

KLAMATH PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

June 24, 2020 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM

Attendance

Cliff Jones	Cory Ortega	Rhonda Nyseth
Kay Ortega	Renea Wood	Richard Pfeil
Amy Quayle	Gillian Wesenberg	Sue Scheiss
Athena Wikstrom	Heather Freilinger	Sylvia Cox
Cindy Walsh	Heidi McGowan	Vanessa Pingleton
Colleen May	Jill O'Donnell	Wendy Brown
Cory Ortega	Kathleen Walker-Henderson	Yecenia Rodriguez
Cynthia Hurkes	Melinda Collier	Kathleen Mitchell
Dena Haudenschild	Machel Ramirez	
Colleen May	Rhonda Janecke	

Please note: the Klamath Professional Advisory Committee was held virtually due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) concerns and guidance on public meetings from the Governor.

Welcome and Introduction

Members of the Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) introduced themselves and their programs.

Minutes

Motion to approve minutes as submitted by Jill O'Donnell, seconded by Melinda Gomez. No further discussion.

Early Learning Hub collective action during COVID-19

Early Learning Initiatives

Rhonda Janecke reviewed initiatives that the South-Central Early Learning Hub has been working on over the past year, including the strategic planning process, Preschool Promise and Coordinated Enrollment with a goal to reach the most vulnerable populations in our outlying areas and engaging them in services. The Regional Governance Council, Professional Advisory Committees, and Governance Committees have been working with Cliff Jones and Alexis Millett from Capacity Building Partnerships to discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as creating an Equity Lens to help guide our decision-making. Additional members have joined the Klamath Professional Advisory Committee in order to reach individuals and programs who have not previously been engaged, for example, the faith-based community in Klamath County.

Gillian shared that she, along with Heather Freilinger and Melinda Collier with the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR & R), and Kathleen Mitchell with the Klamath Tribes, attended the South-Central Oregon Regional Economic Response team meeting to provide an overview of child care in our region.

Melinda Collier shared that the CCR & R is working with providers to assist in maximizing services that can be provided legally due to child care licensure. The CCR & R is also updating 211 with available child care slots weekly, as these updates had been previously given quarterly before COVID-19.

School District opening plans and school aged child care needs

Athena Wikstrom provided an update on Klamath County School District and Klamath Falls City School District reopening plans that were shared by the districts on their websites.

Klamath County School District: <https://www.smore.com/h92jq>

Klamath Falls City Schools:

<http://www.kfalls.k12.or.us/manage.numo?module=blog&component=display&show=post&id=749>

The goal of both school districts is to get children back to in-person learning as soon as possible and keep children and staff safe once they return. Superintendents have put together task forces to help guide their decisions. City Schools will begin the year with comprehensive distance learning due to state-mandated COVID-19 metrics that the county has not met yet. County

Schools have met the exemption criteria to begin in-person learning for kindergarten through third grade. In addition to comprehensive distance learning, each child in either district has the option to enroll in homeschool programs through the districts, or choose to opt into comprehensive distance learning once the schools are approved to begin in person learning. If the child remains in the district's homeschool program, he/she will still be eligible for district programs such as meals provided to students.

Jill O'Donnell, a member of the Klamath County School District Board, provided additional information on the Klamath County School District reopening plans, adding that the school start date was pushed back until Sept. 8, 2020 to allow the typical first week of school, August 31 - September 4, to help prepare parents, teachers, and families to adapt to the hybrid and comprehensive distance learning models. When children return to school, they will be wearing masks, social distancing, and staying in their assigned cohorts.

Klamath County School District has added wifi hotspots at each school and are working to add additional hot spots around the county so that they are able to reach rural families who may not have access to internet or cell phone service. The Klamath Falls City Schools are working with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to contract with Verizon to add hotspots, but contracts have not yet been finalized.

Klamath Falls City School District has also hired a Technology Support Paraprofessional for each school so that families have access to technology support from home. Regarding children in Special Education programs, there will be a Q & A document coming out soon, and teachers will be contacting families by September 15, 2020 to discuss planning for their students.

Child care for the community as well as staff is another priority for both school districts.

[CCR & R discussion about child care options](#)

The goal of the CCR & R is to maximize the supply of child care with providers that already exist in the community before looking into other options like pop-up care. The CCR & R is trying to ensure that currently closed programs will be open by the beginning of the school year. To make sure this happens, the CCR & R is in the process of contacting every child care provider in the county to ensure they are filling their program to their legal maximum capacity and asking if that provider has the ability to assist school aged children with online learning.

To receive up-to-date information on child care openings, families should call 211 who will do an intake with the parent. Once the intake is completed, families can receive child care referrals from 211 by text or email or by mail if needed.

Kathleen Walker-Henderson advised that Commissioner DeGroot called Klamath Community College and asked questions about how the college can help with training to get child care providers licensed. Commissioner DeGroot was advocating for child care for businesses and county employees. Melinda will reach out to Commissioner DeGroot.

[Other emerging child care solutions](#)

Heidi McGowan suggested that the CCR & R provide an online information session for community members about exempt child care, in which an unlicensed provider can provide child care for up to three children.

Melinda Collier will be sending out informational cards to our community about exempt care and is hopeful to get people willing to do this type of care. She will share this information with Danielle who will send it to the Professional Advisory Committee.

