

Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties

Parent Engagement Committee Meeting Minutes

MEETING COMMENCED	10:00am, August 29, 2017 OSU Extension Services Offices, Newport
MEETING CALLED BY	Shirley Blake
WORK GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT	Shirley Blake, Lynn Hall, Cindy Bond, Aoife Magee, Daniel Martinez (Parents as Teachers), Laura Lundeen
VERSION	Draft
RECORDED?	No

Agenda topics

DISCUSSION ITEM	Parent Engagement Updates

DISCUSSION ITEM	Parent Engagement Events
a. USDA Free Summer Lunch – three counties (ongoing)	
b. Festival Latino – 7/30 12PM-4PM	
c. Attendance (Absenteeism)	
ii. Newport Focus Group – Absenteeism – Lola Jones	
Lola talks about being approached by DHS vs. Bexter who is partnering with the governor’s office. They received a planning grant, and when they heard that the ELH hosts focus groups, they decided to financially support future focus groups.	
These groups offer a depth of content for parents and ask parents challenging questions. Lola was surprised that parents didn’t feel they needed to justify their reasoning for the routine they chose for their family. They are self-aware of their own insecurities.	
Lola hopes to gain more input so she can start to group topics.	
Shirley Blake believes these high-risk parents know attendance is important and are working on creating stable homes. She tells the group about a 15-year-old daughter who was in charge of getting her younger siblings to school, and due to numerous obstacles, she was unsuccessful some days.	
Shirley suggests a before-school program to help morning routines become successful. Most parents don’t have a Plan B for morning routines.	
i. Orientation – Lynn Hall	
Lynn Hall explains that the Oregon Education Department has decided to focus on attendance.	
When the Early Learning Division visited the EL Hub to conduct the annual monitoring visit, we held a luncheon and invited our partners to attend. The Superintendent from Lebanon Community Schools talked about chronic absence, the effects on children’s success in school, and the importance that K-12 is placing on attendance. We took the discussion to the Data & Evaluation Work Group meeting. The Work Group asked Mary McKay, Superintendent of the ESD for data regarding our region and for information resources.	
Mary referred us to Attendance Works which has a wealth of information for reducing Chronic Absence.	

Lynn brought some flyers from the Attendance Works website to help orient the group on the problem and brainstorm suggestions for things early childhood can do to address the issue.
Preschool is the ideal time to introduce children and families to the importance of consistent on-time attendance and to encourage strong attendance habits.
K-12 wants to engage with us, which was an issue in the past, so this is very important and powerful. They invited Kristi to talk with them about this.
Research shows that preschoolers who miss 10 percent or more of the school year - for any reason – arrive at kindergarten with lower levels of school readiness. Especially if they are chronically absent for more than one year, they are less likely to read proficiently by the end of third grade and more likely to be retained.
Data & Evaluation feels that when children are young, engaging their families is critical to promoting good attendance. Lynn believes the Parenting Engagement Committee is the appropriate committee to move this challenge forward. According to Attendance Works, teachers, social workers, and parents can engage in a conversation about the barriers and challenges that families face in our region. We can then identify community partners who can help address the issues.
Lynn says providing handouts that promote positive attendance can help, but it has to be a multi-faceted approach. She believes this is something we can actually do – it’s exciting!
Shirley explains that DHS is very interested in our work and wants to incorporate it into their system.
iii. Ongoing “Attendance” focus groups
Laura Lundeen asks if families gave feedback during the focus groups on what kind of resources might help them attendance issues.
Shirley explains that the focus group helps parents brainstorm answers for themselves. These groups create connections between parents, which is a huge motivator for getting children to school on time. These parents need relationships like this because building trust within the community is important.
Cindy Bond says that when parents fill out emergency forms at the Old Mill Center, their families sometimes can’t easily come up with an emergency contact who isn’t the police or DHS. We need to create networks where parents feel safe and trusting of their community members.
In the preschool, should we create community events in order to present families with these opportunities?
Daniel Martinez (Parents as Teachers in Lincoln County) created parent engagement events at the Walport, Lincoln City, and Newport public libraries for parents who lack social connections and engagement. These groups meet during story time and participate in activities. Parents and children interact during these groups. Snacks and free books are provided. Daniel has 10-15 families of Hispanic and Caucasian peoples.
Cindy offers literacy nights at the local public library, as well as a water play and popsicle day, which brought in close to a hundred people each. About half of her families are of color, either Arabic or Spanish speaking families. Latino families are more likely to attend. Shirley enjoys that this is a seasonal event, which creates excitement.
Lynn initially thought we needed to involve social workers in facilitating or presenting during parent engagement events, but now she believes parents can solve their own problems if offered the essential tools and services.
Laura expected some kind of gathering for families when she entered her children into the K-12 system, but she was met with few resources. She believes parents she knows would be eager to join these parent bonding activities. She also explains there is a lot of judgment during parent-teacher conferences. She suggests Rocio’s parent breakfasts.
Laura asks how children are received by teachers when they come in late. This is important to consider in order to reduce negative judgment.
Cindy explains there is a lot of shame associated with tardiness. She also believes parents are shamed for not signing up for parent-teacher conferences.
Shirley continues her story about the 15-year-old daughter, explaining that the school was going to contact DHS about tardiness, and she was met with rigid policies. She turned toward online high school.
iv. LBL Hub – PEC role
Cindy believes childcare costs are often an issue for parents seeking to attend parent focus groups.
Shirley agrees to connect with Laura about childcare options for parents.

