

REGIONAL GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

Meeting Notes

Sept. 9, 2020 | 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Attendance

Heidi McGowan
Gillian Wesenberg
Vanessa Pingleton
Steve Schenewerk
Tammie Hunt
Heather Freilinger

Rhonda Janecke
Vicky Taylor
Dena Haudenschild
Cynthia Hurkes
Athena Wikstrom
Rhonda Nyseth

Sandy Henry
Maurita Johnson
Cliff Jones
Alexis Millett
Danielle Walker

Director's Update

Gillian shared about Coordinated Enrollment and our updated timeline. The Early Learning Hub (ELH) is working with Head Start programs to see what services they provide. This is to ensure we are giving families all options and services of publicly funded preschool available in our region. Currently, Head Start programs, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Klamath Tribes are enrolling families into Preschool Promise on their own.

Regarding the timeline of Coordinated Enrollment, dates keep getting updated. Enrollment forms are finished, Language Link for Translation and interpretation, ELD update PP memo, Finalized the PP enrollment manual. Selection Training dates for ELHs have been scheduled, but there are multiple state requirements that will be available on a to be determined basis.

According to the state's frequently asked questions (FAQs), Preschool Promise sites will begin classes by Oct. 31, but ELHs have not been given authorization to enroll children yet. The ELH is technically qualifying children based on state requirements and maintaining consistency around Preschool Promise enrollment. EL Hubs will not be asking families about health issues or taking other personal information. Once children have been qualified, they will receive a lottery number where children with the lowest randomly assigned number are chosen to fill Preschool Promise slots first. There will be wait lists, but hope to have every family enrolled at the Preschool Promise site they choose.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) will be handling technical aspects for Preschool Promise sites. Heather Freilinger advised that Preschool Promise has been a challenging process, but the process has bought time to learn how the state wants Preschool Promise to be done. Oregon does not want to lose Preschool Promise, and wants to ensure the program stays on a solid foundation.

CCRR has received a draft form for hiring staff, and hopes to hire one Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Specialist in Douglas County, and one in Klamath County. QRIS Specialist will be tasked to do more intensive looks at Preschool Promise programs. Contracts from the state are not finalized, but the CCRR will move forward with hiring once contracts have been finalized.

Tammie Hunt advised she will be retiring at the end of the year, and Sandy Henry will take over the role of Education Director for the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians. They have two Preschool Promise classrooms and four qualified early education teachers. Nineteen students were supposed to start in their preschool classrooms on Sept. 9, but opening was cancelled due to fires in Douglas County.

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians received two grants, the Early Childhood Equity Grant, and Preschool Promise. Details are being worked out with the tribe, but are getting ready to sign contracts.

Dena Haudenschild advised that Klamath Falls City Schools are waiting for the finalized contract so that funds can be used to purchase items for the Preschool Promise classrooms.

Early Head Start has started in Lakeview, but classrooms were downsized to groups of 10 children. There is a waiting list for Early Head Start. Vicky has not heard any new information about Lake County's Preschool Promise start date.

Child Care Update and Actions

Heather Freilinger advised that the CCRR is working with groups in Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties to look at childcare and solutions. These groups include, but are not limited to, schools and businesses.

The state is also releasing a third grant for child care providers as long as they received the first two rounds of granting. CCRR is also asking providers what they need to support school aged children in their programs. Some of the identified needs include personal protective equipment (PPE), internet hot spots, charging stations, and tables and chairs for school aged children. Many child care sites are reopening and communicating their capabilities with the CCRR. Child Care providers are making hard decisions about accepting full time children versus multiple part time children due to state restrictions and hybrid school models. Along with reopening, the CCRR is asking providers to operate at their fullest licensed capacity instead of their desired (lower) capacity to increase the maximum amount of care across the region. Child care providers are also encouraged to submit questions to the state about exemptions or extensions that can increase space in their programs. The state is looking at safety precautions and making sure that child care providers are being accountable and safe. The state has also began using a new system that shortens the amount of time that it takes to complete background checks for providers.

CCRR is making frequent calls to all providers asking about vacancies in their programs. This data is reported to 211. Families should use 211 to find available childcare.

Community Colleges have been given grant funds to offer professional development and college credits for child care providers in Oregon. This model has been successful in Klamath and Douglas, and is seeing an increase in Lake County. There are currently over forty students working toward early care and education certificates and degrees.

Heidi McGowan asked, some members of the faith community have been talking about how they can be supportive of people in this time of need. Has there been any actions that have come from this?

CCRR has created a recruitment flyer that will be going out across the region. The CCRR is trying to get information to our communities about the need for child care. If programs are looking to open sites, contact Heather or Gillian directly to be referred via a warm handoff process to a state representative, who can provide information on child care and health and safety guidelines.

