



Marion County

OREGON

Board of Commissioners

(503) 588-5212
(503) 588-5237 - FAX

March 11, 2013

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Patricia Milne
Janet Carlson
Samuel Brentano

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

John Lattimer

Representative Carolyn Tomei, Chair
House Committee on Human Services and Housing
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Tomei:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on House Bill 2013. Let me clarify that I am testifying as an individual elected official, and not representing a position taken by the Marion County Board of Commissioners.

Since the passage of Senate Bill 909 (2011) and House Bill 4165 (2012), early learning partners in Marion County have been working intentionally to create a seamless transition from the current county-based system of services 0-18 to the proposed regional system of early learning hubs.

Here is a synopsis of our efforts.

- In December 2011, the Marion County Board of Commissioners convened a work session and invited interested parties, including commissioners from Polk and Yamhill counties, to discuss the early learning legislation. Duke Shepard from the Governor's Office participated in our work session.
- Beginning January 2012, the county convened all interested early learning stakeholders to work together to redesign the early learning system. Representatives of each stakeholder signed a memorandum of collaboration. A copy of our work plan is attached.
- The stakeholder group, along with Great Beginnings—representing program managers from regional and local early learning programs—have met monthly for the past 14 months. In February, the stakeholder group approved a set of recommendations that lay the foundation for our hub application.
- Marion County created a Community Services Department on July 1, 2012 that encompasses Children & Families, Dog Control, Marion County Fair

and liaison to OSU Extension services. We have consistently augmented state funds for children and families services with county general fund and intend to continue our local commission, although with more focused local initiatives. Sheriff Jason Myers and the Honorable Tracy Prall, Marion County Circuit Court, serve as commission co-chairs.

- Marion County recently entered into a contractual relationship with Willamette University's Atkinson Graduate School of Management to assess the capacity of organizations interested in providing hub services. The county is on the verge of releasing a Request for Qualifications, based on authority from House Bill 4165, Section 77a.

The bottom line is that Marion County early learning partners are prepared, willing, and excited to become an "early implementer" of coordinated early learning services in our state.

I applaud the provisions in HB 2013 that require standardized screening and appropriate referral services within the voluntary early learning system; that expand Healthy Start services from first-birth families to all eligible families with young children; that expand the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care; and that engage preschool children with disabilities with interventions that promote expressive and receptive communication.

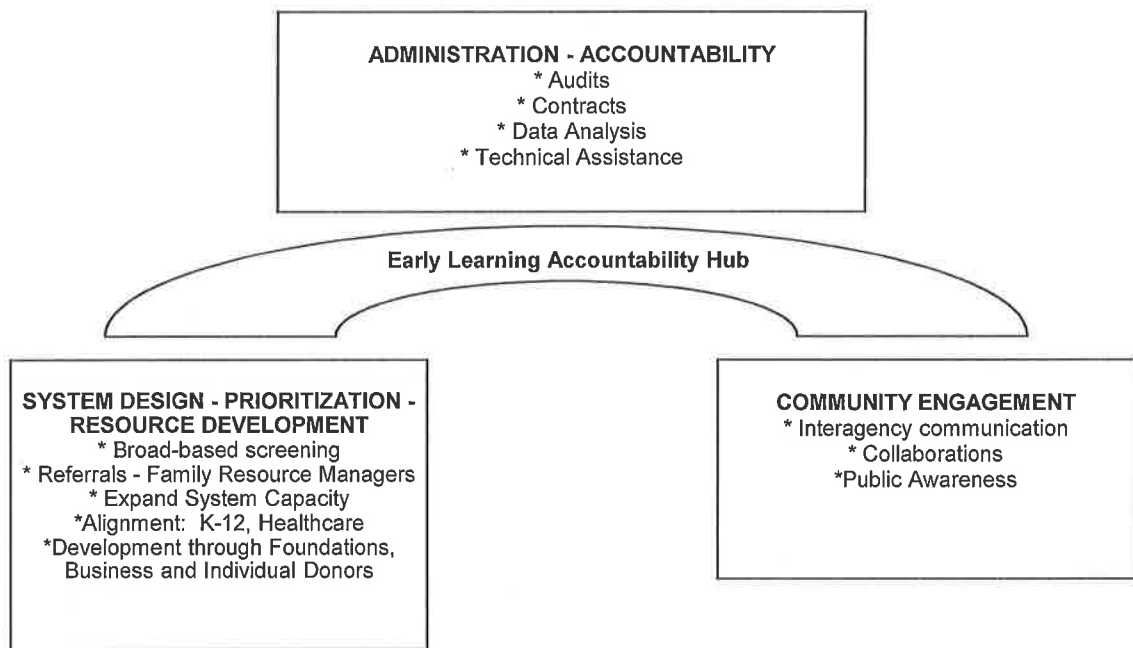
With regard to the early learning demonstration projects and early learning grants, I submit the following ideas and issues for consideration in crafting amendments to House Bill 2013.

1. If the numbers of demonstration projects are limited to five, what happens if more areas of the state are ready and willing to make the transition? Perhaps the legislation could provide greater flexibility in this area.
2. Under House Bill 4165, there is a 6-month transition period (between July 1, 2013 and January 1, 2014) for all parts of the state to establish early learning hubs. With five demonstration projects, there appears to be created a two-year transition period for non-participating areas of the state. Strategies need to remain in place to sustain momentum and progress in all parts of the state during that timeframe.
3. Under House Bill 4165, the state Early Learning Council is authorized to look at the state as a whole and assure that hubs are established with optimum geographic parameters. An alternative plan for demonstration projects will need to assure this process can still occur.

