

# KLAMATH PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

March 20, 2024 | 10:00 AM – Noon

## Attendance

Dena Haudenschild	Kay Ortega	Gillian Wesenberg
Michelle Scott	David Elliott	Vanessa Pingleton
Jill O'Donnell	Maurita Johnson	Laura Barajas
Kathleen Walker-Henderson	Jennifer Jackson	Athena Wikstrom
Mari Ruiz	Joseph Maurer	Ronda Osborn
Sylvia Cox	Jessica McAuliffe	Danielle Walker

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 February minutes. Kathleen Walker-Henderson made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Jill O'Donnell seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion Passed.

## South Central Early Learning Hub

Gillian Wesenberg provided a legislative update:

- Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) – received an additional \$99.2 million for the ERDC program in its 2023-2025 budget. The legislature also granted an additional \$72 million Special Purpose Appropriation (SPA) for ERDC. This investment in ERDC will assist with stabilizing the program and ensuring that families currently enrolled in the program can continue to receive subsidized child care.
- CHIPS Child Care Fund – the Oregon Business Development Department (OBDD) received \$5 million to build new child care opportunities and provide funding for those in construction apprenticeship programs to pay for child care.
- Childcare Infrastructure Fund – Did not pass. The bill was intended to support childcare facilities, particularly home-based providers and access funds for infrastructure.
- Birth to Five Literacy – Passed with a one-year funding allocation of \$9.4 million. Part of the funding will be allocated to Equity Funding, and part will be allocated to Early Learning Hubs through the Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) grant.
- Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) – EI/ECSE received the \$22 million to restore a cut in the 2023 Legislative session. Additional funding is needed to meet current service levels, as funding is based on past years EI/ECSE service numbers, not the current EI/ECSE service numbers need.
- Early Learning Educator Scholarship Program – Did not pass. Funding was intended to expand the Early Learning Educator Scholarship program.
- Stabilization Funding -- Relief Nurseries received \$2.7 million, and Nurse Family Partnership received \$3.2 million for stabilization funding. Unfortunately, Healthy Families Oregon did not receive stabilization funding.

Community UPLiFT connects expecting families and families with children birth to five, and up to the age of twenty-one with special needs, to resources in the community. If you are interested in Community UPLiFT presentation, contact Danielle at (541) 880-4655 or [Danielle.walker@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:Danielle.walker@douglasesd.k12.or.us). New additions to the Community UPLiFT database include Crystal Clear Doula Services and Housing Authority of Douglas County (HADCO). To date, for the current quarter beginning January 1, 2024, there have been 31 referrals in Douglas County, 31 referrals in Klamath County, and one referral in Lake County.

Preschool Promise is accepting applications for the current 2023-2024 school year and will continue accepting them until the end of the school year in June 2024. The Hub qualifies applications for the entire school year in effort to

quickly fill any openings that may become available. Students can still be considered returning students if they fill out an application and qualify for Preschool Promise this year.

There are currently two openings in Klamath County, one at Gilchrist Elementary and one at Little Learners Preschool. Both schools have wait pools of qualified students. Openings should be filled soon.

Applications for the 2024-2025 school year are now open, and families with returning students will begin receiving invitations to complete returning student forms. New students can apply for the 2024-2025 school year at [southcentralhubenrollment.com](http://southcentralhubenrollment.com).

## **Klamath Housing Authority (KHA) - Presentation**

Michelle Scott joined the Klamath Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) to discuss the Klamath Housing Authority HomePath programs. The HomePath program serves both Klamath and Lake Counties. Lake County has a new office at the Lakeview Commons. HomePath recently hired a bilingual employee who is working to develop Spanish flyers and will begin providing coaching services and workshops in Spanish. HomePath programs are confidential, non-judgmental, and anyone can participate. Individuals who wish to take part in HomePath services do not need to be Klamath Housing Authority (KHA) clients.

The HomePath Program includes Financial Coaching, First Time Home Buyer services, Workshops, and Foreclosure Intervention & Default Counseling.

