

# KLAMATH PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

February 28, 2024 | 10:00 AM – Noon

## Attendance

Dena Haudenschild  
Jill O'Donnell  
Joseph Maurer  
Megan Williams  
Christy Hampton

Melinda Gomez  
David Lev  
Lalo Barraza  
Mary Ruiz  
Sylvia Cox

Jessie DuBose  
Gillian Wesenberg  
Heather Freiling  
Ronda Osborn  
Laura Barajas

Please note: For ease of member access, South-Central Early Learning Hub – Klamath Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings will be held virtually unless otherwise notified.

## Welcome and Introduction

The Klamath PAC reviewed and approved the January minutes. Joseph Maurer made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Melinda Gomez seconded the motion. No further discussion.

## South Central Early Learning Hub

Gillian Wesenberg advised the Hub is working closely with Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC) and Klamath Family Head Start (KFHS) to align Preschool Promise enrollment with other publicly funded preschool programs. Preschool Promise received a two-year grant for the first time, enabling the Hub to begin the enrollment process earlier which enables the Hub to partner with Head Start at events.

The Family Governance Advisory Committee is doing well. The Hub contracted Mitten Mommas to help guide the work of the Family Governance Advisory Committee. Mitten Mommas will be working with parents to talk about skills that the parents requested more information about. A couple examples include advocating for their children, and advocacy for families at a state level. Parents receive a \$50 stipend for each meeting they attend. If partners know of anyone interested in joining the Family Governance Advisory Committee, contact Danielle Walker, [Danielle.walker@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:Danielle.walker@douglasesd.k12.or.us), or Athena Wikstrom, [athena.wikstrom@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:athena.wikstrom@douglasesd.k12.or.us).

Early Childhood Bills are moving into the Ways and Means Committee. The legislative short session ends on March 10, 2024. Current legislative topics include:

- Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) – ERDC is a subsidy program that helps working families and students with the cost of childcare. The recent ERDC expansion created funding shortages and resulted in a waitlist for families to receive ERDC benefits. Funding will likely be around \$99 million, which is lower than the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) request of \$250 million. Without the full amount of requested funding, it is likely that the waitlist for ERDC will remain in effect.
- CHIPS Childcare for Construction Workforce – requesting \$5 million to assist Oregon CHIP manufacturers with subsidies to help build construction infrastructure.
- Childcare Infrastructure Fund – requesting \$5 million State General Funds to support childcare facilities. The funding would better serve licensed home-based providers and small childcare centers, as the lottery funds process doesn't help them.
- Early Literacy Success – requesting \$10 million for the Birth through Five Literacy Plan. The funding request is in alignment with DELIC recommendations.
- Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) – requesting \$22 million to support a 5% caseload growth.
- Early Learning Educator Scholarship Program – requesting \$2.5 million to support Early Learning Educator Scholarship Program. The funding request is to meet the needs of program expansion.

- Stabilization Funding -- Relief Nurseries, Healthy Families Oregon, and Nurse Family Partnership are requesting stabilization funding to sustain operations and grow services.

### **Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) - Presentation**

Megan Williams joined the Klamath Professional Advisory Committee to discuss Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) support for families experiencing homelessness. She shared this information:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a cash assistance program for families with little or no income.
  - Families can apply for the TANF program at any time online, over the phone, or by going into the ODHS office.
  - Each family receiving TANF has a Family Coach assigned to them.
  - Families receiving TANF must participate in the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program. The JOBS program helps remove barriers to employment and move individuals into job seeking activities.
  - Both TANF and JOBS are strength-based, and family led. ODHS staff assist individuals to meet their specific family's goals and needs.
- Support to find affordable housing is a top priority if a family indicates homelessness or displacement. Peer mentors and ISRIS workers can provide some transportation to look for housing and assist with applications. Support for application fees and move-in expenses may be available.
- ODHS contracts with Klamath Lake Community Action Services (KLCAS) and Klamath Housing Authority (KHA) to help provide housing stability. Both KLCAS and Klamath Housing Authority (KHA) are on-site at ODHS every other week. Individuals can apply for KLCAS programs and KHA Section 8 Housing Vouchers.
- ODHS can also co-manage some cases with Cascade Health Alliance (CHA) and The Klamath Tribes.
- The ODHS Domestic Violence (DV) Grant program provides a \$1,200 grant to individuals fleeing domestic violence.
  - The grant can be used to help individuals find and establish safe and stable housing.
  - ODHS works with Klamath Advocacy Center, who sometimes assist with additional costs.
- The ODHS Family Stability Project is receiving a grant from the Doris Duke Foundation. More information will be available in April.
  - The Family Stability Project focuses on prevention and stabilization so families can stay together without child welfare involvement.
  - For a referral to the Family Stability Project, a family can complete a release of information with child welfare. Once the release of information is in place, the family stability team can reach out to the family.

