PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes

February 22, 2018 | 10:30 AM – 1:00 PM

In Attendance

Staff Present: Gillian Wesenberg, Brian Burke,

Others Present: Judi Mahoney, Heidi McGowan (on phone), K'Ehleyr McNulty, Shawn Lybarger, and Erin Helgren

January Minutes Were Approved

Erin Helgren Presentation on Children's Institute

See attached PowerPoint for presentation

Erin Helgren shared that she has been the site liaison at the Children's Institute for two years, and in that two years her understanding of what it means to be representational of the community and authentic has evolved. The presentation is from her perspective as a strong community partner, as she hasn't been the liaison from the beginning but rather a partner from the start. Six years ago Kristy Cox, who works for the Ford Family Foundation, and Jerry Fosse who was the principal at the time at Yoncalla elementary school. The two found that kindergarteners were coming into school with low social skills, academic skills, and already behind at the start of their school careers. Jerry felt that there wasn't a level playing field with the poverty, generational poverty, mental health issues, addiction issues, and unemployment rate that was so prevalent in Yoncalla. He felt like there were barriers upon barriers for the children. Cristy knew of a program up in Portland, the Children's Institute, that was creating a demonstration site to be a model of what very high quality community based schools and supports could look like for age's birth to 8. They were doing this in a community that had significant barriers, Earl Boyles. Cristy Cox approached the Children's Institute to ask if they would like to a ten year rural project and they brought together some leaders in the community along with the School Board, Pat Sublette (Douglas ESD), and the principal. This meeting defined what the vision was: a community of healthy thriving kids who become successful adults. They also defined their guiding principles, which reflected Earl Boyles, and knew that the programing was going to be universally available and that normalizing high quality supports for families was very important. It was decided that the project wouldn't only serve a certain population, and it would need to be community based, a smart investment, school connected, led by committed supported local leaders and fueled by engaged and empowered families. It was a priority to have it become focused and data driven, and it has taken six years to get to the point where it is almost exclusively looking at outcomes and data to make decisions. It needed to be integrated and aligned around common goals. Yoncalla is currently entering into year six of the ten year project, and at this point in the project priority areas have been defined by data. They defined that ready and successful children had three pillars which were ready and supportive parents, communities, and schools. What was found from the initial data was that there was a lack of trust and a lack of connection to school, historically, families had felt that the school system had failed them and they had no desire to connect with the school. There was no interest from families in home visiting and they felt that it was threatening, and there was little emphasis on preschool. What they found was that almost 90% of the families that live in Yoncalla live in poverty and they are very rarely able to even leave their community. The community was communicating the need for free things to do with their kids. The administration chose to listen to the parents and created free things to do with kids. They started doing dialogic reading trainings, pre-k readiness trainings, at the local library, which was a trusted place. Then there was an educational component, talking about reading with your children at home or a math night where they could make homemade math games. Trust and listening to community members is really foundational for success and

recognizing that it might not be a strategy that is evidence based or a large return on investment but the return on investment is that trust, because in rural communities there has been such a history of families that are marginalized and lived in poverty that have not been listened to. With those families there is one, maybe two, chances and that is it. If you do something to show they haven't been heard they will not allow you to come back again. Some of the other ways trust was built was being very transparent with the data. It was given to the school board to let them present it to their community. Some of the strategies were: presenting at the community cafes, and an annual retreat where they bring families together and look at and question the data. The other piece they were conscientious about was to engage and support existing programs that had already built strong relationships with the community. The universal teacher home visits have almost doubled each year. Yoncalla has trained not only the preschool teacher but also have supported elementary school teachers. The last two years every child coming into Kindergarten has received a home visit from their Kindergarten teacher. The universal teacher home visits have almost doubled, when there is support at home the dynamic shifts. Yoncalla has trained not only the preschool teacher but also have supported elementary school teachers. The last two years every child coming into Kindergarten has received a home visit from their Kindergarten teacher. Every teacher is receiving stipends as an enticement to do home visits. Traditionally there has been a divide between families and teachers and the home visiting model has helped create a deeper understanding of circumstances. The model is for grade school teachers to go once at the beginning of the year and then again during the middle of the year. Parent Education has doubled in the last two years, and those who attend the parent education groups consider it their self-care and truly enjoy it.

Updates

Erin Helgren will be presenting the presentation to the Douglas County Governance Meeting on March 21st 2018.

Judi Mahoney mentioned that Healthy Families is interviewing for a new Home Visitor.

K'Ehleyr McNulty shared that the subgroup will be continuously meeting and invited to attend future meetings to talk about Parent Engagement.

March Agenda Planning

Parent Engagement workgroup update from K'Ehleyr McNulty.

Next Meeting Date

Thursday March 22, 2018 from 10:30 AM – 1:00 PM