



**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR WORKFORCE EDUCATION
EXEMPLARY PROGRAM AWARDS
COVER SHEET**

Please include this cover sheet with your application. **The applicant's college must be a NCWE member.**

AWARD CRITERIA (check only one)

☒ **Credit Workforce Development Program**

☐ **Noncredit Workforce Development Program**

NAME OF PROGRAM: Early Childhood Education Bachelor of Applies Science

Submitted By: Annie Garrett and Samantha Dolan

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VERIFICATION STATEMENT

I verify authorship and completion of this project in accordance with ethical and practical standards and certify that if credit should be given to other agencies, organizations, businesses, or persons who have been involved in the project for sponsorship, authorship, funding, etc., such credit is given in program materials submitted for consideration or in a letter to that effect. I hereby grant the National Council for Workforce Education (NCWE) the right to reproduce part or all of this entry for purposes of promoting NCWE Exemplary Program Awards with credit given to this community college applicant.

Electronic signature: Samantha Dolan

Date: 5/19/21

SUBMISSION DATE

Electronically by **May 19, 2021, 4p EDT.**

To submit email to: executivedirector@ncwe.org

Please rename this file with your college name. Return this file with your application in PDF format.

AWARD CRITERIA AND EVALUATION

Executive Summary 20 Points Describe your project, limiting the summary to one page: 1.5-2 line spacing, 1" margins, and 11pt font.

North Seattle College (NSC), a primarily two-year college, has an applied baccalaureate degree in early childhood education and a full pathway leading from basic skills to the baccalaureate degree. We are doing groundbreaking work to ensure diversity in the early educator field as the field professionalizes in Washington State.

Current research shows that as educational standards for teachers rise, the field becomes more homogenous. We see this in K-12 education in Washington, where the percentage of students of color is increasing rapidly; from 40.9% in 2012-13 to 45.6% in 2018-19. We know that teachers of color produce better outcomes for these children, yet the population of K-12 teachers remains overwhelmingly white (89% in 2018-19) due in part to the high educational standards required for the profession and systemic barriers built into higher education institutions.

As the state raises its educational standards for early learning, North Seattle College is working with local, state and national partners to build upon existing efforts to resist duplicating the unjust imbalance that exists in our K-12 system.

Methods for accomplishing this goal include creating language-specific on ramps to pathways that lead to baccalaureate degrees for early childhood education (ECE) professionals speaking first languages other than English; creating math pathways that will help ECE professionals complete requirements for Associate and Bachelor degrees; expanding wage advocacy; "fast tracking" diverse professionals through Master's degree programs to diversify ECE higher education faculty; and information gathering to further identify barriers to diversity in the ECE field.

NSC has been particularly successful in this work as evidenced by its size and comprehensiveness of its program—one of the top three largest ECE preparation programs in the state--and the innovative work it has already done to support diversity in the field such as language immersion cohorts at the certificate level. In addition, NSC operates within a state that is proactively examining issues around compensation for ECE professionals. We feel strongly that our work is not only helping to maintain the diversity of the field as it professionalizes, which is beneficial to children and families of color, but that it will ultimately help to bring economic justice to early childhood educators, which is beneficial to all who work in this field.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION *Limit this section to 3 pages: 1.5-2 line spacing, 1" margins, and 11pt font. DO NOT SEND supporting materials at this time.*

Partnerships and Collaborations 30 Points Describe the partnerships and collaborations developed in implementing this program. How does the project fit within local workforce and economic development needs? How is the project funded? Have you leveraged resources to support the initiative?

Our Early Childhood Education program has grown from one of the smaller programs in the state to one of the top three in a state comprised of 34 community and technical colleges. We went from offering certificates and an Associate 10 years ago to offering an I-BEST through BAS pathway with new partnerships with Masters degree granting institutions. Our BAS program has experienced growth from 25 in its launch year of 2016 to over 200 enrollments in spring 2021.

We owe our exceptional success largely to the robust local, state, and national partnerships we have built with both public and private partners.

Local:

We are going on our third year of partnership with King County's *Best Starts for Kids (BSK)*, a voter-approved initiative providing comprehensive supports from prenatal to adulthood to support King County's kids on a path to lifelong health and well-being. BSK has worked with NSC to improve outreach, enrollment and retention of early learning educators enrolled at Seattle Colleges through the Early Childhood Education Student Success Project.

We have also worked with the City of Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning to fund a Navigator position bridging the gap between the City's Universal Preschool Pilot Program and our credentials, removing barriers to entry and completion for teachers who need to increase credentials. Our newest partnership is with Seattle Public Schools, Seattle Central College and the University of Washington College of Education. We are working together to launch the Academy for Rising Educators (ARE) Bachelor of Applied Science degree at North Seattle College, which exists to support paraeducators of color to become licensed teacher of record in K-12 settings, so that K-12 students of color might find themselves better reflected in the teacher population.

Finally, our partnership with the Imagine Institute has helped us to build our language immersion cohorts at the Certificate level as well as a Family Home Childcare Collaborative group. We now offer language immersion cohorts in five languages and are working to launch an Associate in Spanish in 2022 and a Bachelor's Degree in 2023. The Imagine Institute is a nonprofit organization that provides grassroots professional development opportunities to early care and education professionals throughout Washington State with a goal to "...elevate the conditions of this profession while maintaining its incredible diversity." Our aligned mission has made this partnership a fruitful one.

