



Early Care and Education Workforce Committee

April 1, 2021

10:30 am-12:00 pm

Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 926 5062 3888

Attendees: Katherine Clayton, Mary Wolf, Lisa Farlin, Eileen Micke-Johnson, Geoff Lowry, Peter Buckley, Valerie Lovelace, Michelle Gallas, Katrina McGrath, Jim Fong

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

Agenda

Welcome

Legislative Letter

A small subcommittee worked on a draft letter to request a temporarily modification to the requirements around Aide II's and requesting that they be allowed to be left alone with children without a lead teacher in the room for breaks and to conduct tasks such as car drop off and pickups, waiting with a sick child while a parent arrives to take them home, etc. This request would only be in place until enough lead teachers are back to work. (Letter accompanies the meeting minutes). Mary shared the letter has been shared with CCRR directors and Katherine Clayton shared it with Head Start directors to see if any other organization wanted to put their stamp of approval and add their name to it. We want to show that it's not just a regionwide issue but a statewide issue.

It was suggested that letters from early learning programs describing the need would be very impactful to add to the legislative letter. Southern Oregon Head Start, OCDC, Imagine That...Children's Creative Center, agreed to write letters and submit them to Chelsea by April 9th, prior to Peter's meeting with legislators. Chelsea has talked to some other early learning programs as well. Both Rep. Morgan and Rep. Marsh will be present at the legislative meeting with Peter and having bipartisan support will be valuable.

Rene Breznay/Licensing is getting phone calls regularly about the struggles with finding teachers and qualified staff. It's really stressful for providers. When we first went into emergency childcare, programs were allowed to have an Aide II assume some of the duties of teachers.

Although that is no longer allowed for some reason, it makes sense to add it to the letter, as a precedent. It's also a good reminder that providers can go through the exception process and complete an exception to allow an AIDE II to assume teacher responsibilities in certain circumstances. That's always an option on the table.

Mini Grant for Child Care Centers

The idea behind the workforce incentive mini grant is to recruit and retain staff. The discussion was about what kind of incentives would help bring teachers back into the classroom who are possibly still a little hesitant or have barriers that have been created due to COVID. We had a small subcommittee come together to brainstorm the different options that we could offer to early learning programs to apply for.

The application draft was reviewed and suggestions for edits were given.

There's about \$100,000 for this project. We'll have an application review committee go through each application and approve or request changes or modifications to an application based on what was submitted. We want to do a quick turnaround to get everything in place so that if they're looking for new hires, they can use that incentive right away. There is an incentive for retention and an incentive for supporting the cost of child care.

There are some eligibility requirements that the group outlined: the teacher receiving the incentive is either serving infants and toddlers, children from rural communities, children experiencing a disability, or Spanish speaking families, which are also the priority populations for the early learning hub. The three options include a \$1,500 sign on bonus for new teachers, \$1,500 retention bonus for existing teachers that have worked this past year during the pandemic, and the third option of \$1,500 to cover the cost of childcare for a teacher to return or maintain their current work schedule.

The group talked about not having the program issue the \$1,500 in one installment, but to spread it out over time to help with that retention. There's an example of issuing it quarterly, breaking it up into three or four different payments. We talked about some programs being ineligible to receive this funding based on the higher salary scale that they're currently receiving which would be Head Start, OBK funded programs, or Preschool Promise teachers. They are receiving a higher pay differential between programs that are funded with state subsidies versus private programs that are not receiving any state subsidy. The group discussed whether we should maintain that eligibility criteria several times. We wanted to bring that to this group for additional opinions.

Conversation continued about the eligibility process. René presented that we are modeling it similarly to how we did our fire fund process. Partners who are not interested in applying were asked to be part of that review committee. Applicants should be given a few weeks to figure out what their ask might be, then submit, and giving our committee efficient time to score the applications on a shared response. We'll need time to enter into contract. Maybe two weeks to

apply, two weeks to review, so approximately a six week turn around. For this specific fund, it needs to be spent by the end of this biennium which is June 30th. It is possible that we could start again with new funding for this mini grant on July 1st.

It was determined to allow centers to apply with a general idea of who they plan to support with a per program limit of up to six staff each, and a disclaimer that applicants may not get their full request or funded at all depending on the regional needs. This will give directors flexibility within their own programs to disperse the funds based on the three option criteria. Then they will report back to the specifics of how they dispersed their grant award. This would allow for the accountability for the grants and the flexibility for the programs. All funds must be spent by June 30th and reconciled by the end of July. Ongoing opportunities for additional applications will depend on available funding. Additional incentive mini grants may be available after July 1st if funds allow.

It was agreed that this is good to go once hub staff make the final changes. The final version will be shared with Mary so that CCRN can get it out to the centers.

Closing:

Some agenda items had to be tabled due to time. We will roll them forward to next month.

Next Meeting:

May 7, 2021