

Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties

Governing Board Meeting Minutes

MEETING COMMENCED	2:00 pm, December 2, 2021 Online via Zoom
MEETING CALLED BY	Julie Manning
PRESENTER	Denise Swanson
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT	Connie Adams, Kristi Collins, Matt Grams, Antonia Huerta, Sam Rounsavell, Carmen Santacruz, Kelly Schell, LeAnne Trask
VERSION	Final
RECORDED	Yes

Agenda topics

ROLL CALL	
DeAnn Brown, Jeff Davis, Barbara Dougherty, Dina Eldridge, Karol Elizondo, Tonja Everest, Laura Farmer, Susan Halliday, Stephany Koehne, Julie Manning, Nef Pizano, Lorena Reynolds, Bettina Schempf, Lauren Sigman, Paul Smith, Lynnette Wynkoop	

DISCUSSION ITEM	Welcome and Introductions.
Board Members introduced themselves.	
Nef Pizano, as the newest Board Member, gave a brief introduction. He is currently the Directory of Primary Care in Albany for Samaritan Health Services. He has been with Samaritan for over ten years and in healthcare for over 13 years. Julie shared that he was also a past Board Chair for the ABC House.	

SPECIAL PRESENTATION	Q&A with the Early Learning Division
Kristi introduced Denise Swanson, Early Learning Hub Manager from the Early Learning Division. She was invited to speak after the Board had questions about the feedback process with the governance councils and community partners of the Early Learning Division. Denise is here to answer questions, receive feedback and engage with this Board.	
Denise discussed the Theory of Change and the development of new metrics.	
The Board shared that the needs of children and families have reached a crisis level. Under the Theory of Change and other systems, how will changes be made to ensure families get the services and resources they need. What can we do to achieve the state and local level systems alignment to address these needs more quickly?	
Denise responded that Raise Up Oregon was stretched to address some of this. Build Back Better will contribute to the workforce and mental health needs. The Early Learning Division is also undergoing significant change as it becomes its own state agency. The	

Oregon Registry Online system is being looked at for a change. Changes may not happen fast enough to meet demand. The Early Learning Council would be one place to send this feedback.

The Early Learning Division has a new position focused on workforce development. Many Early Childhood funds will be coming in, and we hope to use those resources to build the childcare system. It's statewide, if not a nationwide concern.

The Board asked whether there are places, outside of the Early Learning Council, where we should focus on being heard. Denise responded that the council is the best place as they set the policy and that council is filled with heads of state agencies. However, the legislature is another place to put pressure and make our voices heard.

The Board asked about workforce development. Does the Early Learning Division believe that increased funds in this area will help increase interest in pursuing careers in childcare and early childhood education? Denise responded that childcare is a challenging field for attracting new workers. It would be wonderful to offer scholarships for education and small business assistance. The Board suggested that might be an area for private sector support.

The Board asked about having an entry-level position for childcare, similar to a traditional health worker, to make it easier to fill positions. The current requirement of an Associates's degree makes it unattainable for many. What can we do to work with employers and change the ladder to make entry into this area more equitable? This is a multisector workforce development issue. The Oregon Registry Online does background checks and authorization letters for childcare workers. A staff member must be registered to be alone in the classroom. This system creates barriers to hiring new workers. Denise shared that concerns with the ORO system are being looked at for improvement. She suggested inviting Margie McNab and John Reeves to discuss these specific concerns and what strategies the Early Learning Division is taking toward them.

The Board added that there are so many overlapping agencies that regulate early childcare, and providers are required to understand and know how to work with all of them. However, those agencies do not always have that scope and knowledge of each other. So much is required of childcare providers for such demanding work with so little pay. It really disincentivizes providers. The Early Learning Hub can support alignment between agencies and work to reduce barriers for childcare providers.

The Board further discussed the idea of creating an early childcare position similar to the Traditional Health Worker or Health Care navigator. The example was given of Benton County Health Dept having a regional training hub for these new classifications of health workers who receive training. This could stand as a model of how a similar system for new levels of childcare workers could be created.

Denise shared that she understands everyone is impatient to create change. The pandemic has exposed the truth we already knew to the world – childcare and early childhood education are critical infrastructure. The result is that there is now money flowing to this area and a sense of urgency that will help push change. We can help by putting pressure on the Early Learning Council, our legislators, and our communities.

The Early Learning Division is working on building a whole department around the Child Care Accelerator position. It was shared that the Early Learning Hub had a strong local candidate for the Child Care Accelerator/Business Liaison position, but they declined the offer. We are still actively searching to fill this position. We have an engaged local business sector, and a meeting to discuss childcare is being called in January.

