WaKIDS - Early Learning Collaboration Framework

Interim Planning

- Attend WaKIDS - Early Learning Collaboration (ELC) Planning Meeting
  - Thrive by Five Washington will be convening WaKIDS ESD leads, WaKIDS Coalition leads, and teams involved in the 2011-2012 WaKIDS - ELC “pilot” to discuss:
    - 2011-2012 implementation: successes and challenges
    - 2012-2013 WaKIDS Early Learning Collaboration Framework

- Develop 2012-2013 Regional WaKIDS – ELC Action Plan and associated budget, and Partnership Agreement defining the roles and responsibilities between the ESD and Coalition – Due November 9th at noon as part of the Thrive Community Momentum Grant RFP. Please work with the Early Learning Regional Coalition Lead to incorporate the WaKIDS – ELC Action Plan proposal into the larger RFP.

WaKIDS - Early Learning Collaboration Goals:

The goal of the collaboration component of WaKIDS is to increase communication and build connections between kindergarten teachers and early learning providers to promote smooth and successful transitions to kindergarten for kids. To advance this goal, the WaKIDS – ELC will bring professionals in both the early learning and K-12 systems together in order to:

1. Build and strengthen relationships between early learning providers and kindergarten teachers;
2. Develop a shared understanding and common expectations for kindergarten readiness;
3. Share emerging best practices within and across regions;
4. Share and better familiarize districts and the early learning community with Teaching Strategies GOLD, the data being collected, and the reports that can be generated;
5. Analyze regional WaKIDS data to inform practice and improve future school readiness; and
6. Coordinate with districts and elementary schools to engage kindergarten teachers, elementary principals and administrators in the ESD/Coalition convenings.

WaKIDS - Early Learning Collaboration Framework Overview:

One of the critical elements of a seamless P-3 system is to ensure that data, information and best practices from the early learning and K-12 system inform and influence each other. The WaKIDS – ELC is an opportunity to develop and strengthen relationships and coordinate efforts between early learning providers and Kindergarten teachers –strong and meaningful connections between the two systems being critical in building a seamless P-3 system and ensuring smooth transitions into kindergarten for kids.
Last year, the WaKIDS State Work Team made the decision to fund the WaKIDS Early Learning Collaboration (ELC) work through the Early Learning Regions to support the development of this specific component and give EL shared ownership of this work. A deliverable of this past year’s “pilot” work on this component was a framework to guide a consistent statewide approach to the Early Learning Collaboration component that is based on the lessons learned, promising practices, and conditions for success that regions experienced in implementation. The framework has gone through several iterations after feedback from the regional WaKIDS Leads with their request that the framework be much more specific and prescriptive. Although the underlying conceptual framework remains unchanged, the words and details have been refined to meet the needs of regions as they grapple with implementing this component of WaKIDS. This framework was informed by the WaKIDS District Memo and ESD-OSPI WaKIDS Agreement and developed out of the lessons learned from the ELC implementation of this last school year, the goals of the ELC component outlined in the ESD/OSPI agreement, and is informed by intensive feedback from regional WaKIDS leads.

This framework is meant to guide the collaborative work happening regionally between the ESD and Coalition, and ensure there is consistency and quality assurance for this work across the state. This document is meant to represent the baseline for consistency across the state as we step into a new phase of implementation and we are learning and refining as we progress; this framework does not intent to prohibit but encourage any additional activities to enhance early learning collaborations at the regional, county, district, school, or community level. Additionally, we recognize that regions may have different ways to reach the goals stated above, and may want/need to individualize this framework so that their work is relevant for their community. Modifications to the framework that will achieve the stated goals of the WaKIDS – ELC are allowed so long as there is adequate justification for the new approach. Requests for modifications must be approved in writing by Thrive by Five Washington. Please allow at least two weeks for review of requests.

**WaKIDS - Early Learning Collaboration Framework Key Components:**

The WaKIDS – ELC Framework includes the coordination of 2 groups:

- **The Regional Early Learning Collaboration Steering Committee** is a small, representative group (described in detail below) that grapples with the WaKIDS data, considers what actions might be taken given the data on children in the region, develops a regional 2013-2014 action plan, and reports to the ESD and Coalition.

