

South-Central Oregon Early Learning Hub Douglas County Community Governance Council

*October 3, 2023
4:30 – 6:00 pm*

Minutes

Council Members:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Schenewerk, <i>Faith Representative (Chair)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Bob Dannenhoffer, <i>Medical Representative</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Analuz Torres, <i>OHA Representative</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Analia Nicholson, <i>ESD Superintendent</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Brandi Medeliros, <i>Business</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Bryan Trenkle, <i>Non-Profit Director</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dave Gianotti, <i>School Superintendent</i> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cady Lyon, <i>CCO Representative</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Chellsey Maher, <i>Parent Representative</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sandra Henry, <i>Cow Creek Representative</i> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Desta Walsh, <i>ODHS Director</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Jacqueline Salas, <i>OHA Representative</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Janel Sorenson, <i>School Representative</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Jared Cordon, <i>School Superintendent</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Joe La Fountaine, <i>School Superintendent</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> KC Bolton, <i>Medical Representative</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Marsha LaVerne, <i>Non-Profit Director</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Kimberly Kellison, <i>School Superintendent</i> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shawn Massingale, <i>Professional Advisory Chair</i> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kyle Stevens, <i>Business</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Lehi Dowell, <i>Business</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mandy Rigsby, <i>Home Visiting Representative</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Marta Queant, <i>Speech Specialist</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Mary King, <i>Parent Representative</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peggy Whalen, <i>Non-Profit Executive Director</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Rachel Pokrandt, <i>Community College President</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Rick Burton, <i>School Representative</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rionna Ruley, <i>Early Learning Director</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Theresa Haga, <i>Business</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Tim Allen, <i>Business</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Erin Helgren, <i>School Principal</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Staff Present: Gillian Wesenberg, Athena Wikstrom, Sondra Williams, Heather Freilinger, Robin VanWinkle

Others Present: Heidi East McGowan

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom.

Topic	Discussion	Decisions/Action/Next Steps
Welcome/Introductions	Steve Schenewerk opened the meeting with round table introductions.	
Approve October 11, 2022 minutes	Two participants were present at the last meeting. October minutes were not voted on during meeting.	

*Early Learning Hub
Overview –
Heidi East McGowan*

Heidi shared the history of the South-Central Early Learning Hub. Early Learning Hubs were formed to create an aligned, coordinated system to support children and families. The Early Learning Division, now Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), determined the South-Central Early Learning Hub region would consist of Douglas and Lake Counties then added Klamath County later. Oregon has a multi-sector early learning strategic plan, Raise Up Oregon, which Early Learning Hubs are required to follow in their strategic planning. Raise Up Oregon recently went through a revision and Raise Up Oregon 2.0 was released. The Regional Governance Council has decided to continue with the previous strategic plan until further direction is given by the state.

Heidi reviewed the governance structure and decision-making process.

Gillian shared that many plans have been deliverables within a contract and have had short deadlines. DELIC has been working with Hubs to be more thoughtful in the process and has extended the timeline so it can be more meaningful.

Athena reflected that the South-Central Early Learning Hub partners have worked together in a coordinated manner to create and use the Early Care and Education Sector Plan with intentionality to increase equity throughout the region.

Gillian shared language from Raise Up Oregon 2.0, which can be found at www.Oregon.gov/delc/about-us/Pages/Raise-Up-Oregon.aspx. This plan invites Early Learning Hubs to come to action. All of the partners who work with South-Central Early Learning Hub staff and initiatives are the Hub.

Cady provided an overview of System of Care as a state initiative in which organizations, who serve youth involved in multiple systems, look at barriers youth are experiencing in receiving care. The System of Care also looks at how to reduce and address barriers.

Steve advised, Umpqua Health Alliance's (UHA) System of Care has a barrier submission form. The barrier submission form allows partners to provide feedback regarding barriers youth are facing in receiving care.

