



Preschool For All Report

———— Summer 2019 ————

**Preschool
For All** task
force



Table of Contents

A Message from Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson- 1

Executive Summary- 2

Summary of Challenges- 3

Task Force Recommendations- 4

Early Childhood Landscape in Oregon and Multnomah County- 5

Building Momentum- 7

Preschool for All Task Force- 8

Parent Accountability Council- 10

Preschool for All Work Groups- 11

Preschool for All Task Force Recommendations- 16

Next Steps The Future of Preschool for All- 23

Appendix-24

A Message from Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson



When I think of the work we do at Multnomah County, I am amazed by the ability we have to empower and impact individuals and families in myriad ways. From providing health care, to running senior help lines, to issuing marriage licenses as couples begin a new journey, we intersect with our community at important milestones in their lives. But of all of this, the work that for me is the most powerful is the impact we have on children and their families.

All young children deserve the right to learn and grow in a supportive, safe, and joyful environment. The earlier we invest in our children, the stronger our community becomes. It's on us to ensure that those opportunities exist within our community. While quality early learning is not cost-free, time and again we see the value it brings through the positive outcomes it creates for children, especially children of color, children from low-income communities, and children speaking languages other than English.

Studies reveal that when children receive the right support from a young age, they thrive. As a community, we've failed to make the needed investments in early learning that make a difference for children and families. Families should never have to choose between paying rent and sending their three-year-old to preschool. However, that is the reality for too many in our community. We also haven't made the investments in the workforce to ensure educators can stay in the profession they love and earn a living. This is exactly the work we took on with the Preschool for All Task Force.

The report that follows is the product of a year-long process that gathered community leaders from across sectors: education, business, housing, healthcare, community based organizations, parents and philanthropy. We created a vision for Preschool for All that reflects our local values and priorities. There are more than 60 programs in 43 states across the country, including in Denver, Seattle, and San Francisco that have made investments in large-scale, publicly-funded preschool programs. Multnomah County can be the next jurisdiction to step up for children and families. We need to invest in a game changing early learning system now — the future of our county depends on it.

I want to wholeheartedly thank the nearly 100 people who were engaged with this work, from the task force members to the parent advisory council, to the work group members and facilitators. And I am particularly grateful for the wonderful team who made this work possible: Tia Williams, Brooke Chilton-Timmons, Megan Irwin, Sarah Cohen-Doherty, Molly Day and the Preschool for All Vice-Chair, Mark Holloway. Together, we've taken a huge first step toward making our community a more supportive, safer and joyful place for children to grow.

Executive Summary

The early years of a child's life are crucial for social, emotional, and cognitive development. A strong body of research shows the tremendous impact of high-quality early learning programs on a child's brain development, school readiness, and family well being. Yet children in Multnomah County face significant disparities accessing high-quality preschool, particularly children living in poverty, children of color, children with special needs, and children whose home language is not English.

Oregon is the fourth least affordable state when it comes to preschool, and state and federal funding provide preschool for only those families in deepest poverty, reaching only 15 percent of three- and four- year olds in Multnomah County. Today, more than 60 percent of Multnomah County households with children under 5 years old fall below the Self-Sufficiency Standard, meaning that they are unable to meet their basic needs without assistance. Multnomah County also has one of the highest housing costs in Oregon, with 40 percent of households spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing. These economic pressures often make quality early childhood education out of reach for many families, which means too many children missing out on the benefits it provides.

Investments in early childhood education expand far beyond individuals and families, yielding positive societal impact. Economists estimate that the rate of return for funding high-quality preschool ranges between \$7 and \$10 for every dollar invested.

That's why in fall 2018, Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson convened a coalition of leaders from the public, private, and social sectors to advance the momentum toward equitable preschool access, built through community collaboration over the last seven years.

Over the course of nine months, this Preschool for All Task Force developed a roadmap for overcoming the barriers to providing universal preschool in Multnomah County, starting with children who have the least access to quality, affordable opportunities. To address these barriers, they devised guiding principles and a set of recommendations as to how to develop an equitable preschool system.

To ensure that the resulting model was designed with, as opposed to for, the community, Commissioner Vega Pederson asked the Early Learning Multnomah (ELM) Parent Accountability Council (PAC) to serve as an advisory board and invited two PAC members to join the Task Force. Partnering with PAC reflects the Task Force's commitment to designing a program that centers the values and priorities of families of color within Multnomah County.

The Task Force engaged four Work Groups comprised of technical experts who studied specific elements that are fundamental to creating a sustainable and successful preschool program:

- Policy & Program
- Workforce
- Infrastructure
- Finance Strategy & Administration

With the input of the PAC, the Work Groups developed an extensive and comprehensive set of recommendations. These were then considered and voted on by the entire Task Force. The approved recommendations are set out in full within this report. Together, they form the vision for what is needed to achieve Preschool for All in Multnomah County.

Summary of Challenges

The most pressing challenges the Work Groups were asked to address include:

- Limited access to preschool, particularly for families of color, families who speak English as a second language, those experiencing poverty, and those who don't qualify for public supports but still can't afford preschool;
- Shortage of early childhood educators and a poorly paid and undervalued existing workforce;
- Shortage of preschool classrooms and facilities; and
- Lack of a connected system to support and ensure quality.



