



**SOELS Governance Council**

**November 15, 2022**

2:30-4:30 p.m.

In Person @ 918 Chevy

Way, Medford and

Zoom Meeting ID 910 426 67714

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

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

**Agenda**

**Call to Order 2:33**

**Welcome and Greetings**

**Additions or changes to the Agenda**

None

**Approval of minutes from 9-20-2022**

Motion to approve minutes: Sam Watson

2<sup>nd</sup> Motion: Jessica Durrant

Approved

**Hub Staffing Update**

Sydney is 3 ½ months in and has already held several big events: a full day Strengthening Families training series and reconvening the Home Visiting Network. It feels nice to be growing back into our in-person support. Claudia, who supports Molly with our Coordinated Enrollment, is busy serving families and is doing great. We have one more position to fill. When the Preschool Promise Expansion happened, the ELD promised to increase the budget to support more families that would be applying. That has now happened. The job listing is currently posted and I will share out it again. The role would physically be serving in both Jackson and Josephine County, part time working out of the new Growing Together Family Community Center in Grants Pass. They will be joining Molly and Claudia in the Coordinated Enrollment Team as well as helping families with resources and connections to resources for families.

**Preschool Promise & Coordinated Enrollment Update**

We received 170 additional enrollment opportunities for Preschool Promise between both counties. There have been some challenges with the roll out and timeline for many of the programs that were selected. A few newly awarded programs are struggling to purchase the correct level of insurance; the staffing shortage is still in play; getting staffing through the background checks continues to take several weeks to a couple of months. Also, since the award and RFA timeline so delayed by challenges ELD was facing, one program declined their contract.

We are working with them to get through that process and working with families who are already attending, hoping that they are all eligible. We should know where we land in the next month or so. The delays in contracts caused challenges. Some families went elsewhere because of the funding delays, and some voiced that this felt too unstable and made another choice.

Since there wasn't an in-person component to selections for new Preschool Promise sites, decisions were made based on how applicants completed the RFA, and there are some local concerns about the readiness of some new programs to enter into the Preschool Promise level of quality. We have had to reach out to the Early Learning Division with some concerns and are working through those issues with them. When Preschool Promise first rolled out, the early learning system in each region and was charged with identifying those high-quality programs that were most ready for the high-quality expectations of Preschool Promise. All of the Preschool Promise materials talk about the high-quality and defining it as culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate.

We let the Early Learning Division know that we now having qualifying language that says that the Early Learning Hub does not recommend nor endorse any early learning programs, but that we want to empower families to do their due diligence to make sure the setting they select is aligned with what their needs and preferences are.

Sydney is putting together a curriculum to help families learn what the attributes of a high-quality early learning environment are. It will be a virtual Zoom training that may even be recorded to be available any time.

In the first years of PSP, the hubs held the contracts and did in-person visits on a regular basis, program and fiscal monitoring. Right before COVID, ELD brought the contracts back under their control and in-person oversight has not happened since before March, 2020.

**Cynthia/CCRN PSP Update:** Staffing for the providers is still a concern. Today, one program had 8 staff out amongst 4 of their locations. They struggled and managed to keep the ratio they needed, but had to pull in staff who weren't familiar with the kids or curriculum. We keep hearing this: staffing, hiring, background checks are still taking several weeks, and then retention challenges with some new hires leaving after just a few days.

We have Molly Clement supporting the English speakers and Martha Ibarra doing a great job with the Spanish speakers. Louise Horn, the Inclusion Specialist, is providing supports for more intense needs. The workload has picked up greatly. A lot of visits, zoom calls and one on one support to providers. It seems to be going well. A lot of great successes. We've developed a great partnership with licensing. They want to build up these businesses for success, to have a great experience for the facility, families and staff.

At the most recent meeting, licensing said that they are in the process of hiring several people to do the background checks, as well as training existing staff to process them to speed things up. Sites are losing staff because it's taking weeks to get them hired.

## **CCO Social-Emotional Health Metric**

This is an exciting opportunity for us. The CCO's were given data earlier this year on social-emotional health reach for children ages 0 to 5 in our service areas. The data shows what percentage of children, by social complexity factors, have received assessments or services for

social-emotional health. Complexity factors can include: foster care, parental incarceration, parental death, parent receiving treatment for substance abuse disorder, or behavior health services. In partnership with that reach data, we looked at an asset map of social-emotional services that are available in both Jackson and Josephine Counties for children ages 0 to 5. Looking at who is serving this population, what types of therapies are being offered, and what access looks like over the course of the next few months as a baseline.

