

Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties

P-3 Alignment & Early Childhood Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes

MEETING COMMENCED	9:30 am, May 20, 2026 Online via Zoom
MEETING CALLED BY	Susan Halliday, Stephany Koehne, Diane Wilkinson, Lynnette Wynkoop
WORKGROUP MEMBERS PRESENT	Donna Brown, Woody Crowbar, Susan Halliday, Nicole Kalita, Kimberly McCutcheon, Paul Smith
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT	Kristi Collins, Matt Grams, Antonia Huerta, Jinguang Lin, Sam Rounsavell, Carmen Santacruz, Kelly Schell
RECORDED	Yes

P-3 Alignment Agenda topics

DISCUSSION ITEM	Welcome and Introductions
	Work Group Members introduced themselves.

DISCUSSION ITEM	KPI Updates
	<p>Kristi reported that the new contract for the remainder of the biennium has been received from the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), including additional funding for the Kindergarten Partnership and Innovation (KPI) stream. Moving forward, the Hub will begin reviewing partner expenditures to determine the remaining funds available for allocation under the district funding formula.</p> <p>While full expenditure is not strictly required at this stage, districts must demonstrate a good-faith effort toward spending down their allocations to remain eligible for Year 2 funds. Special consideration is being given to several districts whose spending is back-loaded due to planned summer jumpstart programs. The Hub will work directly with these districts to ensure they remain on track before launching the reallocation process. All biennium funding must be fully spent by June 30, 2027, as there is no option for carryover.</p> <p>The workgroup raised questions about systemic barriers stemming from the misalignment between the legislative biennium timeline and school summer program planning cycles. Kristi acknowledged that the delay in finalized legislative numbers and subsequent contracting creates an operational challenge for summer programming. While "bridge funds" have been offered in the past, districts are often hesitant to use them due to the risk that future budget cuts could affect their core academic-year plans.</p> <p>To mitigate late-biennium underspending, the Hub is prioritizing earlier financial reporting. In cases of unavoidable underspend, a standing contingency plan allows the Hub to reallocate unspent funds back to Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) up to the maximum allowable 15% indirect rate, ensuring no grant funding is forfeited.</p>

DISCUSSION ITEM	KPI Work Special Presentations Discussion
<p>To increase K-12 representation and reduce duplication of effort, Kristi proposed a new meeting format starting in the fall. KPI partners will be invited to give brief, 10-minute presentations outlining their community-specific scopes of work, identifying local needs, and sharing how they navigate their spending plans. This format aims to engage program, fiscal, and business office contacts across districts. Paul and Diane agreed to kick off the presentations.</p>	
<p>To assist districts currently struggling to construct their scopes of work, Paul suggested distributing an existing summary document detailing current KPI utilization strategies. The Hub will distribute this reference document alongside the upcoming contract amendments.</p>	
<p>Susan shared a preliminary tracking matrix designed to map independent school districts across three areas: KPI plans, independent early learning funding streams, and early learning components within summer learning packages. This tool aims to dismantle programming silos and maximize the use of shrinking resources by identifying opportunities for regional collaboration.</p>	
<p>Susan noted that internal coordination varies by district: some have a single point of contact for all early learning and summer programs, while others divide these responsibilities among different staff members. She will continue gathering this data and will share the finalized document with regional superintendents to provide a comprehensive landscape review.</p>	

P-3 Alignment & Early Childhood Coordinating Council Agenda topics

DISCUSSION ITEM	Welcome additional participants
<p>Work Group Members introduced themselves.</p>	

DISCUSSION ITEM	Every Child Belongs (ECB) Update
<p>Lynnette shared that the Every Child Belongs (ECB) pilot officially launched on May 13th across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. Early childhood programs can request technical assistance or mental health consultation through the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) website using the ECB Connect intake form. To date, six requests have been received, evenly distributed across two cases each in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties.</p>	
<p>The initiative's newly hired mental health specialist has been on the job for 15 days after relocating from out of state and has already been assigned two of the active cases. The specialist is currently shadowing the inclusion specialist in Lincoln County to conduct on-site program visits.</p>	
<p>The current active cases are predominantly located within certified child care centers. However, part of the program's core mandate is to serve the least-resourced spaces, including home-based providers. To balance out service distribution, the team is developing a targeted educational and awareness campaign specifically tailored for home-based programs. The goal is to encourage early intervention before behavioral or technical issues escalate, ultimately strengthening workforce capacity and stabilizing placements.</p>	
<p>Diane reported back from a recent presentation with DELIC, highlighting an unexpected state focus on significant amounts of unclaimed program funds. DELIC officials explicitly asked presenters how they could help local regions spend down these allocations.</p>	

