



March 5, 2019

To: Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee  
From: Jenn Richter, Early Learning Program Administrator, Yamhill CCO  
Re: the importance of investing in Early Learning Hubs

Chair Frederick, Chair McLain, and members of the committee, I would like to address the importance of investing in our early learning hubs. While many agencies provide valuable services to our children and families, Hubs are uniquely positioned to bring multiple cross-sector partners to the table to create systems that address shared challenges. I have brought with me today written testimony from a K12 superintendent, a pediatrician, a college chair of education, and the director of our local child abuse intervention center – all of whom are eager to go on the record to state that the Hub has significantly improved their ability to effectively serve children and families. Also on our Council, we have representation from DHS (both child welfare and self-sufficiency), social service agencies, Head Start (including migrant and tribal), Early Childhood Special Education, public health, business, even the local library. These dedicated providers meet at least monthly to collectively address the barriers that hold our children back by developing efficient systems that maximize outcomes and reduce costly duplication of services.

Together we have developed a number of cross-sector programs, such as our Family CORE – or Coordinated 0-5 Referral Exchange – which allows medical and other providers (such as DHS) to refer families in need of additional supports to one central location within our CCO – in which we are embedded -- for connection to home visiting and peer support services that address everything from postpartum depression to substance abuse and provide parents with the supports and the tools they need to get their child started off on a strong foundation.

We also coordinate Service Integration Teams in each of our seven school district catchment areas. These teams include representatives from K12, social services, the faith community, even law enforcement. They address concrete supports that can so dramatically impact a child's ability to be successful in school, from providing lice kits to ensuring that families don't get evicted from their homes. Some of these interventions are funded by a small sum of money from the CCO and from Health and Human Services – but many of them are addressed by the those around the table – committed community members who share their knowledge and connections to ensure that no child falls through the gaps.

We also have recently begun a Children's Champion program, through which nine of our clinics will be sending representatives to be trained in school readiness and family support services and will receive TA to effectively integrate referrals into clinic workflows. Over 75% of our at-risk children are not engaged with the system at any point except through their pediatricians until they reach school. Our partnership with the clinics gives us priceless access to help support parents in their role as their child's first and most important teacher.

Hubs are built on the concept of collective impact – that when we pool our ideas and our resources, one plus one can equal so much more than two. Each agency has a critical role to play in supporting families and in preparing children for success in school and in life, but no one sector can do it alone. This is a task for all of us – and the Hubs' role is to create that space in which agencies can link arms across sectors and collectively address our shared goal.