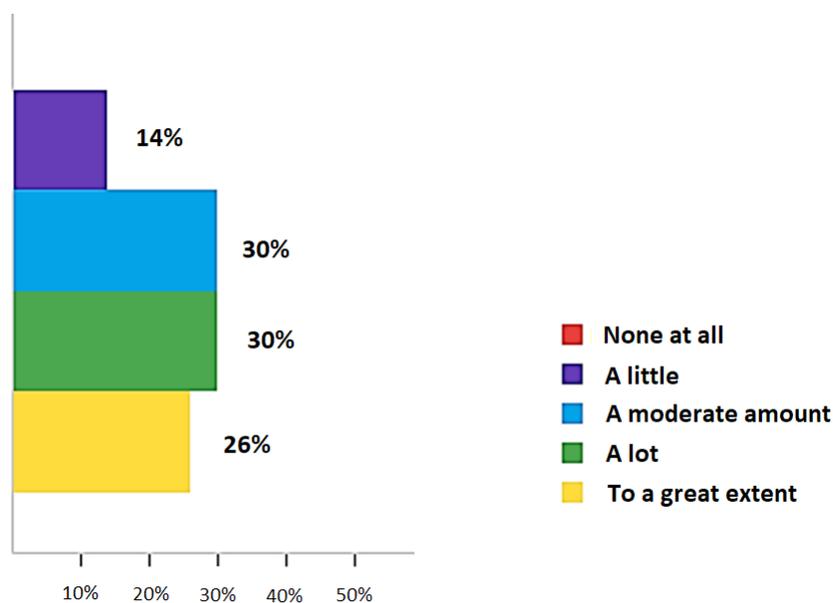
me kick holes in the arbitrary organizational barriers, effectively changing how we approach our youngest students.”

Increased Understanding of Child Development and Equity

All surveyed alumni reported that the P-3 ELCP changed their knowledge, skills, attitude, and understanding of child development and equity in a P-3 context (see Figures 3 and 4). 56% of respondents reported that their understanding of child development improved “a lot” or “to a great extent.” The primary areas of growth in knowledge of child development included improved understanding of language and brain development, age-related learning, and increased knowledge of a developmental continuum from birth through age eight. Likewise, 58% of respondents indicated that the program changed their knowledge, skills, and attitude about equity in a P-3 context “a lot” or “to a great extent.” In discussing changed understanding of equity in P-3, survey respondents documented increased awareness of personal responsibility, institutional bias, and system bias as primary areas of increased understanding.

One ECE administrator shared, “What comes to mind is CLARITY. My ARP completely changed because [of] the presentations in these two areas.” Additionally, participants reflected upon the effect of strengthening practice communicating with others about child development and equity within the workplace. As one elementary principal stated, “I think that [equity] was one of the

Figure 3: Extent to Which P-3 ELCP Increased Understanding of Child Development, Birth through Age Eight



best learnings in the P-3 ELCP. I gained a great deal of knowledge and have used it in my work promoting P-3 as an equalizer.”

Created Changes in Organizations and Communities: Cross-Sector Work

While the impacts discussed so far reside largely in individual participants, one important metric of success is whether the P-3 ELCP influenced significant changes in how organizations collaborate together. Central to achieving this goal was the cross-sector enrollment and team-based approach. Cross-sector work was critical for helping participants make practical connections across a continuum of learning from birth through age eight. Cross-Sector Work is the area in which participants documented the most growth as leaders in the survey, and where they made the most comments during interviews.

As an elementary principal stated, “the benefits of working with a team were huge; I would never have gotten the perspectives of small CBOs [community-based organizations] and other organizations who work outside the district;” while a community-based ECE provider responded it was a “huge benefit to hear voices and considerations from the variety of members of our team. Definitely broadened my perspective on both the challenges and opportunities of P-3.”