During that session, state officials inquired about publicly funded school-based early learning programs accessing behavioral and mental health services through the district. However, they heard from many license-exempt school-based programs that they do not have access, and DELC is now considering creating a separate, parallel pathway for school-based early learning programs to access services. Diane strongly pushed back against this approach, emphasizing that rural preschools operating within school districts are often not embedded in broader support systems and lack internal mental health resources. She refused to support a separate pathway, arguing that rural school-based preschools must retain the same direct access to ECB services as center-based programs.

It was noted that Oregon Pre-Kindergarten (OPK) programs have been restricted from accessing these new mental health consultants, resulting in low prioritization or requests being denied. This restriction stems from the interpretation that OPK performance standards already require embedded mental health provisions, making additional ECB services a duplication of effort.

Stephany and Lynnette countered that this policy creates severe service gaps in two primary areas. First, regarding high-acuity populations, grantees are serving large numbers of high needs children without adequate localized capacity, as evidenced by Kidco, which serves 366 children, 40% of whom are on an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Second, regarding systemic flow obstacles, there was criticism of the state's insistence that communities prove high demand before releasing resources, arguing that the true bottleneck is an inflexible funding system that fails to flow efficiently to communities. Across the state, an estimated \$66 million remains unspent due to these structural barriers.

Next Steps and Future Action Items:

- Standing Agenda Item: The committee agreed to keep Every Child Belongs as a standing agenda item, with an in-depth, thorough program update occurring on a quarterly basis.
- June Board Presentation: Lynnette will deliver a comprehensive presentation on the ECB framework to the full Governance Council in June, as many Council members are not yet familiar with the initiative.
- KPI Cross-Collaboration: Moving forward, the workgroup will explore combining KPI and ECB resources to build mental health capacity focused specifically on five-year-olds who do not have formal IFSPs but require intensive transition supports moving into kindergarten, summer jumpstarts, and fall enrollment.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Partner Calendar for Trainings

Kristi and Sam introduced a newly developed "Resources for Partners" calendar feature, currently being trialed on the Pollywog website. The tool was developed to address ongoing feedback regarding the need for a central repository for training, professional development, and networking events in the early learning space.

The new calendar offers both a monthly grid view and an agenda view. Users can click on individual events to save them to personal calendars or subscribe to the entire feed for automatic synchronization. It serves as an alternative information channel for community partners who experience technical or access difficulties with the Hub's Basecamp platform.

Sam explained several calendar features to the workgroup, highlighting the platform's automation and user-friendly tools. First, the software utilizes automated feeds to populate parenting and early childhood events by directly tracking the Hub's Google Calendar and associated Facebook page events. Additionally, the platform features search and filter tools that support tagging, allowing users to easily sort events by location or specific categories. The system includes a partner submission feature that may allow external partners to submit their own events directly to the calendar.

The workgroup supported a centralized planning calendar to increase public awareness and avoid scheduling conflicts among local events. Lynnette noted that while Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) feeds all official regional sessions into the Oregon Center for Career Development (OCCD) statewide system, a local hub calendar would provide valuable secondary visibility. To expand local options, Lynnette highlighted that their participation in a statewide webinar network effectively quadruples available regional training. Because the CCR&R tracks these opportunities via a public Google Calendar, Sam proposed syncing the two platforms directly so that localized and network-wide webinars auto-populate in one location.

