

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes

February 26, 2026 | 10:00 a.m.

In Attendance, Welcome, Approval of Minutes

Present: Krystal Sanchez, Karissa Bent, Shawn Massingale, Whitney Warr, Jess Hand

Douglas ESD Staff Present: Athena Wikstrom, Charlee Scheer, Robin Van Winkle, Stephanie Cravalho, Julie Hurley, Sarah Wheelock, Vanessa Pingleton, Ronda Osborn, Heather Sewall

The January 2026 PAC minutes were distributed with the agenda prior to the meeting. Athena noted a needed revision to add Jess Hand to the attendance list. A motion to approve the January minutes with this correction was made by Robin Van Winkle and seconded by Sarah Wheelock. The motion passed without opposition.

Introduction and Opening Remarks

Shawn Massingale-UCAN:

The Douglas County Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held on February 26, 2026. The meeting was called to order by Shawn Massingale at approximately 10:02 a.m. allowing time for attendees to join the Zoom call. Participants introduced themselves and shared what they are most looking forward to with the upcoming time change.

Hub Update

Athena Wikstrom- South-Central Early Learning Hub:

Athena Wikstrom provided updates on Preschool Promise and broader Hub activities. Returning student applications for Preschool Promise are being distributed to currently enrolled three-year-olds who will be four next year. New student applications will open in March, accompanied by a regional preschool and kindergarten registration awareness campaign. This joint campaign engages Head Start programs and school districts to educate families that registration occurs in the spring, reducing the number of children arriving for kindergarten without prior registration.

The campaign will include social media, newspaper, and radio outreach; community member Kyle Bailey will again voice the radio messages to promote trust and recognition. The Hub continues to meet Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) expectations and deadlines while the director position is vacant. A new Hub Director position has been posted and shared via email and social media; Julie Hurley reported that an interview team with representatives from Douglas, Klamath, and Lake Counties has been secured and that several applications have already been received.

Athena and Julie emphasized that Hub operations and family support have continued without interruption, including Preschool Promise coordinated enrollment and Community UPLIFT connections. All Preschool Promise sites in Douglas County are currently full; the only open slots across the region are located in Gilchrist, which can also serve families in La Pine and as far as Diamond Lake.

In response to the previous vote of no confidence regarding the backbone organization, Julie Hurley shared that the state has responded and is working closely with the Regional Governance Council and Douglas ESD. The group is updating bylaws and developing an operating agreement that clarifies the roles of the backbone agency, the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), the Hub, and Regional Governance.

The Hub has contracted with Dr. Janet Carlson to support this work. Dr. Carlson assisted with the original bylaws and the initial Hub application and brings extensive experience in nonprofit leadership, education, and state government. She is meeting with both the Regional Governance Council and Douglas ESD to ensure that structural changes reflect the needs and perspectives of all parties.

Shawn provided an update from the state-level Hub-Head Start collaboration workgroup. The workgroup aims to strengthen collaboration between Early Learning Hubs and Head Start programs statewide so that more children receive services and programs remain fully enrolled. The state has accepted the workgroup's recommendations to require formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between Hubs and Head Starts, and a template or required-elements list is being finalized. The South-Central Early Learning Hub and local Head Start already have an MOU in place and are serving as an example for other regions.

The workgroup is also exploring options for combined community assessments to reduce duplication of effort. Julie noted that a similar MOU requirement now applies between the Hub and Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R); Douglas ESD has recently updated and submitted its CCR&R MOU with support from Heather and Athena.

Ronda Osborn reported that the Douglas County Resource Directory has been fully updated for 2026. The document now includes new programs and removes services that have closed. The updated version will be reviewed internally and then distributed later this month. Once finalized, a community partner will assist with translation into Spanish so the directory will be available in both English and Spanish. The existing Klamath and Lake County resource directory has already been translated and is available on the Hub website (scelh.com).