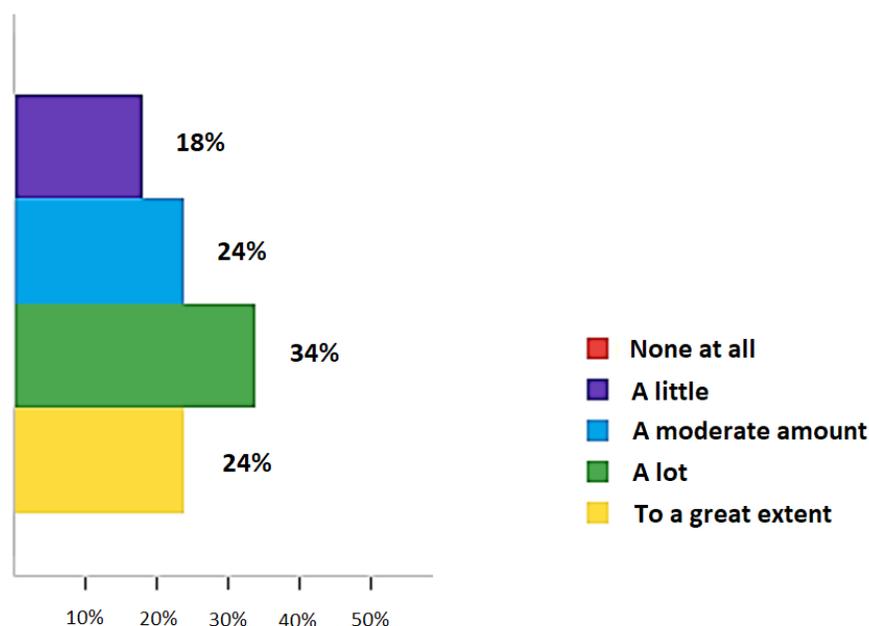
Discussion of community engagement solicited the widest range

of responses with some alumni reporting great progress while others stated they had not seen any changes. Cross-sector communication and P-3 advocacy were highlighted as areas of growth in local contexts (e.g., school, district, community), while alumni reported moderate impact on improving learning experiences in early learning, and setting visions for P-3 that were reflected in changed dynamics within their organizations. Improving family engagement, closing achievement gaps, and making major administrative changes were the categories least impacted by the Program.

Still, respondents expressed a general sense that feelings toward P-3 had shifted in subtle ways. When asked about the shifts observed in local contexts related to P-3, the principal of a P-6 school explained, “[T]here’s definitely a new value in how our kids are served before they enter Kindergarten.” An early childhood director at a K-12 school district echoed this sentiment, sharing: “I think the shift that I’m noticing is that a lot of us are doing common work that is aligned. We are talking the same language and we are helping each other get to a common goal. . . P-3 is a vocabulary that we don’t have to explain to people – they understand what that means.”

Several participants commented on how engaging cross-sector partners changed the dynamic in their local context. One participant shared, “As a community provider, I now have relationships within the [school district] that I wouldn’t have had

Figure 4: Extent to Which P-3 ELCP Changed Knowledge, Skills, Attitude, and Understanding of Equity in P-3



otherwise. I know that our work together has greater impact due to the fact that we come from various organizations. [This is] very advantageous.”

Implemented Action Research Projects

The NP-3C sought to understand the impacts of Action Research Projects on participants’ local communities including the extent to which these projects continued after graduation. Alumni were asked about available data as empirical evidence of the continuation and/or efficacy of their ARP. Just over 50% of all survey respondents reported that data had been gathered about ARPs, with the other half responding that data had not been collected, or they were unsure about the existence of data. While only half of the participants were aware of a specific form of data collection, the majority of respondents reported that some of the efforts of their ARP were in fact still happening (86% said either “yes” or “yes with modifications”). 71% of the alumni who replied that effort is still being devoted to their ARP reported that “the ARP is part of our organizational priorities and mission (It’s how we do business now).”

P-3 ELCP teams used the *Framework* and other tools to identify a problem of practice and establish goals and objectives specific to their local communities. A focus on engaging families and on transitions across ECE and K-12, were some of the most agreed-upon topics of interest for teams across the cohorts. See Appendix A for a full listing of ARP titles across all four cohorts. In interviews, alumni shared three major lessons learned with their ARP work: 1) Cross-Sector Work poses a distinct set of challenges and opportunities, 2) the ARP provided opportunities to learn more about communities, and 3) the design of the ARP had the greatest impact on feelings of efficacy and success. One alumnus, an early learning director at a K-12 school district, explained how these lessons were learned: “Our ARP was and still is about working on getting our families registered for Kindergarten earlier because we want to be ready for those families. I think we realized our lack of knowledge about systems and how to find where those [families] were, and where they were coming from.” In interviews, 76% of respondents felt that they were able to create sustainable change to their local community through their ARP work, including changing mindsets, changing program structures, and changing systems.

