

Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties Governing Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Commenced	2:00 pm, August 7, 2025 Online via Zoom
Meeting Called By	Bettina Schempf
Presenter	Ruby Ramirez, Early Learning Council
Staff Members Present	Kristi Collins, Matt Grams, Sam Rounsavell
Version	Approved
Recorded	Yes

Agenda topics

Roll Call	Board Members Present or Absent							
	Present	Absent		Present	Absent		Present	Absent
DeAnn Brown Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Susan Halliday Benton County K-12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bettina Schempf Benton County Human & Social Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Belit Burke Linn County Human & Social Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jason Hay Education Service District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paul Smith Benton County Early Childhood Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dean Craig Linn County Business	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tammi Hillhouse Oregon Department of Human Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diane Wilkinson Lincoln County K-12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jeff Davis Fiscal Agent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Todd Jeter Coordinated Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Lynnette Wynkoop Child Care Resource & Referral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Barbara Dougherty Lincoln County Early Childhood Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paulina Kaiser Benton County Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Laura Farmer Benton County Parent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stephany Koehne Linn County Early Childhood Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

Quorum

A Quorum was present. There are currently 16 seated Board members, and 11 were present at this meeting.

Special Presentation

Ruby Ramirez, ELC – New EL Hub Rules

Ruby Ramirez from the Oregon Early Learning Council (ELC) introduced herself. She joined the ELC in November 2023. She is also a senior program officer at the Oregon Community Foundation, where she leads the organization's early childhood work

Ruby provided an overview of the council's role, structure, and recent work. She explained that the governor-appointed council includes 11 members (with two vacancies) and six state

agency directors as non-voting members, ensuring diverse perspectives across urban and rural communities. The council oversees *Raise Up Oregon*, the statewide early childhood system plan, which is built around three goals: advancing systems equity, supporting family well-being, and promoting long-term child outcomes. Early Learning Hubs play a critical role in this work as conveners and connectors.

She shared that the council's 2025 priorities include home visiting, housing, behavioral health, education, child care, and the Hubs themselves. She highlighted that the council recently adopted updated administrative rules for Hubs, which had not been reviewed since their creation in 2014. These updates, developed through extensive engagement and public input, will take effect on October 1, 2025, with future phases expected to address funding, community planning, child care partnerships, and family voice. Ruby emphasized that Hub directors and governance councils will continue to be engaged in shaping these rules and encouraged members to reach out with questions or feedback.

The Board asked if Ruby had any thoughts on the momentum for early childhood at the state and legislative level.

She responded that momentum for early childhood at the state level has slowed due to financial constraints, competing priorities such as housing and behavioral health, and a lack of unified messaging across regions. She noted that many early childhood legislative champions did not run again, leaving newer legislators who are often more familiar with K–12 issues and need education on early childhood priorities. While Governor Kotek has expressed interest in building a statewide early childhood system, Ruby emphasized the need for advocates, regions, and partners to engage directly with legislators and the Governor's office to help shape that vision. She acknowledged that the upcoming short session will likely focus on minor fixes rather than significant early childhood investments, but she anticipates greater opportunities in the 2027 legislative session. In the meantime, she encouraged coalition building, engaging new partners such as workforce and business leaders, and developing consistent, collective messaging to strengthen the case for early childhood.

The Board asked what the most important aspects of the rule change were that Governing Board members should be aware of. Ruby explained that the most important relationship is between the backbone and the Hub. This has been a concern for other Hubs, and the new rules aim to reduce confusion and friction.

Consent Agenda Vote June 2025 Meeting Minutes

The Board was asked to approve the minutes from the June 2025 meeting.

Motion: Laura Farmer

2nd: Belit Burke

	Y	N	A		Y	N	A		Y	N	A
DeAnn Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Susan Halliday	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bettina Schempf	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Belit Burke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jason Hay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paul Smith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dean Craig	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tammi Hillhouse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diane Wilkinson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jeff Davis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Todd Jeter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lynnette Wynkoop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Barbara Dougherty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paulina Kaiser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Laura Farmer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stephany Koehne	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Voting Results Individual Votes Cast by Board Members (Yes, No, Abstain)

Abstentions: None

The Board voted to approve the minutes as presented.