Athena invited participants to share new or changing resources serving prenatal to age six and to identify gaps where additional supports are needed. The group highlighted several key resources and needs, particularly around perinatal supports, home visiting, child care, and mental health services for families.

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Update

Stephanie from Care Connections & Education provided updates on CCR&R activities. The two-part Courageous Care Summit, featuring presenter Dr. Amy King, drew 56 participants in November and 69 in January and received very positive feedback. Stephanie is taking the summit series to Klamath County later this month.

CCR&R is launching a year-long Master Class series of Set 3 professional development offerings. Topics will include parenting typologies and caregiving systems (Dr. Ifa McGee), leadership development for early educators (Heidi McGowan), advanced early childhood behavior support (Dr. Amy King), and advanced infant/toddler development (Dr. Sally Guyon). The series will run April to April; registration opens March 1. Participants must be at least at Step 8 in the Oregon Registry Online (ORO), and expectations will include cameras on and active participation. Cost is \$40 per quarter or \$80 for the full year.

Additional upcoming events include the Spring Fling on May 16 (registration opens April 1) and a March 7 Southern Oregon University (SOU) workshop offering eight hours of free ORO credit or optional college credit through Southern Oregon University.

Partner Updates

Krystal Sanchez - Migrant Education: Krystal from Migrant Education Region 28 shared that the program has been flat-funded for another year and will continue services into the next school year. Preschool enrollment is increasing, with winter numbers approaching 60 children. Krystal noted a significant shift over recent years: whereas previously two-thirds of enrolled preschoolers were not participating in any formal program, now two-thirds are enrolled in Head Start, Preschool Promise, or relief nursery programs, representing a major system success. Krystal reported that approximately 50% of the preschool population currently served is from Guatemala, with many families speaking an indigenous language rather than Spanish. The program is exploring ways to adapt services and materials to better meet Guatemalan families' linguistic and cultural needs.

Karissa Bent - Cobb School: Karissa shared that Cobb Children's Learning Center has a small number of remaining openings: approximately one slot in the preschool classroom (ages three to four) and four slots in pre-K. Partners are encouraged to refer families who are still seeking care.

Whitney Warr - Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS): Whitney Warr, Interim District Manager for ODHS in Douglas, Coos, and Curry Counties, introduced herself and provided a brief overview of ongoing transformation efforts within ODHS. The agency is implementing a regionalization model that will create administrative hubs around the state to better support local offices outside Salem. Douglas, Coos, and Curry are part of a pilot region that also includes Lane, Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, and Lake Counties. Whitney's role is currently interim while the agency determines long-term regional and leadership structures. She also noted that ODHS First Thursday events continue and that South County and future North County rendezvous events will support outreach across the county.

Robin Van Winkle - Douglas County Child Care Coalition and Business Champions for Kids: Robin shared updates from the Douglas County Child Care Coalition. The coalition brings together business, workforce,

education, and community partners to address child care access and sustainability. In 2026, the coalition will focus on elevating Child Care Provider Appreciation Day (May 8). The Douglas County Board of Commissioners will issue a proclamation on April 22, and the coalition is planning a countywide recognition effort during the week of May 8 to thank local providers.

Robin noted that the coalition's child care expansion incentive program, which has provided financial incentives for opening and expanding programs and for staff hiring and retention since 2022, is sunsetting as funding is expended. In response, the coalition is partnering with consultant Christy Cox to conduct listening interviews with long-term providers to better understand current challenges and supports needed to sustain the expanded child care landscape.

Sarah Wheelock - Take Root Parenting Connection: The Perinatal Task Force, which includes Take Root, is hosting an infant safety mini-series and planning a standalone maternal mental health workshop in Green. Take Root is nearing the end of its winter term and continues to offer parenting classes and family engagement events, including a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) family night in Reedsport in partnership with the STEM/STEAM Hub.

