

REGIONAL GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

Meeting Notes

June 12, 2024 | 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Attendance

Michael Carter
Dena Haudenschild
Rhonda Janecke
Mary King

Chellsey Maher
Jennifer Jackson
Maurita Johnson
Analia Nicholson

Julie Hurley
Gillian Wesenberg
Athena Wikstrom
Danielle Walker

For ease of member access, Regional Governance Council (RGC) meetings will continue to be held virtually unless otherwise notified.

Welcome and Introductions

Vice Chair, Michael Carter, welcomed members of the Regional Governance Council (RGC) and individuals introduced themselves.

Members of the Regional Governance Council reviewed the March 2024 minutes as submitted. Rhonda Janecke motioned to approve the minutes as written. Dena Haudenschild seconded the motion. No further discussion or corrections. Minutes passed at 11:04 am.

South-Central Early Learning Hub Update

Athena discussed the Family Governance Advisory Committee. The Family Governance Advisory Committee regularly meets with Mitten Mommas, a successful parent advocacy group from Michigan. The Family Governance Advisory Committee is creating a strength-based, child advocacy one-pager for parents. The one-pager includes segments for sensory comforts, diagnosis, medications, and milestones. Mary King, Family Governance Advisory Committee member, shared the committee is excited about the development of the one-pager. The Family Governance Advisory Committee is working on roles, responsibilities, and meeting cadence.

Gillian provided a state-level Early Learning Hub overview. The Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), Early Learning Council (ELC), and Early Learning Hubs are working collaboratively with the research corporation, BUILD. BUILD was hired to research past contracts and develop definitions for Hubs and their work. Hubs are described as conveners, conduits, and capacity builders, with definitions and findings to be released in 2025.

Gillian also shared the Hub's Budget Committee met and is looking at expenditures. DELIC sent out a biennial budget that will be shared with the Regional Governance Council in September.

The Hub hired Pacific Research and Evaluation (PRE), to develop a Request for Application (RFA) for Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) and one-year DELIC Early Literacy Funds. PRE hosted three regional focus groups with k-12 and community partners, to discover what is important for kindergarten readiness and early literacy. All twenty school districts across the region shared their Early Literacy Plans with the Hub. PRE compiled the plans into an Early Literacy Plan Summary to accompany the RFA. Applicants should align their strategies with k-12 Early Literacy Plans and focus on the Hub's Priority Populations.

- Children/families living in areas of geographic isolation, including those experiencing poverty.
- Children who are experiencing displacement: families experiencing homelessness (McKinney Vento), children in foster care, and children in kinship care.
- Children who identify as African American / Black, Asian, Hispanic / Latinx, including native Spanish speakers.
- Children from Native American/Tribal Families.

- Children who are experiencing physical or developmental disabilities or delays, including those with mental health concerns and/or trauma.
- Infants and Children aged 0-3.

Distribution of the RFA will happen today. Summer funding requests are due at the end of June, and the 2024-2025 school year application is due at the end of August.

Regional Governance Council members shared kindergarten readiness needs. Members suggested the RFA be translated into Spanish. School Districts are seeing an increase of children entering kindergarten without the ability to toilet independently. Toilet training is not a requirement for publicly funded preschools. Providing support to preschool parents around toilet training may be beneficial.

Gillian advised a new Suspension and Expulsion statute will go into effect on July 1, 2026. Legislation mandates that children cannot be suspended or expelled from any early care and education settings. The Hub is working closely with Douglas ESD in applying for a one-year Suspension and Expulsion Planning Grant, due June 21st. If the grant is received, the Hub will complete planning pieces, and Douglas ESD will complete implementation.

Gillian also shared, the Hub hired a new Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) Facilitator, Seonaid Uebelhardt. Seonaid is located in Lake County and will serve the entire region, starting with Lake County. She will start on July 8, 2024.

Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) – Dorris Duke Grant Update

Maurita Johnson gave an update about the Dorris Duke Foundation Grant. The Doris Duke Foundation is studying child abuse prevention efforts to inform the federal government’s Family First Act. The Foundation selected Oregon to be part of a four-state effort to receive funding. The Doris Duke Foundation is investing a total of nine million dollars in Oregon to research screen-out initiatives in both Multnomah and Klamath Counties. Funding will be split into different categories. Of the nine-million-dollar investment, a total of two to three million has been allocated for technical assistance and research. Three million dollars is allocated to provide funding for purchasing tangible goods for families. For example, purchasing a washer and dryer, clothing for children, or paying for vehicle repairs. The purchasing process is in development.

The goal of the project in Klamath County is to study the screen-out process from the Child Abuse Hotline. A screen-out happens when a hotline report does not meet criteria for a Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation. In Klamath County, families who are screened-out are currently assigned a Family Coach. Family Coaches offer support in a less intrusive way than Child Welfare. For example, delivering food boxes, or cleaning supplies and laundry detergent. Dorris Duke will be researching the current efforts and building upon them.

Klamath County started work around screen-out processes in 2017 when there were 350 children in foster care. Last fall, the number of children in foster care was 128. Data indicates upstream prevention work has had a positive impact for children and families. The Lake County Family Coach will be back from leave in August and will be doing the same screen out processes in lake County.

