



SOELS Governance Council

February 16, 2021

2:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 948 6812 4175

Attendees: Brittain Zimmerman, Geoffrey Lowry, Kimberlee Whitney, Stacy Inman, Laura McKeane, Sam Watson, Adrienne Auxier, Eileen Micke-Johnson, Lisa O'Connor, Mary Wolf, Jessica Durrant, Jeanne Grazioli, Scott Beveridge, Crystal Rowbotham. **Absent:** Martha Ibarra (ex).

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

Agenda

Call to Order at 2:33 pm

Motioned: Jessica Durrant

2nd Motion: Sam Watson

Welcome and Greetings

Additions or changes to the Agenda - none

Approval of minutes from 1-19-2021

Motion to approve minutes: Mary Wolf

2nd Motion: Jeannie Grazioli

Motion Passed

Results of Legislative Advocacy Vote

At the January meeting, it was introduced that other early learning hubs across the state were joining with Marion-Polk ELH to contract with Eames Consulting for early learning hub advocacy. Information was emailed to council members and an electronic vote was taken. There were 10 in support, 4 against, and 1 abstention, so we are moving forward with this. The cost for each hub is \$3,750 per year. Eames Consulting will keep hubs informed of legislation related to early learning:

Bill Summary by Priority Document. This is something Eames is providing to the hubs during legislative session. It tracks the pertinent bills for early learning. The summary includes the hyperlink directly to the bill. Eames tracks actions as a bill is introduced, gives a brief summary, last three actions, and who within Eames is handling the work related to that particular bill. Also includes what the Hub system's position is on that particular bill.

Shared HB 2053 and 2054 Testimony

This is the first action Eames has taken on behalf of the hubs. It is a shared testimony in support of HB 2053 and 2054. One is changing some of the language around coordinated enrollment and preschool promise and the hub's role in that. The other one is shoring up the type of work and

investments that the hub can make using the kindergarten readiness and partnership Innovation Funding, KPI funding. It's explaining to the legislature how that impacts the work of the hubs in community.

Legislation related to Early Learning

HB 2053: Preschool Promise and Baby Promise Statute Alignment

Addressing the community plans portion of the Preschool. Charging the hubs with continuing to do the sector planning efforts.

HB 2054: Update to Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation Program

Narrows the scope for the use of program grant funds to better target resources to kindergarten transition. Ensuring that we're using the funds to increase positive outcomes during kindergarten transition, that we are really focusing on engaging families early and continuing to engage them.

SB 49: License Exempt Child Care Background Check Process

Transfers the license exempt child care background check process for subsidized care from the Oregon Department of Human Services to the Office of Child Care in the Early Learning Division. The process enrolls license exempt providers in the Central Background Registry. Mary clarified that this is to have one background check that would serve both purposes, but they will both be coming under the ELD rather than two agencies administering them.

SB 50: Recorded Programs Oversight

Provides preschool and school-age recorded programs Office of Child Care oversight through Central Background Registry enrollment health and safety inspections. It is thought to be part of an overall push on the part of the state to reduce the number of programs that are operating without any oversight. Currently, a recorded program is not subject to the same licensing requirements. The only requirement is that the staff is in the background registry.

HB 2055: Creates a Tribal Early Learning Hub

Creates a Tribal Early Learning Hub and Tribal Early Learning Hub Advisory Committee that will serve Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes.

HB 2059: Reforming Spark Program and Tiered Reimbursement

Technical fix to Spark statutes to give latitude in designing a more effective quality rating and improvement system to increase provider participation and families' use of the resource in finding quality early care and education programs.

POP 402: Preschool Expansion

Proposes \$108.9 million in early learning expansion, which would provide over 8,000 new slots for children and families.

We have:

Oregon Pre-Kindergarten:	2,400 slots	\$30.0 million
Preschool Promise:	3,600 slots	\$64.1 million
Early Head Start:	260 slots	\$ 5.8 million
Healthy Families Oregon:	400 slots	\$ 3.5 million
Parenting Education:	1,000 slots	\$ 2.0 million

We do not currently have in our region:

Early Childhood Equity Fund:	1,100 slots	\$ 3.4 million
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The passing of this would definitely bring more early learning opportunities to kids in our region. We don't know what that allocation might be, but are hopeful.

The question was asked if there has been any talk of expansion of Baby Promise beyond the pilots that are in place. It's definitely a goal that the Early Learning Division has, but no specifics yet. During the last legislative session, the ELD wanted to harness the legislative enthusiasm behind the preschool expansion and they chose not to have more specific conversations about the need for infant and toddler care because it could have slowed down the passing of preschool expansion. We know that it's definitely needed in our region and across the state.

