

REGIONAL GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

Meeting Notes

December 5, 2024 | 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Attendance

Steve Schenewerk
Nancy Hauth
Jennifer Jackson
David Elliott

Dena Haudenschild
Heidi McGowan
Analia Nicholson
Heather Freilinger

Gillian Wesenberg
Athena Wikstrom
Danielle Walker

For ease of member access, Regional Governance Council (RGC) meetings will continue to be held virtually unless otherwise notified.

Welcome and Introductions

Chair, Steve Schenewerk, welcomed members of the Regional Governance Council (RGC) and individuals introduced themselves.

Members of the Regional Governance Council reviewed the September 2024 minutes. Dena Haudenschild motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Steve Schenewerk seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion carried.

South-Central Early Learning Hub Update

The Family Governance Advisory Committee has been meeting for over two years. Mitten Mommas and Heidi East McGowan facilitate monthly sessions. In addition to committee meetings, Mitten Mommas engage informally with parents during Coffee and Connect drop-in times, providing a space for members to share their thoughts and ideas.

While no members currently hold formal leadership roles, some have begun taking on leadership responsibilities by leading opening activities and collaborating on a grant proposal for Little Free Libraries. Next week, the committee will convene for a year-end reflection and plan for 2025.

The Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) has released a second Request for Application (RFA) for Preschool Promise slot reallocation for only the South-Central Early Learning Hub region. A total of 18 slots are available for reallocation, and the RFA will remain open until December 31 at 5:00 p.m. Providers who performed well in the first round of the RFA were placed on a waitlist to receive slots as they become available. However, these providers were not allocated slots in the initial round because they did not meet the priority location requirement.

There are currently two Preschool Promise openings in Klamath County. The South-Central Early Learning Hub accepts applications year-round and maintains a waitpool of eligible students. Students are placed in classrooms based on the Hub's priority populations which are required by the DELIC to be identified by all of the Hubs. Due to the region's mobile population, maintaining waitpools allows for quick placement of children when openings arise. Families are encouraged to apply, even if they believe they exceed the income limit, as over-income families may sometimes be placed—but only after all Preschool Promise-qualifying students have been accommodated.

New legislation banning suspension and expulsion in all early care and education settings, regardless of funding, will take effect on July 1, 2026. To support implementation, Douglas Education Service District (ESD) applied for and received a two-part planning and implementation grant. The Hub sub-contracted with Douglas ESD to lead the planning portion of the grant, which includes hosting listening sessions and establishing a steering committee. Heidi McGowan will facilitate listening sessions with in-home child care providers, centers, and community partners. Dr. Amy King is leading the steering committee and is developing an implementation plan. Douglas ESD will be facilitating the discussion of the implementation portion of the grant once planning is completed.

The Regional Governance Council (RGC) approved funding for projects through a one-year Early Literacy grant from the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), as announced by Gillian Wesenberg. The funded projects include:

I. Professional Development Training with Dr. Dawn Bailey

Dr. Dawn Bailey will lead a two-day, in-person professional development training for early care and education professionals, including child care providers, preschool teachers, and kindergarten teachers, in Douglas, Klamath, and Lake counties.

A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA-D) with over 25 years of experience, Dr. Bailey specializes in designing behavioral and learning programs for individuals with emotional and behavioral disorders, autism, and other developmental disabilities. Her training will focus on de-escalation strategies, equipping participants with evidence-based techniques for crisis prevention and management. The Preschool Life Skills component will emphasize instruction-following, functional communication, tolerance, and friendship-building skills.

Space for Dr. Bailey's training is limited. If registrations exceed capacity, priority will be given to early learning professionals, and attendance may be restricted to one or two individuals per organization. To support those working with children during the day, the Hub has allocated funding for related training-related expenses, which could include substitute teacher costs, ensuring greater accessibility.

II. Cards for Connection Training with Dr. Amy King

The South-Central Early Learning Hub contracted Dr. Amy King to provide virtual Cards for Connection training, which offers intervention strategies for managing challenging child behaviors. The training, open to 50 participants across the region, will take place on Friday afternoons. Finalized dates and registration details will be announced soon.

Dr. Bailey is a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA-D) and professor at the Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT). She has over 25 years of experience designing behavioral and learning programs for people with emotional/behavioral disorders, autism, and other developmental disabilities. She supports both the Klamath Falls City Schools and Klamath County School District with behavior needs plans and has also worked with Lake County School District #7.

Both training opportunities will help the region prepare for the upcoming legislation banning suspension and expulsion in all early care and education facilities. Additionally, the Hub is overseeing and supporting the small early literacy grants approved by the Regional Governance Council (RGC).

Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) Update

Early Learning Hub Coordinator Nancy Hauth joined the Regional Governance Council (RGC) to provide an update on the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC)

A key priority for Nancy and the other Hub Manager, Maria Mendoza, is launching the rule-making process to update, clarify, and enhance the framework governing Early Learning Hubs. The current rules, unchanged for a decade, are being revised following a one-year engagement process with DELIC, the Early Learning Council (ELC), Hub Directors and the BUILD Initiative. DELIC will release a document outlining the common responsibilities of all Early Learning Hubs, called Roles All Hubs Share. This document will serve as a guiding framework for drafting the Early Learning Hub Grant Agreement. The new rules will be developed with input from legislative, legal, and policy teams, guidance from Hub Directors and the BUILD Initiative offering support. A vote on the first set of updated rules is scheduled for late June, with implementation expected in mid-to-late 2025.