Task Force Recommendations

In response to the above challenges, the recommendations can be grouped accordingly:

1. Limited family access

- Utilize the Self-Sufficiency Standard as income criteria for free access to preschool rather than the Federal Poverty Level, thus taking into account the specific living costs for Multnomah County.
- Develop a mixed delivery model including home-based, center-based, Head Start and public school-based preschool programs that include culturally specific and multi-generational early learning programs.
- Support the inclusion of all students; suspensions and expulsions will not be allowed.
- Provide navigators within the central administration of Preschool for All to partner with families and help them access options that meet their values and needs.

2. Shortage of educators and lack of investment in early education workforce

- Raise preschool teacher salaries to be comparable with local kindergarten teacher salaries.
- Partner with higher education institutions to increase the number of graduates from early childhood studies with a focus on students of color and students who speak languages other than English.
- Raise credentialing requirements over time in order to include the existing workforce.
- Strengthen and enhance professional development systems.

3. Shortage of classrooms and facilities

- Establish public funding source for building new preschool facilities and improving existing ones.
- Complete further work on the feasibility of incorporating early learning in public buildings or in new community infrastructure investments.
- Develop incentives to support preschool infrastructure growth and conduct further research into public funding, partnerships, and philanthropic opportunities that could encourage development.
- Develop a phased approach to achieve the full number of required classrooms, and pilot a variety of expansion efforts, incorporating what is learned into subsequent roll out.

4. Lack of a connected system to support and ensure quality

- Establish a county-wide, central entity responsible for oversight and administration of Preschool for All program that can champion the needs of families and providers while maintaining strong financial accountability and program quality.
- Avoid duplicating the work of existing entities and build on current systems by leveraging organizations that already support the early childhood ecosystem.

To develop an implementation plan for universal preschool, more detailed analysis and planning is required. The Preschool for All Task Force created a solid foundation from which a second phase of work can develop additional details for implementation and funding. This will begin in fall 2019 under the leadership of Multnomah County Commissioner Vega Pederson.

Early Childhood Landscape in Oregon and Multnomah County

It is well-documented that children thrive when supported from a young age. A strong body of research shows the tremendous impact of high-quality early learning programs on a child's brain development, school readiness, and family wellbeing. The early years in a child's life are crucial for social, emotional, and cognitive development and yet, children across Multnomah County face significant disparities accessing high-quality preschool. Systemic inequities that include a lack of access to high-quality early learning experiences mean children of color, children in poverty, children with developmental delays or disabilities, and children who are English language learners are less likely to read at grade level by 3rd grade, which is a strong predictor of high school graduation. The opportunity gap starts before birth and only widens as children grow.

Oregon is also the fourth least affordable state in the nation for the cost of preschool.¹ A single parent family at the median income typically spends 41 percent of their take-home wage on child care or preschool.² State and federal funding provides preschool for those families deepest in poverty; these investments however only reach 15 percent of three- and four- year olds in Multnomah County.³

These challenges sit alongside those created by increasing economic disparities. The number of people in poverty in Multnomah County has increased over the past 20 years at a much higher rate than the growth of the county's total population. More than 60 percent of Multnomah County households with children under five years old fall below the Self-Sufficiency Standard, meaning that they are unable to meet their basic needs without assistance.⁴ Multnomah County has one of the highest housing costs in Oregon with 40 percent of households spending more than 30 percent of their monthly income on housing costs. Increasing housing costs in the inner-east side particularly has driven many low-income households to the outer east side and eastern suburbs. Within Multnomah County, the highest rates of three- and four- year olds in poverty are in East Portland (59 percent below 200 percent FPL) and Gresham and Troutdale (45 percent below).⁵ These economic pressures are disproportionately endured by communities of color. Forty-one percent of children under 6 years old in Multnomah County are children of color, and 65 percent of children living in poverty are children of color.⁶

What's more, while the cost of preschool is out of reach for most families, and the cost of living is escalating, compensation for early childhood staff remains woefully inadequate, with many staff not able to afford high-quality care for their own children. Low compensation, lack of benefits, and lack of support for the early childhood workforce, of which the overwhelming majority of caregivers are women and disproportionately women of color,⁷ leads to high turnover and negatively impacts the quality of care and education.

Finally, efforts to improve preschool quality frequently focus on raising degree requirements for educators without making systemic changes, leaving behind those educators with deep experience and knowledge of the communities they serve. Currently Multnomah County lacks accessible degree pathways and

1 Child Care Aware of America, Parents and the High Cost of Child Care, 2017 Report

2 How unaffordable is childcare in Oregon? New report ranks costs, Oregon Live, 2017

3 ECONorthwest analysis of 2016 5-year American Community Survey data; May 1, 2018 enrollment reporting by OPK program mapped to early learning hub (from the Children's Institute)

4 ECONorthwest analysis of ACS PUMS 2012-2016 five-year data

5 ECONorthwest analysis of ACS PUMS 2016 five-year data

6 ECONorthwest analysis of ACS PUMS 2017 one-year dataset, 200% FPL

7 Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, At the Wage Floor

Early Childhood Landscape in Oregon and Multnomah County

support systems to enable a large preschool expansion. For many providers of color and providers for whom English is not their first language, institutional racism, lack of culturally and linguistically specific supports, and uneven access to resources mean that higher education is not yet a viable option. Nor is there a system to provide substitute teachers, paid planning time, or professional development days to build teacher competency and support continuous program improvement.

It is proven that investments in early childhood education programs reach far beyond individuals and families, yielding positive societal impact. Economists estimate that the rate of return for funding high-quality preschool ranges between \$7 and \$10 for every dollar invested.⁸ Quality early learning programs improve health, education, economic, and social outcomes, saving money on costly interventions later in life. By not investing in our children at a young age, we are not only failing them, but their children and grandchildren and the long-term success of our community.

