



Educational Equity Committee

January 28, 2021

10am-11:30 am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://soesd.zoom.us/j/4876428933>

Meeting ID: 487 642 8933

Attendees: Bridey Mendoza-Moore, Meryl Roberts, Geoffrey Lowry, Elise Travertini, Eileen Micke-Johnson, Martha Ibarra

Hub: René Brandon, Chelsea Reinhart, Teresa Slater, Vicki Risner

Purpose of Meeting: The Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub's Agency Advisory Council has identified educational preparedness for young children of color in Southern Oregon as a priority focus area. We are convening partners representing early learning, K-12 education, high education, health sector and culturally specific family-serving organizations to drive this work forward. Families with lived experience will guide our work.

Agenda

Introductions and Check-in: How is your organization doing and how are your families doing?

René Brandon: Director, Early Learning Hub

Eileen Micke-Johnson: RCC. Early Childhood and Early Education Department. We just started another virtual term which brings us to a year of virtual only classes. Spring term will also be virtual. Enrollment is down about 25%. Many of our students are working in early learning programs that are currently open.

Bridey Mendoza-Moore: New Department Chair, Early Childhood and Elementary Education Department with RCC. Have worked in the home visiting field, mainly Healthy Families for years. Most recently with Jackson County Early Intervention. Also, was teaching for both SOU and RCC.

Martha Ibarra: with CCRN. A lot of our providers are struggling with technology, using different programs to participate in meetings. They are overwhelmed. They are still coming to classes. I've had 3 drop originally, but they have come back. This last term we finally have a book in Spanish which is making a difference. Families are still experiencing a lot of fear about returning to onsite. René: Are families getting the information they need in Spanish when they need it?

Martha: Not all the families have access to phones, computers, access to websites or the internet. They are getting a lot information from their local schools. Technology was their main obstacle to getting information.

Geoffrey Lowry: Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC). We've been open since October. Currently serving about half of the kids we'd normally serve. Haven't had that many difficulties with it. We've had to close some classrooms for a bit due to travel related quarantines from the holidays. Some parents have stated that they feel safer with their kids with us because we are following the strict COVID guidelines. The hardest is all the unknowns, constantly changing regulations. Our kids are happy to be here.

Meryl Roberts: with the Central Point School District. I do early childhood evaluations, also an autism specialist and a trauma information education specialist. We are working to maintain momentum on training and implementation for universal design support for social/emotional learning for all kids. Families are super grateful that we are seeing their kids. As Martha was saying, we're having to be flexible working with our families. There are changes that we've made to support families that are working and I would like to see continue.

Teresa Slater: with the Early Learning Hub. We were doing a lot of programming between early learning and kindergarten. The parents are craving that connection just as much as the children are. The social isolation of parents with young children was a priority before, it really is now. We have started up our professional learning teams again, now doing them virtually.

Elise Travertini: with La Clinica. We did not have telehealth before COVID and have discovered that we have been able to connect with some families in ways we never did with only in person services. They are much more willing to do family therapy virtually. We did a hybrid model, with in-person and telehealth services. More people are requesting in person services. We opened up four new school-based health centers in the Phoenix-Talent School District: Talent Elementary, Talent Middle School, ATI and Orchard Hill. We have a Latinx Family Parent Group going in our Phoenix-Talent School District, Survivors of the Fire. There are about 10 parents who attend.

Update: Preschool Promise Recruitment Success for families of color and Spanish-speaking families

There are currently 51 slots available. Please help us get the word out.

A demographic analysis of the enrollments to date:

Conversion Children (were already enrolled, either scholarships or private pay): Race/Ethnicity: Black/African American 4%, LatinX 35%, White 47%, Other categories: 14%. Language: English 79%, Spanish 21%

New Children: Race/Ethnicity: Asian 2%, American Indian/Alaskan Native 5%, Black/African American 2%, LatinX 23%, White 68%. Language: English 83%, Spanish 17%

Introduction and Discussion of Draft Strategic Map for Committee for 2021-2023

(René shared the Strategic Map for 2021-2023) We have a strategic map that is an overall map of our early learning hub and the investments we make. There are three overarching goals that the early learning hub is responsible for:

Coordinated and aligned, family centered system

Children arriving at kindergarten supported and prepared for success

Healthy, stable and attached families.

Within those we break them down into individual bodies of work, and various committees drive the work forward. This is a map of where I think our energies should be heading for this next biennium, 2021-23 and I would like your feedback.

The first green box:

- **Increase awareness of, and collaboration with, state and regional initiatives that support educational equity.**

Action: Invite regional and state partners to present to the committee and/or review partner reports and materials.

