OKLAHOMA PARTNERSHIP FOR SCHOOL READINESS

Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 23rd, 2025 – 1:00 PM

Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness

2915 N Classen Blvd., Ste. 400, Oklahoma City, OK 73106

The agenda was posted at 2915 N Classen Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73106 on Wednesday, January 22nd, 2025 at 11:15 AM.

Call to Order

Marshall Vogts, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

Roll Call

Gabrielle Jacobi, OPSR Workforce Manager, called roll and attendance. Quorum was met.

Members Present

Darrell Strong, Deb Smith, Paula Brown, Angie Clayton, Kasie McCarty, Trisha Hutcherson, Gina McPherson, Danielle Dill, Marshall Vogts, Dr. Sada Knowles, Melissa Larimore, Dr. Amanda McCabe, Dr. Jennifer Pham, Lorri Essary, Anthony Stafford, Sharon Morgan, Vicki Weaver Payne, Cindy Lee.

Members Present by Video (Zoom Video)

Annie Van Hanken, Kelly Kay, Kody Suanny, Jennifer Stepp, Teena Friend, Secretary Nellie Sanders, Jacqueline Evans.

Members Not Present

Polly Anderson, Suzie Powers, Jeffrey Cartmell, Ellen Buettner, Natalie Currie, Dr. Hokehe Effiong, Melinda Fruendt, Chancellor Sean Burrage, Brent Haken, Dr. Jon Pedersen, Rachel Proper, Keith Reed, Allie Friesen, Ryan Walters

Staff Present

Allison Loeffler, Stephanie Lippert, Daphne Peschl, Jon Trudgeon, Gabrielle Jacobi, Wendi Mayfield, Amber Culyer, Dustin Goad, Erin Bell, Kelsey Thomas, Lindsay Insomya, Terri Davis, Angela Rodriguez, Brittany Zaring-Hinkle, Leslie Mangus, Mary Griffin, Terri Davis, Collette Sawyer.

Guests Present

Emma Morris, Annie Davenport, Isabel Rodriguez, Heather Monroe, Paul Shinn, Betty Hawkins, Natalie Wright.

Virtual Guests

Dr. Christy Kastl, Tina Feltman, Dena Drabek.

***Approval of Minutes**

Vice Chair, Marshall Vogts, presented the board meeting minutes from the meeting held November 21, 2024. Paula Brown made a motion to approve the minutes without changes, and Angie Clayton seconded the motion. Sixteen members voted in favor and one abstained. The motion passed.

Review of OPSR Financial Report (Daphne Peschl)

Daphne Peschl, OPSR Director of Finance, stated that the financials shared today are for DHS contracts in FY2025 as of September 30, 2024. The Base Clearinghouse budget for the year is $1.5 million which $174,000 of that budget has been spent in the first quarter. The Clearinghouse budget was $2.8 million and has been completely spent. The CCR&R budget is $5.6 million and in the first quarter $933,000 has been spent. The PDG budget is $10.6 million, and the spending thus far is $872,972. The DHS budget for the year is $20.6 million and $4.8 million has been spent in the first quarter, leaving $15.8 million remaining.

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

OCCY Parent Partnership Board (Betty Hawkins Emery, OCCY Parent Partnership Board Member)

Betty Hawkins Emery, an OCCY Parent Partnership Board Member, presented to the OPSR Partnership Board. She wanted to share the success story involving her son, Brandon. Brandon was born with Down Syndrome. He was able to attend Early Head Start at three years of age. Ms. Hawkins Emery credits OPSR and other similar agencies for the opportunity for effective early intervention for her son. She shared that Brandon has continued to flourish even into high school with plans to attend Oklahoma State University in their Opportunity Orange Scholars program. This comprehensive transition program is for young adults between the ages of 18 and 26 with intellectual disabilities. Ms. Hawkins Emery ended her presentation with encouragement for OPSR to continue doing what we do because it works and changes lives.

Secretary Nellie Sanders asked a question of Ms. Hawkins Emery. She wanted to know Brandon's favorite part of the program. Ms. Hawkins Emery responded that Brandon is part of work assistance training program at Douglas High School in Oklahoma City. He is attending a cooking class where he has become a certified food handler. She hopes he will continue and become a prep cook.

