

Preschool for All Task Force Meeting Notes

March 18, 2019, 9:00-11:00

State of Oregon Building, 800 NE Oregon St.

In attendance: Andrea Paluso, Andrew Hoan, Carmen Rubio, Amy Nash-Kille, Jenn Lynch, Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson, Keith Thomajan, Ken Thrasher, Lee Po Cha, Lisa Pelligrino, Lydia Gray-Holifield, Maggie Bennington-Davis, Mark Holloway, Marvin Lynn, Michael Buonocore, Michael Lopes Serrao, Mystique Pratcher, Abby Gassama (for Tawna Sanchez), Petra Hernandez, Ruth Adkins, Swati Adarkar

Welcomes & Introduction

- Commissioner Vega Pederson: Good morning, thanks for being here. All the work we've seen over the last several months is coming together today with this meeting. We'll hear from the Program & Policy, Workforce, and Infrastructure workgroups. This conversation will give a good picture of what we want this program to look like for children, families, and the workforce.
- Megan Irwin: Today we have a big agenda that will require you to switch between three different topics. Going to have first infrastructure discussion, then we'll move to talking about proposed outcomes eval, and then we'll revisit & vote on workforce recommendations. We'll spend more time on that vote. We are also going to get some data from ECO NW to ground you in our current state, you'll hear from the co-chairs of that work group, then we'll have a full-group discussion. You can write questions on notecards if you'd like.

Infrastructure

- Lisa Rau: *used PPT presentation to provide data analysis of current preschool landscape in Multnomah County.*
- Megan Irwin: As you absorb that, this is a good time to write down questions.
- Sarah Zahn & Margaret Mahoney: *Used a PPT presentation to provide an overview of the infrastructure workgroup work and recommendations.*
- Megan: Can you talk to the task force about a couple of the settings you've been to?
 - Sarah: We've located our meetings at various preschool centers, Where we've been able to see opportunities & challenges.
 - Margaret: we've been to Earl Boyles and a home-based center in an affordable housing project built by Rose CDC. On Friday we saw a modular site and a beautiful preschool site at MHCC. We talked to a home-based provider without seeing her site. We also saw a Home Forward site. The Rose site was very successful. Mixed programs like that can pose challenges for finding funding because of multiple funding streams.
- Megan Irwin: As this group is navigating the complexities of all this and coming up with a recommendation for how we can tackle those challenges, and you've seen on your maps where we have shortages, they're really looking for guidance for how you'd like to see them prioritize all these things.

- Ken Thrasher: There are architects & construction firms who specialize in preschools. If it was school-based model you could look at the overall inventory in a school district and start to see where can you leverage dollars, you can create a partnership with districts, and you look to create leverage. If everyone goes out and creates their own thing you'll never get a program that meets all these needs.
 - Megan Irwin: So you are saying we need to come up with a set of best-practices for each of these needs.
- Andrea Paluso: More than a set of best practices, a set of goals for each of those areas. If you have a goal, how do you best facilitate that happening? We need a coordinated plan. It feels important to be talking to Metro and the City. We've flagged why childcare hasn't been a part of our urban planning conversations, but the City & Metro have incentivised locations for certain sectors, and they're looking at new funding streams to support facilities development, so we should advocate for a set aside.
- Ruth Adkins: Is the vision that there will be coordination around building the infrastructure?
 - Commissioner Vega Pederson: That's a question for our group. We know there's a need for infrastructure, how we tackle that is up to us. We're going to have to raise revenue. How do we put our minds together to do this? There is work happening where I live from different organizations who have seen this need and are talking about doing their own effort, but how do we coordinate? I do think there's a need for centralized coordination.
 - Sarah Zahn: We've talked about if there's a centralized location- where does it live? It's something we've talked about but need guidance on.
 - Commissioner Vega Pederson: I think the part about how we're coordinating with other stuff going on, I think having an organization that's doing that will make the conversations stronger.
 - Lee Po Cha: I want us to be thoughtful about the culturally specific community. If you look at existing infrastructure maybe you can think about how we focus on these communities. They may not have anything that exists right now. If we think about infrastructure investment and being thoughtful for prioritizing those who are most vulnerable and may not have the capacity to do what they need right now. We need to be thoughtful about that.
 - Megan Irwin: Absolutely, and that aligns with the equity goals you all have prioritized.
 - Lee Po Cha: How would a home-based model look? I think those communities have a lot of home based models.
 - Task Force Member: What kind of admin entity to you need to fund & build to tackle all these questions. What's the infrastructure that will make these decisions. That seems very daunting.
 - Carmen Rubio: When building that infrastructure, be mindful to lift up underserved communities. Many communities have home care that isn't connected to a system, but we want to include them.

