

Analysis
Department of Education
Report on Early Learning Hubs

Analyst: Doug Wilson

Request: Acknowledge receipt of a report on Early Learning Hubs.

Recommendation: Acknowledge receipt of the report.

Analysis: HB 2013 (2013 Session) established Early Learning Hub Demonstration projects and capped the number of hubs to seven for 2013-14 and 16 for 2014-15. These hubs are to be a critical part of the service delivery system for the various early learning programs and responsible at the local level for: (1) coordinating services in the community; (2) aligning services provided by a number of entities; (3) demonstrating the ability to improve results for children at risk; (4) leveraging additional private and public funds; (5) insuring a transparent budgeting process; and (6) including stakeholders such as providers, parents, local government representatives, and community members in the governance of the hubs. HB 2013 required the Early Learning Council (ELC) to submit a report to the Legislature by February 2014 describing the progress in establishing the hub demonstration projects and the transition of services in communities not served by a hub demonstration project.

The ELC along with the Oregon Department of Education's Early Learning Division staff provided a process for rolling out these demonstration projects including building community support, providing technical assistance at the local level, requesting applications from interested demonstration hubs, evaluating applications, negotiating with demonstration hubs, and finally awarding the contract to successful applicants. This process would take place in two rounds – one for 2013-14 and a second for 2014-15. The applicant hubs were to set improvement targets based on a series of metrics centered around three outcomes: kindergarten readiness, family stability, and system coordination. Their applications were also to set out a strategic vision and five-year plan, provide proof of understanding the proposed "covered" population, demonstrate an effective governance structure and use of a comprehensive children's budget, and have accountability to outcomes.

Fifteen applicants applied in the first round and only one demonstration hub was initially recommended, covering Marion County. Another five applicants were notified they required additional information before they would be awarded a contract as a demonstration hub. This information was due by the end of January and the Department of Education (ODE) staff has worked with each to insure that they understand the expectations. These five potential demonstration hubs cover (1) Grant and Harney Counties, (2) Douglas and Lake Counties, (3) Lane County, (4) Multnomah County, and (5) Yamhill County. Round two should result in the award of up to another nine contracts if the first round is fully allocated.

In anticipation that the entire state will not be served by hubs in the near future, the Early Learning Division has developed a contingency plan which will continue the Healthy Families Oregon through the existing local program administrators until a local hub is established. For other programs, the Division is proposing to hold back the funding streams until a hub is ready to administer the programs. The Division asserts that the other funding programs are outside the scope of the

Division, are relatively small in size, and should not continue at this point outside of the scope of the Division's priority childhood outcomes.

The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends acknowledging receipt of the report.