



Early Care and Education Workforce Committee

January 7, 2021

10:30 am-12:00 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://soesd.zoom.us/j/92650623888>

Meeting ID: 926 5062 3888

Attendees: Katherine Tovar, Mary Wolf, Renee Breznay, Henry Oliva, Nancy Lawson, Stacy Inman, Eileen Micke-Johnson, Katrina McGrath, Devon Finley, Greg Thweatt, Lisa Farlin, Jim Fong, Valorie Lovelace, Crystal Rowbotham

Hub Staff: René Brandon, Chelsea Reinhart, Vicki Risner

Agenda

Welcome & Introductions

Mary Wolf/Katherine Tovar, Co-Chairs

Katherine Tovar – Director at Blossom Hills Early Learning Center (Co-Chair)

Mary Wolf – CCRN Child Care Resource Network (Co-Chair)

Lisa Farlin – Director of Head Start

Renee Breznay – Licenser with the Office of Child Care, Medford Office

Chelsea Reinhart – Early Learning Hub

Nancy Lawson – Program Coordinator for Josephine County Early Intervention Services

Valerie Lovelace – City Councilor, Grants Pass, friend of early learning

Vicki Risner – Early Learning Hub

Devon Finley – CCRN Child Care Resource Network

Henry Oliva – Regional Licensing Manager with the Office of Child Care, Early Learning Division

Greg Thweatt – Rogue Workforce Partnership

Katrina McGrath – CCRN Child Care Resource Network

Stacy Inman – Coordinator for Jackson County Early Intervention

Eileen Micke-Johnson – RCC's Early Childhood Education Dept.

René Brandon – Director of the Early Learning Hub

Jim Fong – Rogue Workforce Partnership

Crystal Rowbotham – Parent Representative from Jackson County

René: Acknowledgment of Nancy Lawson's last ECE Workforce meeting with us. She is transitioning from ESD's EI/ECE program. She hit the ground running when she started with the program, provided stellar support for her team and for the services of Josephine County. Nancy has been a fantastic contributor from day one and our system greatly benefited from it.

Next Steps from December's breakout group work for Recruitment Campaign – René Brandon

René: I want to start by summarizing the information we got back from each of the breakout groups we had last month. I also wanted to pitch an idea that I thought would get us started based on the feedback from the groups as a starting point for our conversations.

I had put some suggestions in red for each group to get the conversations started. We brainstormed some ideas on Jamboard which is how we populated this Excel document. What's now on the Excel sheet are ideas from that previous meeting.

The next charge was to look at all of the suggestions from the brainstorming meeting and highlight those that they thought were probably the most effective ideas to move forward with. It's been recommended that we look to blend some messages since one message might not be compelling enough for some audiences. Also tailoring some messages based on target audience. What we target for high school students may be different than what we send out into the community through our business partners.

Recruitment (flyer or messages):

- Early Learning Matters!

- Make a difference in young children's lives.

- One caring adult makes a difference in young children's lives.

- Rebuild Rogue!! Help to rebuild our Rogue Valley communities and economy!!

- Promote sick leave and vacation options

- Young children in Southern Oregon need you!

Ways to do the Marketing, Outreach and Recruitment Messages:

- Digital advertising/email blasts/banners

- Partner recruitment with local business (e.g. flyer on pizza delivery boxes, coffee stands, Uber Eats, Door Dash)

- Reaching people that aren't already affiliated in our program

- Multimedia marketing campaign

- Talk to businesses that are hungry to help, because they need child care for their workers.

Key People needed to move this forward:

- High school guidance counselors

- Job Fairs – Join combined Careers in Gears/GPHS/Jr. Achievement virtual fair (03/10)

- Local businesses – through local news networks

- Present at Chamber of Commerce in both counties

- Rogue Workforce Partnership's Marketing/Social Media campaign

How can interested people get in touch with programs?

- Check in with Child Care Resource Network

- Centralized connection

Early Learning Hub

Additional questions posed by the group:

How do we reach the older young people or non-high school students?

