

Testimony of Sue Miller on HB 2013
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education – May 15, 2013

Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sue Miller. I am testifying in support of HB 2013 in my capacity as Chair of the Board of Directors of The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF). Mary Louise McClintock, OCF's Early Childhood Program Director, and I have both been deeply involved in the work that has laid the foundation for this legislation. Mary Louise served on the Governor's Early Childhood and Family Investment Transition Team, and we both were members of the Early Learning Design Team and the workgroup charged by the Early Learning Council with developing the characteristics and requirements for the regional Early Learning Hubs. I also come to you with a more local perspective due to my role as a leader of the work to organize an Early Learning Hub serving the northern Willamette Valley.

Early childhood development has been one of OCF's highest priorities for two decades. We believe there is no more cost-effective investment that we can make. We applaud the efforts of the Governor and members of the legislature to move Oregon toward a stronger, more integrated early care and learning system that emphasizes outcomes and is connected to schools and healthcare. HB 2013 is a critical next step.

As you know, a central element of HB 2013 is authorizing development and funding of a system of Early Learning Hubs. I'm excited to share that this approach closely aligns with OCF's signature early childhood investment strategy -- the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative (OPEC). OCF is joined in this initiative by three of the state's other major foundations, The Ford Family Foundation, the Meyer Memorial Trust and The Collins Foundation, as well as by Oregon State University. We are about to embark on our fourth year of funding for a network of 11 one-, two- and three-county Parenting Education Hubs that now reach 19 Oregon counties. Believing that strong parenting is critical to children's ability to be ready for and successful in school, we announced last week that we will be expanding this network to reach the entire state over the next few years.

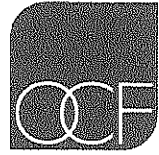
Additionally, OCF will be providing support to a minimum of eight school districts later this year to implement "P-3 (prenatal to grade 3) Alignment" projects that build closer connections between the healthcare system, early childhood providers, parents and elementary schools. In a way, this project is a school-based version of the Early Learning Hubs endorsed by HB 2013. The attached map indicates where early phases of both of these initiatives are taking place.

I would like to outline a few aspects of our Parenting Hub initiative that reinforce the Early Learning Hub direction outlined in HB 2013:

- 1) Our approach, in place for four years, is similar to the "tight-loose" framework proposed for the state's Early Learning Hubs: We foundation funders **allow the structure and leadership of the Parenting Hubs to differ from region to region** according to unique community characteristics, but all of the Hubs are held to a **high standard in terms of outcomes, quality and collaboration.**

- 2) Through both our parenting education and “P-3 Alignment” work, we’ve observed first-hand that **communities all over the state know how to do this work and are ready for it.** Our Parenting Hubs tell us they are “at the table” with early childhood partners, schools and healthcare/CCO providers, helping define what Early Learning Hubs might look like. This work has been happening well in advance of the state’s release of a Request for Proposals.
- 3) Some of the success factors for our parenting education initiative might be instructive for the Early Learning Hub system. They include regional factors such as:
 - allocation of **sufficient dedicated staffing to carry out the Hub’s work;**
 - development and regular updating of a **strategic plan for parenting education in the region;** and
 - a focus on **leveraging, blending and braiding funds from a variety of sources.**
 And state-level factors such as:
 - **technical assistance** on planning, governance, evaluation and program delivery;
 - **consistent collection of data using common tools;** and
 - a **strong emphasis on quality and outcomes** –in our case, through a requirement that Parenting Hubs use only evidence-based parenting curricula delivered by trained parent educators.