- **The Regional WaKIDS Convening** is a meeting that includes participation from all participating WaKIDS kindergarten teachers, principals, early learning providers, and others (described in detail below) with the purpose of coming together to build relationships across the two systems, understand the seminal documents of both systems, and begin to build muscle around collaboration.
1. REGIONAL EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATION STEERING COMMITTEE: ESD and Coalition work collaboratively to convene a Regional Early Learning Collaboration Steering Committee that:
   • Includes (but is not limited to) representatives from the following areas:
     o WaKIDS participating kindergarten teachers
     o WaKIDS participating principals
     o Early Learning Providers to include (but is not limited to):
       ▪ Family, Friend, and Neighbor provider
       ▪ ECEAP/Head Start teacher or director
       ▪ Licensed child care provider (home and center)
     o District Assessment Coordinators
     o ECEAP Family Advocate
     o Regional ESD representative
     o Early Learning Regional Coalition representative
     o Regional R&R representative
   • Meets a minimum of 2 times between October 2012 and June 2013 to explore the WaKIDS data from your region and, and identify ways to use it to build a seamless P-3 system and ensure children and families have smooth transitions into kindergarten.
     Meeting 1: Discuss and build consensus on an action plan for analyzing and using WaKIDS and other relevant data. Determine what must be known and understood about what the skills and characteristics children possess upon entering kindergarten in order to support meaningful collaborative work between early learning and K-12 professionals, and create a more seamless P-3 system. Below are some possible questions to consider:
       • What is the data telling us about what skills and characteristics children in our region have when they enter kindergarten?
       • What critical questions must be answered to ensure that the data is reliable and not biased?
       • Does our region have an “opportunity gap”? If so, what does it look in our region?
       • Are there specific ways to analyze the data that will help us better understand the current realities if different populations of kids (race/ethnicity, socio-economic, English-language learners, etc.)
       • With whom do we want to share the data?
       • Do different audiences require different framing and messaging to understand and use the data appropriately?
     o Meeting 2:
       ▪ Receive the analyzed data according to the plan developed
       ▪ Apply the data to your action plan
• Discuss and determine recommendations for specific actions that could or need to be taken to utilize the data in a meaningful and effective way in the 2013-2014 school year pending availability of funds
  • Regional-level recommendations to inform/create a regional action plan for 2013-2014 WaKIDS - ELC implementation
• Submit recommendations to the ESD and Coalition
  • Example recommendations:
    o Required Professional Development for K-3 teachers
    o Share professional development opportunities in literacy for area k-3 and early learning professionals
    o Child Development courses embedded into elementary teaching certificates
    o State to convene a committee to establish statewide shared definition of school readiness for mainstream, ELL/dual language learners, and children with an IEP
    o Regionally coordinated community cafes to broaden the conversation with diverse communities and develop relationships

2. REGIONAL WAKIDS CONVENING: ESD and Coalition WaKIDS Partnership to co-convene a minimum of 1 regional meeting that:
  • Includes participation of WaKIDS participating kindergarten teachers, other key k-12 stakeholders involved in WaKIDS as regionally appropriate, and early learning providers in the region
  • Explains the WaKIDS process with an intentional focus on the ELC component
    o Provides: context, background, purpose, overall goals, and key strategies for the 2012-13 school year
    o Develop: Shared understanding, commitment, and responsibility for implementing WaKIDS statewide
  • Promotes awareness and use of foundational early learning documents, including (but not limited to):
    o WaKIDS Teaching Strategies GOLD Objectives and Dimensions: http://www.k12.wa.us/WaKIDS/Resources/pubdocs/GOLD_HNDT_Objectives_WaKIDS.pdf
    o The Common Core State Standards: http://www.k12.wa.us/Corestandards/default.aspx
The Professional Development Core Competencies:
http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/partnerships/docs/CoreCompetencies.pdf

- Communicates the implementation process for the WaKIDS collaboration component including the purpose and role of the steering committee
- Introduce the work of the steering committee, including data analyzed if available
- Share the work of the steering committee and their analysis of the data, ideas of ways to strengthen collaboration

Modifications

As noted above, this framework is not meant to be the entire picture of what this component will look like in regions. We know districts and schools will be participating in various capacities guided by the WaKIDS Memo to districts and that regions will require adaptations to meet local needs and priorities within the scope of this component of WaKIDS. This framework represents the consistent approach regions will take statewide but is inclusive of modifications and additional elements that regions choose to incorporate. Modifications to the framework that will achieve the stated goals of the WaKIDS – ELC are allowed so long as there is adequate justification for the new approach. Requests for modifications must be approved in writing by Thrive by Five Washington. Please allow at least two weeks for review of requests.

