

# KLAMATH PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

June 24, 2024 | 10:00 AM – Noon

## Attendance

Rhonda Janecke	Jennifer Jackson	Heather Freilinger
Julie Matthews	Kay Ortega	Vanessa Pingleton
Bethany Holmes	Sylvia Cox	Athena Wikstrom
Brayanna Paradise	Jessie McClung (DuBose)	Laura Barajas
David Lev	Maurita Johnson	
Jane Nicholson	Gillian Wesenberg	

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 May 2024 minutes. Julie Matthews made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Jane Nicholson seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion Passed.

## SouthCentral Early Learning Hub

Gillian Wesenberg shared that there are sixteen Hubs across Oregon who were formed ten years ago. Hubs have undergone many changes over the years, including the transition from the Early Learning Division (ELD) which was housed with Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC). The work of Hubs has evolved to meet changes. Recently, DELIC contracted with BUILD Initiative, a national research corporation, to review past legislation and contracts. BUILD Initiative is working with DELIC, the Early Learning Council (ELC), and Early Learning Hubs to develop definitions that clearly express the work and role of Early Learning Hubs.

Gillian advised the South-Central Early Learning Hub is working on Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI), and has hired a new KPI facilitator, Seonaid Uebelhardt. Seonaid will have an office provided in-kind by Lake County School District #7 in Lakeview. Seonaid will start on July 8, 2024.

Athena Wikstrom provided an overview and explanation of the Request for Application (RFA) for KPI and Birth to Five Early Literacy Funds that was recently sent out. The RFA is available in English and Spanish. Applicants can be any organization who serves children ages birth through eight who has alignment with k-12 public school district early literacy plans, partners with other organizations serving children in the community, and services should focus on the Hub's priority populations as outlined in the RFA. Applications are due Friday, August 30, 2024, by 5:00pm.

For more information or questions, contact Athena Wikstrom at [athena.wikstrom@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:athena.wikstrom@douglasesd.k12.or.us).

Gillian and Heather provided information about the upcoming Suspension and Expulsion Planning Grant. Beginning July 1, 2026, children in any early care and education settings, can no longer be suspended or expelled regardless of how the program is funded. To support a reduction in suspension and expulsion in early learning settings, the state is developing a warm line in which providers will call in their needs and the requests will be routed to either Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) or a behavioral health specialist in the region. Douglas Education Service District (ESD) applied for limited, one-year grant funding from DELIC, to plan for the upcoming implementation of the new rule. If Douglas ESD receives the grant, they will contract with the South-Central Early Learning Hub and Care Connections & Education to complete the planning process. The intention of the planning grant is to determine what is currently available to support the behavioral health support need to reduce suspension and expulsion, what is needed, and recommend a potential service provider for the region. The implementation grant will only be funded for one full-time employee (FTE) to address the behavioral health support needs across the region. Planning will be inclusive of all types of care and will be done through focus

groups. Focus groups will help the Hub determine strengths and barriers, and what is needed to support programs in eliminating suspension and expulsion.

Movement for the suspension and expulsion legislation was initiated by concerned parents who had seen children removed from early care and education settings.

### **Discussion - Early Childhood Priorities**

The Klamath Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) discussed early childhood priorities, including a collaborative vision for the South-Central Early Learning Hub region, and current projects.

Sylvia Cox shared Klamath Family Head Start accepts all children regardless of their potty-training status and are working with families to provide information about independent toileting in relation to kindergarten readiness. Head Start also helps children build behavioral and social-emotional skills needed for kindergarten readiness. Klamath Family Head Start encourages families to build a relationship with their medical and dental homes.

David Lev provided an overview of the Summer Reading Program at the Klamath County Libraries. Each library branch offers various programming, except the Senior Center, Gilchrist, and Chemult, due to distance and/or lack of children who can attend. The Summer Reading Program incorporates children through adulthood. David will be doing summer Storytime reading at Moore Park, Fridays at 10:30 am.

Vanessa Pingleton shared that Take Root will be doing reading and an activity in the park this summer, and offering Ready for Kindergarten activities in August with English and Spanish opportunities.

The Integral Youth Services (IYS) Summer Lunch Kickoff was hosted at Mills-Kiwanis park yesterday, with over 400 individuals in attendance.