Financial Coaching is confidential and helps individuals identify their short and long-term financial goals, set spending plans, develop debt reduction plans, improve credit scores, build stability and financial health, learn about Individual Development Accounts (IDA), and manage budgets.

First Time Home Buyer services include learning about the home buying process and first-time home buyer loan programs. First Time Home Buyer services also helps individuals resolve challenges that prevent homeownership, assists with building a solid credit score, helps with the development of a sustainable plan after home purchase and provides a confidential space to set and discuss a home buying action plan.

**Financial Fitness:** The financial fitness workshops helps individuals with tools for building a budget and setting goals. The workshop provides information about credit reports/scores, fair housing and renter rights, consumer protection, and basic investing. Take Root and Klamath Housing Authority (KHA) partnered to bring a full-day Financial Fitness Workshop to Lake County. There will be another opportunity provided in Christmas Valley. Date to be determined.

**Home Buying:** The Home Buying workshop helps individuals determine if purchasing a home is right for them. The workshop presents an overview of the mortgage loan process and first-time home buying programs. HomePath also offers Home Buying Bus Tours throughout the year. On the tour, individuals take a charter bus and visit available homes with realtors, who teach them how to shop for a house, including what to look for before purchasing a home.

**Ready To Rent:** Ready to Rent is a six-week workshop, and attendees must complete the required homework to receive a Ready to Rent certificate that they can present to landlords. Attendees learn about fair housing and their rights and responsibilities. Individuals also learn about rental agreements and overcoming renter challenges.

**Foreclosure Intervention and Default Counseling:** Foreclosure Intervention and Default Counseling is one of the most attended classes through HomePath. In October 2023, the foreclosure moratorium ended for borrowers. Those who were in forbearance on their loans, are now in full foreclosure. If you know of anyone in imminent default on their home loan, direct them to HomePath for assistance.

HomePath is bringing a Scam Jam training to Klamath County to provide education about scams. Scammers target millennials at the highest rate, but senior citizens are the most susceptible to falling victim to a scam. The Scam Jam training is May 11 at Running Y in Juniper Hall and is open to anyone who would like to attend. The training will have presenters from the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of Revenue (DOR). The flyer is currently being reviewed by the DOJ and will be dispersed once it is finalized. Transportation is a barrier in Klamath County; to assist with this, Pelican Charters has donated a charter bus to transport senior citizens from the Senior Center to Running Y. If a non-senior citizen does not have transportation to the event, Michelle is willing to try to help with finding transportation to attend.

**Individual Development Account (IDA):** The Oregon IDA Initiative invests in the personal and financial growth of individuals to build strong communities in Oregon. IDAs are a five to one matched savings account that build the financial management skills of qualifying Oregonians. Individuals can save up to \$1,800 and be matched for up to \$9,000. The amount of savings is determined by the participant at the time of opening their IDA. The savings and match can be used for the purchase of a new or used vehicle, secondary education or trade schools, dental repair (dentures, implants, other major dental work), home buying, or debt repayment. Checks are made out directly to the payee (lender, secondary or trade school, dental office, creditor, etc.), not dispersed to the individual who owns the IDA. Deposited savings remain accessible to the individual if they need to access the money for any reason. Savings deposits must be completed to earn the match. Contact Donna Lindsey for more information. (541) 884-0649, ext. 121 or [donna@klamathhousing.org](mailto:donna@klamathhousing.org).

## **Kindergarten Readiness Strategies – Discussion**

The South-Central Early Learning Hub contracted with Pacific Research and Evaluation (PRE) to conduct focus groups for K-12 partners around kindergarten transitions. The feedback received from the focus groups will inform Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) strategic planning.

What kinder initiatives are already going on in Klamath County?