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	<p>Steve shared the Early Learning Hubs previously contracted through the Early Learning Division which was under the Oregon Department of Education (ODE). The Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) was formed as of July 1, 2023. DELIC staff has been fantastic to work with and are very responsive. They have experienced some bumps with the creation of a new agency. Early Learning Hubs were developed as a system builder opposed to a service provider.</p> <p>The Early Learning Hub is the partners who are involved in the work. Partners within the Professional Advisory Committees and county Governance Councils may fluctuate as needs change. The Regional Governance Council focuses on the larger picture of the region and maintains a steady core of members to develop a big picture goal and direction for the region of Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and The Klamath Tribes.</p>	
<p><i>Director's Update – Gillian Wesenberg</i></p>	<p>Gillian and Heather attended an Early Learning Hub and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) Collaborative with DELIC in Salem. The group went through Raise Up Oregon 2.0 and began working on a Memorandum of Understanding. CCRRs were not listed as a partner in Raise Up Oregon, though the work they do was listed. Early Learning Hubs work to coordinate the system while CCRRs provide technical assistance to child care providers, trainings, classes, professional development, recruit providers, strive to maintain retention of providers, and provide direct services within the system. CCRRs have been in existence since the early 1980s.</p> <p>Contracts have been on time since the Department of Early Learning and Care was formed. The Department having its own procurement team has been a positive change.</p>	
<p><i>Child Care Action in Douglas County – Heather Freilinger, Robin VanWinkle, Kyle Stevens, Sondra Willaims</i></p>	<p>Child Care Resource and Referral - Heather shared the fall Early Learning Conference will begin Friday night. Parents will lead the conference on Friday evening. Providers will be able to attend classes on Saturday during the conference. There are 130 to 140 participants at the fall conference each year.</p>	

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	<p>The CCRR tracks retention and recruitment of providers. There are different kinds of providers: Registered Family, Certified Family, Centers, Preschools, School Age, etc. In January 2023, Douglas County had 131 total programs. As of September 10, 2023, Douglas County had 144. There have been a lot of calls about becoming a new provider. Many early education providers make minimum wage, so the individuals in the field are generally in it because they love children. Providers “in process” refers to individuals interested in joining the early learning field, or in the process of becoming qualified to be in the classroom. The region currently has 37 individuals in process. While individuals are in process, they receive warm handoffs throughout the required steps and personalized guidance around required steps to become a child care provider.</p> <p>Care Connections & Education, the regional CCR&R, is fully staffed and just hired their fourth Preschool Promise Facilitator.</p> <p>There is robust enrollment at both Klamath Community College (KCC) and Umpqua Community College (UCC) for the Early Childhood programs. Oregon Center for Career Development (OCCD) is providing substantial scholarships for Early Learning. The scholarships cover class costs and related fees. Community Colleges also received funding to reduce costs and fees for students in Early Childhood programs. Umpqua Community College has Early Learning textbooks that can be checked out through the library further reducing student costs.</p> <p>There are funding concerns with reduced federal child care funding and how to effectively address suspension and expulsion in child care facilities. There is a grant coming available to assist with supports for suspension and expulsion.</p> <p><i>Douglas County Child Care Coalition (DCCCC)</i> – Business Champions for Kids (Biz for Kids) is the co-lead for the Douglas County Child Care Coalition. Biz for Kids supports and recognizes employers adopting family friendly practices. There is a nationwide designation that Biz for Kids provides called “Best Place for Working Parents.” The designation is earned through a self-assessment and there are about</p>	

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	<p>20 locally. Employers can also receive Biz for Kids Advocate designation for providing in-kind or funding for early childhood.</p> <p>The Douglas County Child Care Coalition has had relatively consistent engagement across sectors since 2020. The coalition is committed to help solve the child care crisis in Douglas County. Douglas County has increased child care slots by about 80 to 90. The county is still a severe desert for infant/toddler slots and a desert for preschool slots. The coalition is providing stipends for new child care providers going through training. They receive incentives for getting hired, staying at a position for six months, and again at twelve months. The coalition has distributed about \$45000 to 27 new child care providers. The coalition has also provided incentives for providers expanding their slots.</p> <p>Many employers are not able to provide a child care, and they want to partner with a provider. The best model is mutually beneficial where they are providing in-kind for the provider such as space, human resources, fiscal services, etc. Purchasing slots is not a long-term effective model.</p> <p>In April 2024, there will be a Family Friendly Summit to promote partnerships between businesses and child care.</p> <p>Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board (SOWIB) - SOWIB is the backbone of the South Coast Early Learning Hub. Kyle met with the Governor when she visited the region. There was a focus on fixing what is already in place opposed to creating new systems and programs. One-time funding received by SOWIB was used to support current systems as it is not sustainable to create a new process without ongoing funding. SOWIB currently has seven, soon to be eight, participants in the early learning internship program. They are trying to determine where SOWIB can support, including assisting youth and adults entering the workforce. There is funding to assist with paying individuals who are receiving training, however there is not a lot of flexible funding currently available.</p>	