The Board commented that more needs to be done to educate the community on the dire need for childcare and family support. It was shared that if the Build Back Better act is passed and includes national free preschool and childcare subsidies, it will shine a bright light on this area.

Kristi shared that the answer to the question from last month about “how do we get feedback to the Early Learning Division” is that if we feel there is something we need to move up to the State level, we have the connections to do that. The Early Learning Division is willing to listen and attend our meetings to hear our voices.

Denise suggested that we have Sue Miller, the Early Learning Council chairperson, or Alyssa Chatterjee, the Early Learning System director, come and give this Board an update on what is happening at the State level and listen to this Board’s concerns. Kristi suggested that the Board retreat in March might be a good opportunity for that conversation.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT	LBL Hub Updates
--------------------------	-----------------

Kristi shared an announcement:

BENTON COUNTY ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR CHILDCARE

December 2, 2021—Benton County, OR—

Benton County has secured \$225,000 to provide emergency childcare and student assistance to low-to-moderate income residents of Benton County. The funding comes from Business Oregon's Community Development Block Grant COVID Impact Assistance Funds. Benton County is one of only three jurisdictions in the state to be awarded Impact Assistance Funds for childcare from Business Oregon.

The County is partnering with the United Way of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties, and Sequoia Consulting to distribute these funds.

The goal of the project is to support parents to return to work. The project will accomplish this by providing 100% scholarships for children 0-18 from low-to-moderate income families to attend childcare and student care programming between November 1, 2021-August 31, 2022.

“Benton County is thrilled to support this project. All parents deserve to have a safe and supportive place for their children while they work. These funds will allow parents in Benton County to afford childcare while supporting our local child-serving organizations.” -Commissioner Xan Augerot, Benton County

To be eligible, an organization must be a state-regulated organization (childcare, after-school care, Club Organization, etc.) with the State of Oregon that is providing childcare or student care programming in Benton County. The application for grant funding can be accessed here:

<https://forms.gle/N5XnTwEACATrBVweA>.

DUE DATE: Applications will be accepted between December 2, 2021, until December 17, 2021. Grantees will be notified by December 31st.

The link for this announcement will be posted to Basecamp, and Board Members are encouraged to share this information with the community.

Board Members were reminded that we need photos and biographies of Board Members for our Website. Please send those to Sam at sam.rounsavell@linnbenton.edu

The Business Liaison position has been reposted. The Data & Evaluation position has closed, and there are three applicants. The interviews are planned before winter break, so the position should be filled by the first of the year.

LBCC will be closed Dec 24 – Jan 3. All Early Learning Hub staff will be out during that time.

On November 19th, the P-3 committee met. The P-3 committee has been formed around the KPI grant and focuses on working with school districts and community partners working on behalf of school districts to implement the transition to kindergarten, shared professional development, and parent engagement programs. The initial Work Group members will participate in the Dare to Lead training and then serve as an advisory group in offering this training on an ongoing basis to our P-3 partners throughout the region.

We are working with our Head Start partners and the Madison Ave Collective to market the free preschool page on our website. Having a Pollywog billboard on highway 34 with info on free preschool would be amazing. We are considering posters, flyers, yard signs, and wallet cards for marketing this resource.

Preschool Promise expansion RFA is currently delayed due to procurement issues and will be launched in 2022. An Early Learning Division interest survey for all eligible programs came out today. We will be sharing that message out to everyone. We want to include school districts that do not yet have a program but would like to begin one.

FISCAL REPORT	Matt Grams
----------------------	------------

Matt presented the revenue, expenditures, and miscellaneous reports for October 2021.

As of this Monday (11/29), the last summer KPI request was received. With the help of our partners, we have spent the entire KPI grant.

The Board asked if there were plans for the new Title 4b2 funds. Kristi responded that we do not have plans for those funds at this time. Part of our future work is deciding how to spend those funds in the biennium in the context of systems change.

CONSENT ITEMS		November 2021 Meeting Minutes													
The Board was asked to approve the November 2021 meeting minutes.															
Motion: Tonja Everest															
2 nd : Lynnette Wynkoop															
Brown	Y	N	A	Farmer	Y	N	A	Pizano	Y	N	A	Wynkoop	Y	N	A
Davis	Y	N	A	Hall	Y	N	A	Reese	Y	N	A	Open	Y	N	A
Dorgan	Y	N	A	Halliday	Y	N	A	Reynolds	Y	N	A	Open	Y	N	A
Dougherty	Y	N	A	Jones	Y	N	A	Schempf	Y	N	A	Open	Y	N	A
Eldridge	Y	N	A	Koehne	Y	N	A	Sigman	Y	N	A	Open	Y	N	A
Elizondo	Y	N	A	Manning	Y	N	A	Smith	Y	N	A				
Everest	Y	N	A	Miller	Y	N	A	Waller							
VOTING RESULTS		Individual Votes cast by Board Members (Yes, No, Abstain)													
Barbara Dougherty, Karol Elizondo, Stephany Koehne, Bettina Schempf,															
The Board voted to approve the November 2021 meeting minutes.															

