

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

October 28, 2021 | 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance, Welcome, Approval of Minutes

Present: Dr. Bob Dannenhoffer, Colleen May, Judi ~~Marey~~, Kendra Bickham, Maureen Short, Mckenzy Gausnell, Peggy Whalen, Sandy Henry, Shawn Lybarger

Staff Present: Gillian Wesenberg, Danielle Walker, Athena Wikstrom, Heather Freiling, Vanessa Pingleton, Cynthia Hurkes, Amy Quayle, Connie Rosas, Julie Hurley, Mel Johnson, Susan Stiles-Sumstine, Windy Digby
Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this meeting was held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

COVID-19 Updates and Vaccine Roll Out

COVID-19 cases are far lower than they were two months ago. July, August, and September were horrific months and far worse than the cases in Douglas County had been up until then. Douglas County was getting 20 to 60 positive cases a day July through September. Most deaths caused by COVID-19 were in the unvaccinated community. Generally, Douglas County has not had bad cases in children.

Schools have done very well in mitigating the spread of COVID-19. There has been transmission in sports teams. Geneva Academy has experienced spread with 15 COVID-19 cases including one death of a staff member. Milo Academy has had spread, as well. Douglas County has experienced very little spread in childcare settings. It is expected that the FDA will approve giving the Pfizer children's dose vaccine to five to eleven-year-olds in the next few weeks.

Some children who contract COVID-19 do get very sick. One child patient of Dr. Bob's feels like he cannot get a deep breath even after recovering from the initial virus, another child patient is sleeping over 20 hours a day, and several have been down for weeks with COVID-19. The most recent trial with Pfizer showed no safety factors from the vaccine. The probability of getting serious side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine are far lower than the chance of serious illness from the virus.

Nationwide, Meningococcal B only causes four deaths a year while COVID-19 causes near 1000 in children. If we vaccinate for far less deadly diseases, we absolutely should vaccinate for one as deadly as COVID-19.

Shawn asked if COVID-19 will be a required vaccine? Dr. Bob is not pushing for the COVID-19 vaccine to become a required childhood vaccine. Hepatitis B was the last required childhood vaccine to be added to the vaccination schedule and it took nine years to become required. It's unlikely that the COVID-19 vaccine would become required soon if it does at all.

Early Learning Hub Director Update

Gillian reviewed the Early Learning Hub's three goals:

- Children and families are healthy, stable and attached;
- Children arrive to school ready for kindergarten; and
- To create an early childhood system that is aligned, coordinated, and family-centered

The Early Learning Council advises the Early Learning Division (ELD) which is currently housed within the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). The Early Learning Council uses Raise Up Oregon as their strategic goal.

Gillian shared that the Hub completed an update to the Early Care and Education (ECE) Sector Plan and a Slot Allocation Assessment which was required by the Early Learning Division (ELD). The ELD condensed the South-Central Early Learning Hub's original ECE Sector Plan (created in 2019) from 24 pages to one page. The ECE Sector Plan update was completed using data received from many sources including parent focus groups, parent input surveys, Community Needs Assessments, Head Start input, Child Care Resource and Referral input, child care slot data recorded by TRI across the region, Preschool Promise parent input, Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE), census data, K-12 data, parent feedback, partner feedback, and more. Heidi East McGowan facilitated parent focus groups in English, while Pacific Research and Evaluation (PRE) facilitated a parent focus group in Spanish. PRE also led a survey for the South-Central Early Learning Hub.

Gillian reviewed the ECE Sector Plan update and Slot Allocation Allotment documents.

The last Preschool Promise Request for Application (RFA) included a requirement for providers to provide parent engagement opportunities, and it is expected that the upcoming RFA will include the same requirement. Parent engagement is more than math night or conferences, it's having parents involved in the decision process for the classroom. Additionally, there was a requirement to show that there is a process to refer parents to community services as needed. Community UPLIFT was included as the referral source by regional applicants as the referral source. Vanessa provided an overview of Community UPLIFT which can be used for providing referrals for families. Community UPLIFT referrals can be sent via text uplift2 to 484848, www.community-uplift.com, or https://douglasesd.k12.or.us/community_uplift/. For more information contact Vanessa at Vanessa.pingleton@douglasesd.k12.or.us or 541-530-4368.

