KLAMATH PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

March 19, 2025 | 10:00 AM – Noon

Attendance

Dena Haudenshild
Maurita Johnson
Leslie Maxfield
Amber Singh
Jessie McClung
Stephanie Potter
Jane Nicholson
David Lev
Kathleen Walker-Henderson
Jennifer Jackson
Kay Ortega
Holly Mancebo
Gillian Wesenberg
Amber Singh
Laura Barajas
Ronda Osborn
Danielle Walker

Please note: For ease of member access, South-Central Early Learning Hub – Klamath Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings will be held virtually unless otherwise notified.

Welcome and Introduction

The Klamath PAC reviewed and approved the February 2025 minutes. Kathleen Walker-Henderson made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Jessie McClung seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion passed.

South-Central Early Learning Hub Update

Gillian shared that the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC), the Early Learning Council (ELC), Early Learning Hubs, and the national research institution BUILD have completed their work on defining the Hubs and the overall Early Learning Hub system. The first round of new rules for the Hubs is expected to be released in the spring, with additional rules being released next year. There will be an opportunity for partners to provide comments on new rules.

Gillian was appointed to the Home Visiting System Coordination (HVSC) committee for the ELC. The committee is discussing the Home Visiting Systems Coordination (HVSC) transition from The Ford Family Foundation (TFFF) to the Center for Coordinating Oregon's Home Visiting System (CCOHVS) with Portland State University (PSU). The committee is also reviewing Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program funding, and looking for additional funding sources to support home visiting systems coordination.

Athena shared that Dr. Dawn Bailey recently provided training in Douglas and Lake Counties. The training, which focused on Preschool Life Skills and De-Escalation Strategies, was very well received. An additional two days of training for Klamath County are scheduled for March 31 and April 1. Reimbursement for substitute teachers is available for teaching staff who need coverage to attend the training.

Athena also shared information about the Cards for Connection training presented by Dr. Amy King. The training includes a full day of virtual sessions on April 4, focused on trauma-informed and trauma-responsive practices. The next two sessions, with dates to be determined in May, will be half-day virtual sessions addressing therapeutic interventions for trauma that may present in classrooms, based on the Cards for Connection approach developed by Dr. Amy.

The Cards for Connection approach focuses on providing practical, developmentally appropriate tools for those working with children and families. Attendees will receive the Cards for Connection tool as a resource, and the training will provide guidance on how to implement the tools effectively. The Cards for Connection strategies are useful for children from prenatal to age 5, with many of the techniques designed to engage families and equip them with tools to support their children's growth and development.

Both Dr. Amy King's and Dr. Bailey's trainings—Preschool Life Skills / De-Escalation and Cards for Connection—support the upcoming Every Child Belongs Legislation, beginning July 1, 2026. The legislation bans suspension and expulsion from all early childhood settings.

Athena also provided an overview of the Kids in Transition to School (KITS) at Home program. KITS at Home is being offered to families who are geographically isolated and whose children have not had access to preschool opportunities. This 8-week online course emphasizes turning everyday moments into learning opportunities—such as sorting, counting, and sharing during regular routines. It offers a fun, practical way for families to support school readiness from home. The program was developed by Dr. Katherine Pears and the Oregon Social Learning Center and is grounded in more than five years of research into what supports children's success as they enter kindergarten. It continues to evolve through ongoing family feedback and surveys. Research has demonstrated an increase in kindergarten readiness for children whose families have participated in the program compared to those who have not.

The KITS at Home course is available in both English and Spanish. The Spanish version includes cultural adaptations that reflect the values and lived experiences of Spanish-speaking families. If technology is a barrier to participation, families are encouraged to contact the Hub. Support is available to help provide the necessary tools and reduce obstacles to access.

Danielle provided an update about Preschool Promise. Currently, for the 2024–2025 school year, all Preschool Promise slots across the region are full. However, the Hub accepts applications year-round to maintain a waitpool of eligible students. Maintaining the waitpool allows any Preschool Promise openings that may become available to be filled quickly.

The returning student form for current 2024–2025 Preschool Promise students who will remain age-eligible for the 2025–2026 school year has been released for families to reapply. The new student application for 2025–2026 is being updated to reflect changes from the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC). Once the updates are finalized, the new application will be released.

Danielle also shared an overview of Community UPLiFT, which connects expecting families, families with children from birth to age five, and children up to age 21 with special needs to community resources. Family Resource Facilitators conduct motivational interviews with families referred to Community UPLiFT to identify specific needs and provide information and referrals to appropriate programs. Referrals are made based on family voice and choice, with all referrals being completely voluntary.

Online referrals can be completed at community-uplift.com or via smartphone by texting the keyword “uplift1” to (541) 351-3100. Community UPLiFT also has a 30-second public service announcement available with subtitles in both languages:

- Spanish subtitles
- English subtitles

Danielle is happy to offer Community UPLiFT presentations—either in person or virtually. The Hub is also actively seeking providers who are interested in accepting referrals from Community UPLiFT. For more information, contact Danielle at Danielle.walker@douglasesd.k12.or.us or by phone at (541) 880-4655.