We are in the community engagement piece this week. We have a multiple meeting this week, in both counties, in Spanish and English, at different times during the day and evening, at different partner sites. Hopefully this will allow the families to get more familiar with these sites and options. This has been a multi-partner effort. We are in year 1 of a 3-year glide path metric. This is an exciting opportunity to come together as a community and find out what we can do in partnership to improve access. To be able to come together with Jackson Care Connect, Allcare, and the Early Learning Hub team to engage in this shared experience has been great. We are happy to be at the table. All the hard work has been appreciated.

### **Family Engagement Update**

We have been focusing on building up in-person services again, in response to the big family survey we launched in the Spring. (Shared pictures of both family Community Centers listed locations below.)

Growing Together Community Center in Grants Pass is open. Sadie Emmons created some very beautiful spaces for families. There is a gathering space for support groups, GED classes,, etc. There are different computer stations available with space for children and infants to play and be safe. We sponsor a teen parent support group and will soon be offering a group for all ages of parents of children under 6. It was a financial collaboration between the Family Nurturing Center, some grants that Sadie was able to secure, and the Hub. Some other programming includes prenatal yoga, infant massage, and Kaleidoscope. Our new staff member will have regular hours at this site to be available to families. A smaller office is available for any community partner to reserve and meet with families who may be reluctant to meet at their offices.

Similarly, Doulas & Co. in Medford now offers space for partners or host events for families at no cost to them through the partnered support. The Family Connection, Early Learning Hub, Southern Oregon Success, and a few philanthropic groups are supporting the initial funding. There is a Walking Wednesday group that has been successful, as well as childbirth classes and infant massage.

### **Williams Preschool Success Story**

Williams is a small community in the Three Rivers School District. In '16/17, the Sugarloaf Community Center reached out to the Hub asking for help to start a preschool. We were able to support this through preschool scholarships. They also did community fundraisers. Through a partnership with Williams Elementary, they were able to open a preschool funded by the Hub. They have a classroom on site. Over time the preschool teacher built a relationship with the Kindergarten teacher and principal. They were seeing the test scores and readiness to learn increase. They applied to Preschool Promise this year, and were not approved. They reached out to us and we connected them with CCRN and ELD and asked for feedback for what to do differently in the next application. ELD responded that their application was just missed and now they are approved.

Jessica: Looking at data from our kindergartners, 100% of the students who were at benchmark three weeks into the year were the children who were in the preschool. Thankful to Teresa for the support and encouragement she provides to the program.

Teresa: We can soon start to repurpose these original funds to other rural communities to replicate this success.

### **Council Member Updates**

**Sam Watson:** Rumors have been around about changes in our Starting Strong program. We are sunsetting the existing voucher program by December 31, to be redeemed by February 28<sup>th</sup>. We will be sending out information to all members about the changes. We will be rolling out a new program, Care Baby. We will be connecting with pregnant members at different points throughout their pregnancy, providing support. Riki will be looking for ways to connect parents to care support services they may not be aware of such as car seat programs. We will have the ability to support families with specific needs on a case by case basis. Expanding the enrollments through the end of their 6<sup>th</sup> birthdays for OHP. Expanding supports for nutrition, food security, and housing needs. Medicaid waiver rolls out on January 1, 2024. CCO's will be spending the next year sorting out how to roll out these benefits. In 2023, the orthodontic benefit is changing. It will now include children beyond cleft palates. We should have about 4,000 children eligible for that benefit. We will have to do some creative work to get these children seen based on the number of providers we currently have. It's difficult to find enough providers within a 100-mile radius. In more rural areas, it's even more difficult.

<https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/Medicaid-Policy/Documents/2022-2027-1115-Demonstration-Approval.pdf>

This link is a 2-page summary: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/Medicaid-Policy/Documents/2022-2027-Changes.pdf>

**Kim Whitney:** ODH staff will be doing some intentional outreach for both our self-sufficiency and our child welfare programs. As a state, we are moving into Family First and Family Preservation. We are running pilots in 3 counties, none of which are here locally. We are not going to wait until the pilots are done to start best practices. What the national data is showing us is that early education from 0 to 5 is a key factor to prevent maltreatment. I want to run analytics out of Williams for the past 7 years to look at trends. Jessica will partner with this work. We have the 4<sup>th</sup> largest number of calls for child welfare. We are trying to do outreach and connections with families before we have to be called out. Every call is an opportunity to educate and support families. Only 1/3 of the children that we are directly responsible for are even enrolled in early learning education. So many people who are mandatory reporters don't understand the system. We want to educate mandatory reporters to know what it is that ODHS actually does. Difficulties finding child care is a stronger predictor of maternal neglect than almost any other factor, including mental health, drug abuse, history of abuse of a child, and use of public assistance.

**Mary Hough:** We have no available speech therapy referrals in our area. It's a 6-9 month wait at best. Early Intervention is the only available service for a child who is experiencing a language delay.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Sam Watson, Jessica Durrant seconded.  
Vote taken, approved  
Adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** January 17, 2022  
2:30-4:30 p.m.