

SB 213: Early Learning Hubs  
Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee  
March 6, 2015  
Chair Sara Gelser, Vice Chair Kruse and Members of the Committee,

For the record, I am Julie Jeanmard, Children's Librarian for the Douglas County Library System. I am submitting testimony in support of SB 213. SB 213 makes the Early Learning Hubs permanent and continues the work local communities have undertaken to align early learning systems, support thriving families and ensure children are ready to succeed in kindergarten.

#### *Value of Work*

- A compelling and widely cited study found that in the first three years of life, children from low-income households hear roughly 30 million fewer words and engage in fewer back-and-forth conversations than their higher-income peers (Hart & Risley, 2003).
- This gap in what is *heard* has consequences for what is *learned*.
- Early learning partners can bridge this gap through early literacy programs by teaching parents and caregivers to read, sing, play, write, and talk with their children.

#### *How Hubs Add Value*

- Meeting the needs of children and families in our community is an impossible task for any one program or service provider on their own.
- Collaboration of agencies in the Early Learning Hub ensures communication among those who impact early learning so that all families are being served to the best of our capabilities.
- Communication among agencies ensures awareness of service gaps within our community.

#### *Impact Seen*

- As a library, we are better able to serve our community by bringing outreach to programs learned about through the Early Learning Hub.
- The Early Learning Hub has facilitated training to Douglas County agencies. One such workshop, the Dialogic Reading "Train the Trainers" through the Washington Learning Systems, was especially useful in providing a new perspective on how to teach families early learning and literacy techniques.
- The Early Learning Hub provides important grants, such as the Early Literacy Book Distribution Grant. This opportunity brought books to many agencies, including 364 picture and board books for the Douglas County Library System. This will bring books into the hands of many families throughout Douglas County.
- The resources from the Early Learning Hub have enabled easier communication with agencies to form events such as the Community Baby Shower hosted by the Douglas County Library, which is an information event on community resources for new families.

#### *Ask*

- Strengthening early learning through the Hubs will benefit children, families and our region. I urge your support of SB 213.