



March 25, 2019

To: House Committee on Human Services and Housing
From: Jenn Richter, Early Learning Program Administrator, Yamhill CCO
Re: support for pilot of youth development hubs

Chair Keny-Guyer, Vice-Chair Noble, Vice-Chair Sanchez and members of the committee, my name is Jenn Richter, and I'm the Administrator for the Early Learning Hub that is embedded within Yamhill CCO. I am submitting testimony in support of HB 2644 and the administration of pilot programs to explore the coordination of services for older children and youth through youth development hubs. The Early Learning Hubs are already demonstrating the power of the collective impact model by creating a coordinated and aligned system that addresses family stability and school readiness so that children arrive at school ready to succeed. But what happens to these children and families once they are in school? Is it the responsibility of K12 alone to shepherd them to adulthood? We don't believe so. This is a responsibility for all of us, and we can do it more effectively when we gather around a common table.

The Hubs are governed by partners from early childhood and K12 education, human and social services, health, and business. In Yamhill County, this collaboration has allowed us to reach families far more efficiently than we could as siloed agencies. For example, our Family CORE is a program that allows health care and social service providers to refer families to one central location for connection to critical supports to address everything from parenting skills to postpartum depression to addiction to domestic violence. Our Service Integration Teams in each school district catchment areas collectively address the concrete needs of individual children and families – everything from providing lice kits so the children can stay in school to paying off eviction notices so they can stay in their homes. And we are establishing what we are calling the Children's Champion program, in which 11 of our clinics have designated a staff person to be trained by the Hub in the school readiness and family support services that are available in the community – and supported to integrate referrals into their workflows.

The community has been asking for a similar structure for our older children and youth. In two weeks, Public Health will be hosting the kick-off meeting for the Council for Resilient Youth, focused on connecting schools, health and social service providers, law enforcement, and community members to support our middle school youth (and their parents and teachers) with the goal of keeping children in school, creating nurturing and trauma-informed environments, reducing alcohol and drug use, and increasing youth engagement in positive activities.

The Early Learning Hubs have paved the way. I strongly encourage you to consider the development of a similar model to support our older students and their families so that all of our children are equipped for success in life.