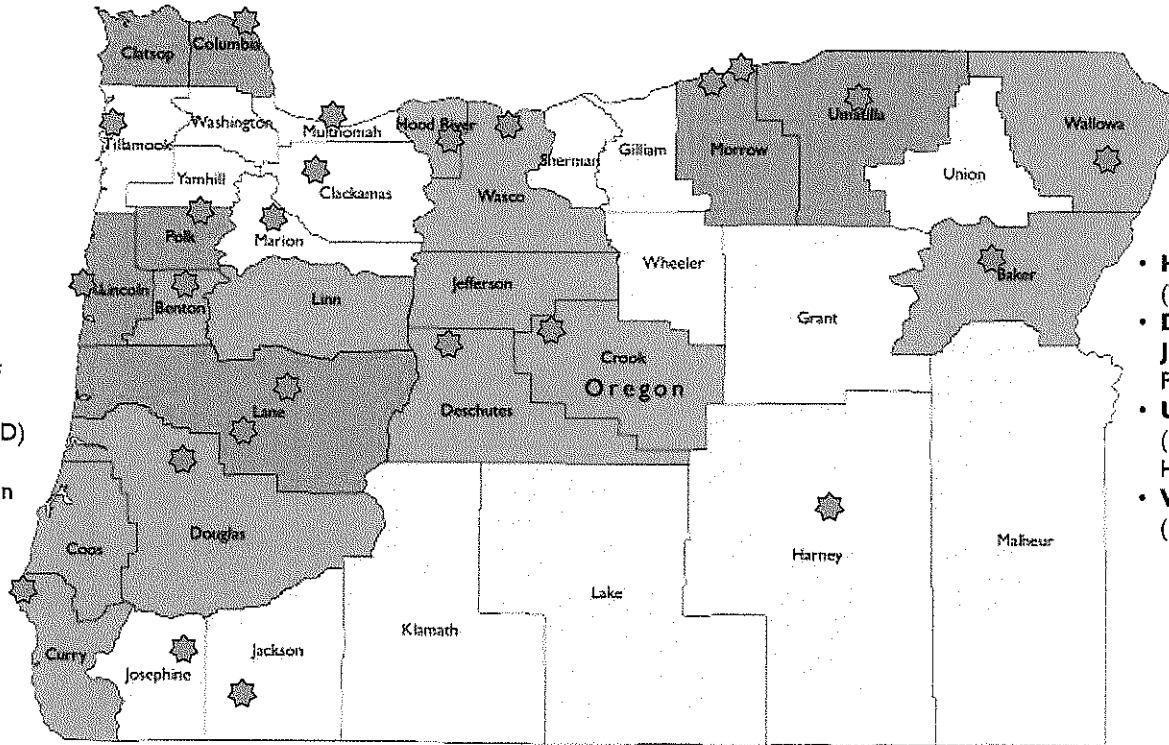
The Oregon Community Foundation looks forward to working with the Early Learning Council to strengthen, leverage and align early learning efforts across the state. We know from our early childhood initiatives that the regional hub model can produce positive outcomes for children and families.



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- **Umatilla-Morrow** (Umatilla-Morrow County Head Start)
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Counties with a parenting education Hub are shaded in blue and orange.
Stars denote the location of P-3 alignment planning grants.

Early Learning Hub, Inc.

Serving the Northern Willamette Valley

My name is Sue Miller and I am here to testify in favor of HB 2013. I am representing Early Learning Hub, Inc. which has recently incorporated as a nonprofit organization, formed to apply to be an early learning hub serving a portion of the northern Willamette Valley. We intend to file for 501(c)(3) status with the IRS by July 1, 2013.

As Commissioner Carlson explained, our early learning partners have been meeting for over a year to identify ways in which to redesign our early learning system in response to HB 4165. We are now prepared, willing and excited to apply to be a hub for coordinated early learning services in the region of the state where our members provide services.

To date our Board of Directors includes the CEO's of our Coordinated Care Organization, Willamette ESD, two school districts, DHS, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, a coalition of Hispanic organizations, four primary early childhood providers and Chemeketa Community College. All of these CEO's live in a world of accountability based on measurable outcomes so the expectations of the Early Learning Hub are not new to them. In addition to these service providers, the Board will also include community members and parent representatives.

Our vision is to create a unified system of early learning services designed to ensure that every child enters kindergarten safe, healthy and ready to learn. We recognize that children's parents play a vital role in children's success and so are committed to ensuring the involvement of parents in this effort.

Through support from its member organizations, our new corporation has substantial capacity to raise public and private funds through grant writing and contracted services as well as by attracting individual and business donations. We have the infrastructures necessary to leverage significant volunteer support and in-kind donations.

As we launch our early learning redesign initiative, our members are donating significant amounts of their own time as well as many of their management level staff. We recognize that this leveraging will be an important element in our success. We encourage the state to also provide financial resources to support these efforts.