



SOELS Governance Council

November 17th, 2020

2:00-4:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Attendees (Via Zoom): Sam Watson, KimberLee Whitney, Brittain Zimmerman, Katherine Clayton, Geoffrey Lowry, Stacy Inman, Laura McKeane, Scott Beveridge, Lisa O'Connor, Jessica Durrant, Mary Wolf, Eileen Micke-Johnson

Hub Staff: René Brandon, Teresa Slater, Chelsea Reinhart, Molly McLaughlin, Vicki Risner

Agenda Item

Call to Order at 2:04

Welcomed Laura McKeane to the committee.

Laura: I am the Director of Oral Health Services for AllCare. I visited with Kat and René last week and shared that this is going to be so good for me. I tend to really live in the world of teeth. This will be great for me to broaden my horizons. I'm very excited to be part of this council. Thank you.

Approval of minutes from 10-20-2020

Motion to approve minutes: Jessica Durrant

2nd Motion: Stacy Inman

Minutes Approved

Meeting Time Adjustment

René: Due to a set meeting time by the Early Learning Division that ends at 2:30 on the same date as this council, I am asking the committee to consider changing this meeting time from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm a half an hour later, 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm. Discussion was that it was better for several members, a few might have to leave at 4:00 to go to other existing meetings. A motion to change the meeting time.

Motion to change meeting time as requested: Sam Watson

2nd Motion: Lisa O'Connor

Move was approved.

SOELS Fire Relief Fund

René Brandon

René: At our last meeting as we were going through each of the funding streams and talking about the impact of COVID and the fires, we discussed repurposing some of the funds for the rest of the biennium. One that was approved by this council was the fire relief fund. We launched that yesterday. We have our first applicant. After this meeting I'm going to send out an email to this group as well as to our Agency Advisory Council asking for a couple people to partner with us to review and score the applications so that it's a neutral and transparent process. Anyone who is reviewing cannot also be an applicant. The application is really short, it's just a few questions. The matrix that we are putting together is just asking: does the applicant serve families with children at or below the age of 6, do they hit some of the priority focus areas that our region has determined as critical; families whose home language is Spanish, rural communities, etc. Making sure that if we have to choose or prioritize that we're giving preference to those who are most aligned with our priority populations. The funding stream will be opened through March or until funds are depleted. We included in the application that applicants can expect to hear back within two weeks. We will keep folks updated at every meeting as to how this fund is going.

Educational Equity Committee Update

René Brandon

This team has embraced the book *Belonging Through a Cultural of Dignity*, by Floyd Cobb and John Krownapple. The authors call out the challenge that many of those communities who are struggling with equity implementation; they call it the dysfunctional cycle of equity work. There is a catalyst that causes people to rally around issues of equity. We need to form a committee. That committee tends to be folks who are already champions and already bought into the truth that things need to change. Often times they are not necessarily implementation experts so they might pull in a consultant who knows a lot more than they do and imparts some wisdom, then leaves the community. The committee tends to struggle and then eventually reach a check the box mentality of "well, we're going to make sure that all of our staff understand implicit bias." Or have x number of training hours under equity content per year. It becomes status quo until the next catalyst happens and the community rallies again. The cycle repeats.

They were seeing this all over the country so they started collecting data regarding when this cycle happens and communities where system level changes are actually happening. The concepts of this book are about creating the climate of belonging. Their examples include Maslow's Hierarchy but putting it into a staircase of success. They say that it's really unreasonable to expect a student to step up to achievement without first having that sense of belonging in their school culture. They said that what we call an achievement gap is really a belonging gap. Many of the members of our Educational Equity Committee have requested copies of the book. We are going through some of the chapters together as a committee. The folks with the book are wanting to use it within their own agencies to really explore what they can do to transform that systems work within their own agencies.

Heidi Olividoti at SOESD is also using this with our K-12 partners. Many of our Southern Oregon Success Partners requested a copy of the book as well. It would be really fantastic to start to see a regional shared focus using the content of these equity experts. Everything is about relationships. If you do that very well then other things fall in place. Every chapter gives you book club type discussion questions so that you can expand the conversation with the folks who are reading the same chapter that you are and talk about what resonates with you, how you're using it. Identifying additional resources that you might need. This isn't a panacea, but is something that is resonating with a lot of people to help move the conversation beyond a training and checking the box.

Child & Family Wellbeing Committee

Chelsea Reinhart

Chelsea shared the Hub's Family Engagement Tool Kit. It has been shared with several work groups and sent out to partners to use within their agencies and with the families they serve. It focuses on the 5 Protective Factors. Within each factor we identified talking points, difference resources and strategies for families to build up that protective factor within their family. We would love to hear feedback from you on how families have responded to this and how to improve it.

Agency Advisory Council

René Brandon

René shared Raise Up Oregon's one page summary slide of the report. Raise Up Oregon includes objectives and strategies to reach the Early Learning Council's three system goals. Goals and objectives, along with strategy highlights. Before COVID, The Agency Advisory Council spent several meeting unpacking these three goals, objectives and strategies.

