

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

January 22, 2026 | 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance, Welcome, Approval of Minutes

Present: Krystal Sanchez, Karissa Bent, Shawn Massingale, Debi Groshong, Elise Hansen, Dr. Bob Danneffer, Danielle Ganze

Douglas ESD Staff Present: Danielle Walker, Charlee Scheer, Heather Freiling, Robin Van Winkle, Stephanie Cravalho

The group reviewed the November 2025 meeting minutes, which had been distributed via email prior to the meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Debi and seconded by Krystal. The motion passed without opposition.

Introduction and Opening Remarks

Danielle Walker - South - Central Early Learning Hub:

The Douglas Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held on January 22, 2026, and was called to order at 10:05 a.m. following a brief waiting period for attendees to join. Participants introduced themselves and responded to an opening reflection question focused on identifying sources of personal and professional support at the start of the new year.

Hub Update

Danielle Walker - South-Central Early Learning Hub:

Danielle provided several organizational updates. It was announced that Gillian is no longer with the South-Central Early Learning Hub, and Alysha Barraza is currently serving as Interim Director. At the most recent Regional Governance Council meeting, voting members passed a vote of no confidence in Douglas Education Service District (ESD) as the backbone organization. The Hub is awaiting further direction from the state and views this as an opportunity to strengthen relationships and collaboration between regional governance and the backbone organization.

The Hub has released a Request for Application (RFA) for Birth-to-Five Early Literacy and Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) funding. Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, government agencies, small businesses, Tribes, and community partners. Each entity may request up to \$15,000 for the 2025–2027 biennium, with funding distributed equitably across Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties. Organizations serving the Hub's priority populations including families in geographically isolated areas; children experiencing displacement such as houselessness, or foster or kinship care; families identifying as African American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latinx, or native Spanish speakers; families identifying as Native American or Tribal; children with physical or developmental delays, disabilities, behavioral health concerns, or trauma; and infants and children ages birth to three will receive priority in funding.

Danielle also reviewed highlights from the fiscal 2024–2025 annual report, outlining key accomplishments including implementation of the Every Child Belongs (ECB) initiative, continued Preschool Promise Coordinated Enrollment, and Community UPLIFT referrals. The Hub currently supports 263 Preschool Promise slots across the region, with enrollment largely full aside from one site in Klamath County. Community UPLIFT referrals at the end of the fiscal year reached 1,720 since the inception of Community UPLIFT, and have continued to grow, reaching over 1,900 total to date.

Additional successes included professional development offerings, family engagement efforts through the Family Governance Advisory Committee, and placement of multilingual Little Free Libraries in underserved communities to support early literacy access. Danielle also shared updates about participation in community outreach events such as First Thursday events, community baby showers, rural outreach efforts, and the Point in Time (PIT) Count, emphasizing the importance of face-to-face relationship building and resource connection for families.

Public Health Update

Dr. Bob Danneffer – Douglas Public Health Network:

Dr. Bob provided a comprehensive health update, noting that COVID-19, flu, and RSV activity had remained relatively quiet locally but that increases are anticipated in the coming months. He discussed national changes to vaccine advisory panels and vaccine schedule recommendations, explaining resulting confusion at the federal level.

Dr. Bob clarified that Oregon, alongside California, Washington, and Hawaii, has formed the West Coast Health Alliance and is continuing to follow prior evidence-based immunization schedules. School exclusion requirements remain unchanged. Concerns were shared about increasing rates of non-medical vaccine exemptions, which could contribute to outbreaks of illnesses such as pertussis and measles. Participants were encouraged to continue supporting clear vaccine education and communication with families.

Learning Beyond Paper

Danielle Ganze -Learning Beyond Paper:

Danielle from Learning Beyond Paper provided a presentation and thanked the group for the opportunity to share information about the program. She explained that Learning Beyond Paper is a fairly new resource for early childhood education and professional development, as well as after school, and camp curriculum. Danielle shared that the organization has been on the market for five years and is already working with some Oregon districts and Head Start programs. She described the program as a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that includes teacher training, pick-up-and-go resources, and materials for home visiting programs.

Danielle outlined the current offerings within Learning Beyond Paper, which include the Learning Beyond curriculum for infants through pre-K and K-4, a family childcare multi-age curriculum, professional development resources, and Learning Beyond the Bell, which serves after school and camp programs. She emphasized that everything is designed to be “pick up and go,” allowing teachers to receive training while teaching. Danielle also shared her background, noting that she taught in the classroom for ten years prior to her current position and reflected that the tools provided by Learning Beyond Paper would have saved significant preparation time while supporting differentiated instruction for children.

The presentation highlighted Learning Beyond Paper’s professional development courses, which Danielle explained may qualify as resources under recently released early literacy grant funding. She described Learning Beyond the Bell as an out-of-school and camp curriculum designed to provide educational yet engaging experiences for children, sharing that feedback has shown children are excited about learning and that teachers are seeing decreases in challenging behaviors.

Danielle provided additional detail about the Learning Beyond Paper platform, which serves infants through pre-K, and K-4 and includes a multi-age curriculum for family childcare and mixed classrooms. She explained that this curriculum was developed through a partnership with Child Care Aware in North Dakota and was built based on identified needs. The curriculum is aligned with the Science of Reading (SoR), and includes built-in open-ended questions and teacher prompts to support classroom interactions.

A key feature highlighted during the presentation was the proprietary instructional coach, referred to as “LB.” Danielle explained that this tool acts as an on-demand resource that understands the lesson and standards teachers are working on and can provide differentiation strategies for varying classroom needs. She shared an example of how teachers can request adaptations for a nonverbal student, and the system will analyze the specific lesson and provide targeted suggestions such as visual aids and alternative communication strategies. She emphasized that the recommendations are lesson-specific rather than general guidance, giving teachers practical and immediate support.

