

KLAMATH PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

Sept. 22, 2021 | 10:00 AM – Noon

Attendance

| | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Rhonda Nyseth | Kathleen Walker-Henderson | Jessica McAuliffe |
| Amy Quayle | Kay Ortega | Holly Stork |
| Athena Wikstrom | Melissa Dorsey - WIC Manager | Maurita Johnson |
| Cynthia Hurkes | Rhonda Nyseth | Dena Haudenschild |
| Gillian Wesenberg | Rhonda Janecke | Melinda Gomez |
| Jessie DuBose | Stacia Clark | Danielle Walker |
| Jill O'Donnell | Vanessa Pingleton | |
| Kathleen Mitchell | Yecenia Rodriguez | |

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

Welcome and Introduction

The Klamath Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) reviewed and approved June minutes.

Check-in Regarding COVID: Impact on Programs and Schools

- Klamath Family Head Start is still working on enrollment. Staffing has been a challenge, and they had to close a couple classrooms due to staffing and COVID.
- Oregon Childhood Development Center (OCDC) - Migrant families will be enrolling one week later than expected. OCDC is also short staffed and have had to close classrooms due to COVID. The Oregon Pre-K program will be held in the Klamath Early Childhood Development Center.
- Klamath County Schools are open and going well, but have been receiving feedback from individuals who are upset about masking guidelines. Kids are happy to be back to school.
- Klamath Promise will be holding the Graduation Motivation event on Friday, September. 24 for high school students, both virtually and socially distanced at the Ross Ragland Theater.
- The Klamath Tribes Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) has been impacted by COVID. There was a total closure for two to three days in the past few weeks. At one point, there were 4 staff members in quarantine. The program is now fully staffed and enrolling children.
- Klamath Community College (KCC) classrooms are back to normal and following social distancing guidelines. KCC is encouraging vaccinations but they are not required.
- SMART advised that volunteers will be allowed back into city schools. SMART volunteers will need to have a background check, Oregon State Police (OSP) check, proof of vaccination, complete Mandatory Reporter training through ODHS, complete Klamath Falls City Schools Sexual Harassment training, and follow masking guidelines while on school grounds.
- Klamath Falls City Schools and Early Learning Programs are back in school and following the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance. Transportation is difficult for school-aged children. Masking is a requirement for children 2 years and up; some families don't want children wearing masks.

Early Learning Division Update

Gillian provided an update on the Early Learning Division (ELD), advising that Alyssa Chatterjee was appointed the permanent Director of the Early Learning Division and that Carmen Ellis will be taking over the Community Systems Director position previously held by Joan Blough. With House Bill 3073 passing, the ELD will begin transitioning to the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC).

The ELD will be putting out a request for applications for more Preschool Promise slots in November. They are also preparing for additional funding which is currently being held by the Oregon Legislature for Preschool Promise in the next biennium.

The Legislature requested more information from the ELD as to the timing of the additional funds. The division requested that the South-Central Early Learning Hub (SCELH) gather the Regional Stewardship Committee to help with the completion of a mini-update to the Priority Populations of the Early Care and Education (ECE) Sector Plan. The brief update will be used by the ELD to share priority groups and needs for the region during the upcoming request for application (RFA) and slot allocations for Preschool Promise.

The Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) provided insight from their program perspectives.

What has changed from Pre-COVID 2019 to now?

- Klamath Family Head Start – Would like to see Head Start income requirements raised for working families who are over income but still struggling to find affordable child care/preschool. Head Start is interested in applying for Preschool Promise in Klamath Falls.
- The region permanently lost nine Preschool Promise slots at Lil Hands Daycare due to state insurance requirements.
- Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) - Most fire victims that were permanently evacuated have relocated. There is an ongoing need for water due to drought conditions in rural areas where wells have dried out. Typical needs are food, housing, and child care. Additionally, there is a need for non-traditional child care (hours, not Mon. – Fri. 8:00 am – 5:00 pm) or "sick" care for children who are ill, whose families need to continue to work.
- Oregon Childhood Development Coalition – Similar to Klamath Family Head Start, families who are slightly over income either have to be declined or put onto a wait list and are left without services. OCDC is always looking for other ways to help. For example, OCDC provides food boxes for migrant families (here for 9 weeks / staying in hotels) and jackets to their children. Children in Migrant Head Start classrooms are in the center for approximately 10 hours per day. Holly Stork offered to provide books to incorporate into food boxes.
- WIC - Hears similar stories about the income barrier. If families are considering a new job and there is a child care need, sometimes the job is not worth it to the families if they are going to lose services. WIC helps refer parents to Head Start, OCDC, and Preschool Promise as well as other early childcare services.
- Kathleen Walker-Henderson – There is still a need to focus on workforce and professional development.
- The group agreed that infant / toddler care in the community is a need. Sylvia advised there is a large waitlist for Early Head Start.
- Athena shared that providers can sign up for updates from the Early Learning Division (ELD): <https://oregonearlylearning.com/child-care-updates>
- Dena asked, when Head Start reaches capacity, are they providing family information to Preschool Promise? Head Start will begin looking at over-income families and will be sharing information with SCELH.

