

SB 213: Early Learning Hubs

Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee

March 1, 2015

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

For the record, I am Susan Norton, Child and Family Education Manager at Lane Community College. 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.

Quality environments are crucial for young children because:

- A child's brain develops more in the first five years of life than at any other time, creating the foundation for all future learning and development.
- During the first few years of life, 700 new synapses (neural connections) are formed every second. If a child is in child care for 8 hours a day, that equates to over 20 million new synapses formed while in child care. Early learning experiences are focused on a child's learning and development can make a tremendous impact on a child's future.

The Lane County Hub is making a difference for children and families by drawing upon the experience and expertise of early learning providers and working to amplify our work through cross sector collaborations. The Hub is leveraging and coordinating existing programs such as home visiting, Head Start, Early Childhood programs and relief nurseries to build on the good work of these programs, share lessons learned across service providers, and encourage the reduction of duplicated services in order to provide the most relevant and effective services to families.

As part of the hub, we are all asked to think beyond the mission and reach of our individual programs to ensure that the children and families in our region who most need services are receiving them. We are accepting collective responsibility for the underserved children and families in our region.

We now have 39.8% of children receiving developmental screening in our community, which is one of the tools we have to get young children and families the support they need to succeed. This is up from our 2011 baseline number of 16.3%. We plan to reach 50% by 2016. As a Hub we've been supporting child care providers to reach early learning and development standards through the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). This work is elevating early learning providers in our community and building our supply of high quality early learning environments. Strengthening early learning through the Hubs will benefit children, families and our region.

I urge your support of SB 213.



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