In other words, because the current children and families system is county-based, many of the early learning planning processes are likewise county focused, even though the regional configurations of early learning services may not be so aligned. It would be ideal if hubs are aligned to the extent possible with regional service delivery parameters.

4. The Governor’s budget includes \$10 million for hubs. We understand these funds are intended to reward performance, although it has been acknowledged that hubs will also need funds to start up and operate. Coordinated Care Organizations have had the benefit of significantly greater dollars for administering health care transformation. The legislature needs to consider what funds, at a minimum, are required to launch and sustain hub functions articulated in House Bill 4165 (2012) and detailed in the recently released hub workgroup report. The following diagram illustrates the core functions described current law.

**EARLY LEARNING “HUB” COMPONENTS
Per House Bill 4165 (2012)**



While I understand and certainly support the concept of “lean” governance in early learning, it must also be recognized that a solid legal entity needs to be in place to manage state funds and effectively coordinate regional and local services. And while it is certainly undesirable to solicit organizations that are simply interested in “the money,” it is likewise probable that organizations with strong qualifications will not be willing to take on an additional workload without compensation.

At a minimum, a hub organization will need staff to execute program coordination, resource development (grant writing, community engagement), and accountability functions (finance, procurement, data analysis). These functions generally require more than one skill set and will likely require multiple positions that support each hub.

My concern is that it appears we are already stretching the \$10 million allocation and

without a statewide rollout, we will not know whether these dollars are adequate to create and sustain the needed infrastructure for success.

5. Other potential amendments to support the hub structures, mirroring the pattern established with coordinated care organizations, should include consideration of:
 - Advisory councils to the legal entities' boards of directors that involve representation of community leadership, professional/technical expertise, and consumer voice;
 - Written agreements between the local early learning hub and relevant coordinated care organizations to assure tight coordination between health care transformation and early learning;
 - Requirements to establish policies within the early learning governance structure to address conflicts of interest;
 - Identification of the early learning governance structure as a public body, given that the entity will be making decisions about public fund priorities.

6. A final amendment is needed to address a technical error in House Bill 4165, Section 77b, which reads as follows.

SECTION 77a. (1) In order to ensure an orderly transition from the local system of commissions on children and families, an entity submitting an application under section 77 of this 2012 Act must show inclusion of, and coordination with, county governments.

(2) On and after January 1, 2014, an entity submitting an application under section 77 of this 2012 Act is required to show that county governments participated in the development of the application as provided by section 77 (4) of this 2012 Act.

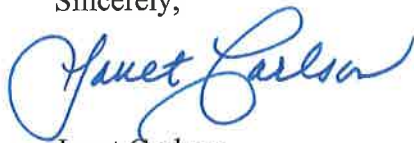
SECTION 77b. Section 77a of this 2012 Act is repealed on January 1, 2014.

Section 77b should be amended to read:

Section **77a (1)** of this 2012 Act is repealed on January 1, 2014.

I appreciate your consideration of these ideas and will be happy to provide additional information to support the legislative committee's work in creating a product that will have the greatest opportunity to promote early learning for Oregon's youngest children and their families.

Sincerely,



Janet Carlson

Willamette Valley Early Learning Stakeholders Group

Draft Work Plan

Updated: May 9, 2012

General Purpose: The purpose of the Willamette Valley Early Learning Stakeholders Group is to develop an application to become the community-based coordinator of early childhood and early learning services as described in HB 4165 §77 (2012) for the mid-Willamette Valley area.

A. Governance Decision Points:

1. Legal structure – Geographic footprint? Delay this decision until after September 2012
2. Legal structure – Proposed name: “Willamette Valley Early Learning Stakeholder Group”
3. Legal structure - By signing Memorandum of Collaboration, participants will not be asked to forego individual applications; this decision could be revisited later on by the stakeholder group
4. Legal structure – Determine stakeholder group/future “board of directors” membership
5. Legal structure – Affirm Marion and Polk commissioners as stakeholder group co-chairs (MOU)
6. Legal structure – New entity? Or fiscal agent/lead agency?
7. Legal structure – Bylaws/operating agreement (quorum, voting rights, etc.)
8. Legal structure – Administrative functions (contract out? Or lead agency?)
9. Legal structure – Community, client representation in decisions
10. Legal structure – Community engagement and involvement
11. Legal structure – Connection to Coordinated Care Organization
12. Legal structure – Alignment with public schools
13. Administrative functions – Requirement to “raise significant funds from public and private sources”
14. Administrative functions – Audit, contract, outcomes monitoring, reporting, accounting/fiscal systems
15. Administrative functions – Ability to work within (up to) 15% cost parameters

B. System Design Decision Points:

1. Ages & special populations - For system design purposes, distinguish between children ages 0-3 and preschool ages, and consider needs of special populations (disabilities, limited English, abuse victims, etc.)
2. Screening – Approve strategies to increase screening outreach to target population (7,000 in Marion County), align screening processes, and assure screening protocols are evidence based
3. Referrals – Approve strategies to develop more seamless referral systems, including systems delivered through family resource managers
4. Services – Approve strategies to “reinvent” the following service delivery systems to achieve early learning outcomes:
 - Child care
 - Home visiting
 - Preschool classrooms
 - Therapeutic classrooms
 - Early intervention services for children with disabilities and medical needs
 - Parent education and support services for at-risk families with young children
 - Primary health and dental care services for young children and their families
 - Mental health services for young children and their families
 - Basic needs services for families with young children
5. Metrics – Within state parameters, approve strategies for systems that measure progress towards designated outcomes, including client outcomes and quality assurance outcomes

