

OKLAHOMA PARTNERSHIP FOR SCHOOL READINESS

Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 28th, 2023 – 1:00 PM

Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth

2915 N Classen Blvd., Ste 300, Oklahoma City, OK 73106

The agenda was posted at 2915 N Classen Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73106 on Tuesday, September 26th, 2023, at 11:15 a.m.

Call to Order

OPSR Board Chair, Sarah Roberts, called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

OPSR Staff Member, Gabrielle Jacobi, called roll and recorded attendance. Quorum was met.

Members Present

Dr. Marny Dunlap, Tonya Garman, Gina McPherson, Joann Carter, Annette Wisk Jacobi, Marshall Vogts, Sada Knowles, Rachel Proper, Joyce Marshall, Audra Haney, Brett Vanderzee, Sharon Morgan, Darrell Strong, Brittany Lee, Paula Brown, Brent Haken, Melissa Larimore, Anthony Stafford, Vicki Weaver Payne, Trisha Hutcherson, Kelly Kay

Members Present by Video (Zoom Video)

Christin Bollinger (1:06 p.m.)

Members Not Present

Angie Clayton, Polly Anderson, Amanda McCabe, Jennifer Stepp, Jacqueline Evans, Deborah Shropshire, Jennifer King, Zoe Campbell, Kevin Corbett, Natalie Currie, Trisha Hutcherson, Dr. Katharine Curry, Tina Floyd, Melinda Freundt, Allison Garrett, Brent Kisling, Shellie Schlegel, Jon Pederson, Keith Reed, Lorri Essary, Carrie Slatton-Hodges, Annie Van Hanken, Ryan Walters,

Staff Present

Carrie Williams, Stephanie Lippert, Allison Loeffler, Angela Rodriguez, Gabrielle Jacobi, Daphne Peschl, Jon Trudgeon, Taylor Knooihuizen (Virtual), Theresa Cooper (Virtual)

Guests Present

Kelly Carter with Inasmuch Foundation, Delena Sullivan with OCCY PPB

*** Approval of Minutes**

Board Chair Sarah Roberts asked for approval of board meeting minutes from the meeting held on 6.22.23. Dr. Marny Dunlap made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, and Anthony Stafford made the second motion. The motion passed with all members voting in favor, with the exception of Paul Brown who abstained.

Chairperson Comments

OPSR Executive Director Carrie Williams welcomed board members and designees.

Review of OPSR Financial Report

Board Treasurer Dr. Marny Dunlap presented the budget to actual financials for FY23 to board members. For the OKDHS base contract, OPSR spent all but \$100 for FY23. The Clearinghouse budget shows 1.8M spent from a total of 2.6M. Dr. Dunlap reminded board members that these funds will carryover. The CCRR budget show a 5.1M spend from a 5.7M. Within the PDG budget, \$115,877 has been spent of the 4.7M. Dr. Dunlap explained the challenges of contracting for PDG, but there is a plan to spend funds. Board Chair Sarah Roberts reminded the board that they only accept the financials but do not need to vote on the financials.

No action is required for the review of the budget or financials.

OCCY Parent Partnership Board Update:

Delena Sullivan presented on behalf of the Parent Partnership Board. She announced the PPB has added two members for FY24. PPB participated in many events such as schools, district press conferences, and presentations. Member of PPB have assisted foundations with grants and community cafes. Their work continues to bring parent voice “to the table.”

Delena’s story: Delena was a teen mother in the 1990s who had the opportunity to go to Pampa Alternative Education Learning Center where she earned her high school diploma. The center had child care on site and while she didn’t have to pay for child care, she was employed in order to take advantage of that part of the program. It was on-site child care, and she was provided education on nutrition, hygiene, wellness and parenting - as well as her high school curriculum. Delena explained that she had this high-quality child care, but today, there isn’t enough available to help moms like her. Sarah Roberts asked how her children are doing, and Delena said they doing well due in part to their early access to resources.

OPSR Research Symposium Update

Carrie reported on the success of the Research Symposium, reminding board members that it was the first in-person symposium since before COVID-19. 152 people registered for the all-day event held at the Devon Boathouse. OPSR staff members Adelaide Webb, Gabrielle Jacobi, and the entire team worked hard to make the event a success. Last year's symposium covered the effects of post-pandemic/Covid, while this year’s topic was a “deep dive” into programs and supports. Dr. Barbara Sorrells was the keynote speaker, and we received positive feedback about the relevancy and importance of play, especially as part of a trauma-informed approach. This event ended with OPSR’s 20th Anniversary reception. Guests included original founding OPSR members, former OKDHS and OPSR directors. It was successful even and well-attended. The link to 20th-anniversary video failed to play, but OPSR will send the link to members.