Aoife Magee believes poverty and mental illness inhibits some parents from seeking social opportunities.
Can DHS financially cover resources for these people?
Many rural families don't have transportation options. Can we have a pool of drivers help these families?
Laura wonders if Family Connections might mobilize more people for home visiting who can walk parents through routines and best practices that support parents from the bottom up.
Aoife suggests connecting with Family Tree, and Cindy explains that her RN staff are allowed to transport people in their private vehicles.
Laura suggests a system for ride-share that doesn't rely on calling in, but instead provides a more anonymous listing. The school can offer a list of people available and the parents can request a ride.
Cindy brings up the higher liability piece for the school since they have to make sure their staff have background checks and the like, so perhaps going informal with transportation would be best.
Laura suggests providing a map of the city that volunteers can highlight with their available routes.
Shirley wants us to come up with a list of questions to ask K-12 and create a report and actions items.
She believes we need to remind parents about attendance throughout the year.
Lynn suggests Parent Café as a resources for solidifying social connections.
She asks how the ELH wants to approach the counties with this issue.
Laura suggests using our data to inform policy and the conversation about attendance while we create organized events.
Questions: How can we help providers? What programs/events can we provide for families? What things are not under our umbrella that we think are valid avenues?
A few examples might be an automated attendance call that is friendly, which Kidco and Cindy already do, but only after children are absent after a few days.
Laura suggests providing parents with the work children missed, as well as future activities the teacher hopes the child can participate in.
Aoife explains that many teachers text information to parents.
Lynn suggests addressing illness as a factor for absences and using the health department to educate parents on appropriate reasons for keeping ill children home.
The number of high and toxic stress factors keep rising for families.
Aoife explains that socioeconomic needs to be a focus, including high and toxic stress can cause illness.
Lynn emphasizes that health is a huge factor for families and absenteeism. She suggests involving the faith community to help.
Aoife wants our new LBCC interns to plan an event to feed and supply families in-need.
Shirley says the main issue always includes judgment from others or the fear of being judged by others.
Audra will provide information on Kidco attendance policies which will be posted on basecamp and sent to individual emails.
Xochitl at DHS came to Shirley and Lola to talk about creating 8-10 parent focus groups in Lincoln County regarding attendance. DHS will provide participant incentives, food and refreshments, perhaps mileage for coordinators, but cannot compensate for staff time. We need partners to help coordinate these groups.
Laura agrees to keep these focus groups on her radar in case she can partner with DHS.
(Shirley begins writing questions for DHS and K-12 on the projector).
Aoife explains that DHS might want to know the barriers to attendance so that they can provide additional resources. It starts with absenteeism and leads to truism.
We agree that most K-12 is behaviorism focused.
Jennifer Hartsock talks about constructivism and suggests connecting with David Oh from PSU to provide master training to K-12 staff and teachers. Lynn describes collaborative problem solving, an aspect of the constructivist approach.

Oral health is a state-wide issue that deserves careful attention. Lynn and Shirley explain that Oregon is more concerned about oral care than they once were; however, scheduling an appointment with a dentist that accepts OHP is difficult.
Aoife reminds the group about teachers providing missed work for parents and children. We discuss how to encourage parents to have this conversation with parents, as well as how teachers can find the time to provide this missed work to parents and children?
Laura brings up the seesaw program app that provides parents with classroom updates and activities. How can this benefit parents who don't have Internet access.
Shirley announces that we need to connect with DHS, K-12, and health departments.
Shirley asks the group to name two things they find important:
Laura: The four circles of focus areas: 1. Information (i.e.: Attendance Works) 2. Early Learning Professional Development and Technical Assistance 3. Parents and 4. Mobilizing the Community.
Lynn: Emphasized the importance of Laura's four circles.
Aoife: Professional development for teachers and practitioners with a unified message. However, how do we help parents help parents? How do professionals offer hands-on skill building and practical support for parents? Oregon Community Foundation hired a woman to spend part of a parenting class on dental hygiene.
Daniel: Educating and informing first-time parents in both Spanish and English language materials that promote transferable skills. Shirley recommends referencing Attendance Works.
Shirley: Focus groups and their impact on a region, questions for K-12, and gaining information from big systems.

DISCUSSION ITEM	Upcoming Parent Engagement Events
	a. Farmer's Market Survey – 9/16 9AM-1PM

DISCUSSION ITEM	Reporting Development
	a. System
	i. Template
	ii. Follow-up

NEXT MEETING	Tuesday, September 26, 2017
	10:00-11:30 Linn-Benton Community College, Luckiamute Center, Room LM-130
MEETING ADJOURNED	12:03pm