Director's Report EL Hub Updates

Kristi gave a Coordinated Enrollment update. Preschool Promise placements are underway, with 270 slots available across the tri-county region. Currently, 63 openings remain—50 in Linn County, 7 in Benton County, and 6 in Lincoln County. Twenty of these openings are at two brand-new elementary school sites, which have taken longer to fill due to summer staffing schedules but are now moving forward. At the same time, there are 50 families on a waitlist for their preferred providers. Once initial placements are confirmed, families on the waitlist may be offered spots at alternative programs, which is expected to both place more families and help fill the remaining openings.

Kristi shared that, following last month's discussion of the data book and Hub-related work, Jinguang is developing a strategic investment recommendations document. This project builds on the work of a previous intern who analyzed the data book to identify areas of highest need across the three counties. Jinguang is expanding on that model to determine where investments could have the greatest impact, with the recommendations aligned to *Raise Up Oregon* and the Hub's strategic plan. He will present this work at an upcoming board meeting.

The Hub is still waiting on the budget allocations from DELC. Kristi hopes that it will be available before the September meeting. If not, we could approve one day of operation into October at the September meeting or call a special board session to approve the budget.

Fiscal Report Matt Grams

Matt presented the revenue, expenditures, and miscellaneous reports for June 2025.

In response to questions about carryover funds, staff clarified that Pollywog operates on a calendar year contract with monthly allocations, so funds are not technically carried over but rather spent unevenly across the year. Importantly, no funds were lost. The Hub was able to fully

spend down “use it or lose it” allocations by shifting costs (such as salary coverage) and maximizing the allowable indirect rate. The longstanding coordination reserve, created when the Hub was funded for a full year during a three-month contract, continues to provide a buffer heading into the new biennium.

Discussion Item	Current Board Vacancies
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The Board discussed the number of current vacancies, noting that several sectors are underrepresented, including housing and business, and that Lincoln County has five open positions in particular. Kristi emphasized the importance of balanced representation across all three counties and sectors. Recruitment efforts to date have included announcements through the Hub’s listserv and outreach by board members to potential candidates in their communities. Kristi is willing to meet with interested individuals, provide orientations, and invite prospective members to observe board meetings before applying. Board members were encouraged to help identify and connect potential candidates.

It was suggested that the Hub create a brief statement about the expectations of a board member to help with recruitment.

This will be a standing agenda item until these seats are filled.

Discussion Item	Follow-up to June Board Discussion
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Agenda Creation / Leadership Committee:

The Leadership Committee will be made up of: 3-5 Board Members, including the co-chairs; the Hub Director; and a representative of each active advisory/working group. They will meet between the general board meetings. Their duties include: debriefing the past board meeting and planning the agenda for the upcoming meeting; making recommendations to the full Board as needed; and other duties that may arise. The co-chairs of the Governing Board will function as facilitators of the Leadership Committee.

Bettina encouraged Board members to attend agenda-setting meetings, and Paul volunteered.

Fiscal Oversight Committee:

The Fiscal Oversight Committee will be made up of 2-4 Board Members. Their duties include: coordinating with the EL Hub Director and the EL Hub Program Accounting Specialist; ensuring that accurate financial information is available to the Governing Board; tracking funding streams and reviewing the financial situation of the Hub; and supporting the Hub budgeting and financial management. The Fiscal Oversight Committee will meet at least annually and when significant changes to the budget are anticipated. The Fiscal Oversight Committee makes recommendations to the full Board; it has no decision-making authority. Diane and Jason volunteered to join.

It was suggested that the Fiscal Oversight Committee meet quarterly, timed just before state reimbursement draws, to ensure meaningful review rather than after-the-fact oversight.