#1 System Goal #1: Children Arrive Ready for Kindergarten

#2 System Goal #2: Children are raised in healthy, stable and attached families

#3 System Goal #3: The Early Learning System is Aligned, Coordinated, and Family Centered

We are resuming this work again, now with a COVID lens, to see if it still makes sense. Are we still on the right track? Do we need to add additional thinking around those due to COVID, due to fires, other strains and stressors on families? We are then asking our Agency Advisory Council to rank each of those objectives on a scale of 1 to 3. 1 meaning it's urgent and we need to deal with it now. 2 meaning it's important and we need to deal with it within the next year. And 3, yes, it's really important, we don't want to forget about it, but we can't do everything at once so this is one of those things that can wait a little longer.

Under each objective, we're also identifying who we think the responsible entity should be. Typically, we would be listing one of our hub subcommittees, as to where that responsibility lies to make sure we are still moving that objective forward. If partners identify that there is someone else working on that in the region then we want to make sure that we're not duplicating efforts, that we are cooperating and aligning our efforts. Once we have our final product we will be bringing it this Governance Council, asking the council to adopt our final product as our own strategic plan moving forward for the next biennium. Once we have that in place then that will help guide our funding investments for the next biennium as well which will drive the work of each of our sub-committees.

Mary: This committee was established before COVID, and have explored workforce needs and barriers. Recruitment and retention are two of the biggest challenges programs are facing. Since COVID has impacted businesses, we have new partners interested in child care issues, including City of Medford, Rogue Valley Workforce, SOREDI and the Governor's Regional Solutions office.

It is very encouraging that we're coming to a shared understanding of the issues and how important they are.. Multnomah just passed preschool for all. We are hoping it will expand to the whole state and maybe the country will follow.

René: Last year we were so excited that the Student Success Act was bringing much needed dollars into the early learning field and then COVID arrived. So many things have changed. It's drastically impacted the child care industry. How many providers have left the field since March?

Mary: Maybe half. But even the capacity of that half is lower, even though they are back up to pre-COVID ratios. But the demand is lower; families are finding other solutions during this time. A lot of the teachers needed to be home with their kids too. It's a complicated problem.

René: In the past, there was push back from the workforce industry regarding child care careers: High demand, but low wage. At this time, we still don't have a way yet to elevate child care to the compensation that is needed for the work that is provided, but we have more interest from cross sectors partners than ever before. Jim Fong, the executive director of Workforce Partnership has shared with the committee some of the work that they did with the health care sector. Looking at caregivers, certified nursing assistants, nurses as similar to the early learning workforce. Our new partnerships will assist with recruitment and retention efforts in the future.

Viewing the health care industry as very similar in some ways to the childcare industry, our subcommittee came to the realization that at least for right now, many of the people who come into child care, early learning at entry level may not stay long term. One of our partners stated that she's just training people for up and out because they are either looking for a higher paying job, maybe with Head Start, or they are looking at getting some more education and moving onto the K12 system. So, we are exploring what it would take to do a robust campaign, business model, for recruitment for entry level positions for new folks coming in. Knowing that it could be a shorter life cycle for them, that they might be transitioning, but maybe that's an actual business model that the early learning field needs to acknowledge for now. There may be a significant percentage of those who will move on until we solve the compensation challenge. But we might still attract high quality people for a period of time and develop more of a schematic that would help us to entice them whether or not they are going to stay long term.

Lisa Farlin shared that they are currently only serving 80 children on-site right now compared to 900-1,000 in a typical year pre-COVID. There are a lot of reasons for that. But as we start to bring more and more children in, we can't do that if the workforce isn't there. The committee spend a lot of time brainstorming how to market early learning to those who might be interested but have no experience. Maybe a sign on bonus and training scholarships. We don't have a durable solution yet, but our group is brainstorming some strategies that can bring more people in quicker, to respond to the need as the child care demand begins to grow again.

Molly:

Hub is overseeing the placement of 280 kids overall.
25% were returning students
214 placements left
Phase 2 was for conversion children; a few still pending, 76 placements
Phase 3 is the Lottery process for new applications. We've had 3 lotteries so far.
Reached out to 70 families, so far, we have 26 now determined eligible
114 placements still left to fill.

The screening process seems to be ensuring that we are getting families who are eligible. About 90% of applicants are eligible.

We will have about 50 openings that we haven't been able to fill.
10 families have not been placed since they want White City locations and they are full.
40 spots are open in Medford and we could use assistance in getting the word out.

René: We just don't have enough families applying. Our Workforce partners are sharing the flyers to their employer connections. Please continue to share and get the word out.

Mary: The fact that providers are not at full enrollment is a stark reflection of the climate that we are in. It's just a very unusual time. As far as supporting the providers:

Martha Ibarra is supporting the 10 Spanish speaking providers
Molly Clement is supporting the English speaking providers
Meetings every other week.
Everybody knows that these are unprecedented times.
Stay the course, things will be clearer in the coming months.
It's challenging for everyone.

Additional Agenda Item: ECE Internships for high school Students

Teresa Slater

The Hub is partnering with Project Youth (formerly College Dreams) and Central Medford High School, to provide paid internships with high school seniors and transition students into the preschool and ECE programming. This could open up a new career path and give them more options and provide programs with entry level staff to skill up. We talked about getting them their food handlers permits, CPR training, ECE basic certificate and possibly more. If you want to host a paid intern site and help them learn these on the job skills, email Teresa.

René: A reminder that we don't meet in December and that we will be back in January at our new time of 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm.

Adjournment

Next Meeting (No December Meeting)
January 19, 2021
2:30-4:30 p.m.