POP 403: OCC Licensing Positions

Proposes \$1.3 million from CCDF discretionary funds to make five positions permanent to support compliance and background check processes in the Office of Child Care.

POP 406 Tribal Learning Hub

Proposes \$0.9 million for planning costs and 1 FTE. POP 406 is associated with HB 2055.

POP 407 Employment-Related Day Care (ERDC) Program and Recorded Programs in Central Background Registry (CBR)

Funds expanded background checks for ERDC license exempt child care providers and staff and volunteers of recorded programs. POP 407 requests 11 positions to do this work.

Proposes a \$1.8 million investment from the General Fund. It's associated with SB49 and SB 50.

POP 408 Position Technical Adjustment

Funds the Policy and Research Director, a current position, with a \$307,000 investment from the General Fund for one position at 1.00 FTE.

Early Care and Education Workforce Supports and Suspension and Expulsion Prevention

This \$5.8 million General Fund investment funds a centralized, statewide system for early care and education (ECE) programs to provide mental health consultation to ECE providers, support stable and inclusive placements, and prevent expulsion or suspension.

Reach Out & Read

Restores \$75,000 that was cut from the program during the 2020 Special Session. It is targeting pediatric offices who are partners with the Reach Out & Read program.

A question was asked about legislation to change the Early Learning Division to the Early Learning Authority. It is HB 3073. The ELD is not advocating on behalf of themselves for this change, this is coming from the governor. It has to do with having one governing body for early learning programs to provide more coordinated alignments and data sharing.

Update on Programming**Infant Toddler Scholarships**

Chelsea: We recently did a survey to child care programs in both Jackson and Josephine Counties to see if they would be interested in expanding their infant and toddler slots. There were 16 applicants, narrowed down to 6 providers based on readiness, slots available, their waitlist, and their program status with Spark and licensing. The hub has contracted with 5 program; 3 in Grants Pass, 1 in Medford, and 1 in White City. 2 centers and 3 family child care programs. With the funding we will serve 24 children, 8 infants/16 toddlers, to serve them from now until the end of June. If successful, we will consider continuing the funding in 2021-2022.

Preschool in Williams

Teresa: For the last few years, we have supported a preschool out in the Williams area, that sits within the Williams Elementary. It is a very rural location in the Three Rivers School District. Often when these children entered kindergarten they've had no early learning experience or exposure at all. A couple of years ago the community rallied and surveyed families about their interest in preschool. The Sugarloaf Community Association partnered with Three Rivers School District to start this preschool, using both KPI funding and private fundraising. No child is excluded due to income; there is a maximum of \$200 a month for families who can afford to pay. The preschool closed down in March due to COVID. Feb 16, today, is their new start date. They should be at full capacity of 20 children, and they have a wait list. They will have a kindergarten readiness group, which will get a few extra hours each week with the teacher who works directly with the kindergarten teacher to ensure that they are prepared to start kindergarten.

Jessica: It is a huge success. The data shows it's working.

Teresa: They did apply for Preschool Promise but were not awarded a PP grant. They are so affordable. A good investment in that community and for those kids in such a rural community.

Eileen: Such an important project for this Governance Council to fund.

Teresa: Definitely worth all that extra effort. They participate in our PLT's even being so rural.

René: The reason we're giving reports for these particular projects is because they are some of our priority populations that have been identified through the data mining that we've done. Because of COVID, we had funds that we needed to repurpose, as you may remember. We wanted to invest in Infant Toddler scholarships in early learning programs due to the data telling us that there are fewer infant toddler slots in our region and these are the most expensive slots. The work that Chelsea, Mary and several other partners have done to pull that together in a really short amount of time is truly meaningful for those programs and those families.

Asking Teresa to report on Williams is emphasizing our support of families having access to services in rural communities, as rural communities are also one of our priorities. It is tough to do. The magic that is happening in Williams because the partners are working well together. They are using other resources, blending and braiding the Hub funding in a way that makes that funding stretch further than if they were solely relying upon the Hub funding which we never know how much or when we're going to be able to invest again.

Preschool Promise Coordinated Enrollment

René: 280 slots we have been recruiting for; have 43 still available. We recently reconvened our Regional Stewardship committee and we're really fortunate to have such a cross sector support in that committee. The priority populations we are focusing on for recruitment are children experiencing disability, families whose home language is Spanish, and rural communities. We are hopeful to fill those slots before the end of June, although COVID continues to impact recruitment efforts. We will be ramping up in April for September recruitments. Lotteries are done every Thursday. 7-10 new families applying each week.

Support to Recovery Programs

René: Families in recovery has been one of our identified priority populations. Relapses have become more common during COVID and recovery programs are trying to meet the needs of these families. We already have an ongoing relationship with these recovery programs and have worked with them before.