In response to what they see as the most important next steps to improve P-3 in their local communities, alumni highlighted a need for increased knowledge and skills of P-3, increased buy-in for and commitment to P-3, and external or cross-sector relationship building. P-3 ELCP participants faced many uphill

challenges implementing and sustaining their Action Research Projects. Though the NP-3C is encouraged by empirical and anecdotal evidence indicating continuation of these projects, barriers to their integration or institutionalization, including fiscal, organizational, and capacity challenges, remain. Since ARPs were developed during the program, administrators generally did not have designated funding sources to assure implementation and ongoing support over the long-term. Additionally, many participants work within large, complex organizations and may not have the positional power to mandate change. As P-3 leaders in their communities, participants shouldered a range of responsibilities and multiple competing priorities, including advocacy among colleagues and partners regarding the importance of quality P-3 approaches. Pushing these projects to continue requires an extraordinary level of determination and perseverance from those working to implement change.

“Without question, this has been the best professional learning experience I have ever had. I wish I could do the entire program again. I appreciate the focus on influencing practice and not just remaining in the academic and theoretical worlds. My sincere thanks for the opportunity to participate.”

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

CONCLUSION

The Washington P-3 Executive Leadership Certificate Program gained national recognition for its scope and strategic design, and similar programs now exist in a handful of other states. The Program expanded the ranks of administrators from both ECE and K-12 striving to create a high quality, equitable continuum of learning for children from birth through elementary school. Data confirm that the reach of the program extended beyond the 162 participants into their organizations, districts, and local communities, benefiting teachers, families and young children across the state. P-3 ELCP graduates have ignited hope and inspired communities with their commitment to the state's youngest learners. Over the course of the Program's four years, insights and experiences from participants deepened both the relevance and the rigor of the Program.

As the 2017 cohort neared completion, the P-3 ELCP was put on "pause." Important contextual shifts drove this decision. As noted earlier, the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) suspended its second-tier certification for practicing principals, the state's *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Education, and the governor signed legislation to create a new Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), into which the Department of Early Learning is being integrated. In 2016, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation tightened its Early Learning grantmaking to focus on PreK and, in 2018, the National P-3 Center moved from the University of Washington to the University of Colorado Denver.

Not inconsequentially, stubborn opportunity and achievement gaps persist for children in Washington, reiterating the need for a powerful cadre of administrators committed to effective P-3 approaches that can mitigate these challenges. With the tides of change, new voices are considering how to sustain Washington's focus on P-3 administrators. Key leaders from OSPI, DCYF, the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP), and highly motivated leaders from Educational Service Districts and school districts across the state are beginning to craft new strategies for the current context. The National P-3 Center looks forward to continuing to partner with key stakeholders in Washington, as the new generation of cross-sector P-3 leaders work together to ensure the success of young children.

APPENDIX A

P-3 EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE PROGRAM Action Research Projects