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	<p>Sondra – Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) – For the first time, EI/ECSE began the school year fully staffed. The program is seeing a little over 400 children who all qualify for the services under IDEA requirements. Heather Sewall is a new Program Manager; she was promoted from being an Early Intervention Home Visitor. Due to problems with the classroom, the Myrtle Creek classroom had to be moved out of its location with the possibility of moving into Riddle. Glendale is going to have ECSE students served in their preschool, so students don't have to be bussed as far to receive services.</p> <p>It is important to provide the least restrictive environments where children can be with their typically developing peers whenever possible. Douglas County is bringing together decision makers for education. Heidi McGowan is going to facilitate sessions to determine what providing high quality, least restrictive preschool can and should look like for children with disabilities.</p> <p>EI/ECSE hosted a workshop called Building Blocks. Building Blocks trains educators on providing services for students in community settings. There were over 200 participants. Many providers feel they do not have the resources and/or knowledge to serve children with special needs in their classrooms.</p>	
<p><i>Child Care Action in Douglas County Discussion – All</i></p>	<p>Heidi asked the group, “What can Douglas Governance can do to support the child care effort in the region?” The group provided the following responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city shared what they did to get the collaborative child care operating. Through System of Care, the process has been shared with the state as a way to address the barrier of child care. • Umpqua Health Alliance (UHA) Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) has funding sources that could potentially be used for creating a child care in the future. • Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) has expanded and is serving more families. ERDC subsidizes child care costs for families. Due to the growth and the governor not getting the requested ERDC allocated funds, there will be a waitlist for families applying on or after November 1, 2023, with some exceptions. Families who will not be placed on the waitlist are families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), families 	

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	<p>experiencing domestic violence, families referred by child welfare, and families applying within two months of the expiration of benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) staff shared previously that families were not able to use their ERDC benefits because they could not find an approved child care in the required timeframe of three-months. There is no longer a requirement to use the benefit within three months. Once families qualify, they can use the benefit anytime within the twelve-month approval period. If families will use the benefit within the next twelve months, they should apply before the waitlist goes into effect. About 26% of families are not able to find approved child care in Douglas County. This is the first time there has been a wait list in six or seven years. • There is a toolkit on the ERDC website with information on how families can apply and utilize ERDC. 	
<p><i>Preschool Promise and Community UPLiFT Update – Athena Wikstrom</i></p>	<p>There is one opening in Douglas County for Preschool Promise. Most all sites have waitpools and the Hub has moved through the waitpools at many of the sites. As Preschool Promise serves a lower income population who tends to be more mobile, the Hub has experienced a fair amount of turnover across the region.</p> <p>Preschool Promise grantee contracts are two-year contracts for the first time. This will allow Hubs to begin qualifying families in the Spring of 2024.</p> <p>Beginning in the 2023 – 2024 school year, the South-Central Early Learning Hub’s Preschool Promise application has a question asking families if they would like a referral to resources within the community. This question prompts a Community UPLiFT referral.</p> <p>The South-Central Early Learning Hub Family Governance Advisory Committee requested a Public Service Announcement (PSA) about Community UPLiFT. Any partners who are able to share the PSA in their office, please contact Athena. The PSA can be found at https://douglasesd.k12.or.us/Community UPLiFT. The PSA is available with English and Spanish subtitles.</p>	

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<i>General Discussion and Partner Updates – All</i>	<p>Shawn Massingale – United Community Action Network (UCAN) Head Start – Head Start moved to a new site in Winston on Main Street. All classrooms have been reduced to 17 kids. Winston has three classes this year. Head Start is almost fully staffed.</p> <p>UCAN is recruiting for in-home Early Head Start. Families can apply at UCANCap.org.</p>	
<i>Adjourn – Steve Schenewerk</i>		
Next meeting	May 21, 2024	