Find out where the high school counselors and similar people that read the ads about career options and connect with and use this with consistent messaging.

Where do interested parties go and how do they walk through that process?

Jim: I would advocate for a seamlessness in this. I think we're going to be doing a lot of overlapping potentially. Everything that is listed in on our list of To-do's. I think it would be helpful if we work together to leverage the messages. To make sure that this is all very coordinated and not fragmented.

René: That makes a lot of sense. I'm wondering how that can translate into action.

Jim: Concretely I think that I would take the list that you have at the top of this spreadsheet, especially around the messages that you've highlighted and create some great info-graphics. Greg is also on this call and he's our info-graphics genius. These would be used throughout the process, at all stages.

Valerie: I'm going to backup with what Jim is saying. There is a lot going on out there that you may not be aware of. SOREDI is trying to identify where child care openings are as this is one of their priorities. I work with our government affairs, our chambers, the hospitals. Everybody knows there's a crisis. The key is how do we all get on the same page? Nobody knows where to go to get where the openings are at. You go to Head Start but they are limited financially to who they can start. There's a big gap between the information and the whole world out there. That's what we need to bring together. I can tell you that the chambers are scrambling to find child care which is part of the reason I'm here. We all know that these need to happen but we need a conduit to get it out to the community.

Jim: I think that one of the things I would add is in partnership with SOREDI and Business Oregon just launched a Rogue business website, a common landing place. For the employers we can add links to all the best resources like CCRN or the Hub, to help the businesses and workers to know how to find child care. There're no wrong doors here or monopoly of who should own this information. Having the right platform and nexus of community platforms that link to each other. Many of these websites are not going away. We want to make sure that they are all linked together so that people, regardless of the door they are coming through, get the information they are wanting and needing. Greg could work on an info-graphic that we could add to our info-graphic pieces. (Shared some visual examples). I believe we are sharing a system that you can plug into concretely. You have the content, we can just plug it in. We can get some help from Guy Tauer for the labor market information that he has access to. We need some sidebar sessions with you to help fill in the blanks with you. The links. Where do you want people to call? Where do you want them to go? All of this will go onto the website as well.

René: Can you send this to me so that we can have some offline time to look at it, discuss it and get some of the details that would be specific for Early Childhood?

Jim: Yes. (Discussion was made of different formats that they can use to share with the group.) I think we'll have to create a new pathway on our Rogue Careers website for you folks. We organize this by industry clusters and I'm not sure it's a separate industry cluster. Maybe it can be combined with Caregivers/Personal Care Aides. I'm just not sure yet. We'll need to talk about it more.

René: I definitely think we need to have more conversation about this. We don't want to minimize early care and education as a career field and as a viable option. Understanding that we've had conversations in this group before about how often it's the financial lure to move onto to kindergarten because of the compensation. So, compensation is an issue that needs to be addressed over time. As we are planning on how to promote this we would not be supportive of promoting it as an only a stepping stone to something better.

Jim: No I get that. But honestly, I look at high touch, high care occupations that are close to minimum wage. You're competing in an environment where you can't compete with other careers. You don't have the business model to compete which is the fundamental challenge right now. I think what we need to pursue is a high-volume strategy. Since you're going to have the turn over anyways, can you show a better volume entry point that can get someone coming out of high school for six months to a year, and then they turn over. It's not ideal but it's better than what you have now which is nobody coming through the pipeline.

Valerie: I get your frustration as a former elementary school teacher, knowing that the transition to education and up the pipeline is simply the way that it's structured right now because they're unionized. They're unionized so they have that. But if you get the numbers of people coming through I think that what you would find is that there are people who do prefer early childhood as opposed to jumping up.