Examples of modifications/additions to this framework that were included in the WaKIDS Memo to districts included:

- Hosting one or more meetings with pre-kindergarten providers in your community to: develop a shared understanding and common expectations for kindergarten readiness, share and better familiarize participants with Teaching Strategies GOLD dimensions, and analyze school-level WaKIDS data to inform practice and improve future school readiness
- Participating in cross-site visits with early learning programs within the local community
- Hosting and/or participating in joint professional development opportunities

Acceptable Use of Funds:

Capacity to support the WaKIDS – ELC implementation will be provided for both the ESD and Coalition leads. Additionally, there will be funds available for activities to implement the framework. WaKIDS – ELC activity funds can support:

- Implementation of this framework
- Outreach and relationship development to foster participation and partnership
- Subs, teacher time, or incentives to encourage attendance of meetings
- Mileage reimbursement
- Meeting space and food expenses
Of critical note, we recognize the importance of outreach and relationship development as a foundational piece to ensure maximum buy-in, participation and commitment so that work is successful. We encourage regions to include plans describing how outreach and relationship development will be conducted to increase and strengthen relationships across systems and provide a solid foundation from which this work can grow.

Additionally, we recognize that while this framework is focusing on a regional approach, much of this work is very local and relationship-based and that local and regional work is intimately and critically connected. We are committed to funding the regional approach but are open to the funding supporting additional work on a local level.

**Additional ESD and Coalition Responsibilities:**

We recognize that the way each ESD and Coalition in a region decide to divide their responsibilities and shape the terms of their collaborative partnership for implementation of this framework may look different in every region. Below is a list of responsibilities of for ESDs and Coalitions that will be necessary elements to include in the Partnership Agreement which will define which party is the lead for various parts of this body of work.

- ESDs and Coalitions will work together to conduct outreach and develop relationships to identify and recruit participants for the Regional Early Learning Collaboration Steering Committee
- ESDs will work to conduct outreach and develop relationships to identify and recruit WaKIDS kindergarten teachers to attend and participate in the regional collaboration meetings
- Coalitions will work to conduct outreach and develop relationships to identify and recruit early learning providers (ECEAP/Head Start providers and/or directors, licensed child care providers (both family and center based), and informal FFN providers) to attend and participate in the regional collaboration meetings. To be successful in this effort, it will be helpful for Coalitions to:
  - Identify where children are being cared for prior to entrance to kindergarten in your region
  - Develop relationships and invite early learning providers from all types of care settings that children are in (ECEAP, Head Start, licensed child care, informal care)
- ESDs and Coalitions will, to the extent possible, ensure that the Steering Committee membership and Regional Meeting attendance are representative of the racial, geographic, and provider variances in regions
- In partnership, plan, coordinate, and staff all collaboration steering committee and regional meetings
- Interface with OSPI to get regional data analysis
- Attend November WaKIDS data and reporting training (information to be announced)
- Collect feedback and meeting evaluation from each participant, including participant information and demographics with a survey/tool provided from Thrive
- Develop communication strategy to introduce regional data analysis to Steering Committee
• Develop joint ESD and Coalition action plan and recommendations for 2013-2014 implementation based on the Steering Committee’s 2013-2014 recommendations/action plan
• Complete joint quarterly and final reports to Thrive and OSPI. Report templates will be distributed at a later date. Please send all reports to Lauren Hipp at lauren@thrivebyfivewa.org
• Attend 2 statewide meetings in August 2012 and late Spring 2013

Definitions:

Participant in the regional collaboration meetings: An early learning professional or kindergarten teacher who attends both meetings and fills out the evaluation survey at the conclusion of each meeting. This definition does not preclude the participation of other people, but sets a standard for how we measure participation.

Early Learning Professional: An early learning care provider including licensed child care, FFN, ECEAP, and Head Start providers.

Kindergarten teacher: A teacher who instructs kindergarten and is participating in WaKIDS.

Educational Service District: The 9 regional ESDs that serve the school districts across Washington State.

Early Learning Regional Coalition: The 10 Early Learning Regional Coalitions across Washington State which share the boundaries of the ESD regions with the exception of Puget Sound, which is split into 2 large counties: King and Pierce.

Partnership Agreement: This is a required piece of the contract process. It is a formalized agreement between the ESD and Coalition that articulates the responsibilities identified to carry out the 2012-2013 Regional WaKIDS-ELC Action Plan and identify who will be responsible for each piece of the work.

2012-2013 Regional WaKIDS – ELC Action Plan: The action plan each ESD and Coalition must collectively establish based upon the WaKIDS – ELC Framework that will serve as their contract Scope of Work and the deliverables to which they will be held accountable.

2013-2014 Regional WaKIDS – ELC Action Plan: The action plan that each ESD and Coalition develops in partnership and is largely informed by the work of the Steering Committee and is submitted as part of the final report for contract deliverables.

WaKIDS Memo to Districts: The March 2012 OSPI Memorandum to all districts regarding expectations for participation in WaKIDS.

ESD – OSPI WaKIDS Agreement: The June 2012 agreement between the Educational Service Districts and OSPI regarding their respective responsibilities in the 2012-2013 implementation of WaKIDS.