- Swati Adarkar: It feels like there's a need to think about parent demographic data with some community driven planning with parents discussing where they want their kids. I also think it's important to look at unintended consequences. I think the infant and toddler piece is very important and we shouldn't wait 20 years to address that. I think when you look at particular settings like home-based its a great way to think about alternative ways to serve those populations, requires nitty gritty planning. We should build upon what already exists and not build something new. SUN Program has aimed to do more in the 0-5 space. We can talk to parents and learn what they want for their kids. Need to think about what our assumptions around financing are. What are funding streams and who bears the burden? I still strongly feel that when we go for K-12 bonds we should also support 0-5. We've seen that in many parts of the state. From a values standpoint we need to step back and learn what the funding streams are.
- Andrea Paluso: if we invest in 3-4 it will depress the 0-3 market because we'll see providers leave that space. We need to grapple with that. I would also ask: what will the governance of this system will look like -- is there a governance committee thinking of how we ensure community governance?
 - Megan Irwin: that's a great conversation to feed into our meeting in April.
- Marvin Lynn: When talking about constructing buildings, thats huge, that makes me think a lot about oversight. It's a big lift. I agree for those of us involved with childcare facilities there's ways this can build on existing strengths. We talk about what we'd do with more resources. We could think about investing in current providers. For home care folks too.
- Andrew Hoan: I agree this is a big lift. We value knowing the trends with labor & construction costs. We all understand the challenges there. We need to dive into a thoughtful conversation with the real estate and construction communities to understand the outlook in a few years. I can't stress enough how much we need to understand the costs 2-3 years from now.
 - Megan Irwin: We need to build off the existing infrastructure and also do predictive planning. That includes costs and migration.
- Mark Holloway: This group has been really strong, expect measured recommendations that include a phase 2 study to go more in-depth. I'd say the question of where families want children in their care has stumped the group because there isn't existing data, and we get different answers from everybody. That would be very helpful if you could talk about that within your networks. 70% of east county residents leave that area every day for work, and 70% of jobs in east county are filled by non east county residents.

Program outcomes & evaluations

- Megan Irwin: This work group has worked hard to accurately represent what is happening in the classroom. They've thought about how this is done ethically, correctly, and they thought about what we want to measure. They've also thought about what the result we want is, but process evaluation is very important at the beginning of a program.

- Amy Nash Kelle: *Used PPT to provide an overview of the outcome & evaluation recommendations.*
- Lee Po Cha: I think it's great that we have some sort of outcomes around the native language, I wonder around the tool. We're talking about a lot of languages. Have you thought about a more straightforward way of doing this? Doing it in every language may be complex. Is there anything that already exists?
 - Megan Irwin: We may need some guidance. We want the program to support native & English language development. The tools that help us are in the K-12 system, but those assessments are only in English & Spanish. It's up here as a value, but we need to talk more about plausibility.
- Marvin Lynn: One of the challenging things about assessments is standards & expectations. What I see as outcomes aren't really standards. What does language development look like? Same thing for social/emotional development. Another piece is about whether we focus on the child or the system/institution/structure. It should be about continuous improvement for the system. How do these standards/outcomes speak to that? Secondly, we do a lot of early childhood intervention work, not just to find disability, but to find ways to work through challenges so kids get to kindergarten knowing what they need. That can prevent them from being pushed into special programs when they're in K-12 that can be isolating.
 - Amy Nash-Kelle: I really recommend looking at Oregon's early learning standards to see what we hope to see out of language/social/emotional development. It also has pull-outs for special needs and dual language students.
 - Marvin Lynn: In terms of language, how do you deal with dialects?
 - Amy Nash-Kelle: It's a consistent challenge. We're looking at translation/interpreters for other languages, but certainly for dialects it's more challenging. It comes down to having teachers who look like the children they're serving and understand the culture and that a dialect isn't a disorder.
- Ken Thrasher: One thing I didn't see in the values is that we don't talk about needs. We should start with a needs assessment. Each area will have different needs. We can't create a template without understanding needs as prescribed by the community.
- Keith Thomajan: Affirms for me the complexity of measuring success, we're all working so hard on these initiatives, and we want to affirm that we're sending thousands more kids to Kindergarten ready to succeed. There are well-defined domains but they're observational. I don't know what the ultimate equation is apart from finding a somewhat empirical system. The public will want some affirmative tangible measures of success. The one question I have is: have you talked about the process of the evaluation? Would there be 3rd party evaluators?
 - Amy Nash-Kelle: We need someone qualified to analyze and report out data. Teachers won't be tasked with that. That will have to be part of the model.
- Lisa Pellegrino: When I read through the list of outcomes none of that is operationalized currently, but I'm concerned about the burden on providers. The data comes from people who are there. We need to think through the level of administrative robustness to run and deliver this strategy. How much of a burden is reasonable

