



Southern Oregon Early Learning Services

SOELS Governance Council

July 21, 2020
2:00-4:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

<https://soesd.zoom.us/j/94868124175>

Meeting ID: 948 6812 4175

Attendees (Via Zoom): Adrienne Auxier, Katherine Clayton, Jessica Durrant, Susan Fischer-Maki, Mary Hough, Martha Ibarra, Geoffrey Lowry, Eileen Micke-Johnson, Crystal Rowbotham, Samantha Watson, Mary Wolf, Brittain Zimmerman. Guest: Mark Angle-Hobson (for Scott Beveridge)
Absent: Scott Beveridge (excused), KimberLee Whitney (excused), Michelle Gallas, Jeanne Grazioli (excused), Kerri Hecox, Stacy Inman (excused), Lisa O'Connor
Hub Staff: Rene Brandon, Teresa Slater, Chelsea Reinhard, Molly McLaughlin, Vicki Risner

Agenda Item	Point Person	Time
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Call to Order	Eileen & Geoff, Co-Chairs	2:04
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Welcome & Greetings	Eileen & Geoff, Co-Chairs	
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Additions or changes to the Agenda: Eileen & Geoff, Co-Chairs

None

Approval of Minutes, April & June 2020: Eileen & Geoff, Co-Chairs

Moved to approve: Sam Watson, 2nd: Jessica Durrant, Motion Carried

COVID-19 Updates All

Rene': Schools are going to be starting soon. Child care is going through tremendous amount of change. Many of our partner agencies are trying to figure out how to best serve kids and families going forward. We want to hear from everyone participating today.

Mark: I am the Director of School Improvement for Southern Oregon ESD. I've been working with our school districts in their reopening plans. Across the Southern Oregon region, a few of our little districts, Prospect and Rogue River, are hoping to be able to return to in person for every student, every day that they are open. The guidance that school districts are having to follow from ODE requires 35 square feet of space per student. The schools measured all their spaces and determined how many human beings could be in those spaces at any one time. This includes students, teachers and all necessary staff. Our smaller districts believe that they are going to be able to open because of the small number of children they serve to bring everybody back, every day.

Our remaining districts for the most part are trying to do a hybrid model. That hybrid model consists of most of the districts trying to bring back their elementary children every day, and doing a combination of on site and remote learning for middle school and high school students. That remote learning looks different in different districts.

Some are preparing to be able to do two days a week, which could be Monday/Tuesday for one cohort of students and the second cohort Wednesday/Thursday or Thursday/Friday. Some are looking at a cohort model where the first group of students would come Monday/Thursday and the other group would come on Tuesday/Friday. One of our districts is looking at a morning/afternoon mix where about half the students would come for about 2 ½ hours in the morning, then a deep cleaning of the spaces during the middle part of the day, then a second cohort of students would come in the afternoon.

Everything that I'm sharing with you are plans as they exist at this moment with the understanding that it's all subject to change. We were expecting updated guidance to be released this morning, instead we received an email saying that guidance is being held and hopefully will be released tomorrow. Among my colleagues, we're hearing that the governor is expecting to hold a press conference and we're wondering if what the governor has to say is somehow going to impact the guidance that ODE was expecting to release and their working on the timing to make sure the information comes out in a smooth manner. So that's kind of where we are. Anything can change at any moment.

Rene: As the districts are putting together their plans, how much conversation is happening about child care in terms of coordinating with local programs in their catchment areas? Supporting the needs of teachers who have children as the teachers are balancing a hybrid model?

Mark: That's been part of the conversation. Districts are concerned about that not only because their parents trying to figure out child care issues, but also because there are educators who have child care needs. It's one of the reasons that so many districts are trying to bring back their elementary children every day. Because if they can get their elementary kids back safely in terms of the social distancing requirements every day, then that helps resolve that issue of who is going to take care of a really young learner while the parents are at work. So I do know that districts are reaching out, trying to work as closely with local child care providers and preschools so they can make those adjustments as seamless as possible given the circumstances.

Eileen: Just to clarify, for the younger children, the plan is to have them come 5 days a week?