The Board discussed opportunities to update committee structures in light of the new hub rules and the potential creation of a Compliance and Regulatory Committee. Members agreed it would be valuable to review committee definitions, meeting frequency, and reporting expectations, particularly around financial oversight.

Creation of a new Compliance & Regulatory Committee:

This is not an existing committee and would require a change to our charter. The board discussed the importance of defining the role of the Compliance and Regulatory Committee in alignment with updated Hub rules and ensuring representation from the backbone organization (LBCC), given its liability responsibilities. Bettina asked for at least three volunteers. They will begin by outlining its charge and timeline before bringing recommendations back to the full board. This process will also help the board better understand the implications of the new hub rules and align bylaws and charters accordingly.

It was suggested that Jeff Davis should be involved as the backbone representative. Stephany volunteered to join.

In-House work vs. contracted Partners

Kristi provided clarification on how decisions are made regarding which services are handled in-house versus subcontracted. The Hub's contract language specifies that the Hub may not subcontract Coordinated Enrollment in its entirety but may subcontract limited services such as transportation, food preparation, and janitorial work.

Kristi described the Asset Mapping project, noting that while funds were budgeted to compensate community partners hosting events, most declined the funding. To ensure consistency across 16 rural communities, Hub staff conducted the work internally, which allowed for standardized training, questions, and processes, ensuring statistically significant results and maximizing resources.

Kristi suggested that the new Compliance and Regulatory Committee may wish to explore how data is shared with the Board. With DELC's recent shift to a new reporting system, there is an opportunity to rethink what data is collected from subcontracted partners and what information the Board would find most useful through a dashboard or other reporting tool.

Geographic Equity

Kristi shared a cost analysis related to staff presence in Lincoln County, emphasizing that while staff do travel there, much of the work can be done effectively and efficiently remotely. For example, Preschool Promise slots in Lincoln County were nearly full as of July 10, with most of that coordination completed remotely.

This underscores the importance of having Lincoln County board members in place to provide local perspective, connections, and guidance on when hub staff should be present at specific meetings or community tables. Kristi highlighted that board members are key to identifying local opportunities and ensuring the Hub shows up where it matters most, citing the Poverty Prevention Work Group as an example.

The board asked if the Hub had considered hiring staff directly in Lincoln County. Kristi explained it is a possibility if the right candidate were to apply for an open position and was available to work remotely.

Sam also described the intentional efforts already being made to ensure equity across all three counties, including in-person tabling events, active participation in local meetings, and digital outreach through community social media groups and partner organizations. This behind-the-scenes work helps ensure families across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties all have access to information and resources.

Discussion Item	New EL Hub Rules Discussion
<p>The new Compliance and Regulatory Committee will be tasked with reviewing the new hub rule set, the current Hub charter, and the new Hub contract and recommending changes to the Hub bylaws. Members were encouraged to read the rules to understand compliance requirements better and support Hub staff.</p> <p>While our Hub already has a strong structure and has avoided some of the conflicts seen in other regions, a few specific items will need to be added to the charter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A defined process for amending bylaws or governing documents • Procedures for conflict mediation and resolution with the backbone entity • Procedures for dissolution or transition of the Governance Council, if ever needed <p>These changes, which go into effect on October 1, will be priority items for the committee to address. Kristi also noted that new language in the Hub contract supports these updated rules and that the charter will be the first step, followed by reviewing the contract to see if further adjustments are necessary.</p>	

Discussion Item	Community Updates
<p>Bettina shared a recent development regarding the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds, which support nearly 150 providers across Oregon that assist survivors of domestic violence, child abuse, hate crimes, and other violent crimes. The U.S. Department of Justice recently added new contract language requiring states to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement. Because this conflicts with Oregon's sanctuary law, the state risks losing an estimated 80% of VOCA funding, about \$15 million, for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2025. This funding loss could force many victim service providers to significantly reduce services or close down.</p>	

Next Meeting	2:00 pm, September 4, 2025 Online via Zoom
Meeting Adjourned	3:27 pm