

SUN Service System Coordinating Council Meeting

September 19, 2008

8:30-10:30 a.m.

MEETING NOTES

Attendance

Members Present: Lorenzo Poe (Chair), Ted Wheeler, Krista Larson, Jerry Burns, Barbara Kienle, Lisa Turpel, Lisa Pellegrino, Bill Scott, Maxine Thompson (alt), Marcus Mundy (Alt), Peggy Samolinski (Alt), Dunya Minoo (Alt),

Alt = alternate member

Also Attending: Hector Roche, Diana Hall, Sarah Norris, Kate Shrum, Lori Kenney, Mary Richardson

Public Comment: Listen to Kids

Sarah Norris and Kate Shrum from Listen To Kids provided a brief overview of their agency. The agency has been providing child abuse and domestic violence prevention and early intervention programs to children and adults in the tri-county area for 25 years. Listen to Kids works with children ages pre K -6th grade, teaching them how to get help if they are being abused or living with domestic violence. They expressed an interest in working with community groups and provide training for adults on how to identify abuse indicators and how to respond appropriately. Summer is a particularly good time for them. Chair Wheeler thanked Sarah and Kate for coming, noting this fits in well with the county's overall prevention strategy.

Reflections on the Current Political Climate/Issues/Interests

Coordinating Council Chair Poe thanked members for meeting over the summer in the three work groups to address Council priority work areas. He also provided a brief reflection on some pertinent conversations and events that have happened since the Council last met:

- Mayor-Elect Sam Adams has expressed a strong interest in championing school graduation
- There is a lot of interest across groups/organizations in finding a way to positively impact suspensions and expulsions and disproportionate representation of students of color in this area
- Mt. Hood Community College President is very interested in working with the Council and the SUN SS
- Many different groups are continually expressing interest in SUN Community Schools, including Leaders Roundtable, parents and community members. Lisa Turpel suggested we share information on all the requests for more SUN Community Schools with our elected leaders. Lisa Pellegrino reported that parents from some of the more affluent schools attended a recent PTA Council meeting and were asking for more SUN Community Schools. Lisa T. noted that a New Seasons ad highlights Kelly SUN Community School and its business partnerships. The community is talking about SUN!
- The renewal of the Children's levy is up in November

Chair Wheeler had additional thoughts about the current political climate and upcoming issues:

- On January 1st, the local political climate will shift dramatically with a new Mayor and new Multnomah County Commissioners. Sam Adams is very interested in poverty and education; we

are encouraging him to build on the SUN Service System platform and template, rather than starting from scratch. We risk getting disconnected from these efforts and need to speak out to keep our efforts integrated with the City's efforts. Sam has reacted positively to Chair Wheeler's conversations with him and he seems very open-minded and collaborative.

- Poverty is moving east in the County. With the high mobility of these families, another district's kids can become your kids at any time.
- In the spirit of full transparency, Chair Wheeler told members that on our current revenue trajectory, Multnomah County may not be able to sustain many of our services, including SUN, at their full current level over time. In addition, several grants will be expiring in the next three years and we will need to have full community ownership at a higher level and a financial leveraging model to protect SUN.

New Council Members

Early this year, Council members agreed to add two new seats to represent the geography and diversity of our SUN communities: An additional representative each for Communities of Color/Underserved populations and East County schools was added. Staff and Council members worked together to fill those seats. The new Communities of Color member is Gloria Wiggins of Catholic Charities. She was not able to attend today but her alternate Marcus Mundy joined the Council briefly. Lori Silverman from Centennial School District will be our additional East County Schools representative; they are still working on an alternate for that seat. We welcome our new members!

Work Group Updates

System Integration and Alignment

Krista Larson reviewed the initial charge to identify strategic opportunities, both large-scale system and small practical steps to integrate all systems under the SUN umbrella. They want to fully understand who all the partners are and how they are involved currently. Ultimately, the goal is to engage all those partners in decision-making about how the system runs, how services are linked and how resources are allocated. Desired outcomes are increased school success (as measured by attendance and graduation) and overall poverty reduction.

Peggy Samolinski reviewed the guidelines the group agreed on for their work:

- Get political buy-in up front
- Expand integration beyond County departments
- Identify benefits for all from engaging with the System
- Identify issues of relevance at the systems level
- Identify small, manageable actions for alignment and integration
- Stay with the SUN model
- Develop strategies and continuously talk about more efficient use of resources

One of the first strategies identified as a significant opportunity for alignment and integration was to consider making every school a SUN Community School. Although that may sound overly ambitious, the group recognized that where we have SUN Community Schools, we have the best ability to connect and align resources. Currently, not even all the schools with high poverty families are SUN Community Schools and this makes alignment a challenge. Staff has done some initial work to determine the associated costs, considering different funding for schools with differing poverty levels. Some system

expansion would also be necessary for a vital system. Group members had the following comments about “Every School a SUN School”:

- Part of the SUN concept has always held the promise of saving public funds. Part of our charge is to unlock available resources, use existing resources more effectively and talk with the Sponsors about the cost savings potential for having Every School a SUN CS School.
- This is a complex system. What all do you expand?