State:

Child Care Aware of Washington was an invaluable partner to NSC in developing and launching our BAS degree and have served on our program advisory board since 2015. Within his partnership we have found ways to braid funding to make student scholarships go farther, and to fund Masters degrees for three of our graduates with their master's degree pilot. North Seattle College has over twice as many students funded through Child Care Aware scholarships as any other baccalaureate granting institution in the state.

We also partner with the policy arm of Child Care Aware of Washington (CCA). We host advocacy events for students and community members twice a year where Child Care Aware sends the director of policy and advocacy to talk about current issues within Washington State and provide an introduction to advocacy. Child Care Aware of Washington is an essential partner in helping our students understand the political landscape, and how to use their voices.

NSC has a strong relationship with the Washington Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). DCYF has representation on our advisory board since 2015 and provided input on the development of our BAS degree and following programmatic changes. They also provide updates to the board about initiatives the department is taking on. Several NSC faculty and staff were present at the Washington State Early Learning Strategic Planning meetings convened by DCYF in January and February of this year, and we have facilitated focus groups with DCYF to ensure that our Somali, Spanish and Arabic speaking students have a voice in state policy.

North Seattle College also houses My Brother's Teacher, a collaboration with the University of Washington and local school districts. MBT seeks to diversify the early learning workforce by recruiting male high school Black and Brown students from the Greater Seattle area to complete college coursework in early childhood education at North Seattle College (NSC) and funded summer internships in Seattle's early learning programs. These young men will receive 60 service learning hours and ongoing mentorship for their work. Although programming provides a supported path to and through college to pursue careers in education, Fellows are only committed to completing [Phase 1](#) of the My Brother's Teacher pathway.

With the University of Washington (UW), North Seattle College, Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) and Seattle Public Schools collectively working together, MBT is a program that will have an immediate impact in early childhood education. MBT offers early childhood education training, mentoring, and scholarships so that MBT Fellows will become certificated early learning teachers. Funding is provided by the Stranahan Foundation, Seattle Promise Program, and the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (FEPP) Levy of Seattle Public Schools.

National:

Our partnership with the Bainum Family Foundation is currently in its fifth year. The Foundation funds scholarships each year and fuels growth by investing in our outreach work. It also contributes to innovation by providing seed funding for pilot projects. For example, it funded our advocacy work when we first launched it as well as our work to provide extra supports to retain faculty of color.

Our largest grant to date has just begun. We were one of six programs nationally to receive the Early Educator Investment Collaborative Award to the tune of \$337,000. This grant aims to transform teacher preparation programs by adding supports and programs for BIPOC students and those historically under represented in lead teachers and administrator roles. This grant strengthens out partnerships with DCYF, CCA, and establishes closer connection with the Public Education Standards Board. With this grant we are able to develop pathways from initial certificates through completion of Master's Degrees to ensure their is a diver early educator and teacher preparation workforce.

Economic Impact *20 Points What is the potential economic impact of the program on your community, both short and long-term?*

The Association of Washington Businesses states that 27% of Washington parents quit their job or left training due to childcare issues. They estimate that turnover and missed work due to childcare directly costs the state \$2.08 billion, and our current state of childcare leads to \$6.5 billion in direct and opportunity costs due. Childcare programs struggle to meet the education requirement of the state, and publicly funded childcare program like Head Start and Washington's' Early Childhood Education Assistance Program require Baccalaureate degrees of lead teachers. A shortage of qualified teachers leads to a shortage of childcare availability for working parents. Our online BAS allows working students from across the state to meet these qualifications.

Our students become in demand and can attain higher paying positions when they attain a BAS, and we have seen many students accept higher paying positions while still in the program.

Program Results *20 Points Discuss program results: completion statistics, retention strategies, certifications and/or degrees earned, number of people placed in jobs, etc.*

The BAS program has produced 125 graduates since our first graduating class in 2017 and anticipates adding approximately 40 more by the end of the 2021. Students who persist with us past the first quarter of cohort are achieving approximately 96% rate of completion within 4 years. Our records indicate that about 95% of students persist through the first quarter and from there about 95% of students complete within 3 years of cohort start date to graduation. We attribute this unusually high completion rate to several factors, amongst them: cohort model, an excellent faculty consisting of 80% instructors of color with all faculty holding doctorates, dedicated advisor/manager, low turnover attributed to college leadership, a self-sustaining budget, political alignment/support as seen through partnerships and grants and state professionalization requirements, and high functionality of student services at North Seattle College such as high responsiveness of Office of Financial Aid.

In terms of job placement, our BAS students are incumbent workers. Many come to us because the professionalization requirements in their current workplace are increasing. As such we measure success not by job placement alone but also by promotions, pay increases, and teaching confidence levels. In an alumni survey conducted Fall 2020, 56 out of 117 graduates responded. 80% said they have experienced professional growth (pay increase, promotion of some sort, or better job) and 93% reported having increased confidence in their teaching skills.

Replication *10 Points Describe how this program can be replicated in other locations as a model or concept?*

We were the first in the state to launch a BAS in Early Childhood Education. There are now more than 10 colleges statewide offering some variation of this degree. The presence of a state Early Childhood Education Teacher Prep Council has made the replication swift given the strong communication between faculty leaders within our profession in this state. We participate and present regularly in conferences such as the Community College Baccalaureate Association, League of Innovation and National Council on

Race and Ethnicity in order to share out our practices on a national scale. Presently, we are eager to develop our Academy for Rising Educators program to address the persistent shortage of teachers of color being successfully supported, recruited and retained into K-12 settings. There is great interest in this “Grow Your Own” partnership in our region and we anticipate that cross-pollination is going to move the needle on this persistent equity gap that plagues not only our city and state but our nation.