



WELLNESS & EDUCATION BOARD OF CENTRAL OREGON (WEBCO)

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March 12, 2015

TO: Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee
Chair Sara Gelser, Vice Chair Olsen and Members of the Committee

RE: SB 213 – Early Learning Hubs

On behalf of the Wellness & Education Board of Central Oregon, we are submitting this letter of support for SB 213 that will make Early Learning Hubs permanent. The passage of SB 213 will allow our local communities to continue the work being undertaken to ensure all children in our region have the opportunities and supports they need to enter school ready to succeed and with health and development on track. The research is very clear, investing early makes a significant impact on later life, not just in terms educational outcomes but in long term health outcomes as well.

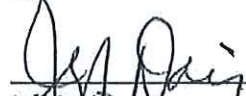
Our region has 17,456 birth through six year olds and approximately 10,243 (59%) of those children meet the statutory definition of “at risk” and are significantly less likely to receive the supports and opportunities they need to be successful. It is our responsibility as a community to close the opportunity gap and to ensure the experiences a child has during those early years creates a strong foundation for future success. Through the region’s Hub, we are not only gaining a common understanding of the issues and needs of our communities and children, but we are making progress and holding ourselves accountable for working together to address the needs. A few examples of our progress include.*

- Expansion of Relief Nursery services to Crook County – now available in all three counties
- Medical provider agreements to implement Reach Out and Read program in 8 regional sites
- Improved quality of child care from two sites qualifying as 3-Star or higher in 2014 to 24 in 2015
- Pre-K Teams working in five demonstration schools across the region and incorporating the Growth Mindset approach
- 85 early childhood scholars are participating in professional development opportunities through COCC Partners in Practice program to improve quality of child care in region’s underserved areas
- A unified and concerted effort to coordinate home visiting programs from prenatal to head start

Healthy children and families are the cornerstone of a healthy and prosperous society. Strengthening early learning and our regional efforts through the Early Learning Hub is benefiting the families and young children in our region – we urge you to support SB 213 so that we can continue this important work.



Ken Fahlgren
WEBCO Chair, Crook County Commissioner



Jeff Davis
WEBCO Executive Director



John Rexford
EL Leadership Council Chair and WEBCO Board Member
Superintendent, High Desert ESD



Muriel DeLaVergne-Brown
EL Leadership Council Vice Chair
Director, Crook County Health Department

*SEE ATTACHMENTS

Early Learning Hub of Central Oregon: Overarching Goals with State and Local Strategy Examples



Mission – Shared Purpose

To create an efficient and effective early learning system to ensure all children, prenatal through eight, receive the opportunities and supports they need to be healthy and successful in school.

Common Agenda – EL Hubs are called upon to work collectively with communities to achieve a “Common Agenda” and the following 3 goals:

GOAL 1: Families are healthy, stable & supported (Parent and/or Care Giver Focused)

Statewide Strategy Examples:

- Child Care – Expand access to low-income families
- Home Visiting Programs (Public Health, Healthy Families, Head Start, Relief Nurseries, and Early Intervention)
- DHS Reform: Safe Children – Strong Supportive Families (Differential Response)
- Involve parents and care givers in developing strategies to improve outcomes
- Address disparities in access, quality and health outcomes (Utilizing State’s “Equity Lens”)

Local/Regional Strategy Examples -Empowering & engaging families to find solutions:

- Parent/Care Giver Survey and Parent Focus Groups to ID needs at demonstration sites
- OPEC Parenting Education Hub – expanding Evidence-based parenting education capacity in region (OCF Grant)
- Professional Development (Partners in Practice early care & ed. professional development grant, ASQ-3 cross-train, Trauma Informed Practice, Grow Healthy Kids)
- Tri-County expansion of the Safe and Equitable Foster Care Reduction Initiative
- Tri-County expansion of Relief Nursery (federal, state, local and private funding)
- Partnering with existing community groups addressing disparity issues (CCO/COHC, WEBCO, HETF, etc.)