Steve Schenewerk advised that he has discussed child care options with different churches, but staffing is a challenge. Hard to find qualified, trained, and background checked individuals that can work, usually for free.

(Kindergarten Partnership and Innovation) KPI Update

KPI generated a report for July 2018-2020, which was shared with the Regional Governance Council (RGC) prior to the meeting. To build the report, KPI used a database created in partnership with Douglas ESD and South-Central ELH.

KPI submits an annual workplan to the Early Learning Division (ELD), unfortunately, due to COVID, a number of activities have changed or been cancelled because activities have to be provided virtually. KPI is also included in the ELH's strategic plan. KPI continues to work with Take Root by offering a virtual Ready! For Kindergarten series hosted via a private Facebook group. KPI is in talks with the CCRR regarding early learning educator events that would happen between Jan 2021 and June 2021. KPI is also giving funds to both of the Douglas and Klamath County Early Learning Conferences, and are working through a process to possibly fund regional ELH strategies.

Community UPLiFT

As of September 9, 2020, Community UPLiFT has received 505 referrals regionally. Of those, Douglas has received 324 referrals, Klamath has received 165 referrals, Lake has received 14 referrals, and there have been 2 from other counties.

MICHV funding for professional development was received for an in-person training in Klamath County, but had to be reorganized into a virtual event: Using Humor to Move Forward and Thrive, which will be hosted on Sept. 23 from 9:30 to 11:00. Registration coming soon.

Another grant was received through Umpqua Health Alliance (UHA) to provide food for lunch and learns. Since groups are not able to meet in-person, UHA was asked to repurpose the grant to offer trainings facilitated by Dr. Amy Stoeber on Meeting Family's Needs while connecting virtually, and on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Community UPLiFT is also working with MICHV and Healthy Families on sending out family feedback surveys on the Community UPLiFT process and materials.

Regional Planning

Athena shared the Strategic Plan on screen and Heidi provided a quick review. The document was also shared with the group prior to the meeting.

Early Learning Hubs have received sizeable budget cuts. The group spent time gathering thoughts and ideas of where to focus efforts *if* there are funds available.

- Develop strategies to help parents with home school education, for example, helping parents feel more confident about assisting their kids at home to build on what they are learning at school.
- Interconnecting parents with each other by helping them trade skillsets amongst each other. Creating small co-ops of parents that can share their talents. Hire a person to do a needs assessment with parents to connect them to each other so they have supports and not be isolated throughout the entire school year.
- Preschool Promise sites are expected to have family engagement activities, and have included in the utilization of Community UPLiFT in their Preschool Promise applications. Tammie shared that

there must be a line item in the Preschool Promise budget for family engagement. This could meet some of the KPI funding for family supports.

- KPI is thinking about a way to fund strategies around building the leadership skills of early childhood educators.
- With current events, there is an opportunity to build on cultural education.

Equity Lens

Cliff Jones opened the equity lens conversation and reflected that this is an emotionally, psychologically, and physically challenging time in our state. He laid out the goal of the equity lens conversation. Think about equity, the Equity Lens, and the process that Alexis Millett went through with the PAC groups. The equity lens drafts were shared with the RGC prior to the meeting.

Equity is providing access based on people's experience rather than services we provide. If people are all treated the same, some are advantaged and others are disadvantaged. With equity, we meet people where they are. Equity is when people's race, gender, economic status, sexual orientation, etc... does not determine their social or opportunities. Where a person starts does not determine where they finish.

The equity lens is a tool that helps us evaluate organizational policies to try and identify where there is not equity. Gets us moving from where we are, to expanding equity with the resources and capacity we have. It is not about perfection, it is about movement.

Alexis discussed the Equity Lens process. In conversations with the ELH Professional Advisory Committees (PACs), there has been commitment and energy around advancing equity. A regional subgroup came together to discuss which questions would be the most beneficial on an equity lens, that could work at different levels of decision making, and work for different programs. A smaller group then gathered to refine the equity lens tool. The Regional Governance Council agreed that the visual version of the equity lens was beneficial. They liked that it was concise, points an individual in the right direction, compartmentalizes the questions we are asking, doesn't prioritize one area over another, and that other communities or programs could use this as a model that was generated in the South-Central region.

Through practice, the equity lens will become more intuitive, and we will have more time to give feedback on the tool. The group was split into subgroups to discuss the visual version of the equity lens and provide examples by pulling from their lived experiences.

The RGC came back together and discussed next steps, which included bringing the Equity Lens to the individual county PAC groups and work through case studies using the Equity Lens.

Next Meeting Date

December 9, 2020 from 11:00 am – 3:00 pm