By the numbers:

- There are approximately 19,000 three- and four-year olds in Multnomah County.⁹
- 19 percent are living in households with incomes below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)¹⁰ – this equates to a combined annual income under \$25,100 for a family of four.
- Over 66 percent of three- and four-year old children in Multnomah County of Hispanic/Latino, African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Native or Alaska Native, Asian or Slavic race, ethnicity or ancestry are living below 200 percent of FPL.¹¹
- An estimated 61 percent of three- and four-year olds under 200 percent of FPL are not served by state or federal preschool programs.¹²
- Median preschool teacher wage in Oregon in 2018 was \$13.70 per hour. That of a kindergarten teacher was \$38.80 per hour.¹³
- For universal preschool access for all three- and four- year olds in Multnomah County, a minimum of 260 additional high-quality classrooms are needed.¹⁴
- There are four early childhood certificate or degree programs in higher educational institutions in Multnomah County – 103 people graduated from these programs in 2016.¹⁵ For universal preschool, an additional 2,300 early childhood educators are needed.¹⁶

8 James Heckman, *Schools, Skills, Synapses* (2008)

9 ECONorthwest analysis of ACS PUMS 2016 five-year data

10 ECONorthwest analysis of ACS PUMS 2016 five-year data

11 ECONorthwest analysis of ACS PUMS 2016 five-year data

12 ECONorthwest analysis of 2016 5-year American Community Survey data; May 1, 2018 enrollment reporting by OPK program mapped to early learning hub (from the Children's Institute)

13 Early Childhood Workforce Standard 2018 Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley

14 ECONorthwest analysis of OSU Oregon Child Care Research Partnership data and Federal Head Start reporting

15 ECONorthwest analysis of IPEDS 2016 Completions data.

16 ECONorthwest analysis of OSU Oregon Child Care Research Partnership data and Federal Head Start reporting

Building Momentum

Recognizing the cost of poor and inequitable access to quality early learning experiences, the Multnomah County Commission on Children, Families & Community joined forces with nonprofit Social Venture Partners Portland (SVP) in 2012 to convene the Ready for Kindergarten Collaborative. The Collaborative convened parents, practitioners, leaders, and concerned residents to determine and advance early learning priorities in the county. As part of this effort, Portland State University was commissioned to map existing preschool programs, gain a deeper understanding of the service gaps, and learn to what extent existing services were effective for the populations they served. The results identified populations where disparities were greatest—children of color, children living in poverty, and/or children whose home language is not English. This validated the experience of those working in the community and as a result, the Collaborative identified these families as its priority populations.

Concurrently, the State of Oregon developed the Early Learning Council to implement a statewide early learning system, including 16 hubs across the state. In 2014, Early Learning Multnomah (ELM) at the United Way of Columbia-Willamette became the hub for Multnomah County. ELM created the Parent Accountability Council (PAC) to guide its work and to ensure that the needs and values of communities of color were prioritized. In 2015, the State of Oregon funded Preschool Promise as a new mixed-delivery model for publicly-funded, quality preschool. In 2016, with deep involvement of the ELM Parent Accountability Council and members of the early childhood community, ELM published a vision for a coordinated preschool system that was affordable, accessible, culturally relevant, inclusive, trauma-informed, high-quality and that created joyful learning environments.

Having laid this groundwork, ELM, SVP and others began a research and co-creation process with parents and community members to determine where gaps still existed and what was required to close them. Together, ELM and SVP co-convened the Preschool Success Project design sessions with leaders of community-based organizations and early childhood education. It became clear that access to early learning experiences, especially culturally specific programming, was extremely limited for priority populations in our community and that a political champion would be vital for driving systemic change.



Preschool for All Task Force

Through the leadership of Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson and in partnership with SVP and United Way of Columbia-Willamette's Early Learning Multnomah, the Preschool for All Task Force was convened in September 2018. The Task Force was comprised of a cross-sector group of community leaders including early learning experts and advocates, higher education leaders, Multnomah County school district superintendents, members of the business community, health sector leaders, culturally specific community based organizations and parents. The Task Force met monthly, facilitated by Megan Irwin, Oregon's former Early Learning System Director.

At each meeting the Task Force reviewed data related to Multnomah County's current preschool and early learning capacity, and reviewed and discussed recommendations generated by Preschool for All Work Groups to address workforce shortages and needs, infrastructure gaps, administrative structure needs, and program design policies.

The Preschool for All Task Force strove to keep children and families at the center of every decision. In its initial meetings, the Task Force articulated a set of commitments to children and families as a north star for planning.

The Task Force Commitment to Children and Families

Children and Families of Multnomah County,

- We commit to partnering with you to develop affordable, quality, preschool and early learning experiences that are joyful, inclusive, create a love of learning, and build positive identity.
- We commit to confront and challenge racism in school practices, processes, and systems.
- We commit to support programs that are culturally responsive, and celebrate home languages, cultures, and traditions.
- We commit to ensuring that you have access to quality, affordable, programs that match with your values and meet your family's needs.
- We commit to following your lead as parents and experts on your children and communities.
- More than anything we commit to do the things we think cannot be done, going beyond what's been done in the past, as we strive toward our vision:

Every child has access to a preschool that's right for them, and every family can afford it.

To ensure that the Task Force's vision for Preschool for All truly reflected the unique strengths and needs of Multnomah County, Commissioner Vega Pederson invited local technical experts to participate in four Work Groups (See Appendix 1 for a full list of the Task Force and Work Group membership). More than 95 individuals participated in the Task Force and the Work Groups, representing over 50 organizations. The Task Force also relied on the leaders at ELM to utilize the structure and expertise of PAC to help shape and give feedback on the recommendations. This structure paved the way for innovative strategies to emerge, embedding the wisdom and lived experience of community members.