Hub staff will be out of the office for spring break; however, Community UPLiFT will still be monitored, and responses to referrals will be provided during the break.

The Breast Place of Southern Oregon

Erin Snodgrass, founder of The Breast Place of Southern Oregon, joined the Klamath Professional Advisory Committee to share information about the services offered by her program.

With a background as a Labor and Delivery Nurse in Klamath County, Erin identified a gap in postpartum care, particularly in breastfeeding support. After completing a lengthy training course and certification test, which is offered only twice a year, Erin became an Internationally Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) and opened The Breast Place of Southern Oregon. Since opening in July 2024, The Breast Place has provided lactation services to over 100 mothers in the community through home visits, in-office appointments, or virtual sessions. Erin emphasized that insurance companies are required to cover lactation support at little to no cost to families. These services aim to provide moms with the tools and confidence needed for a more successful breastfeeding journey.

Klamath County has some of the lowest breastfeeding rates in Oregon. Currently, only 40% of babies are exclusively breastfed at 4 months, with that number dropping to 30% by 6 months. Erin highlighted the well-documented benefits of breastfeeding for both mothers and infants, stressing the importance of accessible, ongoing support to improve these outcomes locally.

Partner Updates

Cascade Health Alliance (CHA) – David Elliott – David shared updates on the Healthy Klamath Connect and the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Services offered through Cascade Health Alliance.

Healthy Klamath Connect, accessible at healthyklamathconnect.com, is a comprehensive online resource designed to serve as a central hub for a wide variety of programs available to Klamath County residents. It includes both local and national programs. Each listing provides one of three access methods: direct contact information, an application that generates an internal referral, or a link to an external site. Programs are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure accuracy and usability. One of the system's most valuable aspects is the centralized database that stores screening and referral data. This improves tracking of outcomes and helps meet CCO performance metrics. David noted that this eliminates the need to rely solely on clinics for data collection, making the system more efficient and reliable for both state reporting and service delivery.

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) funding is available to CHA members and can be used for a wide range of supports that impact an individual's overall health and well-being. This funding can assist with needs such as food, housing, utilities, short-term housing, furniture, transportation (including fuel and car repairs like radiators and tires), and fitness/exercise programs. Members can apply online at healthyklamathconnect.com by completing a comprehensive survey that identifies their specific needs. The survey data is then reviewed by a CHA Coordinator, who connects the applicant with the appropriate services.

Similar SDOH funding programs, also referred to as Health Related Social Needs (HRSN), are available through other Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) across the state.

Foster Grandparents -- Leslie Maxfield – Leslie shared that the Foster Grandparents program is actively recruiting senior volunteers who are interested in supporting children's learning. Volunteers play a key role in providing mentorship and educational support in early childhood and school settings.

Foster Grandparents are participating in a two-day training called FGP Camp scheduled for August. The program is currently looking for speakers to present on topics related to education and child development. Specific areas of interest include early childhood education, reading and literacy, mental health, and trauma-informed care.

Leslie also noted that 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the Foster Grandparents program in Southern Oregon. Plans are in progress for a celebration in August to commemorate this important milestone. The team is seeking ideas, speakers, and community partners to support the event.

Family Governance Advisory Committee – Athena Wikstrom – Athena provided an update on the South-Central Early Learning Hub Family Governance Advisory Committee. The committee successfully completed a grant application and secured funding to place Little Free Libraries in Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties. In Klamath County, libraries have already been installed in Klamath Falls, Merrill, and Malin, with one remaining library still to be placed. The committee has focused on installing the libraries in neighborhoods with limited access to books.

Each library is stocked with early childhood titles that promote literacy and learning, including books in dual languages, culturally diverse stories, and engaging materials that support early development. Some of the books were recommended by the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and are written in the tribe's native language, Takelma. The committee is also working in collaboration with Jennifer from the Klamath Tribes to ensure the libraries reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the community.

Care Connections and Education / Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) – Amber Singh -- Amber Singh shared an update regarding upcoming professional development events. The Spring Fling Conference, originally scheduled earlier in the season, was postponed due to weather. The new date is April 5, and it will be held at Klamath Community College (KCC). Sharron Krull, the founder of PlayPower, will serve as the keynote speaker.

Amber also announced that Southern Oregon University (SOU) will be hosting a workshop on May 3. The workshop is free of charge and will provide eight hours of training focused on observation and assessment in early childhood education settings.

Additionally, on May 17, CCRR will host a Pyramid Model training at KCC. This training is free of charge and designed to support early educators in implementing positive behavior supports and social-emotional learning strategies in their classrooms.

Klamath Promise – Jessie McClung – Jessie shared that the 10th Annual Graduation Sensation Parade and Party in the Park will take place on May 29. Klamath Promise aims to break the record for the number of awards distributed to graduating students. Community involvement and support are key to making this event a success. Jessie encouraged everyone to reach out if they are interested in participating, sponsoring awards, or helping to celebrate the Class of 2025.

Next Meeting:

April 23, 2025, from 10 am to noon.