Executive Director Report

Carrie Williams reviewed her to the board, highlighting the below activities for the OKDHS base contract, CCRR, Clearinghouse, and PDG activities:

OKDHS Base Contract

In partnership with Coalign Group, OPSR worked with The Greater OKC Chamber on a child care study for the OKC metro area, with emphasis on the downtown area. The Greater OKC Chamber wanted to better understand the barriers/challenges of recruiting businesses and workforce due to the lack of child care in the city's main corridors. The report was well received by the chamber and Carrie Williams had a chance to present this study to additional partners. The report will lead to a pilot project on behalf of the state of Oklahoma to help find solutions to this on-going and important issue. The report showed that we need a well-compensated and educated workforce. The final report can be found on the Greater OKC Chamber's website, available as a flipbook. Sarah Roberts commented that there is an opportunity here, highlighting that we can maximize efforts and use the momentum of the study to take action. Marshall Vogts asked if Carrie had time to discuss solutions during her report presentation and if the room prioritized certain actions. Carrie said that the panel highlighted the partnership between businesses and child care providers, career tech, and universities. Carrie informed board members of a program called "Partner up Wisconsin," and that it's a promising model that we might try in Oklahoma. Carrie ended her summary by stating that state and community businesses are feeling the economic impact post-pandemic, and it would be a wise investment to pilot solutions.

Board Discussion Summary after Child Care Study Presentation

- Designee Gina McPherson mentioned that are interested in the Tri-Share program in Michigan where businesses pay a portion of child care costs.
- Board Member Annette asked if such a business partnership would only benefit larger businesses' profit more or if we can focus more on helping those who need it the most. She does not want to lose focus on families working the hardest and who have the most challenging schedules. Carrie Williams responded, noting that one of the main topics that came to the surface with the chamber study survey was the need for child care hours to be more flexible for shift workers.
- Board Member Brittany Lee reported that in administering dessert grants they asked providers if incentives would help child care providers offer alternative hours, and 82% said no. The majority of child care providers that provide alternative hours will be family child care providers because they are the most able to do this. They need more support in order to do this, though.
- Sarah Roberts, Board Chair, commented that when businesses in the community act, it can sometimes influence the public while inviting more businesses to the conversation. Sarah likes the idea of pilot programs that will help us learn what can work.
- Board Treasurer, Dr. Dunlap asked how can the state partner to help improve subsidies. Board Member Brittany Lee responded that OKDHS is taking steps to stabilize the child care industry but there needs to be state investment.
- Board Member Rachel Proper noted that during the pandemic, and since then, lots of resources have flowed in from Tribal funding streams and supports. Rachel mentioned that it would be helpful to know more about the resources and supports provided and how they were distributed.

- Board Member Vicki Weaver Payne asked if OPSR had Tribal support or partners? Annette Wisk Jacobi reported Cherokee committed 40M to a child care center in Tahlequah that would accept all children. Additionally, Choctaw is building several Head Start sites in Stigler and Durant.
- Board Member Annette Wisk Jacobi mentioned that she would like to know, with the upcoming federal money cliff occurring, what will OPSR's response be, as well as what the state plans to do to offset the cliff effect for many families. She would like updates on what supports are needed, so we can have a unified message to legislators and decision makers.
- Board Member Rachel Proper commented that she is not sure if we need to build more centers to solve the issue of not having enough childcare centers and openings for people. She has centers in 4 of the areas that had a high need, but she is unable to fill the centers due to not enough staff. For her and her facilities, finding staff is the number one challenge.
- Carrie Williams stated that we would have 99,000 more in the workforce today if women participated as much as men in the Oklahoma workforce. Board Member Marshall Vogts said that in three meetings he recently attended, all discussions came back to the Oklahoma workforce having underutilization of women in the workforce. We're below the top ten for this metric. Reasons given for this in his meetings were not having child care, no relatives to help nearby, former incarceration, or having families very early with no family support.
- Board Chair Sarah Roberts pointed to Sunbeam Family Services as an example with their "grow your own" program, which might be part of a solution. Board Member Anthony Stafford replied that the teacher apprenticeship and 12-month CDA programs help get teachers their accreditation and was fairly successful. They target high schools and teen parents for this program.
- Board Member Brett Haken, Director of Career Tech, said that changing high school graduation requirements is key to workforce solutions - reform is necessary. Oklahoma has a low graduation rate with over 10,000 students leaving high school without a diploma per year. Board Member Vicki Weaver Payne asked if changing criteria for graduation means lowering standards. Brett Haken stated it's more about asking what is valuable and then do the standards reflect that. He stressed that Oklahoma needs stackable credits that are moveable. Additionally, he asks are we telling students what success is? We need to let students lead. States that have made these changes have increased their graduation rates. Board Member Darrell Strong asked about the efforts to try and credential earlier. He stated we need a change in mindset and perception on how we address this issue with schools, graduation, and helping students find a path. Darrell Strong added that we need better compensation for early care and education career paths or we'll always have a workforce deficit in this area.
- Related to the cliff effect, Board Treasurer Dr. Dunlap shared that the pandemic healthcare emergency ended, and the state is in the process of disenrolling people from Medicaid with data now showing half of those are children. She stressed this only makes issues worse. She asked about the idea to have child care center to help with enrollment