FRAMEWORK BUCKET	2014 COHORT	2015 COHORT	2016 COHORT	2017 COHORT
Cross-Sector Work	Because of the balanced enrollment of district/school and community-based partners in the P-3 ELCP, all ARPs included a cross-sector focus.			
Administrator Effectiveness	Because all enrollees in the P-3 ELCP were administrators, all ARPs included a focus on Administrator Effectiveness.			
Teacher Effectiveness	<p>Successful Early Learning Depends on Effective Teachers and Family Engagement: Development of a Credit-Bearing Course Tailored to African-American Female Early Learning Teachers (<i>Causey's Learning Center, Seattle</i>)</p> <p>Creating Stable, High Quality Pathways to Learning Success by Supporting PreK-K Teacher Teams (<i>Mount Vernon School District, Skagit Valley College/ Skagit Islands Head Start</i>)</p> <p>Building Membership in Our Early Learning Community: Strengthening Professional Learning Communities for Teachers and Principals (<i>Sumner School District</i>)</p> <p>Coordinating Professional Development to Increase Teacher Effectiveness: Head Start, ECEAP, Early Childhood SpEd, and Kindergarten (<i>Clover Park School District</i>)</p> <p>Equitable Professional Development Selection: A Tool to Engage Teachers in Setting Their Own Professional Learning (<i>Burlington Little School, Coho Kids Time of Boys and Girls Club of King County</i>)</p>	<p>Bridging the Gap: Effective Transition Documents and Practices for School Readiness (<i>Peninsula School District, Gig Harbor/Key Peninsula Early Learning Coalition, Rainy Dayz Preschool</i>)</p> <p>Taking a Title I School to the Top: Improving English Language Arts Smarter Balanced Assessment Scores through P-3 Teacher Engagement (<i>Quillayute Valley School District</i>)</p> <p>Cross-Sector PreK-3rd Grade Teacher Collaboration: Relationships, Conventions, and Professional Development (<i>Kent School District</i>)</p> <p>Closing Opportunity Gaps for English Language Learners: PreK-5th Grade Professional Learning Communities Focused on High Quality Balanced Literacy Instruction (<i>Tukwila School District</i>)</p> <p>Closing Achievement Gaps: Engaging Equity and Instructional Leadership Teams to Emphasize Culturally Responsive Instruction and Changed Teacher Practice (<i>Edmonds School District</i>)</p>	<p>Increasing Collaboration between PreK and Kindergarten Teams: Learning Labs as Job-Embedded Professional Learning (<i>Auburn School District</i>)</p> <p>Learning Through Play: Creating Model Kindergarten Classrooms, Learning Opportunities, Structures, and Environments (<i>Seattle Public Schools</i>)</p> <p>High-Quality Professional Learning Opportunities for Para-Educators: Increasing Effectiveness, Job Satisfaction, and Self-Efficacy (<i>Highline Public Schools</i>)</p>	<p>Cultivating Math Development in PreK: Improving Teacher Effectiveness through Strategic Professional Development in Math Instruction (<i>Kent School District, Covenant Kids Christian Preschool, Kent Youth & Family Services, Multilingual Kids Immersion School and Daycare</i>)</p> <p>Empowering Teaching and Learning through Online Collaboration: Utilizing Shared Resources to Support Quality P-3 Instruction (<i>Puget Sound Educational Service District, Prospect Enrichment Preschool, Tiny Trees Preschool, City of Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning, Associated Recreation Council</i>)</p>

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<p>Instructional Tools</p>		<p>P-3 Math Connections: Engaging Teachers to Analyze and Improve Instructional Alignment and Their Own Effectiveness <i>(Columbia School District and Educational Service District 123)</i></p>	<p>Ready Kids, Ready Schools, Ready Community: Focusing on Social and Emotional Development <i>(Peninsula School District)</i></p>	
<p>Learning Environment</p>	<p>True Inclusion: Building a Bridge between Early Learning and Special Education within a Comprehensive Early Childhood School Community <i>(Experimental Education Unit, Seattle)</i></p>			<p>Equitable and Inclusive Learning Environments: Aligning Early and Extended Learning with District Equity and Inclusion Initiatives to Increase Teacher Effectiveness <i>(Bellevue School District)</i></p> <p>A Place to Learn and Grow: Building Social-Emotional Capacity through Play-based Learning in PreK and Kindergarten <i>(Puyallup School District)</i></p> <p>Creating Interactive PreK Readiness Resources for Families and Providers: Supporting Social-Emotional Learning to Ensure a Strong Start in School <i>(Kent School District, Conk Kid's Daycare, Iraqi Community Center)</i></p>

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<p>Data-Driven Improvement</p>	<p>Engaging Families in P-3 Data Carousels, a Process to Examine Data in Order to Improve Programming (<i>Neighborhood House, Seattle</i>)</p> <p>Data Data Everywhere! How One Community Shares Data Between Districts and Community Partners (<i>Opportunity Council of Whatcom County</i>)</p>	<p>Data Carousels: Using Data to Increase Cross-Sector Collaboration Between Community-Based and School Partners (<i>Neighborhood House, Seattle</i>)</p> <p>Increasing Academic and Social-Emotional Success: Data Sharing for Academic Proficiency and Social-Emotional Development (<i>Seattle Public Schools, City of Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning, Community Day School Association, Sound Childcare Solutions, Child Care Resources, Seed of Life Center for Early Learning & Preschool</i>)</p>	<p>Sharing Data between PreK and K: Increasing Awareness and Improving Systems (<i>Highline Public Schools</i>)</p>	
<p>Engaged Families</p>	<p>Family Math Night: Connecting K-5 and Tribal Preschool (<i>Wellpinit School District</i>)</p> <p>Parent Academy: Seamless Learning Between School and Home (<i>Edmonds School District</i>)</p> <p>Engaged Families Support Early Learning Project: Co-Constructing Involvement with Parents (<i>Kent Youth and Family Services</i>)</p> <p>Scobee Parent and Child Education (<i>S.P.A.C.E.</i>): A Parent Community Partnership Program in Dick Scobee Elementary School (<i>Auburn School District</i>)</p> <p>The Pathway for Effective Pre-K to K Transitions and Beyond: Engaging Families (<i>Everett Public Schools</i>)</p>	<p>Parent Education and Leadership Project: Empowerment through Authentic Partnerships with Parents from Minority Populations (<i>Auburn School District</i>)</p> <p>Strengthening Family Connections: Data Analysis to Support Student Success and Learning through Authentic Engagement (<i>Lake Stevens School District, United Way of Snohomish County</i>)</p> <p>Empowering Families as Partners: Reforming Family Engagement to Promote Authentic Leadership through Parent Academies (<i>Highline Public Schools, Educare</i>)</p>	<p>Connect*Learn*Prepare: Collaborating and Connecting with Families of Future Students (<i>Highline Public Schools, Beautiful Savior Lutheran School, Matt Griffin YMCA, Highline Head Start</i>)</p> <p>Super K: Improving Kindergarten Transition at One Seattle School (<i>Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Head Start, City of Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning</i>)</p>	<p>Empowering and Engaging Families: Equitable Collaboration to Support Social-Emotional Learning in P-3 (<i>Auburn School District</i>)</p> <p>Engaging Families for Student Success: Enhancing Family Engagement Opportunities to Support Social-Emotional Learning in P-3 (<i>Tukwila School District, Puget Sound Educational Service District</i>)</p>