Child Care staffing in South Douglas County, and across the region is a challenge and will be a barrier to expanding Preschool Promise. Maureen would be happy to run a program in Canyonville, but there isn't staff currently available. Myrtle Creek Elementary School's Preschool Promise Program was not able to find staff and chose to not open for this school year. Heather reflected that school districts have different requirements than Preschool Promise, schools are requesting certified K12 teachers. There was staff that wanted to work in Myrtle Creek, but the school district had already made the decision not to open.

Early Learning Hubs are going to be required by the Early Learning Division to have a parent advisory council. The Hub is working to recruit parents. Parents who are interested can contact Gillian or Athena. There will be stipends for parents who attend. It is expected that parents will meet quarterly, though the regularity can change based on ELD requirements.

Kindergarten Readiness Innovation and Partnership (KPI) Updates

KPI is hosting an Early Learning Gathering on November 16. There is a collaboration of early learning programs who bring these gatherings to partners. The gathering this year will include "Managing Emotional Mayhem" which provides social-emotional skills for all ages, from providers to children. This is the third year of the gatherings. Shawn shared that the Early Learning Gatherings have great incentives even above the networking that occurs. Gatherings are intended for educators, not parents at this time.

Seventy of 100 Conscious Discipline training slots have currently been filled.

KPI is getting ready to complete biennial funding planning. Cynthia will bring spending suggestions to the Professional Advisory Councils (PACs) to discuss and receive approval from the Regional Governance Council.

Amy shared Opening Doors is an evidence-based program developed by Latino parents with children zero to five-years-old. The training that will be provided is the third edition of Opening Doors which includes virtual trainings and information. The objective of the training is to provide parents with leadership skills. There are two openings for the training of trainers in Douglas County. Once an individual receives the training, they will be a facilitator who trains parents to be effective leaders in the community. The facilitator will need to be bilingual as trainings are presented in Spanish and intended for the Spanish speaking community. Opening Doors facilitator trainings include six workshops on Zoom, totaling 17 hours of training. Candidates are expected to present locally or regionally. November 8 through 19 is the next conference. Please contact Cynthia or Amy to get signed up. The enrollment process will end December 31. This is not a professional development opportunity, individuals who take the training will be expected to conduct a parent training within a year.

Hub and Partner Updates

Julie – Douglas County Child Care Coalition - The Douglas County Child Care Coalition has been focusing on their goal of opening 150 early learning care slots and 50 school age slots over the next two years. They are focusing largely on

supporting child care professional development and an increase in providers. The coalition is looking at software that is being piloted across the state (Wonder School) that will help with business supports. Additional focus is being given to:

- How to assist programs opening new sites,
- How to support current providers expanding, and
- How to support providers in becoming licensed in-home providers.

The coalition addressed the Wellsprings closure, by assisting the YMCA with expanding to assist with the additional need created. The coalition is requesting additional community supports to assist the coalition with gifting providers with supplies, “thank yous,” and program furniture needs.

Susan – Take Root – Take Root is about half way through this quarter's parenting classes. Registration should be coming out soon for Ready for Kindergarten classes.

Vanessa - Community UPLIFT - Planning for the next grant cycle. In the past, the Home Visiting Systems grant has been pretty prescriptive. For this cycle there will be a focus on our region's needs. The Home Visiting Systems goals will be aligning with the Hub's goals and partner goals. The Ford Family Foundation's annual leadership gathering is in November. Vanessa shared the quarterly reports with the group.

Heather – Care Connections & Education – Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) – The state has a couple of grants available for child care providers. Care Connections and Education is providing the third round of training for stabilization grants, which will use Tom Copeland materials. Tom Copeland is a child care provider who provides material and webinars regarding stabilization grants. The current grant is about four times larger than the typical stabilization grant. There are also grants focused on providers reopening.