Mark: It depends on the district. Some of our districts are 4 days a week. Ashland is the only district not currently planning on having their students back 5 days a week. Ashland's plan is every student two days a week regardless of grade level and that they are going to put families together in cohorts so that elementary children who have siblings in middle school or high school would be in the same cohort and in school the same two days. That would potentially allow older siblings in the home to help supervise younger siblings if parents are having to work.

I did participate in a superintendents meeting yesterday where this conversation came up again. Right now, all of the superintendents are waiting for the guidance from ODE to see what if anything has to change in their plans. We are expecting, based on some pre-information we've been given, that cohort size, which right now is undefined, there's not a maximum sized cohort, we believe that's one of the things that's going to be addressed in the updated guidance. That could theoretically change some of the plans in our districts, especially for some of our charter schools who had been considering having their entire school as a cohort group. We suspect that there may be some kind of cap placed on the size of a cohort that would require some changes.

Mary: We've heard that some districts across the state are thinking about setting up child care programs, have you heard anything about that?

Mark: I can't think of a school or district in our region specifically mention that.

Jessica: I haven't heard anything from any of my other colleagues either. Even across the state in larger districts where they are looking at daycare, right now I think they are just trying to tackle the Ready School Safe Learners knowing that child care is going to be an issue, especially for their employees and what that will look like. The scuttle that I hear from my colleagues in the big 10 districts in the state is more distant learning expectations. Only time will tell. Everything you've shared is exactly up to date with what I've heard too.

Mark: I attend two different meetings with ODE regularly. One of them is for the Reopening Advisors. In our Reopening Advisor meeting last Friday, they didn't come out and say that everyone needs to change their focus to comprehensive distance learning, but they really pushed us towards encouraging our districts to begin looking at that plan. So far, the districts in our region have mostly been focused on their hybrid plan of bringing some students back for parts of the week and other parts of the week they work from home. They really started forecasting the need to focus on also building out the comprehensive distance plans. It's all subject to change.

July is often a time that district staff gets to take a little bit of a breather after closing one school year before starting the next. No one is getting to take a break. It's super challenging for the leadership. It's a politically divisive issue. It's challenging all around. During a recent meeting, a superintendent broke down in tears from exhaustion. There is the acknowledgement that no matter what decisions are made in a district, half of the district's population is going to think that's the wrong decision. It's just a really tough time for school leadership as they try to navigate such unusual times.

Geoff: Why did Ashland select a plan so different from everybody else?

Mark: I don't recall in any conversations that Ashland stated as to why. I know that Ashland did community outreach. They did parent surveys. I'm curious if it's a space issue. The tighter the spaces are, the less flexibility you have in getting students back every day. If you just don't have the space, no matter how badly you want to bring students back every day, you just can't accomplish that.

As of right now, unless the guidance changes, most districts are planning on opening after Labor Day. This is all subject to change. As soon as we see the next set of guidance come out, we can see that changing.

Mary: They're issuing the new draft child care guidelines on Thursday. We'll have a lot more clarity on the impact once we know if the stable group size will change or if there are any other changes that would affect how programs can be structured. So, we're all on hold.

Regarding other updates on child care: Phase 1, Emergency Childcare grants, the first checks have gone out. Phase 2, they are in the process now of approving them so those checks can go out too. Childcare capacity is at 57% currently. There are still openings in those emergency childcare programs. Multiple factors are having an impact on the child care picture right now. More clarity once the new guidelines are issued and once school districts have announced their plans too.

Preschool Promise awards were issued in our region. Got quite a few programs. We are really looking forward to supporting those programs. That's an exciting new positive development.

Rene': Another unintended opportunity from the COVID impact on the child care industry; we have economic development partners who are inviting us around the table to learn more now.

Alex Campbell with the Governor's Regional Solutions office convenes an economic development workgroup that Mary, Sunny Spicer from Kid Time and myself participate in. They wanted to know the status of child care, the impact on the industry, what the most recent updates were, and how they might collaborate. So, a

member of that workgroup will be joining our Early Care and Education Workforce committee to function as a liaison.

