PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

November 21, 2024, | 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance, Welcome, Approval of Minutes

Present: Legna Robles, Madison Bright, Krystal Sanchez, Karissa Bent, Colleen May-Weir, Hannah Horvath, Patricia Ortega, Stephanie Cravalho, Cady Lyon, Bryanna Paradice, Marsha LaVerne

Staff Present: Gillian Wesenberg, Athena Wikstrom, Danielle Walker, Charlee Scheer, Susan Stiles, Ronda Osborn, Heather Sewall

Introduction and approval of September minutes. Madison Bright made a motion to approve the October minutes as submitted. Colleen May-Weir seconded the motion. No further discussion is needed. Motion Passed.

Hub Update

Danielle Walker, Early Learning Hub – New legislation was passed that prevents early childhood programs from suspending or expelling a child from any early childhood care center, no matter where the source of funding is from. This legislation takes effect July 1, 2026. Douglas Education Service District (ESD) has received a Planning and Implementation grant from the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) in preparation for the rule to take effect. The South-Central Early Learning Hub (ELH) will be working on the planning portion of the grant.

The Family Governance Advisory Committee is doing great work and received a grant to put up Little Free Libraries throughout Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties. The Committee is asking for suggestions on accessible locations to put the little libraries for families who do not reside close to Public Library locations. The books in these libraries will focus on diversity and books that match what our tribes need for education.

For those unfamiliar with the program, Community UPLiFT connects expecting families, families with children birth to five, and families with children birth to 21 with special needs to community resources. Since 2017, there have been 1,459 total referrals, including 851 from Douglas County. Community UPLiFT covers Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties.

A quick overview of Community UPLiFT numbers shows that we have had over 1500 referrals since 2017 across Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties. Since October 1, 2024, 35 referrals have come in, with 17 in Douglas County and 18 in Klamath County. Currently, there are no referrals from Lake County.

When parents fill out a Preschool Promise application, they are asked if they would be interested in a referral to Early Intervention/ Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) or if there are other resources for the family. A Community UPLiFT referral will be generated when either of these is selected. Since the influx of Preschool Promise applications has slowed down, there has been a slight drop in the number of referrals coming in. Everyone is invited to share information about Community UPLiFT with families and the Hub would like to hear from any organizations that are interested in receiving referrals from Community UPLiFT. Virtual and in-person presentations on Community UPLiFT are available in Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties.

The Family Governance Advisory Council recommended that a public service announcement for Community UPLiFT be developed with both English and Spanish subtitles. This short video is available on the Hub's website, scelh.com. Everyone is encouraged to share this announcement on whatever platform is available.

Preschool Promise slots are almost filled. There are two openings at the YMCA in Klamath Falls and one at Gilchrist. Applications are accepted year-round. Children must be three or four years old by September 1 of the school year they are applying for, have an income of up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, and reside in Oregon. Families who believe they are over-income are still encouraged to apply.

Athena Wikstrom, Early Learning Hub-Umpqua Community Action Network (UCAN) Head Start in Glide does have some Preschool Promise openings. Head Start does its own enrollment for the Glide Preschool Promise program, and families can enroll at the ucancap.org website.

There is currently an application through the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) to apply for 18 remaining Preschool Promise slots available for reallocation in our region. These slots are for priority population zip codes. Providers not in one of the priority zip codes are still encouraged to apply because if the site qualifies for Preschool Promise, they will be added to the wait pool. If any other programs decide to discontinue or cannot continue serving Preschool Promise families, available slots can be reallocated to providers in the wait pool. This will ensure families are served quickly without waiting for a new Request for Application (RFA) to be

released. Anyone who provides preschool services or would like to offer preschool services is encouraged to apply. Applications are open until December 3, 2024.

