



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

TUESDAY, APRIL 13th, 5 p.m. VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM

I. Meeting called to order at 5 p.m.

II. ATTENDEES

Sara Hegnes, Chair, Wee Care Day Care
Lacey Griffiths, R.A. Long High School
Irene Higgins, Washington Department of Early Learning-Licensing
Kimberly Miller, Woodland Public Schools
Megan Shea-Bates, Broadway Early Learning Center
Michelle Mahitka, Kelso High School
Bill Ofstun, Longview School District
Stephanie Patterson, Labor and Industries
Asha Riley, Longview School District
Carmen McClain, Educational Service District 112
Nikki Hemberry, Smart Start Early Learning Center
Rich Reeves
Ann Williamson, LCC
Josie Zbaeren, LCC
Lynell Amundson, LCC

III. AGENDA ITEMS

a) Updates from LCC

Ann Williamson shared that Early Childhood Education classes are going strong. Josie Zbaeren shared that Early Childhood classes are full and that she has appreciated the opportunity to teach in-person classes this quarter. She is preparing for face-to-face classes this summer and a majority of hybrid (online and in-person) classes in the fall. Ann also shared that LCC is currently completing its Early Achiever Grant Application and is again asking to serve 18 FTEs, serving 60 students. Grant funds provide tuition, books, and miscellaneous funds for childcare, emergency car trouble, those issues that can affect a student's ability to complete their education. She added that some current recipients of the Early Achiever Grant will graduate this quarter. Ann told the group that LCC has 16 students graduating from the first co-hort of the Bachelor of Science – Teacher Education (BAS-TE) this Spring. The second co-hort of students are halfway through the program and LCC recently received 37 applications for its third co-hort. Applications are currently being evaluated. There have been a few changes to the BAS-TE program including the addition of foundations courses in the first quarter. She also added that the program is always in



need of mentor teachers and encouraged attending members to share information with teachers.

Megan Shea-Bates said she is looking forward to how many of the graduating students land jobs in the local area. Ann said many students have been working within districts that needed emergency substitute teachers and have been able to get paid for their work while continuing to complete their education.

b) Para-educator pipeline tracks

LCC and Woodland School District are working with L & I and WA state Apprenticeship programs to develop a para-educator “pre-apprenticeship” for high school students in Career and Technical Education courses. Asha Riley and Kimberly Miller from Woodland Public Schools told the group that a lot of this project is based on groundwork already done by Stephanie Patterson while she was with Woodland Public Schools. It tracks to the Washington Public School Employees Apprenticeship and will lead students to the opportunity to complete an associates degree in Early Childhood Education and potentially move into the BAS-TE degree. It also gives students the opportunity to complete their education with reduced tuition costs. All state approved apprenticeship programs receive a 50% reduction in tuition by Washington State law.

The project includes contributions from Chris Nesmith at West Valley School District in Yakima and the effort is to build a statewide program. The goal is to have a pre-apprentice program that leads into para-educator I, para-educator II and eventually a para-educator III track that would include the option to obtain an associate’s and bachelor’s degree. Stephanie Patterson told the group that the third tier – para-educator III is going to the apprenticeship council for consideration in July. The project is focusing on developing a Careers in Education framework that would allow high school students to get hired with a school district right out of high school and move into a para-educator apprenticeship program.

Additionally, a SWWA Regional Education/Training marketing project is currently being developed in Southwest Washington. Ann has been meeting with this group (which includes regional high school CTE administrators and directors, LCC, Clark and WSU-V) to create a marketing plan that will let students know what education tracks are available to them in the region.

c) Career and Technical Education (CTE) course approvals

Kimberly Miller with Woodland Public Schools presented labor market data and course proposal for a 180-hour Careers in Education course “Early Childhood Education” – CIP code 130101 – for approval. Early Childhood Education focuses on what students would have to know - knowledge, skill and practice - for working with young children.

Bill Ofstun moved to approve labor market data and addition of the Early Childhood Education course with CIP 130101; Stephanie Patterson seconded the motion. Advisory members unanimously approved.