- Michael Buonocore: If I understand correctly, the programs will generate data but there's a body of work to do to gather and analyze and report out data. All that can be done and that could also be a contracted 3rd party evaluation. That could be valuable as well and important for making early decisions. It would be another expense but would allow us to craft the ability to not have to go into every program but instead sample some programs and develop an evaluation.
- Pam Greenough Corrie: One of the things I'm not hearing enough is the importance of the parent understanding where their child is in their development process. How do you take qualitative data and turn it into quantitative data? I'm not aware of a model that has successfully done that. I do believe in valuing the qualitative data. The evaluation of a child is to help a teacher guide what they do next, not to report to the community about cognitive development.
- Marvin Lynn: Agree. Assessment is a burden, but to have a 3rd party come do it I'd be very cautious.
- Lydia Gray-Holifield: Everyone is saying they'll evaluate someone's child, but they're not asking the parent what they need. We need to ask parents what needs they've noticed at home, and what do they need around the kid in the classroom. We're assuming one evaluation will fit every kid, but it won't work that day. Even twins aren't the same. We need to remember that when talking about doing assessments of children. We also need to remember that we don't want to offend a family member of a child so we must tread lightly. Parents are the first teachers. Parent will always be able to answer the questions first. We must include the parents in this evaluation.
- Amy Nash-Kelle: And it isn't effective if you don't do that. Sharing out the progress of children isn't the goal here. We already assess students for that reason. These observations and interactions with the families and in the classroom are the metrics that drive this process.
- Mystique Pratcher: Children who speak different languages may be put on a special program because they aren't passing assessments. Staff must have experience as well as academic credentials. Staff may pass on students because they don't understand the child's needs.
- Megan Irwin: Thoughts on the process evaluation? If you have thoughts, please write them down on notecards for the next Policy & Program meeting on April 8th. Please write down at least one question about this program in the early years of implementation that you want to know.
- Lee Po Cha: What still needs to be defined is the "how." We have the "what".

Workforce credentialing & compensation

- Megan Irwin: *Explained the importance of this report & the process we'll use for the rest of the meeting. Used a PPT to explain the recommendations.*
- Ken Thrasher: You have a minimum & target salary. Is the target where we want the average to be? Could it be higher?
 - Megan Irwin: I think so, when the state developed a model they had to look for an average. Programs have to make choices. What this says is we don't want the

average person to go below the minimum, and the target is where we want the average to be.

- Andrea Paluso: The Oregon current median wage is \$60,000, which shows how important these targets are. We need to think of even higher wages. In recommendation 2 there is language about parity with kindergarten wages, but that isn't reflected in recommendation 1.
 - Megan Irwin: Question was in recommendation 1 it only talks about scale & not parity, but this represents parity.
 - Andrea Paluso: But are we linking these standards to future wages & cost of living?
 - Commissioner Vega Pederson: We need something to put shape to a cost model proposal. For me this must be tied to CPI increases, and that's something that we can flush out. This is to give a broad direction so we can begin cost modeling
 - Andrea Paluso: So can we assume that we'll be linking in some way for parity with teachers, for the highest credential?
 - Commissioner Vega Pederson: Yes, because that's parity.
- Swati Adarkar: Both these recommendations have the same end goal, which raises a question about optimizing until we get to vision. Let's go with the higher quality and look at waivers. I feel like that value choice isn't clear enough for me. In Preschool Promise there's a provision saying we recognize that the workforce isn't there yet, that's why there are waivers. The state option recognizes workforce is not there. What do folks see as the pros and cons of not stating a higher goal and vision right up front? Otherwise I wonder if we will ever get there because there isn't a forcing mechanism. There wasn't an active conversation in the state until Preschool Promise came around and tied it to pay equity with teachers. I'm amazed with all these four year programs because the job will now pay a living wage. Think about our chance to set a vision with a pathway to get there. There's a bill in the legislature to make sure Headstart has higher salaries tied to Preschool Promise. You have a chance for integration. What's been troubling has been when you go into a setting and have different programs. I hope we'll start seeing integrated multi-income models, so we should think of the consequences of creating a third pathway. We must recognize that the educators and providers aren't there yet.
 - Ken Thrasher: Is the first option the higher aspiration?
 - Swati Adarkar: It's interesting that they both have the same vision, so I'm trying to figure out where the difference is. We need to have some sort of commitment to professional development and money for degrees. Seems like an opportunity for undereducated folks to have a chance.
 - Megan Irwin: The workgroup didn't want to go in the direction of waivers, they wanted to go the direction of step 7 where we have many more providers. This is the entry point. They didn't want to go the direction of waivers. Degree equivalency is allowed in a mature system because of the value of acknowledging skills folks bring and who may not want to earn a BA. It aligns in implementation.