Gillian Wesenberg- Early Learning Hub- New legislation, effective July 1, 2026, prohibits child care providers and preschools from suspending or expelling children. Currently, Preschool Promise and Head Start already have this policy in place. The Department of Early Learning and Care is implementing Every Child Belongs which will provide behavioral health consultation for child care providers. Every Child Belongs will look different for each region and will be rolled out in two steps, planning and implementation. Douglas ESD received a grant for the program and the Early Learning Hub is working on the planning portion to determine what is available and what the needs are within the South-Central region. Planning will take place until the end of June, 2025. During the implementation portion of the grant, each region will receive funding for one full-time behavioral health consultant to support the providers in that region. The same amount of funding will be provided for smaller regions like Yamhill County Early Learning Hub and larger areas like South-Central and Eastern Oregon Early Learning Hubs. Based on the size and need of the South-Central Early Learning Hub region, the consultant will likely have very limited time to provide in-person support.

Separate listening sessions are being held with in-home child care providers, center child care providers, Behavior Specialists, Early Learning Professionals, Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education, and parents. There will be 15 participant spaces for each listening session, so interested parties should sign up as soon as they are available. Heidi East McGowan, who will be assisting with the project, will facilitate a Steering Committee, including Dr. Amy King, an international Early Childhood Behavioral Health Consultant. The Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) has also contracted with the Oregon Infant Mental Health Association (ORIMHA) to work with local communities for 18 months to assist with putting together a plan and find out where the needs are, how to gain trust and what is going to work best for implementing the Suspension and Expulsion project.

Karissa Bent, Cobb Children's Learning Center – Karissa added communication with the communities about the suspension and expulsion can be traumatic or bring forward traumatic experiences, so the communication needs to be accurate and disseminated to the communities in a way that will build trust within the communities. The initial thought was that children were being let go due to biases or racial reasons. A study was conducted that showed that 85% of children were let go due to behavioral issues.

During the meeting later today with the State Advisory Committee, branding and what communication should look like to local regions will be discussed. The committee will also discuss using a warmline or a Google form for child care providers to communicate their concerns to the state.

Community Presentation - Migrant Education

Krystal Sanchez, Early Childhood Specialist for Migrant Education – The Migrant Education Program (MEP)is a federal program that provides supplemental services to migrant students to ensure academic success from preschool through high school. Support is provided from age three until the student receives a high school degree or GED. The Department of Education manages funding for the program. The funds are distributed into the regions with a service delivery plan detailing what is expected for each region to do for the families. Each region then tailors the funding for their area since regions in Oregon are all very different. The first thing a student needs to qualify for the services is that the family must have done qualifying work in the last three years. Qualifying work is seasonal work in forestry, agriculture, or fisheries. The second qualifier is that the family must have moved school district catchment areas within the previous three years, the student must move with the family to qualify. Once qualified regionally, the case is given to the state for follow-up qualifying questions. This program does not consider race or ethnicity; it is purely about seasonal agriculture, forestry, or fishing work.

Caseloads vary throughout the year. There will be smaller caseloads in the fall and caseloads will grow as the year progresses. Early Childhood services begin at three years old, no matter when the child turns three. The Early Childhood Specialist works with the children until they enter kindergarten, and then the Family Engagement Specialist takes over.

During the first visit with the family, the goal is to get to know them and see their needs. Families are helped with applying for benefits and preschool applications during home visits; the goal is to help the parents understand how best to support the child for school readiness; a learning kit and a box of learning toys consisting of blocks and magnet letters are also provided. There is a big focus on language development. School visits are made to provide support to both families and schools. Referrals to additional resources are also made when necessary.

The summer school programming differs depending on the region. Eugene has five or six districts that participate in the program. Students who live in districts that are farther away receive more home visits. Students in Douglas County receive home visits at this time. Migrant Education does not currently cover Lake County. The possibility of adding Lake County to an existing region does exist. Some regions are county-based, while others are district-based. Presenting the numbers of migrants in Lake Couty to the state could help get Migrant Education coverage in that area.

A family's qualification lasts three years. If the family moves across district lines, they must requalify for the program; communication with other migrant programs throughout the state helps to continue support for families that move to another location.