GOAL 2: Children enter school ready to succeed and with health and development on track (Child Focused)

Statewide Strategy Examples:

- Quality Child Care (Work force development and Quality Rating Improvement System or QRIS)
- All children have access to health care provider
- Early Intervention / Early Special Education
- Developmental Screenings (early identification, addressing developmental issues early)
- Oregon Pre-K and Early Head Start. Oregon Head Start Collaboration office and partnership with QRIS for Head Start sites
- Ed. Reform: P-20 Regional Achievement Compacts
- All day kindergarten 2015

Local/Regional Strategy Examples –

Phased in & Continuous Improvement approach:

- Universal health & developmental screenings for all young children from the time they are born
- Universal vision & hearing screens for all children before entering kindergarten (min. 1X at ≥ 3 yrs.)
- Early Literacy community outreach campaign (ELD Grants) and Early Literacy PSA
- Reach Out & Read initiative with Mosaic Medical, St. Charles Medical, & Indian Health Services
- Regional Pre-K-3rd initiative – Implement a PreK-3rd approach in elementary catchment areas to connect, integrate, & align birth to 5 programs & experiences with K-12 system (OCF & ELD Grants)
- Partners in Practice – Professional Dev. for Early Care & Education Providers (ELD Grant)

GOAL 3: Early childhood services are coordinated, effective, accessible and family-centered (System Focused)

Statewide Strategy Examples:

- Utilize a Cross-Sector and Collective Impact approach to coordinate and align early learning services
- Data Informed decisions, shared metrics and accountability in partnership with education, DHS & Health Services/CCO
- Not “business as usual”: “Braided and Blended Funding” and breaking out of program silos

Local/Regional Strategy Examples –

Phased in & Continuous Improvement approach:

- Build a Tiered Early Learning System – a three-leveled structure that organizes the delivery of early learning services on a continuum to best meet children and families’ needs
- Integration of growth mindset across the P-20 continuum (ELD Grant)
- Invest in evidence-based and best practice programs, projects and/or initiatives
- Resource development to address needs and maximize use of existing resources
- Coord. and aligning professional development and training (i.e. ASQ-3, ASQ-SE)
- Mapping of developmental screening available assets, capacity/needs and barriers
- Long-Term: Dev. common system of referrals
- Long-Term: Attain collaborative alignments in efforts with CCO and private medical providers

Challenges:

- Accountability with limited authority
- Lack of Universal identifier among services for young Children (exceptions: EI & Head Start - SSID)

- Lack of formalized data sharing agreements as well as addressing FERPA and HIPPA Privacy Laws
- Lack of common and/or centralized data collection and sharing system
- Limited capacity and resources