DISCUSSION ITEM		Board Member Application – Lincoln County Health representative													
The Board was asked to consider the application of Melissa Isavoran for the Lincoln County Health representative position. Melissa is the new program director at IHN-CCO. IHN-CCO is a statutorily required stakeholder of Early Learning Hubs.															

DISCUSSION VOTE		Board Member Application – Lincoln County Health representative													
The Board was asked to approve the Board Member Application of Melissa Isavoran.															
Motion: Susan Halliday															
2 nd : Bettina Schempf															
Brown	Y	N	A	Farmer	Y	N	A	Pizano	Y	N	A	Wynkoop	Y	N	A
Davis	Y	N	A	Hall	Y	N	A	Reese	Y	N	A	Open	Y	N	A
Dorgan	Y	N	A	Halliday	Y	N	A	Reynolds	Y	N	A	Open	Y	N	A
Dougherty	Y	N	A	Jones	Y	N	A	Schempf	Y	N	A	Open	Y	N	A
Eldridge	Y	N	A	Koehne	Y	N	A	Sigman	Y	N	A	Open	Y	N	A
Elizondo	Y	N	A	Manning	Y	N	A	Smith	Y	N	A				
Everest	Y	N	A	Miller	Y	N	A	Waller	Y	N	A				
VOTING RESULTS		Individual Votes cast by Board Members (Yes, No, Abstain)													
No Abstentions															
The Board voted to approve the Board Member Application of Melissa Isavoran.															

DISCUSSION ITEM		Declaration of Cooperation & Conflict of Interest Statements													
Kristi reminded the Board that these documents were due. Our contract requires these.															

PROGRAM UPDATE	Jumpstart Update
Sam shared about the Jumpstart program and the final Read for the Record participation numbers for the 2021 campaign.	

PROGRAM UPDATE	Pollywog Update
LeAnne shared the Pollywog analytics for the database, website, newsletter, and Facebook page.	
We have found a second blogger for the Parent Voice. Tiffany Newman, the mother of two young children in Albany. She has a master's degree in Timber Management	
The November Holiday Resource Guide was well received. The December Holiday Activity Guide is also popular in our community.	
Since Family Connects rolled out in May, there has been a significant uptick in the use of Pollywog to send referrals to partner agencies. LeAnne shared the specific services that families are requesting.	

PROGRAM UPDATE	Family Connects Update
Connie shared that Family Connects is connecting with medical providers. She presented to Samaritan Health's Pediatric Group in November and will be providing them with program materials and staff training. They are also working directly with Samaritan Health to implement standing referrals for Family Connects for parents following childbirth. Family Connects will be presenting to Samaritan OB/GYN Group in December.	
Family Connects has many new Pollywog partner connections to report this month.	
The Pollywog database has been updated to streamline the referral process for our community partners.	
Connie reported on Family Connects program fidelity. Next month, they will report data from the program's first six months.	

PROGRAM UPDATE	Coordinated Enrollment Update
Antonia shared the current data for Preschool Promise, including applications received, new eligible children, number of open slots, and percentage of providers at capacity. This month, there were not many changes, but some available slots were filled. Linn County is full, Benton County has one slot open, and Lincoln County has 13 open slots. We are considering changes to the 2022 PP application to improve the process for providers	
The Board asked if a child continues to attend the next school year, how is eligibility impacted. Antonia shared that once approved, a child is eligible for two years. Once a student is kindergarten age, they are no longer eligible.	
Kristi shared that there are different eligibility guidelines for Head Start and Preschool Promise. The data shows that very few Preschool Promise students overlap with Head Start eligibility and some of those are in communities without a Head Start program. There has been some conversation around the state suggesting that Preschool Promise and Head Start are in competition. We want to share with our Board the information	

that this is not true in our area. We are partners with Head Start and hope to fill all the available programs.

DISCUSSION ITEM

The Board is asked to consider adding additional time to the March 2022 meeting for strategic planning. Kristi suggested that the Board meet from 1-4 pm without a special presentation to allow strategic planning time. A 2022 Board schedule will be published soon.

NEXT MEETING	2:00pm, February 3, 2022 Online via Zoom
MEETING ADJOURNED	3:34 pm