The four Work Groups focused on specific elements key to early childhood education:

- Policy & Program
- Workforce
- Infrastructure
- Finance Strategy & Administration

Preschool for All Task Force (continued)

Work Group facilitators guided discussions and helped each group arrive at consensus around critical decisions from workforce compensation to the breadth and depth of the program model. Facilitators of each Work Group then helped craft these decisions into recommendations for Task Force and PAC feedback. The Work Group revised each set of recommendations based on this input and returned it to the Task Force for a vote on their final recommendation.

ECONorthwest, as a respected economic consulting agency, provided contextual data, including analysis of population estimates, workforce data, cost models and learnings from similar preschool expansion efforts across the country.

The Task Force concluded in June 2019 with the recommendations outlined in this report forming the framework for a universal preschool system in Multnomah County.



Image courtesy of CAIRO Oregon

Parent Accountability Council

An element that set Multnomah County's Preschool for All Task Force apart was its reliance on the ELM Parent Accountability Council (PAC), which served as an advisory body. PAC was initially created to guide the work of Early Learning Multnomah (one of Oregon's 16 regional early learning hubs) and ensure that the voices of families of color were at the center of decision-making for the hub. Parents from African American, African immigrant, Asian, Latino, Native American, and Slavic communities form the Council. In addition to the monthly PAC meetings, partner organizations convened quarterly culturally-specific Parent Leadership Team meetings for broader parent input.

"We are our child's first teacher. We are a reflection of our community...successful programming for families can only be created through the voice of parents. Family voice enhances policy." — PAC member

PAC set out a vision for preschools in Multnomah County to be:

- **Affordable** so that all families can give their children a great start toward school success;
- **Accessible** so that families can take their children to the preschool setting that works best for them;
- **Culturally relevant** so that families are honored and respected and understood;
- **Trauma-sensitive** so that children and families have the supports they need;
- **Inclusive** so that children of all abilities are welcome to play and grow together;
- **High quality** so that skilled teachers support children's growth and development; and
- **Joyful learning environments** where children are encouraged to explore and to experiment with the world around them.

Each Work Group and the Task Force viewed the set of challenges and issues they were addressing through this lens and responded with recommendations accordingly.

Throughout the Task Force period of engagement, PAC met to discuss the subject of each Work Group's recommendations prior to Task Force votes to ensure that local community views were considered. Feedback from the PAC came directly to the Task Force through two parent leaders who were members of both groups. PAC played a crucial role in ensuring that recommendations were designed with the community. We expect that this community-based, participatory policy-making approach will ensure that Preschool for All will be more sustainable, culturally relevant and inclusive.

"We are an all-star team of parents that are all pushing against a system that historically hasn't served our children the way it could...in my time with PAC, not only have I seen parent leaders come together pushing for a common cause, I have seen marginalized communities come together, empowering one another, breaking down walls with commonalities and working together towards the better future we all want for our children."
— PAC member

Preschool for All Work Groups

Each of the four Work Groups focused on different aspects which, collectively, are vital if universal preschool is to be implemented in Multnomah County.

The focus of the four groups was as follows:

- 1. Policy & Program:** Designing a high-quality preschool program for children and families from diverse backgrounds. This includes flexibility for families to access affordable preschool options that meet their values and needs;
- 2. Workforce:** Developing an adequately sized workforce that is skilled, valued and compensated fairly. This not only includes, but embraces, in-home providers, and supports parents and high school students to access training and education in early learning;
- 3. Infrastructure:** Identifying ways to ensure preschool programming fills geographical gaps across the county, how to create additional high-quality settings and how to incentivize building developments; and
- 4. Finance, Strategy & Administration:** Creating the framework for a central administration and advising on how much it would cost to deliver the Preschool for All program and how the program might be funded.

A summary of the journey that each Work Group underwent in order to arrive at their recommendations is as follows:

1. Policy & Program

The key areas covered by this group included:

- Program model structure
- Enrollment
- Collaboration with families
- Health and safety
- Instructional standards, curriculum and assessments
- Broader policy context

The Policy & Program Work Group dedicated their efforts to designing a preschool model that took into account what families say they want from a program and that is based on best-practice models and research into early learning practices. The group therefore recommended a program that addresses the following:

- The need for high standards of instruction.
- Supporting children and families from diverse backgrounds.
- Ensuring a flexible framework that allows families to select affordable preschool options that align with their needs and values.

While many preschool expansions across the county have centered their growth on school districts, Policy & Program quickly focused on the need for a mixed delivery system that included a variety of program types. This included culturally specific, multi-generational preschool programs where children and their parents attend together. These unique programs are designed to meet the needs of communities and create safe environments for families to thrive.

Preschool for All Work Groups (continued)

With the rising cost of housing in Multnomah County and with gentrification of neighborhoods pushing families out, the Policy & Program Work Group proposed the Self-Sufficiency Standard as the income criteria for eligible families. Rather than the Federal Poverty Level, which is the same in rural Montana as it is in New York City, the Self-Sufficiency Standard is a more nuanced tool that looks at the specific cost of living in Multnomah County and determines the income that a family must earn to cover basic needs without assistance.