Awardees for the first round of the Child Care Infrastructure Fund have been selected and notified. The Child Care Infrastructure Fund is a grant opportunity offered through a collaboration between the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) and Business Oregon, that aims to address the needs of child care providers across Oregon. In the first grant cycle, 64 projects were awarded with a combined total of \$10 million. Funded projects include planning initiatives, minor and major renovations, and property acquisitions. The second round of funding, set for early 2025, will distribute an additional \$15 million across the state. The release date for the second round of funding has not yet been determined.

DELC is in the final stages of the hiring process for a Community Systems Team Director. The name of the new Community Systems Team Director will be announced soon.

The Early Learning Transition Check-In (ELTC), which is replacing the Oregon Kindergarten Assessment, is currently in its fourth year of piloting. This new approach follows the parent-teacher home visiting model, focusing on building relationships between teachers and families. As the pilot expands to a growing number of schools, the DELC/ODE team is learning which questions are most helpful with each cycle. They are also developing a data collection tool to support the pilot program.

Community UPLIFT

As of the end of September 2024, Community UPLIFT received 1,528 referrals. For the last quarter (July-September), there were a total of 93 total referrals for the region. There were 48 referrals in Douglas County, 44 in Klamath County, and one in Lake County. Currently, from the beginning of October to today, Community UPLIFT has received 50 referrals, including 21 in Douglas County and 29 in Klamath County. Last year, during the same quarter (October to December 2023), there were 59 referrals. Community UPLIFT is on track to meet or exceed the number of referrals from last year at this time.

Families and agencies in Klamath County have reported a demand for assistance in purchasing car seats that meet child and vehicle safety standards. Excitingly, Cascade Health Alliance (CHA) has provided Community UPLIFT with limited funding to supply car seats to families in need in Klamath County. Now, families in Klamath County, indicating a need for a car seat can be referred to Community UPLIFT, where they will work with a Family Resource Facilitator (FRF) to complete the full process and receive a car seat at no cost. The referred family selects a car seat that best meets their needs from a list of available options. The South-Central Early Learning Hub will then order the car seat and deliver it to the Klamath County office for the South-Central Early Learning Hub. Finally, the FRF will schedule a time to deliver the car seat and provide installation from a certified installer.

Regional Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR)

Heather Freiling reported the region submitted 33 applicants for the Child Care Infrastructure Grant. Douglas County had 22 applicants and received four awards, Klamath County had nine applicants and received one award. Lake County had one applicant and did not receive an award.

Some grant requirements, such as obtaining multiple bids for projects, were challenging for providers in rural and frontier areas. The grant will be offered again, and providers who did not receive an award will have an opportunity to apply for the second round of funding. Conversations are ongoing at the state level regarding the next release of the grant, with a focus on removing barriers for providers. Additionally, Child Care Resource and Referral (CRR) offers technical assistance with grant applications upon request from providers.

The Douglas County Child Care Coalition (DCCC) will continue offering workforce incentives to Family Child Care providers for recruiting new hires. Previously, these incentives were only available in Douglas County. However, with the receipt of limited grant funding, the incentives will now be extended to providers in Klamath and Lake Counties as well. Currently, there are 149 child care providers in Douglas County, 108 in Klamath County, and 7 in Lake County. Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) also tracks the number of individuals in the process of becoming child care providers, reporting eight in Douglas County, ten in Klamath County, and three in Lake County.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) continues to offer accessible training opportunities for child care providers across the region. The CPR and First Aid courses are being relaunched with the support of new CCRR team members, who are currently being trained to deliver these courses to child care providers in need of certification. In Klamath County, three new employees have joined the team: the second Preschool Promise Facilitator, a Quality Improvement Specialist/Klamath Community College (KCC) Navigator, and an Inclusion Specialist who also supports the Spanish cohort. Notably, the Spanish cohort has seen substantial growth over the past few years. A new employee has also been hired in Douglas County to assist with Inclusive Patterns work in the area.

Regional Partner Updates

Cascade Health Alliance (CHA) – David Elliott shared the performance metrics for Cascade Health Alliance (CHA) in Klamath County. In Oregon, there are 15 required metrics that Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) must meet to receive full funding from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Last year, CHA did not meet all performance metrics and is committed to meeting their goals this year.

CHA anticipates passing the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) assessment metric, which mandates that children entering foster care receive all required medical, dental, and mental health screenings.

Although CHA is slightly behind on the metric for well-child visits for children ages three to six, they are actively working with clinics to schedule additional well-child visit appointment dates. To meet this metric, CHA needs 71 more children to attend well-child visits by the end of the calendar year. To encourage families to schedule and attend these visits, CHA is offering a \$25 gift card to Fred Meyer for any family whose child has received a well-child visit in the past two months. This incentive program also applies to preventive dental screenings. An additional 197 children ages six to fourteen need to be seen for a preventive dental visit by the end of the year.

Unfortunately, CHA is likely to miss the OHA targets for new Substance Use Disorder (SUD) diagnoses metric due to high targets, the Meaningful Language Access metric because of a shortage of interpreters in the community, and the screening and intervention metric for alcohol and substance abuse due to challenges capturing this work in electronic filing from clinics. Funding received by CHA is reinvested in the local healthcare system by providing reimbursements to local healthcare providers for their services throughout the year.

CHA provides transportation to medical visits through Translink, and rides are also available to locations that address individual Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) needs, such as grocery stores, gyms, and laundromats.

Closing

With no additional business, the meeting adjourned

Next Meeting: March 2025, date TBD.