Longview School District is seeking approval from advisory board members to add two courses in the career cluster Early Childhood Development and Services with CIP code 190708. The 180-hour courses will be titled “Careers in Education I” and “Careers in Education II”.

Bill Ofstun shared with the group that high school students were given the opportunity to visit elementary schools and early learning centers to read to students. The district saw an increased interest by students in the education field because of these visits.

Megan Shea-Bates shared with the group that a student who had been diagnosed as autistic wouldn’t participate in reading activities until a high school student visited. He then sat and read for 30 minutes with that student.

Longview School District worked with WorkSource to explore and obtain labor market data and job postings which showed a demand for individuals pursuing a career in the education field. In response to that data the district proposes the addition of these courses.

Kimberly Miller moved to approve labor market data as presented. Asha Riley seconded the motion.

Asha Riley moved to approve the courses “Careers in Education I” and “Careers in Education II” with CIP code 190708. Kimberly Miller seconded.

d) UPDATE Proposed amendment to WAC 110-300-0100

WAC 110-300-0100 extends the timeline for early learning program teachers and administrators to complete their education. Irene Higgins shared with the group that this amendment is still under consideration and no decision has been made.

Conversations continue to be had about options for community-based training options with the intent to provide different pathways. Irene added that they are hoping for a decision soon.

e) Birth-12th grade partner updates

Sara Hegnes told the group that enrollment is beginning to increase at Wee Care Day Care centers. She said school-age teachers have been challenged by working online with students from multiple grade levels and are looking forward to students being able to return to in-person learning. Josie Zbaeren praised those teachers for the quality work they are doing and the challenges they have taken on.

Nikki Hemberry gave thanks to the community for their support of early childhood education. She told the group that they raised twice as much money this year to create a natural playscape area this year as received last year. Donations went from \$15,000 to \$32,000. The playscape will include a 25-foot water table area and sensory walking path. She added that she is overwhelmed by the community support and encouraged others to visit to see the work soon to be completed.

Michelle Mahitka shared that Kelso High School is developing an outdoor play area and will offer pre-school students on site twice a week as a part of KHS’s Careers in Education.



Laurie Severson told the group that Head Start/ECEAP continues to struggle with enrollments. They have been offering classes two days a week and the teachers have been amazing at coming up with activities that parents can do at home to keep children

engaged. She said parents have shared stories of being overwhelmed with schooling at home during the pandemic especially with older children and younger children who also need attention and activities. Laurie said Head Start/ECEAP teachers have come up with activities to send with parents and in some cases have delivered packets to student homes with ideas for keeping children engaged. She added that they will be adding three new teachers and thanked Ann and Josie for the work they do to prepare teachers for working with young children.

Megan Shea-Bates told the group Broadway School has been operating with a full schedule since Jan. 11th, 2021. Students at the school need in person learning. She added that they are also down in enrollment by about 40 students but expect that as things improve regarding the COVID-19 pandemic they expect to experience a boom in enrollments.

f) LCC updates and next steps

Ann shared that LCC is offering the para-educator fundamentals of study and the Child Care Basic courses through Continuing Education with a cost that is reduced from regular tuition.

IV. PROGRAM OR COMMUNITY EVENTS

Sara shared information about the Week of the Young Child currently taking place. Because of the COVID situation which cancelled activities in 2020 the event for 2021 is also being conducted differently. Planners prepared 500 bags full of 10 to 12 activities, one or two children's books, and other resources that were handed out to families. A Facebook site has been created "Celebration of Children Cowlitz County" where parents can post about activities their children are participating in. She thanked Josie for the practicum projects she created for the event.

Stephanie Patterson shared that there have been discussions about developing an apprenticeship program for Child Care Provider. Trades apprenticeships have reported people leaving their apprenticeship because they can't get childcare which has led to discussions about developing a new program. "Stay tuned," she added.

Asha Riley mentioned a grant out of California that offers supports for early childhood providers in response to the pandemic. She encouraged members to reach out to her for additional information. Members encouraged her to present information with the Cowlitz County Early Learning Coalition.

V. Meeting adjourned at 6 p.m.