Jane Nicholson provided information about Central Oregon Disability Support Network (CODSN) offerings. CODSN is partnering with Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to do food budget training for families. The training will offer guest speakers discussing topics like WIC Farm Direct Vouchers, Double Up Food Bucks, and expanded Summer EBT Benefits. In August CODSN is partnering with the Klamath Falls City School District to do a meet and greet with families at Moore Park. They are hoping to also partner with pumpkin patches in Klamath County, to offer sensory hours for children who need a less stimulating environment.

Athena shared that the Hub collaborated with Klamath Family Head Start, Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC), Klamath Falls City Schools, and the Klamath County School District, to encourage early enrollment in kindergarten and preschool by placing print, digital, and radio advertisements.

Maurita Johnson shared the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Symposium will be held on August 20 and 21 at Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT). The Symposium presentation will be the same each day, instead of a two-day conference with different presentations each day. The speaker will be Dr. Chris Wilson, a psychologist who specializes in trauma.

Bethany Holmes advised Safe Families for Children is seeing families struggle with transportation to preschool programs, like Head Start and A Family Gathering Place. Safe Families volunteers have been helping families with transportation to preschool a few days per week. The Relief Nursery is working on a transportation solution with a van that was recently purchased. Sylvia shared that Head Start has two bus drivers, which limits bus routes. Head Start tries to pay attention to transportation needs to ensure families who need transportation receive that service. Basin Transit Services (BTS) reduced their hours, which has created additional challenges for families without transportation.

Safe Families is also working with parents of children ages 10-18, starting a Family Circle Group to build communication and respect between parents and children. Citizens for Safe Schools is helping facilitate the Family Circle with violence prevention funds.

Jane Nicholson shared there is a need for expanded respite for children with specialized needs.

Laura Barajas provided information about other upcoming Take Root classes, including an in-person safety course, and a summer literacy event at Moore Park.

## Partner Updates

**UCAN Healthy Families – Bryanna Paradice** – A new Healthy Families Supervisor was hired, they will be overseeing UCAN Healthy Families in Klamath and Lake Counties.

**Klamath Family Head Start – Sylvia Cox** – The three to five Head Start program is out for the summer and Head Start is accepting applications for next year. The Early Head Start program operates throughout the summer.

**Preschool Promise – Athena Wikstrom** – The South-Central Early Learning Hub is accepting applications for the 2024-2025 school year and is working on developing class lists for the upcoming year.

The Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) released a request for application to re-distribute Preschool Promise slots to providers across the state. The Hub is waiting for a formal announcement for all the Preschool Promise providers for next year.

**Community UPLIFT – Athena Wikstrom** – Community UPLIFT is always accepting referrals to help connect expecting families, families with children ages birth to five, and up to 21 with special needs, to resources in the community. For more information or a presentation about Community UPLIFT, contact Danielle Walker at [Danielle.walker@douglasesd.k12.or.us](mailto:Danielle.walker@douglasesd.k12.or.us).

**Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC) - Kay Ortega** – The OCDC Seasonal program is continuing in Malin and Klamath. The Migrant Education Summer School Program for children entering kindergarten next year will be starting soon. The Farmworker relief card program, which offered \$600 to farmworkers who continued to work throughout COVID, is ending tomorrow. Over 300 farmworkers benefited from the relief program.

**Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) / Care Connections & Education - Heather Freilinger** – Start-Up and Expansion grants were received by two new providers in Klamath County, whose first language is Spanish. About \$150,000 has been awarded to providers in Klamath County over the last year.

CCRR received a contract amendment to hire an Inclusive Specialist to support programs who serve students with high needs. The ideal candidate is bilingual and has a background in early learning and special needs.

CCRR filled the Quality Improvement Specialist position, the newly hired employee will be starting at the end of July.

**Home Visiting Systems Coordination - Vanessa Pingleton** – A Connect, Share, and Care was hosted last week, with 26 individuals in attendance. The next Connect, Share, and Care will be in-person in Klamath County on August 19 and will focus on professional wellbeing. The events are made possible due to a collaboration between System of Care in Douglas County, UCAN Healthy Families, and the South-Central Early Learning Hub.

The state Home Visiting Systems Coordination is still getting started. Vanessa and Gillian have met with Portland State University (PSU) and the state, to provide information about the South-Central Early Learning Hub's Home Visiting Systems Coordination accomplishments.

## Next Meeting:

September 25, 2024, from 10 am to noon.