Take Root has partnered with the University of Oregon to pilot Family Check-Up, a self-paced mobile app for parents of youth roughly ages 11 to 14; interested families can contact Vanessa (Vanessa.Pingleton@douglasesd.k12.or.us) for enrollment information. Take Root is also collaborating with Oregon State University on an upcoming online resilience class for parents of children ages zero to three.

Vanessa Pingleton - Home Visiting Systems Coordination: Vanessa shared that planning is underway for a Home Visiting and Family Support Gathering scheduled for April 17; additional details and registration information will be distributed soon.

Heather Sewall- Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE): Heather provided an update on EI/ECSE services in Douglas County. The birth–3 program is serving approximately 105 children, and the three to five program currently serves 327 children, with 178 students transitioning to kindergarten this year. The program has open positions for a birth to three occupational therapist and physical therapist, as well as a three to five speech-language pathologist.

In response to a question from Athena, Heather reported that while birth to three enrollment has stabilized, the three to five program is experiencing higher needs and increasing complexity among children and families. There is strong demand for up-to-date information on counseling and therapy resources for families; Heather will follow up with additional resource needs for inclusion in the directory.

Julie shared regional context, noting that EI/ECSE programs statewide continue to be constrained by a funding model based on a five-year rolling average, which was negatively impacted by decreased enrollment during the COVID-19 years. A state workgroup is reviewing the funding model, defining adequate service levels, and developing an updated cost model. Julie encouraged partners to support improved funding for EI/ECSE when opportunities arise.

Athena and Julie also highlighted the region's strong commitment to inclusive placements in community settings, while acknowledging the resource challenges of providing services across many sites and supporting children with complex medical needs.

Jess Hand - Thrive Umpqua: Jess reported that the Douglas County Perinatal Task Force has updated the 2026 Welcome Baby Guide, which will be distributed at the upcoming Community Baby Shower and is available in PDF format for partners. The 2026 Community Baby Shower, themed "Spring into Parenthood," will be held on March 7 at Roseburg High School with more than 25 community partners, free food, raffles, and giveaways for new parents. Jess will share digital flyers and information for partners to distribute.

Jess also shared a breastfeeding guide from the Umpqua Valley Breastfeeding Coalition. Shawn and Athena noted that the Nutrition Oregon Campaign and the Hub's Parent Advisory Council have provided feedback on conceptual designs for a breastfeeding-themed mural and related posters. Initial steps will include poster-sized paintings and prints featuring a QR code that links families to the Welcome Baby Guide and breastfeeding resources, with a full mural planned for a UCAN building later in the year.

Shawn Massingale – United Community Action Network (UCAN): Shawn spotlighted the Family Connects Universal Home Visiting program operated by UCAN nurses. Family Connects offers a free, one-time home visit approximately two weeks after birth for all families, regardless of income. Nurses conduct infant weight checks, respond to parent questions, and connect families with community resources. Referrals can be made through Unite Us, Community UPLIFT, 211, and local hospitals.

Athena shared that the local doula community is growing and that most insurance plans now cover labor doula services. Community UPLIFT and Unite Us contain referral options for families seeking additional advocacy and support during birth and the postpartum period.

Athena Wikstrom - Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation (KPI) and Early Literacy RFA: Athena reminded partners that the South-Central Early Learning Hub's Request for Applications (RFA) is open for Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) and Birth to Five Early Literacy projects. Applications (up to \$15,000 for the 2025–2027 biennium) are due by March 20, prior to Douglas ESD's spring break closure. Priority will be given to applicants serving the Hub's priority populations, including families experiencing geographic isolation (defined as residing outside Roseburg city limits), families and children experiencing homelessness, foster or kinship care, children with disabilities or who have experienced trauma, Tribal families, infants and toddlers ages zero to three, and families identifying as Hispanic/Latinx, Black/African American, Asian, or native Spanish-speaking. Athena encouraged interested partners to reach out with questions or ideas.

Adjournment

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

Shawn reminded the group that the next Douglas PAC meeting will be held on March 19, 2026, via Zoom. This is one week earlier than the usual meeting cadence due to Spring break.