



Educational Equity Committee  
February 25, 2021  
10am-11:30 am  
Join Zoom Meeting ID: 487 642 8933

**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.

**Attendees:** Meryl Roberts, Elise Travertini, Eileen Micke-Johnson, Ceci Robe, Martha Ibarra, Bridey Mendoza-Moore

**Hub Staff:** René Brandon, Teresa Slater, Chelsea Reinhart

## **Agenda**

**Added to Agenda:** Southern OR Success ~ Identifying opportunities

### **Southern OR Success ~ Identifying opportunities**

René: Teresa and I are part of the Southern Oregon Success’ Early Learning and Kindergarten Alignment workgroup, focused on identifying the opportunities for improving the transition to kindergarten from an early learning environment. We are going to have a Zoom kickoff event in April, with our early learning providers, kindergarten teachers and other administrators from the schools and programs, and parents/guardians. We are sending surveys out to each of those three groups, asking what their hopes are for kindergarten transition, their concerns or frustrations about kindergarten transitions, what they think it means for children to be ‘ready’ for kindergarten. Our next steps are to come to a common understanding of what “kindergarten readiness” means.

Teresa shared Oregon’s Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines, which will be the guide for our kickoff event. It’s a really useful resource for early learning, kindergarten and families and is laid out very well. It covers the five domains: Approaches to Learning, Social-Emotional Development, Language and Communication, Literacy, and Mathematics. It emphasizes Equity, culturally responsive practices, developmentally appropriate practices, the impact of adverse childhood experiences and the importance of trauma-informed practices, second language learners, and family engagement. Each section is organized into domains, sub-domains, goals, developmental progressions, indicators, and standards. It includes what adults should do to support these goals.

Teresa shared two links:

[https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/FullDayK/Documents/ODE\\_EarlyLearningStandards\\_final.pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/FullDayK/Documents/ODE_EarlyLearningStandards_final.pdf)

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/FullDayK/Pages/Early-Learning-and-Kindergarten-Guidelines.aspx>

These provide a one-page resources for each domain, to use in the classroom or send home with families. Educators could send them home as they are working on each domain in the classroom. One of the links digs deeper into each domain with additional activities and support. They are available in five languages.

This Equity Committee can give us feedback as we are pulling this summit together; we need to be really mindful of those families that are historically marginalized. Are there any other considerations that come to your mind that we need to be mindful of as we are planning this summit in April? If something comes up that you want included in this conversation, please email one of us.

### **Shared Vision Jamboard Session**

René: At the January meeting, we talked about creating a shared vision for this group. At today's meeting we are using Jamboard to explore the following:

- *We discussed what we want our community to feel like, sound like, look like, thinking about it through the lens of belonging. Think about the various sectors: health, education, social services, business, etc.? How will we know we are going in the right direction? What will be DIFFERENT in these community sectors?*

All children and families feel welcome and respected. That they feel safe, and their thoughts or concerns are heard and respected. Families will see information provided in their home language. Involve them in the process. Kids feel that they belong and don't have to change who they are to fit into school environments. Meaningful goals. Normalize mental health as an important factor in physical health. Organizations in the community, health. People can be themselves without having to adjust their approach or tone to fit white dominate cultures. People of all races, ethnicities, ability levels engaged in community activities. Value and respect each individual for who they are.

Centering on historically marginalized voices & creating space for these community members to be heard. Diversity of families engaged in family support type services will increase. How are the children? All the children are well. Individuals are participating more, asking questions and join different groups & organizations and accessing services. More diverse representation in civic activities, agency boards, and community groups. More families feel comfortable using the services offered. Schools understand the importance of creating a relationship with the family, not just the student. The "achievement gap" goes away and things like dropout rates, substance abuse, etc. are reduced in young people. The schools adapt and tailor their teaching for where kids are currently at since they have had a gap in education for a year. Using service/resources will be viewed as a positive rather than a negative. We will see more engagement from communities that we have not had in the past.

- *What do children and adults from historically marginalized groups NEED in order to learn and thrive here? Think about it through the lens of belonging. How will we know we are going in the right direction? How can it be measured? What will we see Less of? What will we see MORE of?*

Accepted for who they are. Access to high quality and affordable care and education. Access to services in their language. They need to trust the community they live and feel safe to ask for help. To see people who look like them (race, ethnicity, ability level, etc.) in the schools, agencies, businesses they interact with.

We will have to gather feedback from them. Fewer children of color in special education. Fewer children of color being suspended or expelled from school. More diversity in the classroom... materials, lessons, staff. More agencies will have staff that align with the community they are serving by their race/culture/language. Fewer children from marginalized groups in foster care, juvenile justice system. More children from historically marginalized groups in advanced placement classes, TAG programs, honor roll, etc. Achievement will increase when children feel that they belong.

- **Check our Assumptions** – *Who needs to weigh in on our Shared Vision draft? How should we engage them?*

DHS, Early Learning programs and schools. Families need to weigh in. Families with children experiencing disability, especially those families of color. Families with children from historically marginalized groups who have experienced navigating our "systems". Families with tribal affiliation. Migrant Education. Parents. Southern Oregon Coalition for Racial Equity.

**Next steps:** Vicki will put the feedback into a table and then I will create a draft statement that we can look at later. We'll have some next steps especially from the third table about how we can measure. Possible measurement pieces. Then vetting our statement with other community partners.

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

Chapter 3 Continued: *Beyond Access: Belonging*. Read from *Belonging Uncertainty*, page 53. Questioning whether we 'belong; is normal for most of us in specific situations. Students from historically excluded and marginalized groups experience a disproportionately intense impact from *Belonging Uncertainty*.

What if it's your school that you don't feel like you belong in? What if it's your work? How does a person navigate that input about how they feel about themselves? Adults have a lot more tools to deal with those uncomfortable experiences. How must it feel for a child that has these other systemic barriers that have been put into place?

When struggling to achieve in order to belong, students routinely fall into two options:

1. Resign themselves to (perceived) personal inadequacy and diminished self-worth. They believe they are incapable of achieving the expectations, and as such, are incapable of belonging.
2. They will do whatever it takes – even if that means cheating, compromising their own dignity, or “selling out” – to achieve the status of belonging.

Some of the causalities of conditional belonging: drop out, anxiety, self-harm, suicide, conformity, exhaustion, negativity, gangs, clubs, and radicalization, emotional numbing, substance use. Belonging must precede achievement. The importance of Belonging is such a self-evident concept. ...so why are we not prioritizing it for EVERY student? Could it be due to a tradition designed to exclude students who do not achieve normative social and academic standards?

Our charge going forward is looking at what we can do to really start to examine how we want to move forward within each of our spheres of influence. What can we start to do? Chapter 4 looks at culture.

Teresa: Our adults need to have sense of belonging in order to create that sense of belonging as well. Making sure in the educational equity lens that we look at those professionals too. How do we support them so that they're in a place where they can create a belonging environment also?

Meryl: We do need to support the adults so they can shift their practices. These stressed adults are not going to change without support.

Next meeting in April we will be digging into Chapter 4.

**Other Business** – none

NOTE: No meeting in March

Next Meeting:

April 22, 2021

10-11:30 am