

LAKE COUNTY COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

Meeting Notes

February 24, 2026 | 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Attendance

Lane Stratton (v)	Jen Schulze	Bailey Guido
Michael Benson (v)	Julie Hurley	Athena Wikstrom
Michael Carter (v)	Vanessa Pingleton	Danielle Walker
Miranda Philibert	Heather Freilinger	

Please note: For ease of member access, South-Central Early Learning Hub – Lake County Community Governance Council meetings will be held virtually unless otherwise notified.

A quorum was present to approve the May 2025, September 2025, November 2025, and January 2026 minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Michael Carter and seconded by Michael Benson. No opposition. Motion carried.

Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) - Michael Benson provided an update on Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) services. Michael is nearly through the initial evaluations generated from October through December EI/ECSE screenings and is qualifying the 22nd child for an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). One referral is currently in process, and several children seen in the past week and a half will likely be referred.

May 12 is scheduled as the transition day for North Lake students moving into kindergarten with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Lakeview School District #7 will hold its transition on April 15. Families still need to be scheduled for those days.

Lake County Education Service District (ESD) – Lane reported no major updates for Lake County ESD but shared that a Speech Language Pathologist Assistant (SLPA) may be available next year to support Michael Benson with North Lake EI/ECSE services.

South-Central Early Learning Hub - Athena provided the South-Central Early Learning Hub report. The Request for Applications (RFA) for Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) funding is currently open. Although the formal question period has closed, Athena remains available to help with questions. Applications are due to Athena via email at athena.wikstrom@douglasesd.k12.or.us by March 20. The South-Central Early Learning Hub encourages regional participation to ensure funds are directed equitably across the three counties.

Julie shared that she is finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the South-Central Early Learning Hub and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) to clarify partnership efforts for the coming year. The agreement is expected to be completed soon, incorporating some structural revisions. The South-Central Early Learning Hub Director position was posted last Friday. A regional social media campaign is being developed in collaboration with the communications team at Douglas Education Service District (ESD) to ensure outreach across all three counties, and a flyer will be distributed once finalized. The position is open to candidates residing in any of the three counties. One of the Regional Governance Council members will serve on the hiring committee, and additional community partners will be invited to participate. Julie noted that several external applications were received over the weekend.

Athena also shared that a co-advertising campaign for preschool and kindergarten registration will be launched within the next week or two. The campaign is intended to ensure both families and schools are better prepared for fall enrollment, both in kindergarten and in publicly funded preschools.

Preschool Promise applications for the 2026-2027 school year will be released in March.

Danielle noted that the South-Central Early Learning Hub Klamath / Lake County Resource Directory has been newly translated into Spanish and is available online at: <https://www.scelh.com/parent-resources>.

Care Connections & Education / Child Care Resource & Referral (CCRR) – Heather reported that Lake County currently has three Registered Family Child Care providers, each licensed to serve up to ten children, in addition to Preschool Promise, Head Start, and Certified Center programs operating in the county.

Since July, CCRR has delivered approximately 84 hours of online professional development, increasing access for early educators by allowing remote participation.

The Klamath County Spring Fling will be held at Klamath Community College (KCC) on April 18. The keynote speaker will be Lisa Murphy, widely known as the “Ooey Gooey Lady.” Early registration starts on March 1 and costs \$35. Additional details are available online at:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/3f549a50701/29fe9b6e-5a7a-4422-956d-98a96a53928b.png>

Dr. Amy King is facilitating a two-part Courageous Care Summit on February 27 and 28. Both sessions offer identical content, and registration remains open. Approximately 70 participants are currently registered across both dates. Feedback from the Douglas County Courageous Care Summit was highly positive. The Summit will include a session focused on Every Child Belongs (ECB) and Inclusive Partners. Community members may register specifically for the ECB/Inclusive Partners session without attending the full Summit.

Every Child Belongs (ECB) was established through state legislation to reduce suspension and expulsion in early childhood settings. CCRR provides ECB services across Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties. Since the regional kickoff in November 2025, four requests for ECB support have been received from Douglas County providers. No requests have been submitted for Klamath or Lake Counties yet. CCRR supports child care providers and early childhood professionals through consultation and technical assistance to maintain child placements. Summer and Stephanie are leading these regional efforts.

ECB Information Card: <https://files.constantcontact.com/3f549a50701/4ab59cc8-6027-4ab9-bedc-4413a9380fd9.png>

Heather also shared that a Service Guide Snapshot has been completed for Douglas County and is in the final stages of development for Klamath County. The Snapshot provides child care providers with an overview of regional early childhood support, including CCRR and Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE). CCRR plans to collaborate with Lake County EI/ECSE to develop the Lake County version.