for Medicaid. Dr. Dunlap asked board members to spread the word to any program or service working with families – please update information for Medicaid enrollment.

- Board Member Sada Knowles asked if the barrier is an expense for childcare – price is too high and compensation is too low, then where is the money going. Board Designee Brittany Lee pointed out that subsidies only pay for low-income families, and small businesses can't raise costs enough to cover what the cost actually is. She states that subsidies are 75% of the market rate. Marshall Vogts recalls listening to a program that discussed data on this topic - America has the worst combination of policy addressing this issue. We need either the free market or universal, but we have policy that is in-between.

Child Care Resource & Referral

Carrie Williams reported that CCR&R is in FY24 implementation and shared that Amber Cuyler is Director of Child Care Resource and Referral. Thrive, our staffed family child care network, is raising the standards of home child care and has 264 members currently having been in operation for only eight months. Thrive also provides a pathway to a degree, as members can get their associates degree because providers are able to go to school for their CDA. Thrive is piloting a program offering telehealth and teletherapy to childcare workers with PDG funding.

Clearinghouse for Early Childhood Success

Carrie reported that the Clearinghouse has completed 12 projects totaling 9 million dollars and we continue to look for private support. The outdoor learning environment project has 1.75 million in funding for child care homes/centers. There were 191 applications received from 55 of 77 counties. Dr. Dunlap asked if this was renewable funding or just one-year funding. Carrie responded that this is one-time funding.

Preschool Development Grant B-5

Carrie reported that OKDHS and OPSR continue to finalize PDG contracts with partners, and it has been a slow process. The non-compete continuation application was successfully submitted to ACF on October 1st. Oklahoma was the first state to submit, and the application was approved. OPSR Director of Early Childhood Systems asked board members what they're interested in learning about with regards to the updated needs assessment for PDG. Below are responses from board members:

- Post-COVID immunization rates are not where they need to be for children, other vaccines reflect this lower rate as well.
- Would like to know more what's critical for a community to thrive – what are core sets of services and programs necessary
- Infant and maternal mortality worsened and would be worth investigating more as part of needs assessment work
- Mental health of young children
- Mental health for the workforce
- ACES intervention as a community effort – effort on how to prevent ACEs
- We need to look at exclusionary practices, which includes expulsion, suspension

- More about services and programs and what they do. For example, what does child guidance do and where they fit in the system
- Foster support and access of resources and support for foster children
- Workforce

Board Chair Sarah Roberts asked if we can use board engagement tools during the board meeting to collect or survey information from the board. Allison Loeffler reported that OPSR asked for the Office of Attorney General's opinion on this matter, and we were told that open discussion in the board meetings is the most transparent option. Board Member emphasized this as well – that board discussion should remain as a large group discussion and tools like Slido are not allowed. Carrie Williams reported that OPSR will continue to investigate this and ask clarification from the AG's Office.

Public Comment

None.

Announcements

Designee Gina McPherson announced that Scholars for Excellence will be launching a new database that will integrate with CECPD. Rachel Proper shared that the McKenzie Scott Foundation gave a sizable donation to the Zero to Three Foundation.

New Business

None.

Adjournment

Joyce Marshall called for a motion to adjourn the meeting and Paul Brown made the second motion. Board Chair Sarah Roberts adjourned the meeting at 2:31 p.m.

Signature:  Nov 21, 2023
 Carrie Williams, Executive Director, OPSR

Signature:  Dec 2, 2023
 Sarah Roberts, OPSR Board Chair

Approved OPSR Meeting Minutes 9.28.23

Final Audit Report

2023-12-02

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