Pastor Richard Pfeil shared with the group that the churches in Klamath County can play a big role in helping the community during this time. If church facilities could be opened to child care, they could easily house 40 to 50 children. Melinda advised that churches are not exempt from state child care requirements, and churches would need to become certified. There are a lot of requirements for centers including a director, aides, teachers, training, safety measures, etc... Another suggestion included mobilizing retired people to "adopt a child" or "adopt a family." Pastor Richard will be posing this thought to his congregation. If each congregation has 20 people willing to help children, this would be a huge benefit for families. A "tutoring club" would also be an option not requiring licensing for three hours a day, five days a week.

Sky Lakes is hoping to open child care for their employees, but Renea Wood advised that this at a stand-still right now as options that were explored did not pan out. Renea is willing to email out exempt child care information to their employees.

Rhonda Nyseth advised that DHS will be breaking ground for their new building in August and may have space for child care once the building is completed in about a year.

Cindy Walsh advised that Klamath Family Head Start is waiting for approval to open. Once open, their services will be different than they have been previously. Klamath Family Head Start hopes to be able to serve at least half of their children on site and will have part day classes, online learning, and full day classes. There will be a two-week training period for staff, and half of the centers will likely be opening Sept. 14. Transportation is an additional challenge with all of the new guidelines. Klamath Family Head Start has also received a Preschool Promise grant for expansion into Lakeview. Sylvia Cox added that there will be an expansion for Early Head Start in Merrill as well.

Gillian advised that the contracts for Preschool Promise will be coming out through DocuSign, and Preschool Promise administrators should be looking for this in their email.

Supporting children and families with an equity lens during COVID-19

Cliff Jones, with Capacity Building Partnerships, facilitated a conversation around our Equity Lens and next steps by reviewing meeting minutes from our July regional equity lens conversation and revisited the definition of equity. There will be a small group discussion Tuesday, August 25th to finish the Equity Lens which will be brought to the Regional Governance Council, local Governance Councils, and Professional Advisory Committees in September for finalization.

Partner Updates

Kindergarten Partnership and Innovation (KPI) – Will be sending out 2018-2020 report in September that will give an overview of everything KPI was able to support. They will be contacting programs in September regarding the plans for this year.

Take Root – Has been holding virtual early learning scavenger hunts. Training for staff around trauma-informed virtual parenting has increased and they are revising their curriculum to reflect this training. Workshops will continue virtually this fall beginning with Make Parenting a Pleasure and Nurturing Parenting for Adolescence starting in October 2020. Take Root is currently working with facilitators to schedule workshops and family engagement activities virtually until the end of the year.

Community UPLiFT – Vanessa Pingleton advised that since September 2017, Community UPLiFT has received 483 referrals, of which 151 have been for Klamath County. This last quarter was slower with 12 referrals. Danielle shared a story about a recent Community UPLiFT family and thanked the group for their partnership in assisting this family receive additional support.

Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) – Will be distance learning for now, and families will have access to Canvas, the Klamath County School District distance learning platform. Teachers are creating boxes to go home with children that include learning materials which support instruction during the first six weeks of school.

Healthy Families – Colleen May advised that Klamath Basin Behavioral Health (KBBH) discontinued the Healthy Families contract due to internal budgeting. UCAN will now be overseeing Healthy Families in Douglas, Klamath and Lake Counties. Families in Klamath County will still be served with existing Healthy Families staff as all families are still being served virtually. Machel Ramirez has been hired as the Klamath County Supervisor, and they just finished interviewing for Klamath Family Support Specialists. Healthy Families is still accepting referrals and are doing screenings for these referrals. New families will be started with existing staff while the new Klamath County staff are shadowing these employees.

Child Care Resource and Referral – There are two Southern Oregon University (SOU) workshops this week on Supporting Empathy, Kindness and Friendship Skills and The Impact of Environment on Early Childhood Brain Development. Both workshops are filled to capacity. The immediate child care need for our community is full time care for school aged children as well as providers willing to assist with the children’s online learning.

Klamath Family Head Start – Still accepting applications. To apply, families can visit the Klamath Family Head Start website or call (541) 882-5988 to schedule a time for the application and enrollment process.

Department of Human Services (DHS) – Klamath County DHS Symposium: Our Community’s Response to COVID-19 was hosted virtually on August 12 and 13, 2020.

DHS Self-Sufficiency – There is a drive-up window to assist families, as they are not currently serving families in the building .

Klamath Community College (KCC) – Has released their course calendar, but are unsure if metrics have been met for in-person learning. Plans for child care for students and staff have been put on hold due to COVID-19. The college would still like to provide child care in the future. SOU was invited to apply for a grant (early learning investment collaborative with other community colleges) for scholarships to assist with early childhood degrees and to help providers get into Bachelor degree programs. Unfortunately, the STEPS program did not receive a grant to continue their work, but the college does have funding to assist students with diapers and formula.

Cascade Health Alliance (CHA) – Their buildings have not yet opened, and they are not looking to reopen until at least January when reopening buildings will be reassessed.

Family Advocacy & Support Network – Funding for the program was cut, but Yecenia will continue as a volunteer. The program is still searching for grants to continue their work.

Next Meeting:

Klamath PAC: September 23, 2020 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Hosted virtually.