



SOELS Governance Council

September 19, 2022

2:30-4:30 p.m.

Zoom Meeting ID 910 426 67714

Attendees: Brittain Zimmerman, Cynthia Anderson, Bridey Mendoza-Moore, Jessica Durrant, Sam Watson, Crystal Rowbotham, Geoffrey Lowry, Katherine Clayton, Mary Hough, Eileen Micke-Johnson. Absent: Kimberlee Whitney, Scott Beveridge, Stacy Inman, Adrienne Auxier

Hub Staff: René Brandon, Molly McLaughlin, Sydney Wing, Teresa Slater, Claudia Leonard, Vicki Risner

Agenda

Call to Order 2:33 p.m.

Welcome and Greetings

Appreciation for Eileen Micke-Johnson on her last day as a member of the Governance Council. She was the last original member of this council. Her steadfast commitment to elevating early learning as a critical career choice is transforming society's view of the first five years.

Additions or changes to the Agenda

Moving Teresa's presentation to after MM's presentation due to scheduling conflict.

Approval of minutes from 7-19-2022

Motion to approve minutes: Jessica Durrant

2nd Motion: Sam Watson

Approved

Hub Staffing Update

Our team is fully staffed now including one new position! Teresa Slater focuses on the early learning to kindergarten transition. She works primarily with the Kindergarten Partnership and Innovation (KPI) Grant. Molly McLaughlin supports all the Coordinated Enrollment work. Her role is primarily to do outreach, engage with the families and walk them through the enrollment process and hand them off to programs.

Claudia Leonard is working very closely with Molly providing supports for our Spanish-speaking families in addition to our English-speaking families. For the first two years that we have been working to support our Spanish-speaking families, it was a scramble. We were using a language line, borrowing folks from Rogue Community who were kind enough to offer some bilingual staff to us a couple days a week. Claudia came and hit the ground running.

Sydney Wing joined us in July. She comes to us with experience as a Preschool Promise teacher, home visiting experience and more. She will be facilitating a Home Visiting Information Session on October 7th.

Preschool Promise & Coordinated Enrollment Update

Cynthia: PSP expansion overview from CCRN's involvement. There were 3756 slots for children to receive quality care in the Preschool Promise program at no charge to the family. In addition, the providers and directors get wrap-around support and some incentives along the way. ELD just added 2500 slots in Oregon. There are currently 259 Preschool Promise providers that are already in service, this added 170 at this time. A huge expansion and a lot of work happening. CCRN staff are heavily involved in providing supports to these grantees.

We provide opportunities for providers and directors to brain storm as a group in addition to one on one coaching. We provide training opportunities, site visits and assessments. We have a new inclusion specialist on board now. Louise Horn, is now available to work with providers when there is a situation that's a higher need. She will go on site, coach and do assessments to see if there are additional supports that we can provide.

The last couple of years there has been an increasing number of supports needed for children and more quantity of requests for this kind of support. There's a lot of high stress and life scenarios that are affecting families, directors, staff and the children. We're having to get more creative in reaching out to community partners for support. The team is working closely with the partners and directors. The CCRN team is very collaborative with the community partners, making connections and working closely with the directors at the sites and are seeing some incredible success. Families are getting relief, children are starting to thrive in a scenario that there was struggling beforehand. There's a lot of great things happening.

Struggle #1 staffing is a huge concern, as across the board with any industry. They are not able to hire the staff that they need. They have to have an X amount of staff, certain ratios for certain populations. We are providing support to keep the directors networking together, sharing ideas and resources, where to post jobs, recruitment tools, attending community events to advocate and promote openings.

Struggle #2 While we were eligible to apply for a PSP grant, but we didn't apply. When the providers were able to apply for the expansion, we didn't have access to lists of who applied, who was declined. Even though the team is very skilled at coaching a provider through how to get that information and the things to look at and the requirements, we just don't have access to this information we need to truly do a deep dive. We are working on a solution with ELD.

Molly: We started off the year with 259 returning slots to existing programs. A couple programs did not continue this year. Of the 170 new slots, we have 6 new programs, 1 existing program who will be adding 4 new locations in addition to 5 existing programs who will be able to serve more children. We're really excited for these opportunities. There are some communities that have not had Preschool Promise yet.

