



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING
PO BOX 40970, Olympia, Washington 98504-0970
(360) 725-4665 • FAX (360) 413-3482

October 3, 2008

Dear Tribal Leader:

I am so pleased to report that the Department of Early Learning's (DEL) Second Annual Tribal Early Care and Education conference was a great success! Almost 200 participants representing 26 of the federally recognized Tribal Nations attended the DEL sponsored event. We were grateful and honored that the Tulalip Nation co-hosted at their beautiful facility in Marysville. Tulalip Chairman Sheldon was able to join the opening session briefly and we appreciated his welcome, along with that of Vice Chair Marie Zackuse. A joint DEL and Tribal Nations' planning team developed the conference agenda that included extraordinary workshops on the role of language, culture and family support in positive child development. DEL is hopeful that state resources will allow for this to continue to be an annual event.

The gathering on September 12 and 13 also allowed me and my staff, Sonali Patel, DEL Senior Policy Advisor, and Allison Cusick, DEL Partnerships Administrator and Tribal Nation Liaison, to meet with Tribal Leaders and Chairs, or their designees, to discuss the Centennial Accord and the relationship between our new department and the Tribal Nations. Specifically, we shared information about early learning issues and discussed how we can best move forward to develop a strong government-to-government agreement under the Accord. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to sit down face-to-face and start this important discussion with the Tribal Leaders and Chairs who were able to join us.

Thank you so much to:

- Leonard Forsman, Chair, Suquamish Tribe, who facilitated the meeting;
- Mel Sheldon, Chair, Tulalip Tribes;
- Joseph Pavel, Chair, Skokomish Indian Tribe;
- Liz Mueller, Vice-Chair Tribal Council, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe;
- Marie Zackuse, Vice Chair, Tulalip Tribes;
- Bernie Thomas, Business Council Member, Lummi Nation;
- Ted Solomon, Business Council Member, Lummi Nation;
- Dana Matthews, Samish Tribe, Council Secretary;
- Marie Riebe, Hoh Tribe, Tribal Council Secretary;
- Jeromy Sullivan, Council Member, Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe;
- Karen Condon, Business Council Member, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.
- Helen Fenrich, Government Affairs, Tulalip Tribe;
- Lloyd Commander, Head Start Director, Chehalis Tribe; and
- Laura Waukechon, CDC Manager, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe

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This was a wonderful beginning and we look forward to a continued thoughtful, collaborative process that is inclusive and respectful of each of the Tribal Nations in Washington State and of the new Department of Early Learning's mission and capacity.

In the afternoon of September 12, several Tribal Nation early learning staff members met with DEL staff members in order to plan the next steps. Tribes represented during the afternoon meeting included the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, Tulalip Tribe, Samish Indian Nation, Skokomish Indian Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, and the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe. It was agreed that as we develop an agreement reflective of our shared values around young children, an interim measure would be for DEL to follow the guidelines in the DSHS Administrative Policy 7.01, Attachment 3 – Communication and Consultation Protocol. It was also agreed that regularly scheduled meetings would be held to develop the DEL – Tribal Nations government to government agreement. A planning group including both Tribal Nations and DEL met on October 1 at Samish with a subsequent meeting set for October 29 at Suquamish.

I expect that by working together, our staff will have a new draft agreement ready for our review and consideration well before June 30, 2009, when our current coverage under the DSHS plan ends. I very much look forward to talking with you again soon, and please do not hesitate to contact me directly at (360) 725-4584.

Sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jone M. Bosworth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jone M. Bosworth
Director