Jessie DuBose shared the Family Stability Project works with families whose students have been identified with poor school attendance. If you are working with families with school attendance issues, you can email [D11.truancy@odhsoha.oregon.gov](mailto:D11.truancy@odhsoha.oregon.gov).

### **Kindergarten Readiness Strategies – Discussion**

Klamath Family Head Start is getting ready for kindergarten transitions. Teachers and parents are co-creating “All About Me” sheets about their children. The sheets are shared with schools the children will be attending, based their school catchment area. Information includes educational aspects as well as social-emotional aspects.

In the past, Head Start has hosted literacy nights where school teachers and administrators attended and provided activities for children. Some Head Start classrooms in smaller communities go on field trips to their elementary school. Head Start strives to provide parents with the tools to support them as their number one advocate for their child.

Children that are identified with special needs with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) transition well into kindergarten. Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) schedules transition meetings with schools and parents to develop Individualized Education Plans (IEP). There is a challenge when students have not

been identified, or received EI/ECSE services, or there is no existing IFSP. Children who have not had preschool services are less prepared to enter kindergarten.

Each school does a kindergarten round-up. Klamath County School District (KCSD) offers Play2Learn Nights for children and families. Families visit schools with their children, meet teachers, and take part in activities together.

Both the KCSD and the Klamath Falls City Schools (KFCS) have offered Jump Start Kindergarten for the past few years. Jump Start has been successful for acclimating students to their new learning environment. The current funding for Jump Start Kindergarten ends this summer.

Members of the PAC indicated seeing an increase in challenging behaviors across early learning and K-12 settings. Another trend causing challenges for early learning programs with children transitioning into kindergarten is an increasing number of children who are not independently toileting.

Suggested strategies include printing and distributing kindergarten readiness materials like kindergarten readiness brochures and Klamath Basics.

Heather Freiling with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) has a contact list for all providers and can help send information to child care providers on a large scale.

Klamath Promise offers free ACES and Resilience overviews for community organizations in order to build awareness and become trauma-informed. The training opportunities are offered as part of the Southern Oregon Family Resilience Project. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XgTL22WMg4HKJ5OUTkKRV49A2GwaSm0h/view?usp=sharing>.

## Equity Lens

Jessie DuBose shared that the Klamath County Community Health Assessment is impactful for determining community health priorities and directing Oregon Health Authority (OHA) funding. The Community Health Assessment update is underway. In the past, the process has not fully inclusive of K-12 and early learning. The goal of the Community Health Assessment is to be a multi-sector plan. Jessie encouraged members of the PAC to reach out to Healthy Klamath and request an invitation to the upcoming partner meeting.

The Community Health Assessment Partner meeting is tomorrow at the Sky Lakes Wellness Center at 11:30 am. Danielle sent out registration information after the meeting.

## Partner Updates

**Child Care Resource and Referral – Heather Freiling** – The Spring Fling Conference will be hosted at Klamath Community College on April 22. The conference is STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) themed. The Key Note Speaker will have Spanish Translation.

Fifteen individuals in Klamath County have identified interest in becoming child care providers.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) will be hiring for a newly developed, Inclusive Specialist position. CCRR will also be hiring for a Quality Improvement Specialist/Klamath Community College (KCC) Navigator.

**National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** -- Jill O'Donnell – The Children's Learning Fair will be at the Klamath County Fairgrounds on April 13 from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. The first hour is open to children with special needs who need a quieter learning environment.

**Klamath Family Head Start – Sylvia Cox** – Klamath Family Head Start is working on pulling data from community and parent surveys. Data will help determine when Head Start Applications for the 2024-2025 school year will open. Sylvia shared they will likely open in April.

Head Start is looking for a new board member. If anyone is interested, contact Sylvia Cox at [sylvia.cox@kfheadstart.org](mailto:sylvia.cox@kfheadstart.org).

## Next Meeting:

March 20, 2024, from 10 am to noon.