We do have some of the challenges in addition to what Cynthia has already covered. We are hoping in the future to start this process in the spring when many families are looking to secure their schedules for the fall instead of late summer. Walking families through the eligibility process can take quite some time. With the expansion, we're expecting to start at the beginning of September. It's not ideal for current providers or those new providers because the business contracts are not yet in place. Providers are working struggling to make payroll and continue providing services.

René: The system is chasing its tail and trying to catch up. The programs are already working to survive over the past years. We want to be supportive and as clear as we can be. We just don't have all the pieces yet. Between the SOELS & CCRN teams, there is a tremendous amount of support for both families and the programs delivering Preschool Promise. We just need to close a few of those loop holes to make it more successful in the future.

Early Learning to Kindergarten Transition

Teresa: A few things that we are focusing on right now: Early Learning & Kindergarten Professional Learning Teams, the internship program and the Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups.

For the Early Learning & Kindergarten Professional Learning Teams: We opened enrollment on Friday and they filled up by Monday. We have 154 people enrolled. They will be held on October 27th in Josephine Co. and November 2 in Jackson Co. We capped it at 75 per county. They will receive a gift card for participating. The format is to meet in person, build relationships, based on catchment areas, although we are starting with virtual meetings first.

Jessica: We would love to host; just give me a couple days' notice and we can open up a classroom. It's an open-ended invitation. I've had teachers reach out to me to see if this would be happening. Teresa: Your district has been involved for so long, we probably don't need this first virtual session but will after that.

Student Internships in early learning programs: Project Youth Plus. This is our first full year. We opened it up to all Jackson and Josephine county high schools. It's going great. The students have to fill out an application, go through an interview, then it's on the job training. To date we have 18 students and 14 different programs. Our goal is that when they leave the internship they are employable. We have had 2 interns hired over the summer who are now employees with 1 more when she finishes her internship. Eileen reached out with a student who tried to sign up during the summer but ran out of time waiting for the background check. She's been placed back into the internship program and will be taking ECE classes at RCC. That came full circle.

Project Youth Plus: it's really going well working with the students and providers. There's only been 1 student who didn't stay at the site that they originally interviewed and chosen for since we started. Transportation and school to program scheduling has been the biggest issues. We do a classroom improvement project with the students. They identify the issue and work with the provider to achieve it. Shared a bridge and dry creek bridge that was added to Great Beginnings. It helped them learn things from the business side of it. They had to work with the provider, work within a budget. A great success.

Kaleidoscope Play and Learn expansion. The parent/child 90-minute weekly drop in playgroups. Building community connections, so when they walk through the kindergarten doors they will be familiar with many of the other families. We aren't there yet but are working towards it. We had one facilitator who survived through Covid. Now have 9 facilitators, 13 groups, 1 private group. Plan is for these facilitators to open 3 more offerings. Groups are in both counties. Hoping the new groups will be in the new shared community centers. Our next training session should be in January. We need facilitators and sites. Please reach out to me if your program is interested in hosting or have staff who might be interested.

CCO Social-Emotional Health Metric

René/Sam: Shared slides (see attached). Changes: New Collaboration Opportunities: High level plans: Data – Knowledge – Action

Jackson CareConnect and Allcare are approaching this together. Looking to what behavioral health services are available to the community. How many appointments do provider have? Are they offering services? What languages do they speak? Etc. Looking at the surveys done earlier this year to learn what the community is saying they need. How to we leverage the systems in place?

In additional to René joining the table, South Coast Early Learning Hub has joined as well. The goal is to have all of that information and present it out to the community and in community spaces.

René: This will be a standing agenda item for quite a while as we learn...
We will provide access to the full slide presentation

Family Engagement Focus

Family Community Centers

Very excited about the timing of two community centers, opening one in each county at the same time. We are in partnership with The Family Nurturing Center, creating the Family Community Center in Grants Pass. It's in the old fire house building, 310 SW H Street in Grants Pass. There will be an open house the first week of October for partners to take a tour to really envision how they might utilize it to support families with young children. It's becoming a natural place for families with young children to meet and find support. There are work stations where parents can work at a computer station while their children have a safe place to play. There are plans for a diaper bank. There is a really big room for full body movement.

The other is being sponsored by Doulas & Company along with Southern Oregon Success. They are up and running now for families with children of all ages. They have tours on Tuesdays, walking Wednesday events. There are some groups already using this location.