Preschool Promise / Coordinated Enrollment

Athena gave an update about Preschool Promise and Coordinated Enrollment. Based on recent data, Preschool Promise across the state is enrolled at 96%. The South-Central Early Learning Hub Region has been fully enrolled for quite some time. The Hub maintains waitpools of Preschool Promise qualifying students for programs. Waitpools ensure program openings can be filled quickly.

The Hub is accepting Preschool Promise applications for 2024-2025 school year. Applications are being reviewed and qualified. The Hub is working toward the first round of program placements.

The Preschool Promise Application for slot reallocation is due June 17. The application is open to new programs who want to become Preschool Promise grantees, and current grantees for expansion. DELC will review applications and determine slot reallocation. DELC will develop a provider waitpool for future slot reallocation. There are 18 slots available for reallocation in the South-Central Early Learning Hub region.

As both Hubs and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) can apply for Preschool Promise slots, neither entity can provide suggestions about provider selection. Hubs can suggest priority zip codes for their region where Preschool Promise slots are needed.

Community UPLiFT

Danielle gave an update about Community UPLiFT and shared that since 2017, Community UPLiFT has received a total of 1,349 referrals. In the last quarter, January – March 2024, Community UPLiFT received 72 total referrals. Of the 72, there were 35 referrals for Douglas County, 35 for Klamath County, and 2 for Lake County.

Connect, Restore, Thrive (CRT) Counseling began receiving Community UPLiFT referrals last quarter. The Hub is working on a secure drop-off location for referrals in Lake County.

Lake County had a Lunch and Learn last quarter. A Lake County program shared their interest with Vanessa Pingleton about receiving Community UPLiFT referrals. Unfortunately, their process doesn't align with the Community UPLiFT process and the program cannot use Community UPLiFT. Community UPLiFT can provide information about the program to families.

Regional Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR)

Heather Freiling shared that Care Connections and Education, the region's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR), hired two new staff. One new staff member is an Inclusive Facilitator. The position is funded through a CCRR contract amendment with DELC. The second staff is a new Klamath Community College (KCC) Navigator.

- CCRR is working on the following projects:
- Co-hosting a fall Early Care and Education Conference at Umpqua Community College (UCC).
- Sponsoring the fall Early Care and Education Conference at KCC.
- Co-hosted a Pyramid Model training with KCC.
- Co-leading the Douglas County Childcare Coalition.
- Supporting childcare providers in the application process for Preschool Promise expansion.
- Co-hosting the Family Friendly Business Summit with community partners. The Family Friendly Business Summit is a project of Biz for Kids and was hosted in Douglas County last April.

This year, UCC has eight Early Care and Education graduates, receiving either early childhood certificates or associate's degrees. Two of this year's UCC graduates are part of the CCRR team, Michelle Bassett and Nichole Martin. KCC has been working with up to 67 early care and education students and has ten graduates this year.

CCRR started a group called Strong Start, which works with individuals across the region who are starting a child care business. Individuals commit to two one-hour classes per month and receive site visits and support from CCRR.

The Infant-Toddler Network is going into phase two. Providers who join this group also receive training and site visits.

The next round of Second Step training is coming up. Second Step is a social-emotional curriculum. The training is available online through five virtual sessions. The Second Step curriculum is provided to all programs who attend the series.

Last year, Douglas County had 131 child care providers in the workforce and is up to 147 child care providers this year. Klamath County had 97 child care providers in the workforce and is now at 113 child care providers. Lake County has increased from four child care providers to six child care providers in the workforce. Three new Spanish speaking child care providers have been licensed in the region. One in Douglas County, and two in Klamath County.

Regional grant funding to child care providers in the region this year is now at \$134,500. CCRR has been marketing grant opportunities, supporting providers applying for grants, and following up with providers to make sure they are taking advantage of grant opportunities.

The state released an application for individuals working in early child settings to receive an annual recognition check of \$500. Individuals working in the early care and education field can log into their Oregon Registry Online (ORO) account to apply for the funds. The state is projecting to send approximately 18,000 awards this year, and the same number the following year.

Regional Partner Updates

Douglas County Childcare Coalition - Workforce incentives have returned to Douglas County. Incentives are being distributed to new and expanding programs. Douglas County Childcare Coalition is accepting grant applications for child care providers to receive \$3000 per grant in health and wellness materials for infants and toddlers, and \$3000 per grant for health and wellness materials for preschoolers. Both the workforce incentives and health and wellness material funds are specifically for Douglas County.

South-Central Early Learning Hub – Athena Wikstrom – The Hub will be open throughout the summer, except for Fridays in July and August.

Take Root Parenting Connections – Julie Hurley -- Take Root is offering their second summer of programming. Take Root is creating more family, play-based, engagement activities across the region. Klamath County is planning hikes and chalk art. Lake County will be continuing their Family Engagement Boxes through a partnership with the schools in Lake County. Take Root is hoping to offer a virtual Make Parenting a Pleasure series this summer but needs to find a facilitator before the series can be scheduled.

Community Health Worker (CHW) – Gillian Wesenberg – Gillian received a two-thousand-dollar scholarship to complete a Train the Trainer Course for Community Health Workers (CHWs). The focus is to increase CHWs across the region. Athena Wikstrom recently completed her CHW training and received certification.

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians – Sandy Henry retired from the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians. The Tribe is currently interviewing for a new Education Director.

Closing

With no additional business, the Regional Governance Council adjourned at 12:18 pm.

Next Meeting: September 18, 2024, at 11:00 am