

Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties

P-3 Alignment & Early Childhood Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes

MEETING COMMENCED	9:30 am, January 21, 2026 Online via Zoom
MEETING CALLED BY	Kristi Collins
WORKGROUP MEMBERS PRESENT	Deanna Barclay, Donna Brown, Susan Halliday, Nicole Kalita, Stephany Koehne, Andrea Lengel, Paul Smith, Diane Wilkinson, Lynnette Wynkoop
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT	Kristi Collins, Matt Grams, Jinguang Lin, Sam Rounsavell, Carmen Santacruz, Kelly Schell
RECORDED	Yes

P-3 Alignment Agenda topics

DISCUSSION ITEM	KPI Contracts
<p>Kristi provided an update on KPI contracts, noting that approximately half are fully executed, while several districts have submitted scopes of work but are still finalizing budgets. Matt will follow up with partners who have not yet completed their MOUs, as contracts must be fully executed before funds can be drawn down for reimbursement.</p> <p>Kristi shared that DELC approval for contracts over \$15,000 has been happening quickly and without issues, allowing agreements to be promptly sent for signature via DocuSign. Although some contracts fall just under the \$15,000 threshold for year one, all contracts are being submitted to DELC upfront to allow for future addenda in year two without additional approval.</p> <p>Susan Halliday noted that superintendents recently discussed the importance of closely monitoring spending and submitting claims promptly, given the single-year budget. Kristi added that the Hub is closely tracking spend-down and reporting timelines and will support partners in transitioning to the new initiative-based reporting system, clustering similar programs where possible, and following up with districts, such as GAPS, that are implementing multiple KPI-funded projects.</p>	

DISCUSSION ITEM	KPI-Funded Projects Across Districts
<p>Diane reviewed several KPI-funded projects across districts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Santiam (Lebanon) will develop homework packets to strengthen home-school connections through hands-on activities.• Central Linn is implementing an early literacy program for children ages 3–4, using KPI funds to support instructor salary and benefits.• Greater Albany Public Schools (GAPS) is supporting two initiatives: an early literacy partnership for children ages 0–5 using a Play and Learn model in collaboration with LBCC and Parenting Education, and a Kindergarten Academy Transition program for incoming kindergarten students. The five-week gradual entry program will provide additional pay for 28 licensed kindergarten teachers, planning time, and substitute coverage to support inclusion during the transition period.	

- Strengthening Rural Families initiatives in Santiam, Alsea, and Philomath all focus on kindergarten readiness for children ages 4–5. These programs include home visits, family meetings, and classroom activities, with KPI funds supporting staff wages and supplies. Alsea will additionally focus on family outreach and engagement for children ages 0–5 in partnership with the district family navigator.

Kristi noted that a summary document outlining each project's scope of work has been started and will be shared on Basecamp, with plans to also share it with superintendent groups to support districts that are still determining how to use KPI funds. Susan Halliday confirmed she would assist with sharing the information.

Susan provided an update on Philomath, explaining that due to funding constraints, the preschool program operated only in the fall. The district maintained a \$10,000 commitment and presented the funding situation to the school board, which reaffirmed its commitment to early learning. A local Philomath News article highlighted the program and community partnership, with hopes it may generate additional community support. <https://philomathnews.com/next-steps-preschool-faces-uncertain-future-amid-funding-crunch/>

Nicole shared details about her partnership with GAPS, including the Juntos/Together early literacy program for parents and children ages 0–5, which uses the Ready to Read curriculum. The program is transitioning to a bilingual format to support enrollment and includes free books and family supports. Nicole also described a newly combined Creative Discovery Lab, a STEAM-focused class taught in Spanish through LBCC's Live and Learn program, which has been well-received in the Albany community.

Diane gave an overview of Lincoln County's literacy alignment efforts, including family literacy kits, kindergarten transition, and family literacy events. They are also working on a preschool implementation of the Savvas curriculum, Heggerty training led by the district literacy specialist, Letters training focused on the science of reading, and exploration of developmentally appropriate assessments aligned with kindergarten expectations to better track literacy outcomes over time.

DISCUSSION ITEM	K-12 Early Literacy Grant Projects
	<p>Kristi provided an update on K–12 Early Literacy grants and emphasized opportunities to strengthen alignment among district early literacy funds, Kindergarten Partnership and Innovation (KPI), and Early Learning Hub investments. She shared that at the upcoming Northwest Teaching, Leading, and Learning (formerly COSA/OASCD) P-3 Conference, leaders from ODE and DELC will present on early literacy funding and strategies for leveraging resources more effectively. Kristi noted that several superintendents, particularly those new to their roles, were unaware that early literacy funds can be used to support children before kindergarten entry, highlighting a need for clearer communication and coordination statewide.</p>
	<p>Susan shared that she is beginning to gather information from districts on how early literacy grants are being used, including both programmatic investments and professional learning. This information will help identify opportunities to align efforts or mirror professional development across systems. Susan also noted that ODE may shift summer learning funds into a competitive pool, though the eligibility criteria and scoring details remain unclear. Preliminary information suggests that summer learning awards could be multi-year, which may prompt districts to reconsider how</p>

they allocate early literacy resources. Susan will continue monitoring updates and report back as more information becomes available.

The workgroup discussed the broader policy and funding landscape, noting ongoing state-level conversations about potentially redistributing early literacy funds to lower-performing districts. Budget uncertainty remains as agencies await the next revenue forecast, and members acknowledged the need to remain flexible and responsive as funding guidance evolves.

P-3 Alignment & Early Childhood Coordinating Council Agenda topics

DISCUSSION ITEM	Every Child Belongs
<p>Lynnette gave an update on the Every Child Belongs (ECB) Early Childhood Mental Health initiative, a legislatively mandated program focused on preventing preschool suspension and expulsion. Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties are expected to be included in Phase 3 of implementation, anticipated in early March. Statewide data to date show strong demand for services, with most referrals coming from center-based programs and primarily involving children ages three and four.</p> <p>Requests are submitted through ECB Connect and triaged regionally to either mental health consultation or technical assistance. Coordination with Early Intervention will continue for children with IFSPs, while ECB provides classroom-based and provider-focused supports. Capacity constraints and overlapping systems were noted as challenges, and improvements to child- and provider-level data collection are underway.</p>	

DISCUSSION ITEM	Birth-to-Five Literacy Projects
<p>The workgroup discussed Birth to Five Literacy project planning and implementation. Grantees are approaching the 60-day deadline for submitting project details in DELC dashboards. The Hub's subcontracting approach continues to simplify reporting and support literacy-focused conferences and professional development.</p> <p>The Coastal Conference, scheduled for April 10–11 at Oregon Coast Community College in Newport, will include content on early literacy and early intervention. The group discussed the potential use of underspent funds for provider scholarships or reimbursements, with final decisions pending updated budgets. Literacy funding is structured as one-year awards with the option to roll unspent funds into year two of the biennium.</p>	

DISCUSSION ITEM	New Business
<p>Workgroup members were reminded that there will be no February P-3 & ECCC meeting due to staff leave, and that meetings will resume in March.</p> <p>Planning is underway to launch Head Start and Preschool Promise applications in early April, with continued efforts to align timelines and processes across programs.</p>	

NEXT MEETING	9:30 am, March 18, 2026 Online via Zoom
MEETING ADJOURNED	10:32 am