The CCRR is working with Umpqua Community College (UCC) to increase the workforce, as workforce is a challenge across the region. Living wages have been difficult to achieve in the child care profession, which has been a deterrent for new individuals entering into the field. There is a large early learning system through the ESD which provides supports for providers. There are state funded programs that do provide livable wages, as well as other programs that make livable wages achievable. If you know Instructional Assistants (IA's), please encourage them to look into getting a degree or certificate in early childhood. We want to be able to support every child. Sally Guion is a great advocate for early childhood through UCC.

Care Connection & Education's Fall Early Childhood Education (ECE) Conference, got to take place in person at UCC. Seventy-two providers were at the conference, which is about a ten percent increase from the virtual conference held last year.

Preschool Promise is receiving supports through CCRR looking at professional development, site environments, providers' needs, and increasing efficiency. The CCRR is excited to work with EI/ECSE and other Douglas ESD early childhood services to support programs.

“Mind in the Making” class has been provided with Charlene for providers. Webinars have provided an opportunity for individuals to learn from afar.

Peggy - Family Relief Nursery - Family Relief Nursery purchased their building and will be doing some renovations so they will be able to add another classroom at their site. They would be interested in applying for Preschool Promise slots during the upcoming RFA. Family Relief Nursery will be receiving \$180,000 in American Rescue Act funds. These will largely be used to renovate the new site. The relief nursery is hoping to have the new site up and running by September 2022. Then, the relief nursery will be able to double the children they currently serve. With the additional space, the North Douglas site will be able to serve almost as many children as are served in Cottage Grove. Part of the American Rescue Act funds will go to helping raise salaries.

Judi Mahoney – Healthy Families – Healthy Families is currently doing in-home visits if adults and home visitors wear masks. Masks are offered to children as well.

Colleen shared that Healthy Families is fully staffed and accepting new families. Six new families will begin receiving services in the next week. There are a lot of referrals and a lot of positive screens that have been processed recently.

Dr. Bob - Flu did not go away, he is encouraging everyone to get flu shots. Please keep sick children home.

Windy – Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI / ECSE) – EI is working mostly through a virtual platform, there are some community meetings where staff and families can socially distance.

ECSE - Classroom numbers are down which is great because that means children are moving to community programs. Inclusion coaches are now available to assist children in community programs.

Mckenzy – ADAPT - Darkness to Light trainings are coming up. Mckenzy is working with Douglas CARES to provide the Tribe child sexual abuse trainings

Sandy Henry – Yimisa Preschool – Yimisa has a great staff who are serving 15 children for Preschool Promise. They are having a hard time maintaining a full class, because parents have been great about keeping children home if they are not feeling well. Yimisa Preschool is funded through Preschool Promise and the Equity Fund program, and does not provide transportation. One parent is transporting their student from Sutherlin every day, resulting in the parent driving 120 miles a day. Sandy is trying to find a way to reimburse parent for transportation that is allowable through the funding streams.

Shawn shared that Head Start has used flexible funds to pay for a bus pass for a family that needed transportation. She wondered if Yimisa could buy gas card for transportation.

Sandy proposed providing a gas assistance check based on attendance of the child.

Julie has been able to provide gas vouchers to individuals who attended parent training. Take Root received the gas vouchers from Mercy Foundation and the vouchers were only usable for certain stations in South County.

Julie - Business Champions for Kids – Business Champions for Kids took a hiatus and focused on the child care coalition. This allowed businesses space to find out how to run business during COVID-19. Business Champions for Kids is looking at how to connect businesses to the early learning system and how to support businesses becoming more family friendly. The Ford Family Foundation committed to funding Business Champions for Kids which allowed the program to hire Mel.

Shawn – UCAN – Head Start needs classroom assistants. Assistants do not require degrees or experience. One teacher position and kitchen / nutrition team positions are available. There are some slots available for 3 and 4-year-olds. In-home slots are available for 0 to 3-year-olds. The new kitchen will start running on the 8th or 15th of this month. Salvation Army has been the interim kitchen and have not charged Head Start for the space.

Gillian – The state Head Start Association invited Early Learning Hub directors to meet with Head Start Directors. The directors are having ongoing discussions on aligning Head Start and Preschool Promise while building collaboration.

Future Topics

COVID-19 Updates with Dr. Dannenhoffer

Next Meeting Date

Next meeting November 18 from 10:00am – 12:00pm. (One week early due to Thanksgiving.)