Other important decisions along the Work Group's nine-month journey included creating a policy of no suspensions or expulsions, recognizing how these disproportionately impact children of color, especially young African-American boys. The group recognized the need to provide the support necessary for staff to be successful with every child, by helping them recognize their own biases and providing coaching and professional development. In order to create the most optimal learning environment, the group recommended a lower staff-to-child ratio than most traditional preschool programs, with three adults in each classroom of 20 children and in each home setting with 16 children.

After the program framework took shape, Policy & Program engaged in discussions and group activities that outlined the elements of high-quality preschool and early learning environments that support the development of the social, emotional and pre-academic skills necessary for success in elementary school and beyond. Policy & Program worked hard to ensure that high-quality always included honoring family culture, needs and preferences, and that it should create settings where all preschool children and families feel safe and that they belong.

2. Workforce

The areas this group focused on included:

- Credentialing requirements for Preschool for All
- Compensation guidelines for Preschool for All
- Staff competencies
- Workforce development and support strategies

In order to fully implement universal preschool in Multnomah County, an additional 2,300 early childhood educators are necessary. Historically, low compensation and systemic educational barriers have prevented early childhood educators and professionals from accessing degrees in early education and progressing through the higher education system. Early educators are currently poorly paid, undervalued, and required to navigate confusing and disconnected systems and regulations.

The Workforce Work Group built its recommendations with a strong commitment to supporting existing community care providers, most of whom are women and, disproportionately, women of color. The Work Group considered how to include providers who may not yet meet Preschool for All proposed requirements of licensure and credentialing, but who could acquire these with outreach and support. In-home providers, whose unique strengths and needs are often not considered in the development of preschool systems and investments, were considered throughout the group's work.

The Workforce Work Group's first task was to determine the credentialing requirements and compensation levels for Preschool for All program leads and program assistants. In order to bring along

Preschool for All Work Groups (continued)

the existing early education workforce and recognize the systemic inequalities in access to degrees, the group recommended that credentialing requirements grow over time, after substantial supports have been put in place, and that higher education not be the only credentialing pathway for Preschool for All teachers and assistants.

The group decided that at both the start of Preschool for All, and in 10 to 15 years when the Preschool for All system is mature, there would always be a viable and respected community-based credential that utilizes the Oregon Registry Online career lattice. That credentialing should also include an evaluation of competency, regardless of degree or credentialing level.

By valuing credentialing pathways, degrees and community-based trainings, Preschool for All recognizes the experience and wisdom of providers who reflect the communities they serve and have not had the opportunity to access higher education.

The final recommendation focused on pay for Preschool for All program leaders being comparable to the average kindergarten teacher salary in Multnomah County, with salaries being tiered by credentialing level. A degree would always have an equivalent on the career lattice, but a higher level on the career lattice would result in a higher salary. To avoid concerns about ongoing low wages and pay gaps for early childhood professionals, the Preschool for All salary scale must avoid dramatic pay stratification and reflect the cost of living in Multnomah County.

The Workforce Work Group also considered the competencies that staff in Preschool for All programs would need to demonstrate and the administrative supports needed to build to a mature system when credentialing requirements would be higher. The group stressed that major investments would be needed in professional development, and financial and systemic workforce support systems. The existing system is confusing, disjointed and does not provide a viable path for providers who speak languages other than English. The workforce development and support recommendations included investments in programs that provide opportunities for parents and high school students to obtain their early childhood certification, scholarships to access training and higher education, regular coaching, increased support for navigation and changes to the existing early childhood system.

3. Infrastructure

This Work Group had a broad area of focus which included:

- Identifying the gap between existing preschool space and future needs.
- Finding creative opportunities and partnerships to provide additional early learning facilities.

In preparation, this group reviewed the current landscape of early childhood infrastructure in Multnomah County, outcomes of infrastructure investments in other jurisdictions across the country, and learned from a range of child care providers through site visits and interviews with in-home providers, schools, Head Start facilities and centers. The Work Group reviewed geographic maps of Multnomah County outlining income disparities and the available preschool slots and settings in different regions of the county. Based on their analysis, the group recommended that areas with the least high-quality preschool

Preschool for All Work Groups (continued)

access should be prioritized for infrastructure investments and partnership opportunities, and that an equity lens should be used to prioritize development. These high-needs areas included East Portland and East Multnomah County.

The Infrastructure Work Group also believed that investments should add to the diversity of settings available (in-home, schools and centers) in each area to create more choices for families. Currently, there are far more in-home child care providers in East Multnomah County and more early childhood centers in downtown and closer to the city core.

The group also proposed that prior to implementation, significant outreach should be done to partner with culturally specific and culturally responsive providers to support their facility needs in advance of their participation in the Preschool for All program.

In the short term, the group recommended that planning focus on gaining a better understanding of existing opportunities for partnerships and that initial investments should prioritize spaces and opportunities that leverage other resources. The Infrastructure Work Group also recommended that a survey be conducted in the next phase of the Preschool for All work to build a deeper understanding of the potential opportunities for partnerships, prioritizing an analysis of current slots and capacity to facilitate growth, expansion and stability of existing preschools, with a focus on culturally specific providers.

Based on analysis by ECONorthwest, an additional 260 to 580 high-quality classrooms need to be added to serve all three and four year olds in Multnomah County in a universal preschool system. While reviewing options as to how to create these classrooms, the group noted that developers are frequently wary of including early learning spaces in new buildings because of strict development and operational regulations. Developers also run the risk of not finding credit-worthy tenants who can pay market rate rents. To mitigate these concerns, incentives and capital tools will be needed to spur development, reduce uncertainty and rapidly increase the supply of preschool infrastructure. The Infrastructure Work Group recommended exploring both public and private partnerships, tax credits and incentives, and other development tools to encourage more rapid expansion of child care facilities.