Danielle also shared that live teacher training is included at no extra cost, allowing educators to meet with trainers throughout the year via Zoom. She noted that she personally meets with teachers to discuss lesson

adaptations and classroom preparation. All professional development and curriculum training are included, and resources are available in both Spanish and English. She concluded by sharing a QR code and a link in the chat for participants interested in learning more about professional development, the curriculum, or Learning Beyond the Bell, and offered to schedule follow-up discussions for those wanting deeper exploration of the resources.

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) and Every Child Belongs Updates

Heather Freiling, Program Coordinator and CCR&R Director for Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties, introduced the CCR&R updates and invited Stephanie to provide program highlights. Stephanie shared that the Courageous Care Summit was held in November, with part two taking place in January. The event was a huge success and received positive feedback. Dr. Amy King presented the Clarity Model and Co-Regulation with children. Attendance increased from 68 total registrants in November to 81 in January. Stephanie also announced a save-the-date for the Spring Fling on May 16, featuring keynote speaker Sharon Kroll, founder of Play Power, presenting "Playing to Learn." A revised-format newsletter was shared in the chat, which includes upcoming winter term trainings scheduled from January through March.

Heather provided an update on Every Child Belongs (ECB), which transitioned to CCR&R this past summer. Staff have been completing training about program requirements, documentation, and new systems. She explained that Every Child Belongs is a collaborative effort connected to both infant and early childhood mental health consultation and CCR&R services. When requests for classroom support are submitted, they are routed through the state and back into local communities, where Inclusive Partner supports determine the most appropriate response. Two requests have been received so far, and staff are prioritizing quick follow-up and welcome interviews to assess needs and ensure appropriate support.

Heather shared that pilot information shows strong demand for mental health consultation in some counties, with portions of requests also being addressed through CCR&R technical assistance. Updates have been provided to the planning team, with a follow-up planned later this month. She noted a staffing adjustment in which Summer will continue providing services through June 2026 while the position is being reposted. A shared position with Early Intervention (EI) also remains in place, ensuring continued service delivery and strong collaboration.

Upcoming outreach includes the Courageous Care Summit in Klamath Falls at the end of February, which will also help share information about Every Child Belongs and Inclusive Partner supports. Heather emphasized that the goal of ECB is to support providers and build educator capacity. The program officially opened in the region on November 21, following minor delays due to the holidays, and is now fully operational with ongoing outreach and support.

Heather also highlighted collaborative work between Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) and CCR&R to develop a Quick Start Guide for early educators. The guide outlines when to access CCR&R, Every Child Belongs, or Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education supports and explains how systems can work together. She noted that providers may receive multiple supports simultaneously, depending on child and classroom needs. Work is currently underway to expand Quick Start Guides for Klamath and Lake Counties. Collaboration with Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education has strengthened partnerships and understanding of each system's role. Heather invited questions and encouraged participants to join the upcoming planning meeting by adding their contact information in the chat.

Partner Updates

Krystal Sanchez- Migrant Education: Krystal shared that caseloads continue to grow, with staff working to resume regular home visits following holiday-related illness disruptions.

Karissa Bent-Cobb School: Karissa shared that Cobb has received a few grants and has hopes to add a new parking lot and play structure.

Robin Van Winkle-Douglas County Child Care Coalition and Business Champions for Kids: Robin shared that this year's focus has been sustaining the child care landscape, noting that while overall capacity has increased in recent years, there is still significant need for infant and toddler care and some providers are struggling to fill newly expanded slots. Robin shared that funding was secured for Care Connections & Education, and the Douglas County Child Care Coalition to conduct listening session interviews with providers to better understand local child care challenges and supports needed. She also reported that Business Champions for Kids continues working with the business community, though engaging new employers has been more challenging due to shifts in the workforce climate. A roundtable at Mercy Medical Center is planned to discuss additional employee benefits and assistance programs that support mental health and work-life balance for working families.

Sarah Wheelock-Take Root Parenting Connection: Sarah shared that Take Root is in full swing for their winter term, serving Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties through individual county programming and virtual events. She shared flyers in the chat and highlighted an upcoming story time event called *Kindness Begins with Us*, hosted with Kristen Yon at Douglas ESD on Saturday, January 31. The event is intended to provide a welcoming space for families and will include books, a craft, and snacks. Additional flyers were shared for upcoming activities. Sarah noted a Conscious Discipline class is currently taking place at Green Elementary with Tina Little, and that it is going well.

Elise Hansen-Family Connects: Elise reported no major updates, but shared continued rollout of the Family Connects Universal Home Visiting program, noting increased participation and the highest number of visits so far during December and January. She shared that growing awareness is resulting in increased referrals to other home visiting programs.

Debi Groshong-Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians: Reported no updates.

Shawn Massingale-UCAN: Shawn shared several announcements, including current preschool and pre-K openings for three-, four-, and five-year-olds. Applications for the 2025-2026 school year remain open. Head Start applications are also open for the 2026–2027 school year. Early Head Start applications for infants, toddlers, and expectant parents are open continuously. Families with previous enrollment history are advised to contact the main office directly, as the system does not allow duplicate online applications for additional children.

UCAN offices will be closed to clients for most services on January 28 to support the Point in Time (PIT) Count; however, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Head Start, nurses, and Healthy Families services will remain open. All other staff will be participating in Point in Time Count activities, including a resource fair and community outreach teams.

Adjournment

Shawn Massingale-United Community Action Network (UCAN) Early Head Start/Head Start:

The next Douglas PAC meeting will be held on February 26, 2026, via Zoom.