Douglas County Service Guide: <https://files.constantcontact.com/3f549a50701/7fcac163-604d-4dfc-92ec-6acb16afdee2.png>

Rural Early Learning Facility Funding has reopened. In the previous funding round, a Lake County provider received \$25,000. The grant supports quality improvement initiatives and new program development. To date, more than \$113,000 has been secured for the region across Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties through this opportunity.

Rural Early Learning Facility Improvement Funding Opportunity:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/3f549a50701/ff1e6fe9-16d0-4e01-8b62-47650e887d35.pdf?rdr=true>

Take Root Parenting Connection -- Bailey provided a Take Root update. Family Engagement Boxes are being distributed through the Lake County Food Share, in partnership with the Lake County Education Service District (ESD), and have two openings remaining. Family Engagement Boxes are available for pickup in person at Lake ESD or at the Lake County Food Share. Two registrants from Modoc County were determined to be ineligible because they did not have children in the home. One participating family picks up food boxes either in Paisley or Lakeview, and accommodation is being made accordingly. Outreach continues with a Spanish-speaking family to support registration. The first box was distributed on Thursday, and a total of three boxes are being delivered to each family.

Upcoming Take Root opportunities include Positive Intent, a Conscious Discipline workshop, that will be held March 12. Build Your Bounce is being offered the first Wednesday of each month, addressing rotating topics. In Christmas Valley, a parent-child tumble class for ages three to five will be offered in partnership with Lakeview Martial Arts Academy, with support from North Lake School District for outreach. Make Your Own Sensory Box is scheduled for March 13 and is designed for families with children who have sensory needs. A four-week childbirth education series in partnership with the hospital begins this week. Enrollment for Family Check-Up, a self-paced parenting app, is open for families with youth ages 11–14.

Bailey reflected on the Recreate and Celebrate Valentine's Day event. Although registration numbers were high, only two families attended, for a total of eight participants. One family called in advance to confirm they could bring two additional foster children on the autism spectrum who had recently entered their care; the event was adapted to ensure it was inclusive and supportive. The children's biological grandmother also attended to provide additional support. The second family included children ranging from age from five to 18. Families participated in cupcake decorating and interactive games and later shared that it was one of the most enjoyable events they had attended in a long time. The experience served as a reminder that even with lower attendance, the impact of these gatherings remains meaningful for participating families.

Home Visiting Systems Coordination (HVSC) – Vanessa advised that there were no major updates for HVSC but anticipates sharing registration information and the agenda for the April Family Support Gathering at the next meeting.

Lakeview School District # 7 - Jen Schulze reported that Lake County School District #7 preschool and child care programs are full, with waitlists in place. A family child care provider recently relocated, further limiting capacity. Friday GAP care is operating successfully at full enrollment, with ongoing requests to expand; however, staffing shortages prevent growth. Parent engagement efforts included a trauma-informed book study offered in both English and Spanish, allowing families to engage in their primary language. Honker Preschool has also increased its focus on open-ended art and sensory exploration.

Michael Carter reported that the board is recruiting candidates for the superintendent position. Budget development is underway, with funding challenges noted, particularly regarding the backpack program, which has approximately \$31,000 remaining. A Collins Pine grant was secured to support an apprenticeship program in partnership with Klamath Community College. He also shared that the boys' basketball team is competing in its first playoff game, with advancement to state contingent on the outcome, and that five wrestlers are advancing in competition.

Lake County Public Health - Miranda noted that February 25 is the school exclusion deadline. Lake County Public Health is currently busy assisting families in meeting immunization requirements or completing exemption waivers. In response to a question about non-medical exemptions, Miranda confirmed an increase in recent years, particularly since COVID. Families retain choice, and vaccination rates have declined overall. Michael added that in at least two cases within Lake District #7, staff delivered forms directly to families who expressed fear about visiting clinics.

Additional Business: Lane addressed governance matters. Two voting members, Dr. Carter and Gail Buermann, are retiring, and confirmation for Vicky Taylor's continued participation is pending. There is a need to recruit additional voting members. Individuals interested in serving should submit a letter of interest to Athena. If a steering committee member is added, the appointment must be approved by the full council and coordinated by Athena or Michael Carter. The roster is being updated to ensure accuracy. A Doodle poll will be distributed in May or June to confirm whether Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m. remain a viable meeting time.

Next Meeting: March 17, 2026, at 1:00 pm.

Adjournment: With no further business, the Lake County Community Governance Council was adjourned.