Due to the vast undertaking these recommendations require, the group advised that the implementation team should develop and recommend a phased strategy to get to scale and that Preschool for All consider one or more pilot programs to explore these options. In the next phase of infrastructure planning, coordinated conversations with local jurisdictions, providers, businesses and the philanthropic community could determine which options to prioritize.

4. Finance Strategy and Administration

This Work Group built on and responded to the recommendations of the other three groups. Their focus included:

- Required capabilities and functions of an administrative organization
- Cost estimates of the Preschool for All program
- Revenue generating options

Preschool for All Work Groups (continued)

The Finance Strategy & Administration (FSA) Work Group used the recommendations proposed by the other three Work Groups to set out what would be required of a Preschool for All central administration in order to deliver their recommendations. Their initial priority was to utilize the Policy & Program recommendations on eligibility, enrollment and program model to identify the key functions of a Preschool for All administrative body (rather than identifying an organization to serve as this central body). The group considered which functions should be taken on by a central administrative body and which functions might be contracted out to other organizations.

In order to ensure a high-quality program, FSA recommended that a core set of responsibilities should be completed by a county-wide central body responsible for oversight of the Preschool for All program. This central administration should be structured as effectively and efficiently as possible. They advised that the central administration needs to provide strong operational support and oversight of the Preschool for All program, emphasizing the importance of administering an equitable program for families, children and providers.

FSA recommended building on current systems and avoiding duplicating the work of existing entities by leveraging organizations that already support the early childhood ecosystem. FSA especially recognized the importance of culturally responsive services and encouraged partnerships with organizations that are trusted by their local communities.

Lastly, FSA was tasked with advising on the development of a Preschool for All cost estimate and with reviewing potential revenue mechanisms for funding the program. Their guidance shaped the information and discussions prior to the Task Force review of the information.

Preschool for All Task Force Recommendations

The Task Force strove to address the four major challenges to high-quality preschool access in Multnomah County through the following recommendations. Each of the Task Force's votes on these recommendations included a presentation from the Work Group that proposed the strategies, a question and answer period, and a discussion. Task Force members would provide feedback during discussions and through written input on the recommendations. The Work Group then used the questions, concerns and ideas to refine each set of recommendations, before bringing them back to the Task Force for a future vote.

In order to be included, the final recommendation needed to pass the Task Force with at least 80 percent of present members voting that they agreed or accepted the recommendation. More detail on the considerations thinking behind the recommendations can be found in the work group sections of this report.

1 *Limited access to preschool, particularly for families of color, families who speak English as a second language, those experiencing poverty, and those who don't qualify for public supports but still can't afford preschool.*

Eligibility & Enrollment

1. Base economic eligibility for free access to the Self-Sufficiency Standard for Multnomah County rather than using Federal Poverty Level.
2. Allow families with incomes above the Standard to apply for/enroll in Preschool for All via sliding-scale tuition, with priority given to families living closest to the standard.
3. Be open for both three- and four-year olds.
4. Prioritize migrant children, children from historically marginalized communities, children with developmental delays and disabilities, refugee children, Native American children, children learning English, homeless children, children of incarcerated families, children of parents in substance use treatment, foster children, children of teen parents, children whose parents are in school, and military families for enrollment.
5. Prohibit families from being disenrolled for any reason related to a change in eligibility requirements from the time enrolled until graduation from the program.
6. Allow parents of kindergarten eligible children, who have been previously enrolled in the program to request to keep their slot for that additional year. Requests must be made by the child's family (not the program).

Suspension & Expulsion

7. Prohibit suspensions and expulsions of children. When a concern arises about a child's placement with a provider, the provider, the family, a family advocate, and Preschool for All administrators will meet to address the situation collaboratively.

Preschool for All Task Force Recommendations (continued)

Program Model

8. Utilize a mixed delivery model and include home-based, center-based, Head Start, and public school-based preschool providers.
9. Include culturally specific, multi-generational early learning programs as part of the mixed delivery system.
10. Ensure that families will have equitable access to program types and the ability to indicate setting preferences when applying.
11. Offer families half-day and full-day schedules.
12. Require that providers offer a minimum of 900 hours per year for a full-day program and 400 hours per year for a half-day program.

Supports for Families

13. Provide transportation for families.
14. Create a navigator position in the central administrative office responsible for coordination with other service providers to meet family needs.

2 *Shortage of early childhood educators and a poorly paid and undervalued existing workforce.*

Compensation

1. Require that teacher salaries will be comparable with the average kindergarten teacher salary in Multnomah County. Salaries will be tiered by credential level.
2. Provide compensation that increases as the provider's Oregon Registry Online step level or degree increases.
3. Require that program assistant salaries will have parity with the average elementary school paraprofessional salary for Multnomah County, no less than \$15 per hour.
4. Create a salary scale that avoids dramatic pay stratification for teachers, regardless of credentialing level, and reflects the cost of living in Multnomah County.

Credentialing

5. Include a community-based pathway credentialing option, meaning that providers can achieve their credentialing through the Oregon Registry Online and must attend community-based training or earn college credits that align with the Oregon Core Body of Knowledge.
6. Institute credentialing requirements that build over time for both lead and assistant teachers, allowing for workforce development strategies and supports to be in place before the credentialing requirements rise. At program maturity, lead teachers will be required to be on Step 9 of the Oregon Registry or have an associate degree or bachelor's degree.