Presentation: 2024 Oklahoma Early Childhood Fiscal Map and Policy Report (Paul Shinn, Emma Morris, and Gabrielle Jacobi)

Ms. Jacobi began the presentation explaining that this report is an update of the original report done with the Preschool Development Grant in 2019. The report is a complete fiscal analysis of all the spending we do as a state, federal, local, and private dollars on children, birth to six. Data was collected from 2018 to 2023 from sixteen state programs on what they spent, how they were funded, and how many children or pregnant women were served each year. This is the third edition of the report.

Ms. Morris shared the latest results of the report. Oklahoma is home to 300,000 children under the age of six. One in four of those children live below the poverty line and 29% of these children receive at least one public benefit. The data reveals that children with single parents may lack adequate resources.

Oklahoma's children represent a diverse population in which 21% are Hispanic and 17% are tribally affiliated.

Ms. Morris continued her presentation of the report by explaining the basic supports for young children and their families. These basic supports are broken up into four categories. The categories are health care, early education, basic needs, and parent care and support. Health and nutrition programs served the most children. Major programs, like SoonerCare, SNAP, and child care subsidy can lift children out of poverty by supplementing income so that families can meet the basic needs for nutrition, health, and childcare.

Mr. Shinn shared the trends in the report. He stated that spending on Oklahoma's young children is steadily increasing. Oklahoma spent $5,600 per child in 2004 and that per child amount has grown to $8,000 currently. The largest portion of the state's spending goes to health care needs followed by early education, basic needs, and parent care and support. Regarding spending by program, Oklahoma spends the most on SoonerCare and Pre-Kindergarten. Federal funds account for the majority of all spending. The report shows that state support for children under six is shrinking. Oklahoma has been working to coordinate services better to serve its young children.

Mr. Shinn then went on to discuss the recommendations for the state. The recommendations for early education are threefold. We should maintain child care subsidy for families making up to 85% SMI. The state should increase child care subsidy reimbursement rates. The final recommendation is implementing new federal subsidy requirements. Mr. Shinn gave health care recommendations as well. The first recommendation involves SoonerCare. He advises that new innovations should be created to help Oklahoma families. He would like to see our state pilot an enhanced reimbursement rate for group prenatal care. He suggests that providers require a screening for maternal depression. The state should also increase eligibility and provide continuous coverage for children under age six. Mr. Shinn also believes that SoonerStart should expand access to children who experience very low birth weight, homelessness, and drug exposure. His final recommendations involved the basic needs of families in Oklahoma. He would like to see the state enhance TANF cash assistance to eligible families. The state should increase tax credits that support families. Mr. Shinn believes that food insecurity should be reduced by providing universal free school lunch and participating fully in SUN BUCKS. We, as a state, should support working parents by increasing the minimum wage and enacting a family leave program. Mr. Shinn ended their presentation by highlighting OPSR's role in these endeavors. OPSR should continue to increase the emphasis on the benefits of investing in the young children of Oklahoma through research and program evaluation. He also stressed the importance of an annual data collection protocol.

Approval ad Voting for Executive Committee Members (Carrie Williams, Executive Director, OPSR)

Paula Brown made a motion to elect Marshall Vogts as Chairperson and Angie Clayton as Vice Chairperson of OPSR Partnership Board. Deb Smith seconded the motion. The motion was voted on by the board and passed.

Executive Director Report (Carrie Williams, Executive Director, OPSR)

Ms. Williams started her executive report by discussing some key deadlines coming up soon. She announced that the first day of the legislative session is February 3rd. March 6th is the deadline to report legislation from committees to the House of origin. Ms. Williams then drew the board's attention to OPSR's budget. Our fiscal year budget is now 32 million because the Year Three Preschool Development Grant has been awarded by the Administration of Children and Families. She went on to say that a large scope of our work will be centered around childcare. Ms. Williams expressed concern about the downward trend in capacity in licensed childcare. The state of Oklahoma has 181,000 children birth to age five who need quality care. There is a deficit in licensed childcare to meet the needs of these children. She shared that there are several pieces of legislation this year that will aim to help support childcare across the state of Oklahoma. Representative Shreiber has a tax credit bill for employers who are willing to subsidize child care for their employees. They can receive a tax credit. The bill also has a $1,000 tax credit for those who are working in the childcare space. A separate piece of legislation for people working in the childcare field will provide them with categorical childcare subsidy. This will give them free subsidized child care if they are willing to work in a child care program. Ms. Williams stated that this would be a powerful recruitment and retention tool. OPSR is making these issues a priority at the State Capitol. Carrie shared that our legislators need to know that they should make strong investments in child care and early learning. Ms. Williams also shared that two pieces of legislation are addressing paid family leave policies.