Follow-up from June

KPI Actions – Received summer early learning funding to be expended between April and June; then additional funds to be expended from July and September. Funding plans were approved by the Regional Governance Council with input from the three county Professional Advisory Committees.

KPI, in partnership with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR), will offer Conscious Discipline courses to 100 participants. There are ten videos and five virtually facilitated sessions. Also included are incentives for sessions being attended, and KPI is purchasing books for participants. Mini grants were allotted to 4 different entities. One of them was the Gathering Place in Klamath County, the other was Klamath Family Head Start. Sylvia advised that the mini grant paid for Annette Chastain to present to families and staff about Conscious Discipline. Over 30 families attended the presentation either in person or virtually via Zoom.

KPI also purchased 336 Teach My Kits to be distributed throughout the region. Kathleen will provide training via on-demand videos and once training is completed, families will receive a Teach My Kit. Ready! for Kindergarten kits were also purchased for 240 families, and Take Root will provide the Ready! for Kindergarten trainings.

Amy Quayle advised that Abriendo Puertas (Opening Doors) is for Hispanic/Latinx families with children 0-5 and will be offered at flexible times when families can attend.

STEM Kits

Danielle – The regional STEAM Hub provided Klamath County with STEM Kits. Klamath County received about 250 kits, 200 in English and 50 in Spanish. They are for Early Learning and include videos on how to utilize the kit. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1dS8aZEKTR77CXs2WVttD9RzUntwCi-IC?usp=sharing>

Parent Focus Group Summary

Athena provided an overview of the Family Focus Groups which were provided in conjunction with family surveys. The Pacific Research and Evaluation (PRE) Executive Summary is attached to the Klamath PAC invitation. The data gathered will be used to inform the updated Early Care and Education (ECE) Sector Plan focusing on family voice and choice.

Partner Updates

Community UPLIFT – completed the family mapping project in partnership with Portland State University and hosted a review session for providers. A parent attended and provided information about what her life was like before Community UPLIFT, what the UPLIFT process was like, and an update of where she is now.

Community UPLIFT has their own webpage that is attached the SCELH's page.

Over 50 community agencies are receiving or sending referrals. Community UPLIFT has added the Help Me Grow program in Siskiyou County (so we can refer families from California who come to Klamath Falls for services), A Family Gathering Place (Klamath County Relief Nursery), and Klamath Open Door.

There is a pilot project in Douglas County with the McKinney Vento liaison to send unaccompanied minor referrals to ODHS for services. Community Uplift has received 5 referrals through the pilot project.

Tonight is the final training with Dr. Amy Stoeber at 6:00. The panelist from Douglas County was in an accident and cannot attend.

Partnered with Healthy Families to bring a Communities United Resource Network (CURN) meeting to Klamath County. There were 17 partners who attended the first meeting in September.

Take Root -- You can find a link to current Take Root Page offerings at: <https://douglasesd.k12.or.us/take-root-parenting-connection/>

Family Advocacy and Support Network (FASN) – Received a grant to assist families who are currently quarantined due to a positive COVID test. Assistance includes rent, bills, and groceries. Contact Yecenia at (541) 363-8930 for more information or to refer a family.

Klamath Chapter of the Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children (ORAEYC) – Partnering with Klamath Community College, South-Central Early Learning Hub including the Kindergarten Partnership and Innovation (KPI), and Take Root to offer the Early Childhood Conference. The conference will be in-person at KCC on November 6, 2021 with Keynote Speaker, Lindsey Kealey, presenting: Empowering Problem-solvers.

SMART – Hosting a Virtual Literacy Summit Thursday, Oct 21 from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Central Oregon Disability Support Network (CODSN) – has been awarded a five-year grant from the Federal Office of Special Education Programs to implement work as a Community Parent Resource Center serving eight rural counties in Central and Eastern Oregon (Crook, Deschutes, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, and Wheeler Counties). These regions have multiple barriers which prevent parents and youth with disabilities from accessing support including reduced access to resources, high poverty rates, language and communication barriers, and high foster care and rising incarceration rates. In becoming a Community Parent Resource Center, CODSN will be able to improve learning and long-term outcomes for the underserved populations in Central and Eastern Oregon including the American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hispanic/Latino, LGBTQ+, homeless, incarcerated, impoverished parents, and youth with disabilities.

Next Meeting:

Klamath PAC: October 27, 2021 from 10:00 am – Noon.