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FRAMEWORK BUCKET	2014 COHORT	2015 COHORT	2016 COHORT	2017 COHORT
<p>Continuity and Pathways</p>	<p>Building Bridges: Expanding Awareness of and Access to PreK (<i>Enumclaw School District</i>)</p> <p>Effective PreK to Kindergarten Transitions: Seven Approaches that Engage Schools, Centers, and the Community (<i>Highline Public Schools, Easter Seals Angle Lake Child Development Center, Educare</i>)</p> <p>Creating a Model P-5 School: From (Grass) Roots to Results (<i>Evergreen Public Schools</i>)</p> <p>Creating Predictable, Year-round Kindergarten Transition Systems (<i>Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Head Start</i>)</p> <p>Connected Learning: Creating a Guide for Effective Transition Practices Pre-Kindergarten through 3rd Grade (<i>Educational Service District 105, Yakima School District, Selah School District</i>)</p> <p>Make Way for PreK: Building a System for Successful Transitions from Community-Based PreK to K (<i>Seattle Public Schools</i>)</p>	<p>Developmentally Appropriate Transitions: Building Relationships to Influence Professional Development and Student Assessment (<i>Hilltop Children’s Center, Seattle</i>)</p> <p>Supporting Transitions Beyond PreK to K: A Tool for Transitions Across the Full P-3 Continuum (<i>Highline Public Schools</i>)</p> <p>Increasing Access to PreK: Connecting with Future Students and Families through Sibling Tracker Tools (<i>Highline Public Schools, John Knox Community Preschool</i>)</p>	<p>Child Find Hubs: District-City Collaboration for Children with Special Needs (<i>Seattle Public Schools and City of Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning</i>)</p> <p>Increasing Access to PreK: Involving District Staff to Engage Families and Children (<i>Enumclaw School District</i>)</p> <p>Increasing Community-Based Access to PreK: Designing a Mobile Preschool Program (<i>Kent School District, Somali Youth and Family Club, Children’s Home Society, A Child Becomes</i>)</p> <p>Developmentally Appropriate Practice Across Sectors: Shared Learning Opportunities (<i>Kent School District</i>)</p>	<p>Building Strong Relationships and Seamless Transitions: Supporting Social-Emotional Development as a Collaborative Community (<i>Bellingham Public Schools, The Madrona School</i>)</p> <p>Improving Transitions for Children and Families: Building Meaningful Relationships for Successful Transitions (<i>Highline Public Schools, Para los Niños, Educare</i>)</p> <p>Supporting Transitions through Shared Learning: Professional Learning Communities for P-3 Alignment (<i>Mukilteo School District, Quillayute Valley School District</i>)</p>

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BILL & MELINDA GATES *foundation*

The development of this report, as well as the generous support for the design and implementation of the Washington P-3 Executive Leadership Certificate Program, was provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

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The authors are grateful to the College of Education at the University of Washington, where the National P-3 Center was housed from 2011-2018. In 2018, the Center moved to University of Colorado Denver.