I've also heard from Colleen Padilla, the Executive Director of SOREDI (Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development), who attended that meeting. While she doesn't have a staff person who can attend our committee meeting, she wants to know when the meetings are so that she might be able to pop in once in a while to learn and find better ways to collaborate. Those are two really big wins. No one outside of system partners have been aware of the impact the child care industry has on everything; on all of the economy, on our families ability to get to work and stay at work, for our children's' ability to be ready for that next step after early learning.

Mark: I will add one additional piece that I forgot to mention. 7 of the 13 school districts in the region have adopted a learning management system called Canvas. They are in the process of finalizing their purchase. ESD has hired a contractor who is going to support districts on the instructional side of canvas. It's a learning management system that will allow for a more robust distance learning.

Katherine: Head Start's guidance comes out August 14th. Looking at a hybrid model. 2 days onsite, 2 days virtual for our families. For duration classes that were 6 ½ hours days, may be doing 3 hours a piece to get everybody in. We're going to do all of our home visits and all of our parent meetings virtually. Early Head Start will begin at the end of August with virtual visits and we'll be doing virtual registrations. We will be staggering our staff back so we can focus on training staff on the latest protocols. We sent a staff survey out to find the comfort level with coming back. They're comfortable and ready. August 14th will be the day we'll know what direction we are going.

Susan: Is there any *Best Practice Guides* for employers. We're really starting to hear the panic and the call for additional supports for parents as they are navigating working in the fall when child care and school will look so different. This is a concern of the AllCare staff since our guidelines require certain employees to be at work. Are there models you could share with us?

We're talking about the complex issue of how do we push upper level leaders within large employers or even equip smaller employers in our community to know how to, in a trauma informed way, survey staff as to what they are concerned about. And then provide Family Centered supports or connections to programming. It goes back to a deeper listening of our staff and what they are needing in this time.

Rene: I wonder if *Trauma Informed Oregon* has any type of response to the COVID crisis on their website. That seems like a place to start. Our team can take that on, at least looking into it and then asking their leadership if they don't currently have resources that are available for employers, if they have an idea of who might or if that is something that they are interested in taking on given their expertise. Would really be serving folks across the state. We'll have to dig a little more. Does anyone have any other ideas?

Mary Hough: Our integrated behavioral health specialist just did a survey to check in with our staff, how they are doing and what resources they might need. I know she had been in touch with different integrated behavioral health sources through Jackson Care Connect. I know that there has been a network that she used for our office based on what other organizations had used for their staff. I can check with Casey and see what she used for building our questionnaire.

Rene': This is such a challenging time emotionally for humans. So many employers don't have an established way to check in with their staff on how they're doing. So many businesses are focusing on the outcome or output, whatever that might be. I think to Susan's point, many of them, it's not that they might not want to do that, they just don't have any experience with it. It might not even be on their radar that they have employees who are barely hanging on.

Crystal: Sometimes at work I do feel like they expect me to work like the before times. Myself and my coworkers are stressed out. Even the small point of asking someone to put their masks on and they are rude to you and affects the whole customer experience and the work we do. It's been really hard.

Mary Hough: It really helps to have resources to share with people. When we were starting to do depression screening for 12 and above and realized that we were unearthing a whole load of mental health issues that we were not aware of and really didn't have the resources for how to deal with that. I think the easier it is for people to access resources, the more likely they are to ask questions. We realize that with anything about COVID, we know that the most important part of survival is adaptability. Having the resources their staff can contact is key.

People may be far more likely to ask how their staff is doing if they knew they have resources easily available to support them. There are so many organizations around the country that are focused on supports such as mindfulness and other things and are offering free subscriptions for people if they are in essential services.

Rene: It feels like this is a body of work that can be assigned to our Child and Family Wellbeing committee to make sure it stays alive and that there are folks engaged in a work group that are willing to continue to chip away at it and get those resources out in a specific way. We convene again in September. Mary H said she will send some information our way. I will reach out to *Trauma Informed Oregon*. Maybe the committee can look at those resources and figure out what a next step might be to have a comprehensive response to the issue that Susan raised. Thank you for that.

Sam: We have a school-based work group that has reconvened. We're taking a look at what kind of supports can we provide. We know that a lot of youth won't have access to school-based health centers. We've seen a decline in utilization of behavioral health services. So really looking at where we can step in and what our role can be in helping providing those supports in more innovative and non-traditional ways. We may be reaching out to some folks with some expertise in the educational sector to see how we might best support those.