- Klamath County School District (KCS) Play2Learn Nights
- Jump Start Kindergarten (Klamath County School District and Klamath Falls City School District)
- Klamath Falls City Schools has summer opportunities available for students and are adding summer events for kindergarten transitions.
- Kindergarten Roundups at each of the elementary schools in both school districts.
- Preschool Promise sites are assisting with transition as outlined in the Preschool Promise contract. Sites share information about kindergarten roundups. Little Learners will be creating a packet about each student that their future kindergarten teacher will receive. It will also include a one-pager about the student.
- Formal transition meetings for students with an Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) transitioning into kindergarten and moving into an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The downfall to this is that the meeting may not be with the child's kindergarten teacher. Transition meetings happen in the Spring before staffing is finalized.
- Take Root previously offered Ready! for Kindergarten workshops, and will likely offer them again. Take Root will continue supporting work that is already being done around kindergarten transitions.

Do the current kindergarten transition initiatives cover the need for kindergarten transition?

- There are still a lot of families who struggle with kindergarten transition. For example, who to talk to or what needs to be done.
- Klamath KID Center, a local child care provider, has found it difficult to make connections with the schools. Providers are likely not as in-tune with kindergarten transition opportunities. It would be helpful to communicate more with community child care providers. For example, sharing information about summer programs, kindergarten roundup, etc.
- The Hub is working on getting the Early Literacy Plans from each of the region's school districts to help inform what is happening in K-12 and how to support work around early literacy.
- Additional marketing information about the Hub may be beneficial. For example, a short statement or explanation about the work of the Hub.

In an ideal world what would kindergarten transition look like?

- In the past, Miss Muffet's (now Cadence), would share a folder portfolio of the student work and information with the child's kindergarten teacher.
- Kindergarten roundup used to provide a space for children to visit classrooms. The roundup has evolved over time and is now about an hour where parents go into the school and register their student.
- The slow phase-in to kinder has been successful in helping kids get to know their new teacher and learn the school routine. The slow phase-in may be difficult for some parent schedules.

- Parents should be advised which school their child should go to. This could be done through different marketing, for example, mailers for each of the schools, public announcements on the radio, news outlets. Additional marketing of Kindergarten Roundup activities.
- Schools typically receive students at the beginning of the year that they did not know were coming.
- Head Start and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) in Lake County have transitioning students go on school field trips to visit classrooms and see what a big school looks like. Logistics in larger areas is a bit difficult.

Are there any other promising practices that you know about that we should be evaluating?

- Having preschool opportunities in an elementary school is helpful, like the Preschool Promise site at Gilchrist Elementary.
- Universal Preschool

Are there activities that should be avoided when looking at kindergarten transition?

- Avoid looking at specific skills; instead, look at the whole child. Look at what's developmentally appropriate.

Anything else you want to share?

- Workshops and events like Ready! for Kindergarten and Play2Learn are valuable opportunities that should be continued. Continue messaging for parents that they are their child's first teacher. Encourage parents to read to their children. Investments in preschoolers have lifelong value.

If you have additional feedback to share, contact Danielle, Athena, or Gillian.

## Partner Updates

**Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR), Care Connections & Education** -- Heather Freilinger - The Spring Fling Conference is on April 29 at Klamath Community College (KCC). Spring Fling offers six and a half hours of training with lunch provided. The Key Note speaker is STEAM Educator, Chris Senger. The Key Note, and most breakout sessions will be interpreted in Spanish. Some topics include sign language with early learners, infant/toddler breakouts, early learning environments, and more. Early Bird Registration is \$35 until April 12, with the fee increasing to \$50 after that date. The Spring Fling Conference Flyer can be found online at <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/wmzwmkr/lp/0845d10d-fd13-4af4-baef-12afd84ec88a>, and registration can be completed at: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/wmzwmkr>.

**Take Root Parenting Connections** – Vanessa Pingleton – Take Root is offering a Family Input Session in Klamath County on April 23, 2024. Families receive a \$50 gift card for participating, and child care and dinner are included. Take Root will be collecting input from families about services Take Root can provide, as well as asking some questions about home visiting services. The input session is for families with children of all ages, not specifically related to early learning. Additional information about upcoming virtual, in-person, and hybrid parenting education can be found on the Take Root Spring Flyers.

## Next Meeting:

April 24, 2024, from 10 am to noon.