The group’s second strategy was to hold a series of sequential conversations in specific areas that hold the greatest promise for alignment efforts. Those areas include:

- Anti-Poverty: Economic Self-Sufficiency
- Anti-Poverty: Housing and Basic Needs
- Mental Health
- DHS
- Attendance
- Schools and Educational Resources/Funding

First Sequential Conversation: Economic Self-Sufficiency. On August 21st, over 45 people attended a three-hour brainstorming conversation on Economic Self-Sufficiency. People we had never seen before and who previously had no interaction with SUN were there. The meeting generated a lot of great ideas, energy and enthusiasm. Those ideas created the most interest and energy are as follows:

- Moving families forward to taking the next step toward asset development and self-sufficiency, as well as addressing their current need
- Embracing as a fundamental way of thinking: *Coordinating the Family as a Whole.*
- Tie our legislative agenda for the City and County to these issues
- Seize Mayor-elect Adams’ interest to increase graduation and reduce the drop-out rate
- Work with the Commission on increasing assets, starting with a pilot on tax credits
- Increase financial literacy of families to increase the number of families who are “banked”
 - Consider asking Sponsors talk with Banks (Wells Fargo and others) to support this effort
 - Identifying liaisons in each partner organization and/or site and build relationships.

Second Sequential Conversation: Mental Health. The System Integration and Alignment work group plans to address mental health issues next and will be meeting to determine the best structure for that work.

DHS/SUN Partnership Overview. Jerry Burns shared an update on the alignment effort taking place between DHS and SUN, which has already resulted in positive action and benefits. Early this year, Jerry and SUN staff began working on the alignment of DHS self-sufficiency services and the service contracted by the SUN Service System. DHS dedicated .5 FTE toward this integration effort and discovered that the two agencies had almost no individually identified contact points, no shared service provision or joint case management. Clearly, they could benefit immensely from increasing their knowledge about each other’s services and processes.

Following this baseline analysis, they determined a set of action steps to deepen the alignment of our systems and improve work with families. The partnership began pursuing action on the following, many of which are the same issues/ideas raised at the August 21st Conversation on Economic Self-Sufficiency:

- Increasing knowledge of SUN among DHS personnel and of specific DHS services and processes among SUN folks. They are looking at various approaches for accomplishing this. DHS recently created client brochures describing all their self-sufficiency services; SUN is working on a simple tri-fold brochure for clients. Both brochures will be disseminated broadly. They also plan presentations for each other's staff and continue creating opportunities to meet one another. SUN staff attended DHS summer trainings and gave a brief overview of the system. Information on SUN and DHS was presented and shared with participants at the August 21st conversation on Economic Self-Sufficiency. In addition, DHS staff from self-sufficiency and child welfare participated in the Systems Alignment and Integration work group this summer.
- Identifying a key point person/liaison at each DHS processing center for each school and all potential clients would contact that person for eligibility.
- Piloting on-line food stamp application by October 2nd that clients could access from home or the library, with the intention to spread to other SUN providers as it is operational.
- Piloting a shared case management approach between a DHS branch and the related SUN Service System Regional Service Center.
- Exploring information sharing options and ways to more easily share information about when our clients are being served by others
- Incorporating a question about student success on the DHS intake form. This will help convey to families the importance of school success to a child's future. Information will also be included on SUN services and will check to see if they are already participating in those services.
- Continuing to consider whether to outstation DHS staff.
- Embarking later this year on a similar effort for the child welfare system. In early September, Juli Beck from Child Welfare attended the SUN CS Site Managers "Teach In" to share information on the protocol for DHS interacting with schools, to discuss the role SUN CS folks can play, and to problem solve how we could be working better together.

All this is taking place despite a few sobering facts reported by Jerry. Previously, clients wouldn't take the time if they would only end up receiving \$20 worth of food stamps, but that has changed. DHS has exceeded even the highest projection for requests for Food Stamps. Historically, when funding was this difficult, their agency cut training budgets and connections with partners, but their work with SUN has yielded demonstrated benefits. One of his main challenges is convincing overworked staff that they will benefit from collaborating with others.

System Integration and Alignment sees all of this work dovetailing nicely with the work being done around joint ownership and mutual responsibility. With joint ownership discussions happening at the top levels, we need to be thinking about how best to bring this same commitment to the staff and program level.

Next Steps for the System Integration and Alignment Work Group:

- Address mental health issues, either in a series of meetings such as the DHS/SUN partnership or a conversation, such as the Conversation on Economic Self-Sufficiency.
- Continue meeting for the foreseeable future to work on system integration and alignment.

Mutual Responsibility

Lisa Turpel reviewed their initial charge: To clearly define what joint ownership and mutual responsibility means. The group agreed to focus on "mutual responsibility" as a more powerful description of what we are working toward.

