

Preschool for All Task Force Meeting Minutes

November 28, 2018

NWEA, 121 NW Everett St, Portland, OR 97209

In Attendance:

Diana Nunez, Amy Nash-Kille (for Elanna Yalow), Robert Cantwell (for Guadalupe Guerrero), Jenn Lynch, Jessica Vega Pederson, Kali Thorne Ladd, Keith Thomajan, Ken Richardson, Ken Thrasher, Nicole Buchanan (for Kim Melton), Lee Po Cha, Lisa Pellegrino, Pam Greenhough Corrie (for Lisa Skari), Lydia Gray-Hollifield, Kitty Miller (for Michael Buonocore), Michael Lopes-Serrao, Mystique Pratcher, Tawna Sanchez, Petra Hernandez, Rachael Banks, Ruth Adkins, Soobin Oh (for Swati Adarkar)

Parent Advisory Council Report

- *Molly Day*: [provided an explanation of what the Parent Accountability Council (PAC) is]. [Molly then used a PPT slideshow to discuss how the PAC supports the Early Learning Hub]. Now, we'll have Lydia and Petra share their personal experiences as members of the PAC.
- *Lydia Gray-Holifield*: I have been on the PAC for four years. Everybody in the room agreed that we wanted it to be more than just another group that talked - we wanted to be a family. So we made sure that we set up our guiding principles and rules to make sure that we're always a family. We don't see everybody as different families, we're all one big family. We celebrate each other. We meet and talk about what's important. We share the same views and values about what we want for our children. Our children aren't children that do not deserve the best, their foundation is very important to us. Preschool is laying the foundation for these kids for how they communicate for the rest of their lives. We need to make sure that it's as sturdy as a house - we don't want the foundation to be blown down. We need to make sure that our children and communities are receiving the best education they can get.
- *Petra Hernandez*: I've been with the PAC since 2016. With this group, I feel like I am home because they accept me the way I am. Something I like from the PAC is that all the cultures get together and we feel like a big family because our voices are heard, and every parent can share their voice. All of this has been very good for me because even though I am from a different culture they accept me the way I am. All the leaders get together and share our ideas - we respect that.
- *Lai-Lani Ovalles*: The PAC has tackled lots of important questions about what preschool and staffing would look like, as well as what the biggest barriers they face are. So the same questions that the work group is tackling, the PAC has discussed. They also went back to their communities and talked to hundreds of parents about their experiences. Whatever you talk about will go to the PAC, and whatever goes to the PAC goes to the community. We want to have culturally responsive and specific programs, we want passionate teachers, and parents are less concerned about degrees than they are the

experience of the teacher and their ability to connect with parents. We care about parent voice - nothing about us without us.

- *Petra Hernandez*: First of all, we want to gather teachers and know they welcome and accept us and our kids. Sometimes we have barriers that they don't understand.
- *Lydia Gray-Holifield*: What Petra said is very true. One of the biggest things is that both children and families are welcome. Greeting parents in their language and culture. We want to see kids' cultures on the walls - not just white children's culture on the walls. We want it to be all inclusive - teachers that look like our kids and speak their language. Even if there are barriers we want teachers to be invested in the child. If they're invested our kids will learn. We want to make sure teachers have what they need. It isn't just about their higher-education, it's also about: are they going to love our kids when they come into the classroom? How will they treat our kids if they fall down? We want them to be loved.
- *Petra Hernandez*: There should be no barriers in the financial issues, because sometimes money is a barrier for services. At meetings we sometimes learn that due to the income of parents, if they are slightly above eligibility, they won't qualify for services. It is very sad to see our children who didn't attend preschool arrive in kindergarten and not have that experience.
- *Lai-Lani Ovalles*: We want to invite you all to attend PAC meetings in the future.
- *Kali Ladd*: Is there anything like the PAC elsewhere in the state?
 - *Lai-Lani Ovalles*: No, it is unique in Oregon.
- *Commissioner Vega Pederson*: We thought that this was a very important way to kick-off the discussion on program suggestions. The vision document is the product of 18 months of work by the PAC. We should be using that as a strong sentiment of what parents are looking for as we design this program.

Program & Policy Work Group Recommendations First Reading

- *Tutu & Me Video: Multi-generational preschool program from Hawaii*
- *[Megan Irwin began delivering PPT slideshow presentation]*
- *Tawna Sanchez*: What does a "shorter program" look like? (regarding multigenerational programs).
 - *Megan Irwin*: That varies, but 1-2 hours over multiple times a week.
- *Rachael Banks*: I'm interested in what they were going to say as the clip ended regarding how they welcome new parents and what caregivers can expect. I'm curious about that experience.
 - *Megan Irwin*: It goes into talking about what the parent can expect in the classroom and how they are supported to interact with the child, through activities such as what you saw in the background. It gives parents a sense of what the program looks like.
- *Mark Holloway*: One comment that comes up between multigenerational and preschool programs is: can you compare them apples to apples, because they're different models? The National Association for the Education of Young Children did allow for multigenerational models. There is a way to measure quality even between very different

models. I go back to ECONorthwest saying that we need to experiment locally. Other communities may not experience with multigenerational, so we should take the lead on this.

