



# Legislative Priorities

2020

## **EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES (ELO) QUALITY INITIATIVE**

The Expanded Learning Opportunities Quality Initiative (ELOQI) launched during the 2016–17 school year to provide the support needed to ensure that expanded learning programs can deliver the type of high-quality engagement proven to result in meaningful youth-level outcomes. ELOQI is a joint effort of School's Out Washington (SOWA); Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF); Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); Child Care Aware; and Cultivate Learning, University of Washington.

Over 100 program sites across Washington state have participated in ELOQI, receiving extensive supports, including assessments, coaching, and training, which have proven to increase program quality linked to improved youth outcomes. We estimate that over 11,000 youth across the state have directly benefited from these investments in their youth programs. Additionally, the initiative is working to create strategies to support children in school-age only child care as well as those in child care centers and family homes as part of Early Achievers.

To continue these impactful supports for summer and the following school year, ELOQI partners are working to secure **\$1 million for FY 2020 to:**

- Sustain and expand quality supports to more providers in more parts of the state;
- Grow the partnership with Child Care Aware and work with center-based and family home child care that have school-age kids and are involved with Early Achievers; and
- Work with DCYF to provide a set of quality supports to programs that are specifically designed to work with foster youth and adjudicated youth.



## **SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE**

School-age only child care is a vital expanded learning opportunity (ELO) supporting academic growth and social-emotional learning. These programs run before and after school, during the summer, and holiday breaks for children ages 5-12 and are a critical support for working parents. Over 30% of children on the Working Connections subsidy are school-age, yet most child care discussions are only focused on zero-to-five. Below are three legislative requests for 2020.

**Subsidy:** Child care subsidy rates are well below market value and many low-income families still pay a portion of child care costs. Given the cost of care and providers' struggle to stay in business and provide a living wage, **rate increases should be made available to all child care providers.**

**Quality:** While SOWA and ELOQI partners are working to align with Early Achievers (EA), the EA system was not built for school-age youth or providers. The **ELOQI should continue to expand** and support the school-age child care field in partnership with the EA system.

**State Infrastructure and Support:** Any legislation regarding child care should have specific language that will **support and strengthen school-age child care.**

### ***YOUTH DEVELOPMENT***

Programs serving children and youth ages five through young adulthood – such as high-quality expanded learning opportunities, mentoring, and case/resource management – provide time for children and youth to engage in learning outside of the classroom. This helps them to build relationships with caring adults and other youth, apply academic concepts and social emotional learning in their own world/realities, and break down barriers and shape pathways for their own success in education and life. To grow and sustain this work, we have three goals for the 2020 session:

1. Increased resources to provide culturally engaging opportunities to learn and grow through expanded learning; mentorship case and resource management; and other high-quality youth development activities such as the OSPI Academic, Mentoring and Innovation (AIM) program.
2. Increased training and supports to provide trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and social and emotionally rich programming such as the ELO Quality Initiative, mentoring quality, and ensuring school-based professional development includes community partners.
3. Integration and alignment of youth development programming, funding, and supports across the day and year, from school to community including additional FTEs in the DCYF Adolescent Unit.



### ***PUGET SOUND TAXPAYER ACCOUNTABILITY ACCOUNT***

This Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account (PSTAA) aims to improve educational outcomes for youth in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties who are low-income, homeless, and/or in the foster care system. Counties will receive proportional funding based on Sound Transit population and will determine best use of funds at the local level. SOWA supports sustaining PSTAA including promoting strategies that include an accountability plan for each county and a robust role for community engagement and collaboration in the planning for and utilization of this funding.

### ***OTHER KEY ISSUES:***

- Sustaining and growing the Building Communities Fund and Youth Recreational Capital Fund.
- Incorporating ELOs into a robust and innovate statewide career exploration and awareness strategy as a focus in career connected and work-integrated learning efforts.
- Promoting collaborative funding streams and policies that integrate programming and strategies to support children and youth in and out of school and between schools and community-based organizations.