Eileen: For RCC, we still don't have any definitive plans yet. We are looking at face to face classes with the limitations we've been talking about. ECE classes we're planning to operate like we did in spring. In person classes will be through Zoom. A number of our classes are online anyway. Sending students out into the community to do observations won't be happening. We're in the midst of summer classes, all on line.

Financial Report & Current Investments Review: René & Hub Staff

(See PowerPoint for specific details)

Rene: Without knowing what our Early Learning Hub funding looks like for the second year of the biennium, I will just to walk you through our current investments, where we think we want to hold steady, and the investments we think we need to hit pause on until we have a clearer understanding of our budget situation.

All of the information that I'm going to be sharing about our investments is a part of the Investment Priorities document that you've all seen. It's what we reference at the beginning of every biennium. The investments for each funding stream going forward that we think will get the best impact for the priority populations that our early learning system partners have identified for families with children under the age of six.

Once we have a clearer understanding of what our year two finances will be, we'll go back to our priority investment document, go through it very cleanly and clearly, deciding on the work to move forward in our work plan for the second year. What you are going to see today is what we think right now given limited information. Our priorities are: Children without early learning opportunities prior to kindergarten; Children experiencing disability; Teen Parents; Foster Families; Families in Recovery; Families in Poverty; Spanish-speaking families (families whose home language is Spanish) and Rural Communities.

- **Kindergarten Partnership and Innovation (KPI):** The goal for KPI funding is to improve early learning to kindergarten transition, to create shared professional development opportunities between our early learning and kindergarten educators and to increase family engagement.

As we shared at the last GC meeting, KPI has the potential that it could go away in the second year of the biennium. But we really don't know what that means right now. This is a snippet from the quarterly report that we send to the Early Learning Division. What you see in the April through June column, that's the activity from January through March. It's just the nature of the reporting period, there is a one quarter delay. The \$785,860 is the current KPI award amount. As of the most current reporting period, we've spent 18% of that award.

What you see on the right side are the activities that were listed in our Priorities Investment Document. Everything in green we have plans to continue. These investments are critical to improve family stability and children's transition to kindergarten. The item in red will be going to pause pending funding. (See details on PowerPoint) This is the format for each of the funding stream slides we will review today.

- **Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV):** Focused on increased communication and coordination between the other MIECHV programs: Nurse-Family Partnership, Early Head Start, and Healthy Families; and facilitation of a home visiting network that is for home visitors to increase networking, peer support, and professional development opportunities.
- **School Readiness:** Focused on increasing access to school readiness supports for children entering kindergarten, for building relationships between early learning and kindergarten teachers, and increasing family engagement.
- **Healthy, Stable, Attached Families:** Focused on family stability. We have not obligated any of the funds for this program other than repurposing \$30,000 of the funds for the activity kits for families. It is the smallest funding stream we have.
- **Family Support:** Similar to Healthy, Stable and Attached Families except that the investments have to be focused on the adults in the family, rather than directly supporting the needs of the children. This is a federal funding stream.
- **ECE Sector Planning – New Fund.** We are no longer holding the Preschool Promise contracts; those providers/contractors are now contracting directly with the Early Learning Division. The hub's role is to provide coordinated enrollment and this fund supports staffing for that work.
- **Hub Coordination:** Focused on hub staffing, infrastructure, and emerging needs such as consultant Heidi McGowen providing guidance on the restructuring of the Governance Council and compensating our parent representatives for their important contributions to our work.

PSP Coordinated Enrollment Update:

(See PowerPoint Slide 11 for details)

Preschool Promise (PSP) Update

(See PowerPoint Slide 12 for details)

Preschool Promise RFA Results & ELD Next Steps

Mary W: We will reach out and start working collaboratively with providers as soon as those contracts are finalized. Our region received awards for 21 providers, 8 are new to PSP. It's a good cross section of provider types and 13 are Spanish speaking.

Of the ones who received an intent to award, most are currently open, maybe 4 are not open for emergency child care.