CCR&R Update (Carrie Williams, Executive Director, OPSR)

Ms. Williams shared that CCR&R has been OPSR's implementation support on everything we do. They are facilitating high quality training for child care professionals across the state of Oklahoma and some trainings are offered in Spanish. They are using the Pyramid Model to help child care providers improve the quality of care they offer. CCR&R offers frontline support for those who are working to support our children and families.

Thrive, our staffed family child care network, now has 546 active members. This number has surpassed our goal of 450 and it is still growing. The third annual Thrive Network Summit is April 4th and 5th.

Clearinghouse Update (Carrie Williams, Executive Director, OPSR)

Ms. Williams said the Clearinghouse had a submission window around infant and early childhood mental health focusing on consultation and workforce support. The Clearinghouse has completed 29 of the original outdoor learning environments. OPSR is working on a final evaluation of these projects in terms of pre and post assessments and outcomes for the 2,352 children who directly benefited from those environments. OPSR has closed 13 original Clearinghouse projects. These projects have led to additional funding through other funding streams, for example, Title V funding, which has been used to extend our contract with the Oklahoma Autism Foundation. Child care professionals across the state will receive high quality training because of this funding.

Preschool Development Grant (Carrie Williams, Executive Director, OPSR)

Ms. Williams shared that OPSR has issued many RFPs recently. Our Research Director, Brittany Zaring-Hinkle, is working with the University of Oklahoma on an expulsion and suspension study involving early care and education.

OPSR took over a short-term contract with Candor, a marketing agency, to continue the Before the Bell campaign. The Before the Bell campaign is the Preschool Development Grant's family engagement campaign. The campaign focuses on parents being their child's first teacher and connecting families to resource and tracking milestone development. Candor has generated 59.3 million impressions on social media and 172,000 website visitors due to their ads that they are running regarding the Preschool Development Grant. Ms. Williams shared that this has contributed to the program growth in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, Reach Out and Read, and our telehealth and teletherapy benefit for those working in the child care space. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library currently has 81,959 children enrolled in Oklahoma - 33% of eligible children statewide. Our enrollment goal is 65% with the help of Preschool Development Grant funds. She stated that the strong online ads are effectively getting the word out about this early literacy program.

Ms. Williams shared that OPSR has published the Home Visiting Annual Outcome Report and submitted it to Governor Stitt, the Legislature, and OCCY. She stated that OPSR is now working on a home visiting outcomes measurement plan. OPSR is also participating in a cost modeling cohort which will estimate the cost to provide quality childcare in the state of Oklahoma. OPSR now has 56 subrecipients or contract agreements through the Preschool Development Grant alone.

Announcements

Deb Smith shared some information from DHS about the proposed emergency childcare rules and the public hearing involving these rules. She explained that the hearing was well attended. People made public comments and online comments. Ms. Smith shared that their legal team combined these comments into a report for DHS. Their child care team has reviewed this report and is making revisions based on all the public comments. They hope to present the finalized revisions to the Governor for consideration in early February.

Ms. Smith explained that they are still focused on child care subsidy. They are looking into several studies around affordability and what other states in the region are doing related to child care rates and subsidy rates. Angie Clayton asked Ms. Smith if outcomes of this legislative session would affect the amounts of rates and subsidies. Deb Smith answered that yes, and that the outcome of legislative session could impact the timing of what they are considering.

New Business

None

Adjournment

Marshall Vogts asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Angie Clayton made the motion, and Paula Brown seconded the motion to adjourn. Marshall Vogts adjourned the meeting at 2:40.

Signature: ____

Carrie Williams, Executive Director, OPSR

Signature: ____

Marshall Vogts, OPSR Board Chair