Preschool for All Task Force Recommendations (continued)

Workforce Development

7. Advocate strongly for state policy reforms and partner with state leaders at the Early Learning Council, Early Learning Division, Oregon Center for Career Development to ensure that the Oregon Registry Online (ORO) is positioned to meet community training needs and avoid roadblocks for providers of color and providers who speak diverse languages to advance their training.
8. Recruit new providers and partner with existing community child-care providers to obtain licensure and meet the Preschool for All requirements.
9. Partner with providers who want to access higher education or community-based trainings including:
 - a. Scholarships for tuition and other costs associated with higher education, such as substitute staff and childcare for their children.
 - b. Culturally and linguistically relevant education navigation services to help providers develop the timeline and path to graduation that is the best fit for them.
10. Partner closely with local community colleges and universities to increase the number of early educators graduating from their institution, with an emphasis on making the system more accessible for students who speak languages besides English. Strengthen existing articulation agreements and other system agreements to make it easier to access and navigate higher education.
11. Provide opportunities to access personal and professional development supports such as career coaching, professional networks and unions.
12. Expand, replicate, or develop new programs that provide early educator certification, training and pathways to employment, including Child Development Associate programs for parents, high school students, English language learners, the Community Education Worker certification and paid internship opportunities.

3 *Shortage of preschool classrooms and facilities.*

1. Make infrastructure investments and development decisions with a racial equity lens and prioritize reducing geographic and racial disparities.
2. Create a dedicated public funding source for capital improvements and new construction.
3. Focus on gaining a better understanding of existing opportunities for infrastructure partnerships. When funding is available, initial investments should prioritize spaces and opportunities that leverage other resources. Preschool for All infrastructure planning needs to include:
 - a. Conversations with families and existing preschool providers of all types to gather additional information about their infrastructure-related priorities (amenities, access, location, type) for preschool facilities. Conversations with state licensers to identify common challenges among providers.
 - b. A mapping of schools, churches, affordable housing, libraries, community centers, and other public buildings that may have available and easily convertible spaces.
 - c. Conversations with local entities using or planning to use bonding authority in order to explore partnerships to incorporate early learning into their planning. As child care is closely related to schools, transportation, and housing, Preschool for All should work with Metro, TriMet and school districts to include early learning centers as allowable expenditures in their bond language and development plans.

Preschool for All Task Force Recommendations (continued)

- d. Additionally, Preschool for All should prioritize an analysis of current slots and capacity to facilitate growth, expansion, and stability of existing providers, with a focus on culturally specific providers.
4. Create systematic supports to help providers access infrastructure technical assistance and navigate challenging regulatory and permitting systems. These supports should include:
 - a. A code guide for providers who are interested in building a new space or remodeling an existing one. This guide should build on existing resources from the State and be written in plain language and translated into multiple languages. The guide will help providers navigate State, city, and other regulations.
 - b. A list of vetted professionals (architects, contractors, developers, etc.) who are knowledgeable about child care design and licensing guidelines and financing options for providers to access.
 - c. Access to a knowledgeable contact person at each applicable stage in the permitting process who can answer questions and support providers (e.g. the Bureau of Development Services in Portland has a staff person dedicated to child care).
 - d. Trainings for providers that focus on infrastructure and enable such training to count toward required training hours.
 - e. Trainings for infrastructure professionals (architects, contractors, developers, etc.) on child care licensing that meet requirements for Continuing Education.
 - f. Connections to small business networks and other supports in partnership with Child Care Resource and Referral.
5. Develop incentives and capital tools to support preschool infrastructure growth. These might include:
 - a. A risk mitigation fund underwritten by the Preschool for All central administrative body. This can address the lack of certainty and risk in private investments in early childhood spaces and could follow existing models, such as the Portland Housing Bureau's Risk Mitigation Pool for supportive housing units in its portfolio.
 - b. Work with the state to create a new focused tax credit to directly reduce the costs of developing early learning facilities. Tax credits are a highly effective tool in the development of specific facilities by creating economic incentives for development.
 - c. Property tax abatement for buildings that include early learning facilities.
 - d. A feasibility grant program, modeled on Prosper Portland's Development Opportunity Services grants, that would help a provider pay for the initial due diligence (site selection and evaluation, design, financial feasibility) required to evaluate and understand an infrastructure project. Under certain circumstances, the grant should be forgivable if the project does not move forward.
 - e. Grants and no- or low-interest loans for in-home providers and centers to renovate and expand their space.
 - f. Agreements with local jurisdictions to waive some or all permit and/or System Development charges, which can often be cost prohibitive to providers.
 - g. Further research public funding tools, partnerships, and philanthropic opportunities that might be utilized by Preschool for All to encourage infrastructure development.

Preschool for All Task Force Recommendations (continued)

4 *Lack of a connected system to support and ensure quality.*

Administration

1. Identify a county-wide central body responsible for administering the Preschool for All program. The functions of the administrative body should include:

Program Oversight (Equity, Coordination, Evaluation & Accountability)

- a. Provide oversight and management for Preschool for All, including the coordination of an advisory group.
- b. Oversee financial management including budgeting analysis, needs assessment, collection of funds, and braiding of funding streams.
- c. Guide strategic planning to meet equity commitments and financial and programmatic needs, including infrastructure and workforce development.
- d. Provide oversight and public communication of data collection and evaluation results.
- e. Collaborate with the State, Head Start providers, Early Childhood Special Education, and the Early Learning Hub to ensure that Preschool for All is tightly coordinated with system partners

Family Experience

- f. Manage and oversee the application, eligibility, and enrollment process.
- g. Identify and address gaps in provider types and geographic needs as the program grows.
- h. Provide a clear and accessible way for families to raise concerns and have them addressed quickly, such as with an ombudsman.