Over the next month, Sam and Kristi will evaluate the backend capabilities of the calendar, including tag management (e.g., color-coding distinct tracks such as provider trainings versus community-wide family events) and direct database syncing. The Hub team will present a refined layout on the main Early Learning Hub website at next month's meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEM	Coordinated Enrollment Community Plan
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Kristi introduced the Department of Early Learning and Care's (DELCO) newly rebranded Coordinated Enrollment Community Plan (formerly the Early Childhood Sector Analysis). While official templates and deliverable deadlines have not yet been released, the state's vision is for Head Start programs, Child Care Resource & Referrals (CCR&Rs), and Early Learning Hubs to collaboratively map out regional preschool access needs.

Because the local Head Start programs already utilize the Hub's comprehensive Data Book for their Community Needs Assessments, Kristi noted that this region is essentially ahead of schedule. The formal reporting process will be managed by this committee (acting as the Regional Stewardship Committee) and is expected to be less intensive than in other parts of the state.

Lynnette requested a visual geographic overlay to compare general child populations with existing service slots for Head Start, Preschool Promise, and Oregon Pre-Kindergarten (OPK) to aid in data analysis.

Kristi continues to lobby the developers of the Early Learning Map of Oregon (ELMO) to integrate granular, census-tract-level data detailing where high-needs families live versus where childcare centers are physically located. Kristi and Jinguang have joined the state's data workgroup to help guide the development of these features. Jinguang confirmed he can construct a localized summary map using regional tract, population, and poverty data if state software delays persist.

The workgroup noted that waitlist statistics should be factored into upcoming maps to identify high-demand anomalies. For instance, Lebanon maintains the largest preschool waitlist among 13 regional centers despite having a high concentration of public providers. However, the committee noted that waitlist inflation and duplicate listings remain an analytical challenge across the state.

Kristi recommended that the state add a preference question to upcoming family surveys regarding whether parents prefer care closer to home or their physical workplace. A significant post-pandemic shift toward hybrid work schedules has dramatically altered traditional commuting and care patterns.

DISCUSSION ITEM	Priority Populations Discussion
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The workgroup conducted its annual review of the regional priority population criteria used to guide program placements. Kristi reminded the group that infants and toddlers (from prenatal through age 3) were previously removed from the Preschool Promise tracking list to keep the scope tightly aligned with funded preschool spaces.

The committee unanimously agreed to maintain the current list of six non-ranked priority populations for the upcoming enrollment cycle:

1. Children experiencing houselessness
2. Emergent bilinguals
3. Children who are Native American or from tribal nations/communities
4. Children who are Latinx
5. Children with disabilities
6. Children living in rural communities

The criteria will be shared with Preschool Promise providers next week, before the final presentation to the Board in June.

DISCUSSION ITEM	Aligning with Community Inclusion Team (CIT) meetings
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The workgroup evaluated a proposal from Autumn Belloni, EI/ECSE Program Administrator, LBL ESD, to merge or co-locate the Early Childhood Coordinating Council with the Community Inclusion Team (CIT) due to significant membership overlap.

Regarding the structure, instead of merging the programs completely, the workgroup preferred to have the meetings back-to-back. To keep things respectful of everyone's schedules, the combined meeting block will likely push the start time to 9:00 am, up from the usual 9:30 am. The workgroup strongly supported the consolidation, noting it creates calendar efficiency, prevents duplicate reporting, and exposes a broader array of regional partners to critical classroom inclusion strategies. The Hub team will brainstorm a finalized, flexible agenda structure with Autumn ahead of the next session.

DISCUSSION ITEM	Summer Meeting Schedule
<p>To accommodate executive board retreats and regional conferences, the committee finalized its summer meeting schedule. The June meeting is officially confirmed for Wednesday, June 17th, while the July meeting has been canceled due to a scheduling conflict with the Northwest Teaching, Leading, and Learning summer retreat.</p>	

DISCUSSION ITEM	Technical Data Reports Under Development
<p>Jinguang provided a progress update on his data portfolio. With the primary Regional Data Book nearing completion, he is transitioning to authoring two highly specialized sub-reports:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Regional Investment Recommendation Report 2. The Regional Poverty Representation Report <p>Committee partners are requested to submit any specific localized topics, demographic targets, or high-acuity data trends they want highlighted in these publications to Kristi or Jinguang as soon as possible.</p>	

NEXT MEETING	9:30 am, June 17, 2026 Online via Zoom
MEETING ADJOURNED	10:57 am