

SB 213: Early Learning Hubs
Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee
March 1, 2015
Chair Sara Gelsler, Vice Chair Olsen and Members of the Committee,

For the record, I am Kristi May, Linn Benton Lincoln Early Learning Hub Coordinator. 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.

I am writing to urge your support for additional investments in early learning systems and strategies for children and families in Oregon. Research concludes that investing in young children from birth to age 5 provides a 10:1 lifelong return through improved health, increased graduation rates, competitive workforce, reduced incarceration and stable families. (James Heckman reference)

In Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties there are 19,270 children ages 0 - 6. Approximately 12,884 live in families considered at-risk based on poverty, drug abuse, unsafe housing, unmet medical needs, parental mental illness, child abuse and/or neglect. These children are less likely to receive services and supports and more likely to struggle in school as a result. Hubs are responsible to close this gap so all children have the best chance for success.

We hold ourselves accountable to clearly understand our community needs and to working to meet them. By working together across sectors the focus is less on silos and more on families. Some of our early successes include:

- Creation of a three county region that mirrors the service areas of IHN-CCO, LBL ESD, and DHS maximizes opportunities for the integration of early learning services.
- Broad involvement, across three counties, of over 200 community partners in the RFA process and development of the successful application.
- Annual financial support - defined in an MOU with IHN-CCO - for EL Hub activities. In year one, some of these funds will be used to develop the Linn Benton Lincoln Early Learning Hub brand and communication strategies.
- A Northwest Health Foundation grant award, one of 25 community-based proposals funded. This one year planning grant supports meaningful engagement of parents and families in assessing community strengths and needs and in planning ways to improve the health of children most impacted by educational, health and social inequities. The grant award includes eligibility to apply for a five-year Community-Based Partnership with the Northwest Health Foundation to implement the plans.

We have done significant work in the community to build relationships and create the infrastructure for a true early learning system. I urge your support of this locally driven work and SB 213.



Kristi May
LBL Early Learning Hub Coordinator