What initiatives should this committee be aware of and be in alignment with?

Meryl: A lot of school boards are adopting anti-racist policies.

René: Maybe collecting those policies to see how the region is responding.

Meryl: Charlie Bauer with SOESD might be a good resource for that. He's leading the SOWARE (Southern Oregon White Anti-Racist Educators). He should already have a list of them.

Eileen: I think being in touch with the ELD with what's happening at that level. There is a lot happening at the state level. The Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children received a grant from the National Association to do work around equity and diversity. There will be things like book groups, a focus group process with marginalized communities. They will be statewide over Zoom.

- **Increase community member and stakeholder understanding of issues of educational equity and impact on child and family outcomes.**

Action: Identify key regional data sources for tracking policies, practices and behaviors related to educational equity and opportunity gaps for children of color.

Action: Use surveys, focus groups and/or key informant interviews with families to identify what's working and what's needed to support children and families of color to achieve educational equity. René: We will be working with partners who are doing this work.

Action: Disseminate results of data collection as call to action and invitation commit to making policy, practice, and behavioral shifts.

Eileen: I think that after just reading the first few chapters of the book that this group could put out a positive vision look like. Do some work on getting that word out.

- **Increase stakeholder knowledge and utilization of available resources, supports and trainings to impact policies, practices and behaviors related to educational equity.**

Action: Professional Learning within Committee, using *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation* as a shared tool.

Action: Identify Stakeholders needing resources, supports, training: early learning and kindergarten teachers and administrators; K-12 curriculum directors; family-serving organization; families. Create distribution plan of resources, supports and trainings to various stakeholder groups.

Professional Learning & Discussion: Floyd Cobb & John Krownapple's *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity*: Review Chapters 1 & 2, Continue with Chapter 3.

René: The authors took Maslow's hierarchy of needs and put it into a staircase to success. They made the point that belonging must precede achievement. You must feel like you belong before you can achieve in that environment. Without that sense of belonging you will not reach your full potential. The point of the book is that if we don't figure out why some students in early learning and K-12, why they are not feeling that sense of belonging and why we're still expecting them to achieve, then we're setting them up for failure. What we typically hear of as an *achievement* gap is actually a *belonging* gap. This is the launching point of the book. It's the system, not the student, that needs to do things differently and figure it out.

I was reflecting on the PBIS program that a lot of early learning and K-12 programs use. Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies. When my kids were using it in school, I renamed it Performance Based Incentive System. The way the schools that my children attended used it, it was rewarding the children who were already achieving the normative educational and behavioral expectations. Rewarding those kids who were already feeling a sense of belonging, feeling a sense of achievement, who were doing well. It was the kids who were struggling, who were falling through that staircase that set them up for failure, who would never get those little incentive tickets. It was a negative reinforcing program that isn't what PBIS was originally designed to do, but it was how it was applied in those situations. The outcome was really what is represented here (in the staircase depiction). I'm sharing this as an example of how the system puts practices in place, but they are not meeting the true need because we're not digging down into why these children are not achieving in the first place. We're not digging far enough.

What are you learning so far from this study? Have you been able to introduce this to others in your daily work? What are the next steps you want to take for yourself and/or your organization?

Meryl: The whole positive shared vision is very potent. We have to be for something, not just against. How do we intentionally welcome back students? Stressed adults will fall back on what they know. I really hope that we can focus on connection and belonging.

Chelsea: It should start with the drop off. Currently there is no connection and it's really rushed and jarring. Before it was taking them to the door, give hugs, say goodbye, say hi to the teacher. It is important to think about this connection point, especially with masks on, it's hard on kids.

Geoff: The family part has been the most difficult. We used to have 100 parents in the same room for a meeting. Now doing this all virtually there aren't the same connections. We've been lucky that we have a parent advocate who calls the parents to make connections. But people don't recognize me with a mask on unless they've been a part of my program for years and know who I am.

René: In February, let's continue to focus on discussing the strategies towards coming to a shared vision. Not just for this group but for this group to share what their thinking is in terms of how to do that within their organization. To continue to identify within the organizations represented in this group, where those points of contact are, where those practices are, where we can evaluate how well the practice is in promoting that sense of belonging. Whether it's for the family of the child, whether it's for the child. I think it would be beneficial if we sit within those first three chapters for a little longer.

We have not fully explored that third chapter, so reading through it before our next meeting would be helpful.

Be thinking about those strategies.

How can we move forward with a shared vision?

What does it look like to increase that sense of belonging with our families and our children?

Other Business: None

Next Meeting:

Next Meeting: February 28, 2021

10-11:30 am