Jim: The other piece that I would like to add to that is that this is all about targeting your demographic profile. I think that what the caregivers will tell you, and told us, is that their best employees are frequently people, mostly women in their late twenties, early thirties who are basically now getting to a place where they are looking for something solid and they have not been successful academically and have primarily held entry level jobs. Those are some of their best workers if they can afford to live on the wages that are being made. They don't even think about progressing because they love the work. There's so much love and compassion that they don't want to leave their people. So, this becomes about life choices and what works for you economically. We want to encourage as many people as possible. But those demographics as well as the entry level demographics are our targets. Give them an entry point, give them a sense of hope and some kind of hands on self-

advocacy because they're not academic learners or have other issues that are preventing them from further education. The long-term fix for the economics of this, that's a long work project ahead requiring an economic and sociological shift that's going to have to take place. How do we solve the problem in the meantime is the issue?

René: We have a few different priorities and strategies. I think we all agree that people do get into this field for different reasons and for different durations of time. We're grateful for all of them. Having the supports for why they're getting into the field and however long they're staying, ensuring that we're engaging them, supporting them, hoping to retain them is obviously our strategy.

Jim/Greg shared additional info-graphics. Jim: We would give you a lot of editorial license on both content, color pallet, graphics. You want to keep it fresh and changing, even monthly. We would sign them up for a two-day training educating them in the Workforce fundamentals. The value of them going through the Workforce Rogue Valley is that they can getting can get the individual training scholarships. Once they go through this and we are vetting them through this. As they finish that we would then have a job fair, mostly virtual currently, and offers could be coming from there. In our caregiver program, as soon as they were hired, they get a \$100 training scholarship. They would get a \$300 training scholarship after 90 days and then \$300 more after one year. Which would give them \$1,200 for CNA training after one year. We could see what it would look like for your incoming early learning providers.

René: This looks great. It's very much in line with what I was going to bring up next. (PowerPoint presentation). Recruitment Campaign to put some of this into action now vs. continuing to plan, plan, plan.

Monthly Zoom Recruitment Information Session.

- Flyer with call to action and incentives outlined. Standing date/times for 1-hour sessions. (Stress the importance, need right now, what's in it for them)
- CCRN, RCC ECE Dept., at least one ECE program representative at each session.
- Content of Session:
 - The need – shortage of ECE workforce and need to support healthy growth and development of young children.
 - The offer – training costs and time compensated. Sign on bonus if selected to work with local program. First year of required trainings at no charge.
- Cover training cost and seat time for:
 - CPR/First Aid
 - Food Handler's Card
 - RRCAN
 - Other?
- Cover other requirements with fee:

- Criminal background check
- Fingerprinting (per Nancy's input)
- Other?
- If successfully placed with local ECE program:
 - Sign on Bonus of \$XXX after 90 days
 - Cover other required training costs for first year of employment – how many hours per year and what is average cost?

It would be really helpful as a starting point is if CCRN could send a survey out to the early learning programs in Jackson and Josephine counties asking exactly what Valerie was highlighting, which programs have openings and what are the openings? We would have a snapshot of that time's need as we are bringing people into these information sessions and trying to connect them with the programs that have the openings.

Jim: I'm thinking past your Hub funds, we have a lot of money now because of the wild fire disaster grant that we got. We would help pay for this. These are the kinds of things we routinely pay for. There's a sustainable business model for this kind of investment strategy.

Eileen: In looking at our grant model and our cohort model of getting people trained and through the basic certificate courses which there are 4 courses, we're looking at starting a new cohort in the spring which would be in April. That might be good to bring some people into that which could be another piece of this.

Mary: I would also say that we can certainly survey providers, but we absolutely know for a fact that there is a huge workforce shortage. It's a revolving door. You can also say that once they've gone through those basic trainings that they need to have that they would be eligible to be substitutes which is a great way for somebody to go into a program and see if it's a good fit. Often a substitute gets hired once they're there.

Jim: It would help to get a sense of what's the scale of the problem that we're trying to solve here, what's the goal. Between the survey of what the vacancies might be, and also what Valerie pointed out that SOREDI and Economic Development and Workforce, the employer side of this is "What's the capacity?" What does that mean in terms of hard numbers? How do we make sure that we reach out to those who have shut down, as well as those who have stayed open, to ensure that there is viability in them staying open, and if there is something we can help those early learning providers to start up again. SOREDI has access to seed money that could help them. We have other partners like Business Oregon who can also assist them in reopening.