They centered their work on developing documents for the following (attached):

1. Description of the SUN Service System. If partners are going to “buy in” to a mutual responsibility, they need a full understanding of that system. A two-page document was developed, which describes what the system is, core services provided, outcomes, numbers served, benefits, partners and partner contributions.
2. Definition of “Mutual Responsibility” (noting the difference in the collaboration required of mutual responsibility that is very different from coordination or cooperation)
3. Description of the commitments necessary with mutual responsibility and a description of the benefits to their agency for taking mutual responsibility.

Group members reviewed materials on each of the above areas providing input as shown below:

- The information is very helpful and clear and represents a great deal of very important work for the Council and the SUN Service System.
- The SUN Service System should be defined by its outcomes. Rework the first paragraph to start with the outcomes.
- Highlight that this is a unique model. Outsiders continue to be amazed at this unusual level of collaboration and commitment to values, strategies and funding.
- Combine agency and system benefits since all agencies are working toward benefits for the system in which they work.

Next Steps for the Mutual Responsibility Work Group:

- Rework documents to reflect input and suggestions from Council members. Bring to the October 3rd Coordinating Council meeting for approval to take to Sponsors.

Data and Evaluation

Lisa Pellegrino reported that this workgroup has been working hard to fulfill their charge in this complex and sometimes confusing area. Not surprisingly, our many SUN partners are collecting many different kinds of data. Work group members understand their need to report data to public funders and policy makers. Their goal is to define what data is needed, how to get it, and then to approach the school districts and the Multnomah ESD for that information. Maxine Thompson noted that the ESD is ready to have a conversation about this.

The work group has agreed to reduce the number of data points and to focus on the number of kids who are making progress and moving up, rather than those who “meet” certain benchmarks. The information about progress is much more powerful than the benchmark information. Their objective is to provide key information about how kids are performing and indicators of success.

Some of group’s questions are:

- To what extent is SUN causing outcomes?
- How much does the quality of programs have to do with the outcomes?
- How can we pay for additional evaluation during a time when services are being cut? Lisa P. noted that this work group would take responsibility for finding any needed funding for the evaluation they ultimately recommend.
- How much should we pursue larger system evaluation to see how well the system is working in an effort to bolster confidence in that system?
- What type of evaluation does Council want the work group to pursue?
 - System evaluation
 - Service evaluation
 - Causal evaluation (around outcomes for children)

Group members offered comments:

- Evaluation is very timely with our efforts around joint ownership and involving other agencies in that ownership
- We should let Sponsors consider the costs of a recommended evaluation
- Consider involving private foundations in decisions about data collection
- The different data needed from all private and public funders makes this issue very complex. At some point, we may have to involve private funders in this discussion too.

Chair Wheeler offered his thoughts about what really matters with the voting public. He does not see the value in large-scale expensive evaluations. Public safety programs are very effective at passing their levies because of their skill in clearly stating the value of those levies in qualitative terms. He suggests that awareness and communication strategies are more effective than evaluative strategies when it comes to the public.

Additional comments followed:

- While the awareness/communication strategy may be more effective with the public, school districts will still need to see causal outcomes for their funding.
- Even with the schools, employee groups are very well organized around political strategies to get their needs met.
- We need both strategies to increase support for SUN. We might want to propose the rationale for each of the three areas of evaluation, getting input from members of the system about each area.
- We do have some data on the system already; we need to put values and stories behind that data to support it and make a powerful message.

The discussion concluded with Chair Wheeler re-emphasizing that several large grants will expire in the next three years. Multnomah County is not in a position to pick all of that up. We need a "Building Community Support" Committee to address this issue.

Next Steps for the Data and Evaluation Work Group:

- Data and Evaluation will make a recommendation to the Council about the evaluation efforts that will be the most helpful to our collaborative efforts. They will include a cost/benefit analysis for the recommended options.
- This work group will likely be addressing this work for another 3-6 months.

October 21st Sponsor Meeting

Chair Wheeler confirmed his interest in moving forward with the Sponsors at the October 21st meeting to address key issues for the Coordinating Council.

Group members agreed to bring the following to the Sponsor's Meeting:

- The three documents developed by the Mutual Responsibility work group
- Data and Evaluation should bring a set of recommended data points that demonstrate we are working toward commonality amongst system partners
- Share observation of how alignment would be enhanced if services were offered through all schools as SUN CS Schools
- Describe examples of alignment taking place:
 1. DHS Partnership (Online Food Stamp alignment effort with PPS should be running by then)

2. School Family Housing

- Pending County budget and the reallocation of resources
- We should invite the Multnomah ESD Superintendent, Ron Hitchcock, to attend
- Create a values piece, perhaps bringing someone in or have Jerry or Krista present a successful client story

Next Steps:

- Finalize content for agenda
- Determine who will speak to each piece of the agenda
- Clarify our asks

Next Meetings

Full Council:

Friday, October 3, 2008

8:30-10:30 a.m.

Multnomah Building, Room 112

501 SE Hawthorne

Work Groups:

Data and Evaluation

Monday, September 29, 2008

9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

DHS Offices

2446 SE Ladd (off Division)

System Integration/Alignment

Friday, October 10, 2008

1:00 -2:30 p.m.

MFS Board Room

1808 SE Belmont