- Kali Ladd: In terms of background I personally advocated for an amendment to have AA and Equivalency. There is a private system in terms of access to 4 year programs. We heard from many people from rural areas that accessibility to community colleges was in stark contrast to access to 4-year universities. Not just the cost, that also includes where folks want to be and feel comfortable. The idea of quality isn't only reserved for BAs, professional development became consistent thread for quality -- access to ongoing professional development. There are barriers to accessing professional development in Oregon. There are a million barriers to that. We have a system that hasn't figured out the equity component yet. Anything that wouldn't allow folks with experience & cultural competency is not a good program. I'm not suggesting there isn't a value to formal education but there are huge inequities to access to those programs. I think the group came out where I hope we'd be with Preschool Promise and waivers. I'm glad there's no waivers, they ended up being a challenge. There wasn't capacity to process all the waivers. If we're not ready and most people need waivers, then the program needs to be re-looked at.
- Andrea Paluso: My question is: if we vote on these recommendations, will the next step for the workforce group be to figure out how to cost model what we need to put this into process? Properly staffing the professional development system & credentialing? That's the next step?
 - Megan Irwin: Exactly. This moves from a compensation to cost model conversation.
- Amy Nash-Kelle: If larger providers were only doing Preschool For All, that may be easier, but having some programs that aren't apart of Preschool For All, that causes complications. I am concerned about not going far enough in the 0-3 space.
- Ruth Adkins: Option 1 tiers based on qualifications and aligns with the state, option 2 collapses systems to get everyone up to the same level?
 - Megan Irwin: Correct.
- Keith Thomajan: Just credentialing, or credentialing & compensation?
 - Megan Irwin: They're intertwined.
- Keith Thomajan: I'll advocate for option 2 because my sense is that option 1 is by definition inequitable. It values academic credentials at a higher level. We have a disproportionate level of workers of color at lower tiers. Given those inequities, option 2 acknowledges that experience and training are just as valuable. Let's adopt the more equitable option and work to address the shortfalls.
- Ruth Adkins: I am trying to understand the challenges around multiple funding sources that might exist. How will a program maintain equivalence between compensation with multiple funding streams?
 - Megan: You're pointing out that an unintended consequence could be drive providers to not be in this program because of the need to align.
- Mark Holloway: Both option 1 and option 2 have a pathway for community-based equivalency. Option 2 pays everyone at the same level, which for some folks would not incentivize people to get to higher steps. One potential unintended consequence is that someone with an AA -- it could drain the K-12 system. You can only be in that system

with a BA. If you're on that pathway then it could be an incentive to not continue your education.

- Swati Adarkar: I'm confused at one response where you said option 2 is where we'll invest in the system to move people to mature pathway.
 - Megan Irwin: Either way there has to be a professional development investment. This group needs to choose which salaries to use to model. The other group needs to know where we're going on this so they can think more about it.
- Petra Hernandez: As a parent we may not have the level of education, but we have capacity because of the experience with the child. With older children we see that they're getting more educated, and for a parent they need to as well, but it can be difficult financially. As a parent how do we move forward with that?
 - Megan Irwin: How to get there is important, we don't have a recommendation yet. Regardless of the professional development pathways, the level of pay is important to be able to access those programs. I can't answer that question yet, but you're making an important point about how salary affects access.
- Keith Thomajan: In option 1 there's a comparable pathway, but as a state we don't have the capacity to get to level 10. So the intention is right but it's inequitable from the outset.
 - Megan Irwin: The County does have some resources, and that could be a chance for the County to be a leader on that.
- Commissioner Vega Pederson: Part of what we're doing is asking what supports we need to make this system a reality. If that is adding the professional development supports, then we should be able to consider what we do to get that. The recommendations on credentials are about three different pathways, we want to respect different paths to get to these professions.
- Kali: Carmen and I were speaking and we were talking about how the pay being based on credential is biased against our communities, it perpetuates existing inequities.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 am.