



Multnomah County Veteran Services Taskforce

April 6th, 2015, 9:00am – 11:00am

Multnomah Building, Copper Conference Room, 501 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland, Oregon 97214

MEETING MINUTES Focus – Families

Welcome and Introductions

Task Force meeting attended by: Diane McKeel, Sean Files, Diane Labant, Doug Menely, Don Weber, Pete Pringle, Doug Kuhl, Eric Zimmerman, Patti Jay, Katelynn Bock, DeAnn Smetana, Hank Bauer, Amy Conroy, Tammy Davis, Janna Marshall, Kelly Hokanson, Jim Schlachter, Andy Smith, Eric Ensley, Barbara Besand, Katie Burgard, Andrea Jusino, Raychel Gary, Alex Glover, Chris Aiosa, Dawa Brooks, Sgt. Jeremy Gill, Jill Behunin, Sarah Johnson, Fiona Milligan, Emily Moser

TOPIC / PRESENTER

NOTES

Supporting Children in Military Families

Superintendent Jim Schlachter
Gresham Barlow School District
Ms. Kelly Hokanson,
Oregon National Guard
Ms. Janna Marshall,
Oregon Army National Guard
Ms. Tami Davis,
Oregon Air National Guard

Commissioner McKeel introduced this agenda item by noting that children in military families experience the same impacts of deployment and reintegration, but sometimes don't have people around them to help understand what's happened or receive support from peers. This issue was prioritized for this year in the 2014 Year in Review. Commissioner McKeel introduced the panel, with the goal of discussing opportunities to partner.

Barriers identified during panel discussion included:

- School staff often don't know which kids are in military families, and the students themselves may not know which of their peers are either.
- A big barrier is centralized data collection, and then being able to collect and access the information.
- Don't want to label students as though being "military connected" is a deficit. There are many strengths that come from military service in children, and kids are resilient. Would focus on a positive assets-based group rather than deficit-based like counselors often do.
- Schools work with many partners such as DHS, the SUN program, and mental health providers who offer services in the school, but National Guard or another veteran organization would be a new partner.
- What should you look for and what would be the needs of these kids? Students don't come to a teacher and say "here's my problems", they go to a trusted adult who could be a teacher, counselor, classified staff, coach, or someone else. Sensitivity training would be helpful for all staff to better understand who are the students and how do you speak about certain issues.
- Students transfer from one school or district to another. Superintendent Schlachter noted that the Multnomah County school districts work together really well but continuity of support for individual kids could be an issue if this is piloted at one school or district and kids transfer away.

	<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are about 2300 students at Gresham HS, so this is a great opportunity for peer support groups. Hank described the Teen Panel, which could be formed at a school and meet during lunch time or after class. • Amy and Hank from National Guard can do training but it is difficult to get information on where the kids are (and without this data they sometimes get push-back from schools or other potential partners.) A lot of service members are active from Gresham area so that is good location to pilot a training partnership. • Discussion indicated that principals, social workers, and counselors are key to any training partnership, but it really starts with the teachers to take advantage of “teachable moments”. Two examples shared by parents included a daughter who used writing assignments to tell her story when her father was deployed and the teacher used that for education at the class level; another was the children had cell phones and were allowed to answer them during class and step into the hall if their father called. One parent indicated that counselor outreach is valuable because they can work 1-on-1 more than a teacher who has 35 other kids in class. • Training opportunities could be through a district training, SUN schools or other programs in the schools, or working with a principal to develop this component into the training curriculum. • Other youth partnerships exist that the school district could build from, such as Boys and Girls Club’s national partnership with Department of Defense that provides free membership for military families. There are plans for the new Boys and Girls Club opening in Rockwood. • Will explore additional training opportunities for parent about how to advocate and to whom at the school. Will also look into possibility of mentor program through the ROTC program at Reynolds HS to work with younger youth. <p>Next Steps: Superintendent Schlachter will meet with Hank and Amy to explore a pilot project in Gresham-Barlow.</p>
<p>Employment Speaker’s Bureau</p> <p>Commissioner McKeel & Sean Files <i>Multnomah County</i></p>	<p>Sean presented the speaker’s bureau document and explained the concept. This was also identified as a priority project for 2015 in last year’s Year in Review document, provides an outline of talking points for why businesses should hire a veteran and the resources for employers to connect with candidates. Handout is linked on the task force website. On the third page is a contact list for business associations and chambers of commerce throughout the county.</p> <p>Multiple members of the task force indicated interest in reaching out to businesses, and Commissioner McKeel’s office can help schedule times if that would be helpful.</p> <p>Document will be updated with correct email for Craig Snitker. A request also made for materials that can be distributed so Sean will work with Pete to have those available at an upcoming meeting.</p>

Updates

All

- Legislative: Andy Smith from AOC Veterans Committee provided brief legislative overview and update. There are about sixty bills this session related to veterans or veteran services, and the AOC committee's priority bills. During discussion, multiple comments were in support for HB 3479 that would create a position at ODVA for women veterans services. SB 691, for purposes of state law, would exempt dishonorable discharges that are based solely on sexual orientation. The group discussed importance of this being changed at federal level rather than just the state, need to also consider those who were discharged prior to their service period because of sexual orientation and are thus ineligible for benefits, and this would require investigation because soldiers often discharged for reasons besides sexual orientation even if that was the determining factor. Bills are still getting public hearings scheduled so please contact Commissioner McKeel's office if you'd like to testify or help advocate in the legislature.
- Pete updated the task force that the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program has been opened up to be eligible for any veteran who has been incarcerated at any point in the past. Contact Pete for more information.
- Multnomah County Sheriff's Office has received the "Employer of the Year" award from the Oregon Air National Guard.
- Eric reported that Multnomah County just hired a County Veteran Service Officer, who will be a valuable addition to their outreach efforts. Will have a CVSO at Portland State 3 times per month for office hours, and working to expand to other colleges.
- Diane L provided update on Honor Flight event in September and opportunities between now and then to volunteer, host a fundraiser, or attend a fundraiser. Contact Sean for more information. 64 veterans have signed up to go and they have already raised 40% of the \$50,000 needed to send them all to Washington, DC. Also need volunteers to be at the airport to welcome them home.
- Oregon Air National Guard has an upcoming deployment of 100 airmen leaving in May, 40 leaving in June, and another 150 leaving in July. Most live in the Portland Metro area. Deployment will typically be 90-180 days.