Provider Support

- i. Establish clear eligibility guidelines and processes to become a Preschool for All provider.
- j. Contract with Preschool for All providers (and other organizations providing services).
- k. Braid funding streams to ease the administrative burden on providers.
- l. Monitor contract compliance, including adherence to program quality standards.
- m. Provide technical support for siting and development of new facilities and/or community level infrastructure supports and strategies.
- n. Coordinate and support workforce development strategies with higher education partners and community-based organizations.

Preschool for All Task Force Recommendations (continued)

2. Decide if the central administration or another organization is best positioned to complete the following functions.

Program Oversight (Equity, Coordination, Evaluation & Accountability)

- a. Collect and manage data.
- b. Conduct a formal audit.
- c. Complete a system evaluation.

Family Experience

- d. Lead culturally specific and culturally responsive outreach to families for Preschool for All recruitment.
- e. Provide family navigators to support resource connections.

Provider support

- f. Coordinate and lead training and professional development of preschool educators.
 - g. Provide behavioral specialists to support and coach teachers.
 - h. Recruit potential Preschool for All providers.
 - i. Provide support to reach program quality standards.
3. Structure the central administration as effectively and efficiently as possible to be able to provide strong operational support and oversight of Preschool for All.
 4. Avoid duplicating the work of existing entities and build on current systems by leveraging organizations that already support the early childhood ecosystem, including partnerships with those organizations that are trusted by the community.
 5. Create a position at Preschool for All central administration to oversee workforce development and support strategies.
 6. Create a position at Preschool for All central administration focused on infrastructure planning and supports. This position would be tasked with finding ways to reduce barriers for providers to start, grow, and/or expand preschool operations.

Funding

7. Fund providers for a minimum of one teacher and two support staff. Programs may request adjustments to staffing levels based on classroom/group size .
8. Allocate additional funding to providers that serve children with developmental delays or disabilities and providers that serve dual language learners.
9. Utilize Employment Related Day Care and/or other currently available supplemental funds to support providers to offer extended hours for before and aftercare.

Preschool for All Task Force Recommendations (continued)

Overall Program Goals & Evaluation

10. Track and measure overall Preschool for All program outcomes that include:
 - a. Children develop pre-academic and social emotional skills;
 - b. Developmental screenings are implemented appropriately and referrals are made when indicated;
 - c. The opportunity gap narrows at school entry and 3rd grade;
 - d. Parents and families are engaged in their child's learning; and
 - e. A diverse workforce is recruited, supported and retained.
11. Evaluate overall implementation and progress toward meeting the program's goals.

Quality & Instruction

12. Use a quality framework addressing the following domains of program instruction and administration: relationships, family partnerships, community partnerships, teaching, curriculum, screening and assessment, staff competencies, preparation, and support, health, physical environment, and leadership and management. Programs are expected to work toward quality in each domain and will be given strengths-based support from Preschool for All administrators and contractors to continually improve.
13. Use a suite of tools to support quality improvement: The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale–Revised (ECERS-R), the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale (FCCERS), and the Administration for Children and Families Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness Program Preparedness Checklist (adapted).
14. Require participation in an evaluation of competency and a training series.
15. Implement a cohesive set of strategies that support and grow educator competency:
 - a. Provide regular coaching for the Preschool for All workforce that builds on the strengths and needs of individual programs and early educators.
 - b. Ensure that coaches and mentors are recruited from communities that reflect the children and providers of Preschool for All.
 - c. Implement professional learning communities for providers.
16. Provide adequate time for provider planning and reflection.
17. Align instructional standards with Oregon's Early Learning through Kindergarten Guidelines, with the addition of a domain for perceptual, motor, and physical development.
18. Permit providers to select the curriculum and assessment tools best suited for the populations they serve, in alignment with the domains and standards represented in the Oregon Early Learning through Kindergarten Guidelines.

Shared Services

19. Invest in and support a shared services model that will allow providers to access centralized supports. Utilize small business development supports available through community partners.

Next steps: The Future of Preschool for All

The Preschool for All Task Force formed a strong vision and foundation to achieve universal preschool in Multnomah County. Concurrently, Oregon policymakers approved the Student Success Act in spring 2019, investing another \$200 million per year dedicated to early childhood services statewide as part of a \$1 billion education package. The clarity of vision provided through Preschool for All positions Multnomah County ahead of the curve in prioritizing and planning investment of these new state dollars where our county's residents want and need it most.

With these dollars spread across the state, however, the investment in Multnomah County will still not be enough to serve all of our children. We are also not yet prepared to implement a larger scale and more equitable system. More work must be done to secure additional funds and to refine the vision and recommendations of the Task Force. Starting in Fall 2019, two leadership groups will drive these next-stage efforts:

The Steering Committee, which will determine the feasibility of public funding and revenue options, analysis of the State's increased investment (including the Student Success Act), and identify the timeline for a potential ballot measure for revenue generation.

The Technical Advisory Committee, which will focus on the next steps for the Task Force recommendations, creating a plan and cost for how Preschool for All will be implemented and maintained.

In Closing

Now is the time to create a preschool system that serves all our community's children, places families at the center, and uplifts a vital workforce. Join with us in this quest. We invite your further inquiry in this vision and strategy. We encourage your engagement in our next phase of development and we ask for your support in making Preschool for All a reality in our community.



Image courtesy of Latino Network

Appendix

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