- *Lydia Gray-Holifield*: There is a program like Tutu & Me in Atlanta, Georgia, that I just saw at a conference. They even sell buses that communities can purchase so they can have them in the community. They go to different communities each day, so families can travel with them if they choose to.
- *Soobin*: I have two reflection points: we obviously want to do it all, but I think in terms of priorities, we need to define what we're trying to achieve with the model. I can see in this program a high priority of parent attachment. I also wonder about...are we driving towards readiness...how do we prioritize the outcomes is a question we need to address. Secondly: there are many ways to do multigenerational, in New Jersey, they are using other models to conduct multigenerational education.

[Hadiyah Miller explained the initial program recommendations using a PPT slideshow presentation].

- *Kali Ladd*: Is there any conversation taking place about professional development & training?
 - *Hadiyah*: Yes, that is going to the workforce workgroup.
- *Jenn Lynch*: How can we do this range of models and still make sure that every parent feels they can have access to the model they need?
 - *Megan Irwin*: That gets into the enrollment conversation. Part of how the enrollment and eligibility group thought about this was if you administer it centrally, parents can fill out one application with their top choices, and then there is a matching process that happens. They won't be constrained by geography or income level. Seattle seems to be using that model well.
- *Soobin*: Regarding recommendation 4, no suspension or expulsions, the natural alternative is an inclusive environment. Have you talked about programatically what types of supports are needed?
 - *Hadiyah*: We talked a lot about professional development - we know that it is critical that teachers have the correct training and support - so having experts come into the classroom. We talked for a long time about that. I was adamant about, if you want quality care you need to support teachers in ways that are very different than what we do now. When you have children who are really struggling, a teacher cannot, there just can come a time when a child is beyond what teachers know. Teachers need support so they don't blame them for why it is not working.
- *Keith Thomajan*: Getting back to the central application & matching process, I presume the intent is that families will still have a range of options?
 - *Megan Irwin*: Correct.
- *Mark Holloway*: I want to clarify something regarding suspensions and expulsions. There is a point about alternative providers. If a provider can't handle a student, do you mean that they will never be excluded from the program, but may be transferred elsewhere?

- *Hadiyah:* Our intent is that suspension isn't the first option. At some point, some children don't do well in classrooms and we want to accommodate their needs.
- *Mystique:* What would you do to encourage more black men (for example) to have employment in the kindergarten atmosphere? How do we encourage men of color to get into the field so we have a diverse staff pool?
 - *Hadiyah:* We need to go out and recruit. Getting them the support they need to be in those roles. I'm fortunate that my son has an african-american male teacher and that has changed a lot because he gets it. We're aware of that need.

Small group report-back:

- *Green group:* We agreed to everything. We had lots of conversations about the need for flexibility and avoiding unintentional consequences of barriers. We want a safety valve because that works in the real world. Some questions we had were about how the home-based programs work. We also want clarity that "centralized" means that you can call in.
- *Red group:* We talked a lot about making sure that when we define wrap-around services, you have to understand where all the services are located so we can locate the gaps and what we'll need, how they can be centralized, and kept to be cost-effective. One of the big barriers we see is the development of teachers. We need to clearly define and have a train-the-trainer model.
- *Yellow group:* We support this, but are concerned about how to cost the model. We need to understand the average number of hours that the program supports kids.
- *Blue group:* We would like to see more clarity based on needs. We also believe that mental health consultations for teachers are important.
- *Orange group:* We had so many things to say about the best way to implement this model. We have lots of questions, and a lot to say about how we cost-model a system that is....the documents mention a 2:10 ratio, but elsewhere it says 1:10?
 - *Megan Irwin:* That is a typo.
- *Orange group:* We have a lot of thoughts about how we think outside of the 9-5 box.

Eligibility & enrollment recommendations

[Staff used a PPT presentation to cover eligibility & enrollment recommendations] [Staff explained what the self-sufficiency standard (SSS) is].

- *Commissioner Vega Pederson:* Can you give us an approximation of the size of the population below the SSS?
 - *Megan Irwin:* Approximately 60% of children in Multnomah County are living below the SSS.
- *Tawna Sanchez:* Many families that are below that level can struggle with consistency. What are we doing or thinking about in terms of helping families maintain enrollment and then, did anybody have that conversation? Have we discussed those families and what we would do to accommodate them and prevent them from losing their spot?
 - *Megan Irwin:* One recommendation is that you can't lose your spot if your income rises. I think the group is interested in hearing about your concern and incorporating that.

- *Tawna Sanchez*: My question is more about stability & displacement.
- *Megan Irwin*: My sense is that the group would like to dig into that more. Homeless families are prioritized, but it is an important logistics question.
- *Ruth Adkins*: How do we administer this? Will there be a lottery?
 - *Sabrina Ersland*: We haven't discussed a lottery. We discussed a "check-off" system.
 - *Ruth Adkins*: And then matrix that with what their options are to find the best solution for each child.
- *Robert Cantwell*: Recommendation 4 may be problematic. For children with disabilities who are ready to transfer to kindergarten, their benefits stick with them until they are five. If their family decides to stay in Preschool for one more year, they may lose services and the school district won't be obligated to pick them up.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55 am.