René: Returning to the next slide I had for this discussion:

Next Steps

- CCRN/Hub Teams develop flyer (and anyone else who is interested)

- Take a look at the beautiful flyers that Greg has put together offline.
- Start putting in the content that is relevant to early learning
- Identify some of the information we don't yet have and need
- CCRN to survey their workforce to find out where those openings are (knowing that it's a snapshot in time).
 - It would be critical in that survey to ask their willingness to participate with Rogue Workforce partnership to formalize this process a little more towards their business needs.
 - Who they are? What they're need is? What their willingness to participate is? How many spots could you have open if you had staff available with your current funding? (For those fully staffed but with empty classrooms.)
- Determine set monthly introduction session time slot
- Determine which partners can commit to the session
- ID cost per person and number of people who can enter project
- All Hub funds must be spent by 6/20/2021
- Work now to ID funding to continue next year, if successful pilot

René: If the CCRN staff could start with putting the questions together for the survey, maybe my team and maybe Katherine to weigh in on the wording and questions, to work together as a group on that.

Katherine: Yes

Eileen: René I would be willing to help too.

René: Perfect. We'll recap with an email that encourages folks to reach out if they're interested in any of that as well.

Jim: Another thing I would offer in terms of process for organizational support, we're just refining a set of tools that were shared with us that were found to be affective, project organizational management tools. A lot of our partners are having great success with it. We can make it available on our cloud so everyone has access to it.

René: Are there any other comments on moving forward. It sounds like something very tangible would meet at least partially meet the need of some of the programing. It certainly doesn't solve the problem of having a highly qualified teacher to step into the program, but it does get more people into the field which hopefully will get more children supported, get more interest around early learning as a career choice. Does this feel like we are moving in the right direction?

Eileen: I think so because then we can bring these folks in and we can train them up to be teachers. I'm very excited about it.

(Multiple yeses in agreement)

René: So, we'll have some work that needs to get done prior to the next meeting. Once we receive those example info-graphics from you Greg, we'll get together with some of our folks, do some planning around that, and maybe we can reach out to both Greg and Jim to have a next step meeting.

Jim: Absolutely.

Lisa: I just want to throw this out there that in terms of entry level positions that we often need would be a cook and cook asst. While it's different than someone working in a classroom, those are positions that we often have a very hard time filling.

Jim: That's maybe a side conversation that we could have since it's a unique situation because of the size and scale of Head Start's operations. I also think it's unique because you are competing with the fast food industry. We need you to be successful so maybe we could brainstorm in a separate conversation. How to incentive people to come to you instead of fast food.

René: Lisa I think your comment is also great because it tells us that in this survey that we're sending out to programs that we need to be specific as to asking the type of jobs they are trying to fill otherwise we probably won't get the level of information we're going to need to get to inform our next steps. We really need to understand what the region is needing.

Jim: Ask them: What are your pain points? What are your barriers? What are your issues? We found surprises in the health care industry. So, offering cooks and cook assistants with training incentives might make it more appealing than the fast food industry.

Greg: And maybe support services as well.

Henry: I think another thing worth talking about too is how things are changing. We have a specific set of challenges today. Those challenges are going to be a little bit different this summer. We're hoping that they are going to be a whole lot different in the next school year. Creating a nimble road map makes a lot of sense. I think that supporting existing providers to fill their slots again is the immediate goal.

Then we can start addressing the child care desert, providing enough training so that people can go out on their own. Open their own businesses, whether it's in home care or centers. That's a little bit different conversation than the one that's most important right now before this summer. Once we can get the current providers stable, the ones that are open, opens at half or minimum capacity and the ones that are closed, because of the Covid challenges, then we can address the child care desert.

René: Thank you. This has been a very action-oriented meeting and it seems like we have the right folks chiming in. It's obviously not a one and done. It's just the first step of many. It's really appreciated. This is important work. I'm glad to be along side all of you doing it.

Other Business & Closing

Mary Wolf/Katherine Tovar

None

Next Meeting: February 4, 2021