



SOELS Governance Council

November 16, 2021

2:30-4:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting ID 948 6812 4175

Attendees: Katherine Clayton, Adrienne Auxier, Brittain Zimmerman, Crystal Rowbotham, Eileen Micke-Johnson, Jeanne Grazioli, Jessica Durrant, Carrie Prechtel, Martha Ibarra, Mary Hough, Mary Wolf, Sam Watson, Scott Beveridge, Guest: Jen Perry

Absent: Kimberlee Whitney (ex), Geoffrey Lowry, Stacy Inman

Hub Staff: René Brandon, Teresa Slater, Vicki Risner

Agenda

Call to Order: 2:33 pm

Welcome and Greetings

Carrie Prechtel from All Care is joining us in Laura McKeane's position.

Additions or changes to the Agenda: none

Approval of minutes from 10/19/21

Motion to approve minutes: Jessica Durrant

2nd Motion: Adrienne Auxier

No actual vote was taken so minutes will be presented again at our next meeting.

Gratitude for Mary Wolf and her contributions to the work

Certificate read by René: "Thank you Mary Wolf for your service to the early learning system in Southern Oregon. Thank you for your careerlong commitment to building relationships with child care providers and improving the lives of children, who are our future." Several members thanked Mary for her participation.

In Utero Screening - René

The 4th year that Southern Oregon Success has focused on resiliency in November. This is the 2nd year we have partnered to promote the *In Utero* screening and provided the funding. Stats to come on virtual attendance.

Discuss resources to support partner agencies transition - René

About 6 weeks ago, Sadie Emmons started contracting with the Hub to discover how partners connect with resources and how they connect families with resources. She's discovered that many partners have not seen their clients in person since the pandemic began. People are having varied responses to the idea of returning to in person contacts. There is a lot of complexity around it.

Jessica: As schools we are learning from our parent/teacher conferences. Some of it is due to health concerns. Some of it is that people are out of the habit. A couple of things we've tried: #1 we had office hours that anyone could connect with to discuss these issues.

Crystal: Over the last 18 months there has been such a disconnect. As a parent, a physical letter of invitation is welcomed, or a personal phone call. There are just too many emails.

Jessica: It's been an adjustment for our teachers and staff. They are thrilled to be back in person with students, but it is challenging. This year is just more exhausting. They are experiencing more hiccups than they did the year before.

Katherine: Same here. This year, there is so much more to it. More to juggle with masks, vaccines, challenges in their personal lives. When we were virtual there wasn't so much to track. We are constantly trying to figure things out.

Brittain: Emergency child care locations were open the whole time, they never closed. Those staff members grew resentful of others staying home. A lot of staff felt they were being used as an experiment. I don't know if child care professionals have recovered from that. At first, they were heroes, but that quickly faded.

Jeanne: The in person feels somewhat normal. Our parent conferences aren't until next week so we don't have that data. A lot of people chose to continue with online school. Others decided not to come back at all, choosing home school or other options. Things have become almost normal and most have adapted pretty well. The younger kids may be struggling to adapt a bit more than the older kids. I feel like there is hope.

Mary Wolf: I agree with Britt. I think it's had a bigger impact than people realize. The child care providers are still struggling with staffing. When others are continuing to work remotely and they are in person, it's giving people pause to reevaluate their professions and people are leaving.

Martha: There was a lot of fear in those early months. A lot of families were still struggling with getting vaccinated. Providers didn't know if they could ask about vaccine statuses, lots of miscommunications about Covid and vaccines. People experienced loneliness and loss.

René: This is a topic that I feel that we can provide some support around. What I heard from this is that mostly importantly, personal outreach matters. We need to regain trust and rebuild relationships. We could bring forward some guiding tips, possibly organize a regular drop in community of practice to help people navigate their way and provide support. We'll share this with our Agency Advisory Committee in January.

High School Internship Project with Project Youth Plus: Teresa Slater & Jen Perry

Teresa: A year ago, I met with Daye Stone at Central Medford High School to discuss doing an internship project and he immediately said we needed to include Jen Perry with Project Youth Plus. We did a pilot project with their general education students and transition students, focusing on seniors who could be ready to enter a full-time early learning position by the time they graduated. It was a six-month project. The providers and students liked it. Jen's team did an amazing job preparing the students, getting them through trainings, interviews, and the application process. After the project, Jen and I met and we knew we wanted to offer this again for the next biennium with two full years of funding. We are looking at additional funding streams to continue to support these folks after they graduate and our project ends and where they can pick them up.

Jen: Our local workforce board has Title I dollars that allows us to provide paid work experience to youth in the Rogue Valley. Six youth fully completed the process in those six months; over half of them were being served with an IEP at school. We were able to go into every classroom and share this opportunity and connect with students where ever they were. After the school year ended, some of our students were able to maintain employment with sites like the YMCA and a few providers who provide summer programs.

The big news is that for the next two years, we are able to provide the paid work experience opportunity at all high schools in both Jackson and Josephine counties for up to 40 youth. And to possibly continue this support up to the age of 24, to continue to support them in their education, building their career skills along the way. We are connected with Oregon Registry Online (ORO) to get them to a place where they've taken all the safety trainings for child care providers. They get their food handlers license, and their CPR and first aid certifications. For most of these students, it's the first time they've completed a real job application and are experiencing their first interviews.

Katherine Clayton: For Southern Oregon Head Start, it was amazing. The students were great and eager to learn. It was refreshing because they are young and energized. The transition into our program was seamless.

Jen: Providers were flexible, understanding and made it easy to communicate with. They met the students where they were at, worked with their schedules when needed.

René: Thank you Jen. Thanks Teresa. I really appreciate all that you have worked together to build. We'll have Jen back to report on how this year went once we can look back on that, with even more youth engaged and hopefully more hirings at the end of it.

René: In January, we will be hearing from Sadie Emmons who is doing some exploratory work on identifying how families are being supported to navigate services right now. She's learning a lot and will be able to report out to this Governance Council on what she's learning so far.

In February, I'm hoping we'll be able to hear from a couple of our partners who are supporting our teen parent efforts. Teen parents are one of the populations identified as a priority for the Early Learning Hub system back in 2017. For the last three years we've had a robust young moms support group in Josephine county that was able to continue to weather the storm during Covid and figured out how to keep those moms engaged virtually which wasn't easy. They have continued as a cohort, most are now in their early 20s. The facilitators have created a second group that is for younger parents who are still in high school. The idea that these groups will

continue to grow together, share experiences and create their own support system even outside of that support group. The support groups promote protective factors in the lives of these young families.

Preschool Promise Coordinated Enrollment

We are continuing weekly lotteries for all openings. At this point we only have 16 children in the waiting pool. We have 14 slots open at six different providers. Since families choose the locations they want for their child, there becomes a waiting list for providers who are full. We are continuing to work on marketing strategies to fill the spots with the remaining providers. White City and Phoenix seem to be the locations we're having the most trouble filling so we are doing our best to get information out in those areas. We are still looking for a bilingual staff person to better assist families applying who are Spanish speaking. We are using IRCO and Language Link for translation and interpretation services, but want a staff person who speaks Spanish to better support the families we serve.

It is important to note that the families in the waiting pool are there by their choice. We keep them updated with where openings are. They have chosen to remain in the waiting pool for specific locations.

Motion to Adjourn: 3:50 pm Mary Wolf, 2nd Crystal Rowbotham

Next Meeting

January 18, 2022

2:30-4:30 p.m.