



Success, Achievement, Together ... for All Students

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain, members of the Education Subcommittee, my name is Sean Aker, the Student Success Act program coordinator at the Willamette Education Service District. I am here today to offer my support for fully funding Early Learning Hubs in the 2021-2023 budget.

Our Partnership with Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub (MPELH) and Yamhill Early Learning Hub has been key in our region to be able to collaborate and align services to address the unique and complex needs of families in our communities. The ability to convene and catalyze action from a cross-sector and collective impact point of view is critical.

In our collaboration, we have been able to make system level changes to better support families in meeting developmental need of their children. An example of this is the referral pathway from medical/pediatric clinics to our agency for early intervention assessments. This resulted in broader education for health clinic on the work of Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education and many other supportive resources available to families. It also resulted in better communication and data collection between pediatric clinics and WESD. The changes in data collection forms was adopted at the state level due to this important project.

In addition, MPELH is a trusted and valued partner in bringing early childhood educators together along with kindergarten teachers to be able to create connections, engage in professional development, and focus on kindergarten transitions. We have been able to collaborate this year on a Community of Practice which has included emphasis on social emotional supports, embedding trauma informed practices, and kindergarten transitions. This is a critical element we can provide to our early learning and public educators as we work toward increased attendance and higher rates of third grade reading.

Because of our connection with MPELH, we have been able to do more to reach migrant families served by our organization. This has resulted in greater parent engagement.

The hub role is meant to be nimble to adjust to the needs of their local community, which is why you hear a variety of different examples of the work hubs do. At their core, hubs ensure providers of early learning services are accountable for outcomes and that services are provided in a cost-efficient manner.

The Hub system is a key piece of a larger early childhood system that cannot function without stable investment across the board. We support current service level for all early childhood programming, including hubs, and the Early Childhood Coalition agenda investment package.

I urge your support for full funding of the Early Learning Hubs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sean Aker'.

Sean Aker
Student Success Act Coordinator
Willamette Education Service District

Dave Novotney, Ph.D.
Superintendent