

March 9, 2015

SB 213: Early Learning Hubs  
Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee  
March 12, 2015



Chair Sarah Gelser, Vice Chair Olsen and Members of the Committee,

The intent of this letter is to express our support for continued funding of the Early Learning initiatives established by the Early Learning Division/OEIB. As leaders of the Blue Mountain Early Learning HUB in Eastern Oregon, we are uniquely positioned to offer our perspective. We believe the early learning initiative is the most critical reform effort in the state.

Although the Blue Mountain Early Learning HUB was officially sanctioned last fall, our region developed an early learning collaborative over three years ago. Due to the high degree of poverty in our rural setting, leaders from the education, health, and safety sectors recognized the need to focus on prevention at an early age. Despite our efforts, we were unable to “systematize” our collaborative until the formation of the statewide HUBs. The additional funding mechanisms provided by the HUB structure, including grants through the OEIB strategic investments, enabled us to develop quality programs for families.

The Blue Mountain Early Learning HUB has been a leader in innovation. The Ready to Learn Card offers a Section 529 program for families, in which they receive contributions to the Oregon College Saving Plans for attending activities through their local library. The Kindergarten Innovation grant resulted in a tri-county Professional Learning Team, consisting of private and public early learning teachers. These educators receive ongoing training from a national presenter: the Houghton-Mifflin Teaching and Learning Center. Other highlights include Parent Learning Picnics, neighborhood book drop boxes, and a comprehensive oral health program.

The Blue Mountain early Learning HUB will serve as a vital linkage between Education, Health and Safety sectors across the three counties. It will serve as a formal bridge across systems that frequently intersect but have historically been somewhat siloed, allowing for the better use of resources and improved, dovetailed outcomes. This will insure children and families are set on a successful course for life.

The Blue Mountain Early Learning HUB is one example of a “boots on the ground” collaborative, benefitting from Oregon’s focus on improving early learning. We believe there is no better Return on Investment (ROI) to reach our state’s goal of 40-40-20 by 2025. We urge you to provide adequate, stable funding for this critical initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark S. Mulvihill".

Mark S. Mulvihill  
Superintendent  
InterMountain ESD  
BMELHUB Co-leader

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Maureen McGrath".

Maureen McGrath  
Executive Director  
Umatilla Morrow Head Start  
BMELHUB Co-leader