Gillian asked whether Migrant Education and Healthy Families worked together. Colleen responded that since there are currently seven Spanish-speaking families in the Healthy Families program, it would be a good connection to work together.

Legna Robles, Preschool Specialist for Jackson County – Legna added that the program offers different services. There are Graduation Specialists who oversee students from grades seven to 12. These specialists provide tutoring, review transcripts, and provide college and career information. There is a Family Engagement Specialist who helps the family find needed resources and to help families understand the school system. Parent workshops are offered with topics suited to the family's needs. Summer school is offered in some areas, as well.

Partner Update

Colleen May-Weir, United Community Action Network (UCAN)– UCAN is creating a Community Advisory Board for Family Connects Oregon; it is a free voluntary nurse home visiting program for all new families in Douglas County, regardless of insurance or income. Home visits begin around the age of three weeks, and families can receive one to four visits. Meetings for the Community Advisory Board are one hour long and held every other month. The challenge in expanding regionally is that Lake County doesn't have a home visiting nurse, and Klamath County only has one, making it difficult or impossible to cover such a large geographic area. UCAN is also hiring a Home Visiting Nurse. Please see the website for more information at www.ucancap.org.

Bryanna Paradice, UCAN Healthy Families – Healthy Families is seeking members for the Healthy Families Advisory Board. Meetings will be held every other month for an hour. Discussions will be around program improvement plans, how the program grows, and community input from clients and families. Anyone interested in joining the Advisory Board can contact Bryanna at bryanna.paradice@ucancap.org or Colleen, colleen.may@ucancap.org.

Athena Wikstrom, Early Learning Hub—Douglas ESD will be closed from Wednesday, November 27, to Friday, November 29, 2024, and again from Monday, December 23, to Friday, January 3, 2025. There will not be a meeting in December. Community UPLiFT will still respond to referrals during this time.

Karissa Bent, Cobb Children's Learning Center – Educating Policy Makers, a Douglas County Childcare Coalition subgroup, met with The Ford Family Foundation to discuss how to partner with them to share the need for more child care slots and more funding with state representatives. There is also the concern of how things already in legislation and set in stone can be made to fit the current needs. There is a lack of funding for child care employees, mental health, and child care slots. Douglas County Child Care Coalition is also working on a seven-to-eight-minute video about child care awareness, the lack of slots, the lack of infrastructure, and why the whole business plan is broken. The goal of the video is to bring awareness that the lack of child care affects everyone, whether they have children or not.

Madison Bright, Family Relief Nursery - The Family Relief Nursery collected food donations from the community to assist local families. The teachers at the Family Relief Nursery are excited to shop for the children's Christmas gifts tomorrow. The Relief Nursery is having a fundraising gala in April to assist with expenses at the nursery; efforts are being made to make more connections in Douglas County for funding.

For those unfamiliar with the Relief Nursery locations, there is a site in Drain that serves Yoncalla, Drain, Elkton, and Creswell, and the main site is in Cottage Grove. All sites serve families with children zero to five years old. Therapeutic classes are held every week, toddler classes are held on Monday and Tuesday, preschool is on Wednesday and Thursday, respite classes are on Friday for the outreach children, and home visiting services are done monthly. The goal of the home visit is to build a connection with the whole family and to connect them to resources. The program is not financially based; risk factors or stress in the family's life are used to determine eligibility; the family only needs to meet five of those factors to qualify. Screening is done over the phone, and the outreach coordinator will schedule a home visit. All children start in respite on Fridays to help

determine which classroom placement is best for them. Children cannot be put into a classroom until the age of two and can continue until age five.

The Family Relief Nursery started with two children in September, and nine children are expected to be enrolled by the end of the year. Currently, the toddler class is full.

Heather Sewell, Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) – Currently, positions are available for a Speech Therapist and a Physical Therapist. These positions will work with children from birth to five.

All children who qualify for EI/ECSE are accepted into the program. Kindergarten transition planning begins in January.

Next Meeting Date

No meeting will be held in December. The next meeting is January 23, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.