Chelsea:

OnTrack: A salary position for a mental health support staff for families who are in the process of graduating. Blended funding from a few different partners as well. The demand for mental health support is elevated due to COVID.

Oasis: A few different requests: A children's services position. Providing developmentally appropriate information for families being served through their family room, supplies and materials around parenting and child development, expanding their services to pediatrics as well as more parenting support. They are seeing a better outcome for families being supported in a one stop place.

Teresa:

Choices is now under the umbrella of Options; it's been a great partnership. Some of their older population is having a harder time connecting with technology. Big uptick in ER visits for teens. They are partnering directly with the Grants Pass police department. When Narcan has been used, they contact those families directly to get them into the office or on Zoom. Many are coming in because it's a safe place. They will use the funds to provide a computer for access to services, and materials and supplies needed for family supports. They are making improvements to the family room so it's a

safe and inviting place to come. Adding a small TV screen with the Strengthening Families protective factors video looped on it. Lisa O'Connor noted that FNC can donate a TV to Choices.

KOBI Raising Resilience Campaign

Chelsea: This is a partnership between Allcare, Jackson Care Connect and SOELS. Reaching viewers of KOBI and Telemundo. They want to capture what resilience means to families (60 second vignettes) by highlighting the stories of local families. They will also have a segment on 5 on 5. If you have families that you think might want to share their resilience stories, we can connect them with Susan Fischer-Maki. After this launch, they are planning to expand into hosting podcasts, interviews and having panel discussions.

Paid Internships for students in ECE programs

Teresa: This came about from the workforce committee talking about the issues with recruitment and retaining new ECE workers. They tend to train up and train out. Teresa reached out to Central Medford HS/ Daye Stone and partnered with Jen Perry/Project Youth Plus. Students receive paid internships. Seven sites have signed workforce agreements. Seven students from Central Medford HS are participating; one has already been hired.

They are connected with a student support person to fill out the job application and all job-related paperwork. They always have someone to talk with about the process. Interview preparation, open bank accounts, complete their background registry, child development classes, CPR certification, food handler's certification. Regardless of where they enter into their internship project, when they exit they will have skills for any entry level early learning position. We are working with some special ed transitions students and this opportunity can open up a whole new future for them. We have more sites and providers than students at this point and we hope to expand this to other schools in the future.

Both Magdalene Home and Choices are both interested in doing some internships with their participants. Project Youth Plus has already met with Magdalene Home. Even if the youth weren't interested in being in direct care, there are so many other opportunities like the front office, the kitchen, etc. that they might connect with.

Rogue Workforce Partnership has the funds to keep this going, using workforce investment funds. The timing has been really good to launch this. The partners were in place to respond quickly. They have additional funds to work with youth that are coming out of substance abuse or the criminal system.

Fire Relief Fund

René: We set out with \$250,000 and still have over \$100,000 remaining. Other partners who set up fire relief funds are also struggling to get those funds spent right now. These funds can pay for temporary stays, storage, child care. I'm not anticipating that we will be able to spend these funds out. That's not a problem because Hub Coordination funds are not "use it or lose it" funds (by June 30th). If you know partners who may still be able to utilize funding to support families with young children who were impacted by the fire, please point them in our direction.

Deadline is the end of March to apply. The funding has to be spent by June 30th. If there is a need that emerges in April we could certainly talk about how we could meet those needs as well.

Bilingual Staff Recruitment

René: Although the early learning hubs across the state are looking at a \$1.4 million-dollar reduction that is going to impact School Readiness funding, there is an increase in Coordinated Enrollment funding to pay for hub staffing for this expanded work. We will soon be hiring for a bilingual team member primarily for Coordinated Enrollment. The posting will be out soon. As we ramp up for next year's coordinated enrollment we want this person in place.

Hub Funding Formula and Contract Update

René: ELD is meeting this week with our co-chairs, Scott Beverage as our backbone agency, and me to introduce a new hub funding formula and scope of work. The proxy that's been used for funding, is SNAP data from every region. It is not perfect, but is available in every region. Starting in July 1, they are shifting to American Community Survey Census data. Some of the issues of the ACS data is that it's only as good as the number of people completing it and we have populations who are less likely to complete it, such as our Latinx community and rural communities such as Cave Junction. This could mean fewer dollars to various parts of the state that truly need it. ELD is aware of the limitations of the data, unfortunately there isn't a perfect data source to use for our purposes. More to come soon.

Motion to adjourn: Eileen Micke-Johnson

2nd Motion: Jessica Durrant

Motion Passed

Adjournment

Next Meeting March 16, 2021

2:30-4:30 p.m.