These are for families of any income or need. All families want to come together, all children want to connect with their peers. There may be times when offerings are set for children with sensory issues, so there may be time that is devoted for that purpose. This will be an ongoing agenda item.

Family Leadership Council progress. Currently putting together an interest survey. Will we be virtual, in person, a blend? Will we need to feed families? We want parents of all demographics from across the region. Sydney will be starting a cohort soon, working on budgets, technology and other needs. More to come during the Hub Investment Priorities Update.

Home Visiting Partner Information Event: We are bringing together the various organizations around the valley who offer home visiting services so we can all hear about who's doing what? Get to know each other. Have an opportunity to really connect with each other. If anyone is interested in attending, just reach out to Sydney.

Foster Care Partner Workgroup. We set aside some funds through the workgroup to recruit and retain more foster families. Our funding can be more flexible. Recently both counties are creating more family friendly visitation centers. We are ordering books and other items that families can leave with. Josephine Co. isn't quite as far along but we are working with them as well.

Our next strategy is to carve out some money in our Family Preservation Fund to work with. \$30,000 might be available. It doesn't just have to be a focus on families in the foster care system, but to help families to become more stable.

Jessica: Is there one or two questions asked of a family when they leave either of the new Family Community Centers: Did this meet your needs? What do you want to see more of? What can we do different?

Hub Investment Priorities Update – Slide presentation

Shared Investment Priorities Review

- At the start of current biennium, we reviewed and approved the investment priorities.
- Focus on priority populations: Spanish speaking families, children experiencing disability, teen parents, rural communities, children without early learning prior to kindergarten, foster families, and families in recovery.

- Second year of biennium, we review and course-correct, if necessary.
- Report reflects services delivered through March 21, 2022
- Funds do not roll over at end of biennium
 - Hub Coordination is the exception – for staffing.

Kindergarten Partnership and Innovation (KPI): Adding Strengthening Families Training \$15,000

Healthy Stable, Attached Families: Regarding the Tiered Model of Support: Medford School District is going to be contracting with Kairos to do what Grants Pass and Three Rivers is already doing, in bringing skills trainers into the elementary schools to help children with self-regulation. What we hope is to add this for early learning as well. Head Start is interested in piloting this. We can use these funds to pay for the skills trainers to pilot this and to show the state that if it's funded, can this partnership work and can we bring it to scale. It's important because the expulsion prevention legislation kicks in really soon. When that happens, early learning program will not be able to dismiss children because of signification behavior issues or because of higher needs. That's difficult for early learning programs when they are under resourced. If we can bring in more resources to these programs, they can be more responsive to the needs of all children coming into care. We can innovate. Try something new.

Jessica: Skill trainers talking to skill trainers to know what is working.

René: pull Jessica and Susan in together about this to have a greater conversation.

Family Support:

Young Parent Support Groups: 2 in Jo Co. Target: 2 in Jackson Co.

Foster Care Partner Workgroup: events

Sadie Emmons: Family Engagement

Family Preservation:

Every biennium we provide support to the Family Connection, our parenting education hub for Southern Oregon. For the last three years we have partnered with the Medford School District to provide Teen Parent Support, great success with providing incentives especially during COVID when motivation was hard for everyone. Incentives were need based and key to keeping them engaged.

Adding: Respite care/other stabilization needs TBD \$31,677. Needing addition support so that biological families can be stabilized and don't end up needing more drastic services. Incentives worked well keeping parents setting and achieving their goals (need based).

Hub coordination fund:

Adding: Family Community Center in each Co. \$30,000

The remainder is used as flexible funding when unexpected things come up – the fires, COVID, etc. We have funding from previous years while we were short staffed. We are able to hang on to those funds.

Parent Leadership Council:

- \$30,000 must be spent by 12/21/22
- Parent Leadership Council will not be in place until Spring 2023
- We are preordering materials such as hotspots, gas cards, etc., to have on hand once the Council is in place.
- ELD has not yet indicated there will be ongoing funding for this council.

Our hub is in a really good financial place, in a really good partner place. It feels good to be fully staffed, everyone is well suited for what they are doing, and that the community is ready for this.

Motion to Adjourn: Crystal Rowbotham
Vote taken, approved
Adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Next Meeting: November 15, 2022
2:30-4:30 p.m.

DRAFT