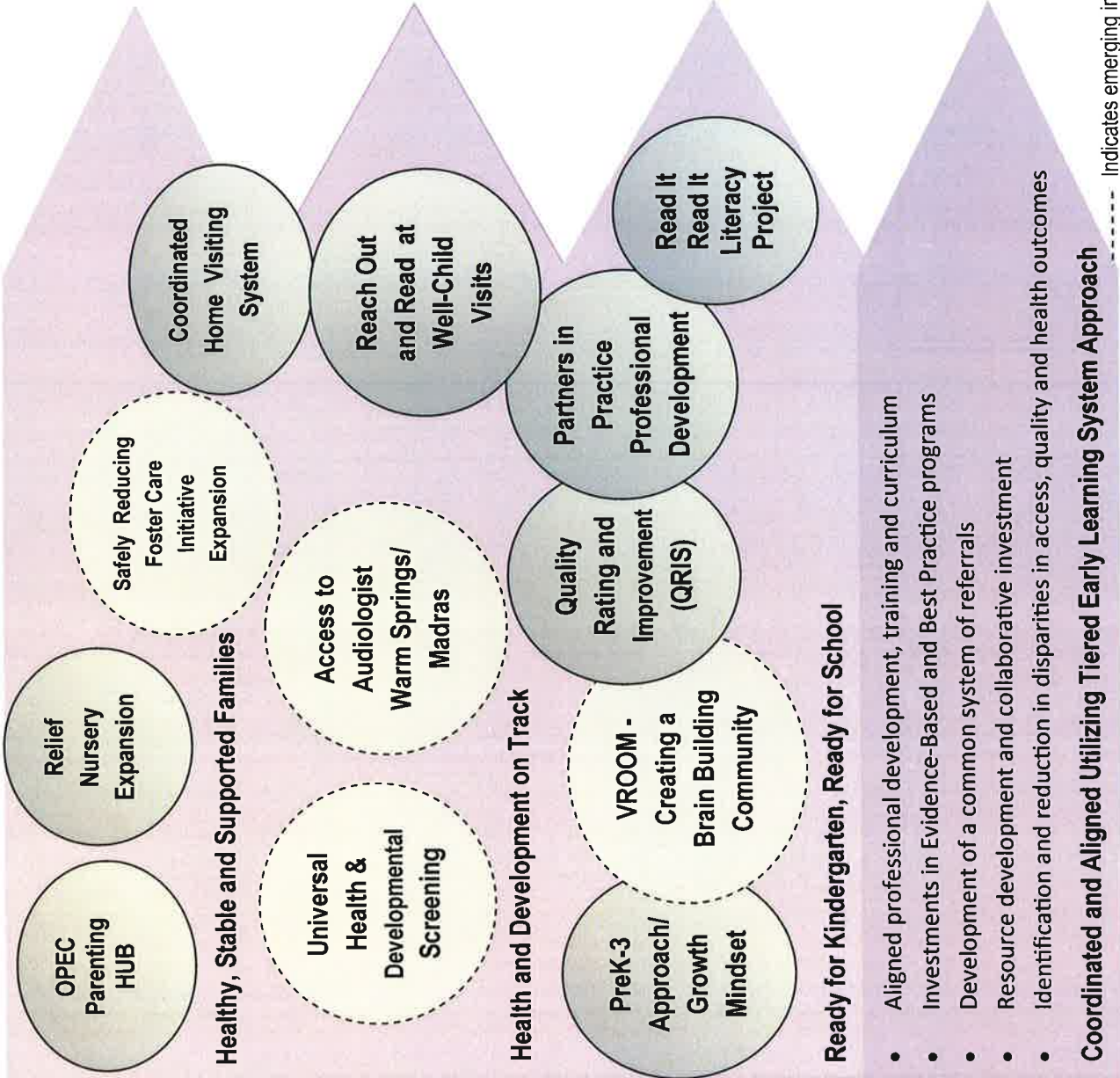


Goals

Goal 1:

Families are healthy, stable and supported.

Strategies and Initiatives



Goal 2:

Children receive the opportunities and supports needed to enter school ready to succeed.

Goal 3:

Early childhood services are coordinated, effective, accessible, and family-centered.

Early Impacts (2014)

- Expansion of Relief Nursery to Crook County - services now in all three counties.
- Goal: Literacy, health and developmental screenings for all children in region.
- Medical Provider agreement to expand Reach Out and Read program from three sites to eight region-wide.
- PreK-3 Teams working in five demonstration schools across the region and incorporating Growth Mindset approach.
- Of 85 scholars actively participating in professional development through Partners in Practice, 42 or nearly 50% identify as Hispanic/Latino.
- Early Care Providers at QRIS Star 3+ ratings in Central Oregon is 24 as of February 2015, compared to 2 Star 3+ providers in February 2014.
- Read It, Read It Literacy work has resulted in the distribution of over 900 books in first three months, 9 Provider Trainings, monthly newsletters in English/Spanish and Early Literacy PSA.

Coordinated and Aligned Utilizing Tiered Early Learning System Approach

Ready for Kindergarten, Ready for School

Health and Development on Track

Healthy, Stable and Supported Families

Aligned professional development, training and curriculum

Investments in Evidence-Based and Best Practice programs

Development of a common system of referrals

Resource development and collaborative investment

Identification and reduction in disparities in access, quality and health outcomes

Indicates emerging initiative