

Head Start Association
April 12 & 13, 2007

Present: Mary Jane Standaert, Robyn Willet, Christi Rusk, Shawna Hooper, Christina Barto, Tom Richards, Barb Brophy, Patty Dahl, Gail Mickey, Kathy Leary, John Filz, Stacey Scarborough, Emily Randash, Marit Ita, Sally Leep, Cal Spangler, Ron Conrad, Mindie Bentick, Alma Young, Rosemary Rosenberry, Wendy Bull Child, Betty Williamson, Susan Carlson, Pam deRosier, Susie Goffena, Kamie Bristol, Rose Swan, Brenda Fisher, Caroline Yellow Robe
Guests: Todd Lester, Melinda Edwards, John Thomas, Mark Heinert, John Thomas

Tom Richards opened the meeting by welcoming everyone; introductions were made. Barb Brophy was selected as timekeeper and Cal Spangler as facilitator.

PROGRAM UPDATES: Programs were asked to report on how they used technology in the classroom and on their Emergency Preparedness Plans.

AWARE Early Head Start completed their continuation grant, staff has been consistent with most teaching staff having been with the program for two years, they use computers only to track data and have emergency preparedness plans in place.

Butte Head Start is taking care of the sinking playground that resulted from a mine shaft and working on raising it back up; it settled about 12 inches. Have two computers in each classroom that were donated from businesses. They utilize high school volunteers to work with the children when they use computers. Butte Silver Bow County did a two day training on emergency preparedness; Head Start staff attended and is trying to coordinate Heads Start disaster planning with Butte Silver Bow to make their plan a better one.

RMDC Head Start recently held their second annual "Eggstravaganza" fundraiser. It was very successful. At their Townsend, site they are having issues with plumbing that will cost \$10,000 to fix. This year they have had staff issues, with some staff needing extended leave because of family emergencies and it has wiped out their sub pool. Each classroom has a computer; they are old and not much is spent on them in the way of software. Their emergency preparedness plan coordinates with community plans. For Week of the Young Child (WOYC) their Tri-County School Readiness team has many activities planned including reading in the Capitol Rotunda, local county libraries, and schools throughout the week. There will be a series of newspaper articles in the local newspaper on the value of early childhood education, about HS and services for children.

Deer Lodge County Head Start has computers in the classroom that are used every day with developmentally appropriate software programs. They have many activities planned for WOYC ending with a carnival.

Central Montana Head Start's Performance Review has been postponed until next fall. Their Board is pushing for awareness and publicity, two open houses and health fairs are being held. They have major health needs in their community and received a grant to help

pay for those needs. Computers are in all of the classrooms. Emergency Preparedness plan is in place. They are advertising for a fiscal officer.

Ravalli Head Start is blending School Readiness and WOYC activities together and hired someone to coordinate activities. Ravalli is refinancing both of their facilities (Ravalli Head Start and Missoula Early Head Start). Computers are in all of the classrooms, UM has a Technology Corp project and they have a volunteer who works with staff to develop staff competencies. Computers are in each classroom for children to engage with when they want, screen time is not necessarily encouraged. The school district in the Hamilton was a lead agency on a homeland security grant and just finished a two year plan on emergency preparedness and Ravalli Head Start was included in the plan. They held a planned evacuation. John noted that the most likely thing to happen is a major earthquake.

Missoula Early Head Start is working to improve services in a variety of ways. The center based program has started a parent group similar to home base. They submitted their continuation grant. They are focusing on ongoing monitoring and trying new ideas and models. All is well and just plugging along.

Northern Montana Early Childhood Center are currently reassessing the numbers of Head Start eligible children in Chinook to see if they can reopen the classroom. This last year they have had a home based option in Chinook because there are so few eligible children and are hoping to open the classroom this year. An open house was held to recruit but only had 2 people show up. A community meeting was scheduled to get input from the community. The county commissioners were invited to that meeting along with a community invitation in the paper. No one came to that meeting. It is a little disappointing not to get input from the community especially when they were so involved and verbal about not closing the classroom last year.

They are also still working on reorganizing. The reorganizing first started in November of 2005 when the Head Start and Early Head Start combined into one birth to age five program--Northern Montana Child Development Center. Then in the fall of 2006 two of the family advocates resigned so rather than replace them, several of the teachers were given more hours and the family advocate duties for the children in their class. At about the same time the Transition Specialist resigned so those duties were assumed by the Family Advocate. Then in October the Early Head Start Family Support Specialist resigned which paved the way to have only one Family Support Specialist for the whole program. The latest step is to restructure the education component. Changes that will be implemented in June are:

- Have one Child Development Specialist and one Disabilities and Outcomes/Assessment specialist who will also advocate for EHS center based families instead of 2 Child Development & Disabilities Specialists.
- Add a teacher mentor

The next phase of the reorganization will be to look at the health focus area. Currently they have a Health Specialist for Head Start and one for Early Head Start. It will be several months before discussions begin around the Health component.

They were fortunate to have Craig Hart in Havre in March to do some father involvement training and hope he will be able to return in May for a follow up visit. He had a lot of good information for the teachers. Several of them are also family advocates and it was a great opportunity for them to receive some training regarding working with families and fathers in particular.

Head Start Inc has had a new director for three months, Sally Leep. They have completed their continuation grant and needs assessment. In that process they did restructuring, and eliminated six positions. It was a tough decision but felt it was a good idea. The restructuring impacted the administration only; no direct service staff positions were changed. They do have computer work stations in all of the classrooms. They received \$5000 grant for technology. They have written emergency preparedness plans for all five sites and are working on lock down plans.

Billings Early Head Start: Classroom technology is limited to digital ear thermometers. They are program partners with the school district for emergency preparedness. They have been evicted from their present location and need to be out by June 1. This summer they will use the Head Start facilities and are exploring options for a permanent site. They have written grants and received about \$125,000 and need \$750,000.

Action for Eastern Montana: The CAP agency that has the Head Start grant serves 17 counties and Head Start is in 4 counties. Last year, the CAP agency Director added holidays which put the program in a deficit situation; they made cuts and saved to break even. They did make a decision to drop transportation. Next year is a review year. They have computers in each classroom; however they are getting older and it is more difficult to upgrade and find software for them. Emergency procedures are specific to each site. They recently had a lock down in Miles City, which was a reminder to keep parents informed about emergency procedures.

Opportunities Inc: Things are going great in Shelby; they have a computer in the classroom that is not functioning at this time. They have a listening center and can bring in a TV/VCR if needed. They have an emergency plan in place.

Fort Belknap Head Start did not meet enrollment, enrollment was reduced along with the grant being reduced by \$171,000. Fortunately, tribal council put child care under Head Start and that eliminated laying off staff. Next week they will be collaborating with Tribal health programs and IHS to do a health fair in each community. They do have computers in all of classrooms, and have other funds and getting quotes for new computers. They have a Disaster Plan in place. .

Northwest Montana Head Start currently have a Disaster plan with Columbia Falls schools but the other sites do not have a plans, but starting to look at it. Last year

someone donated brand new computers to all classrooms. They are considering changing the classroom days from T-TH to M-TH. Because of full day kindergarten they may lose the Columbia Falls site, but a church may be interested in housing both Columbia Falls and White Fish classrooms. They will have training on Child Plus. A group of parents entered a float in the White Fish parade.

Blackfeet Early Childhood Services has computers in classrooms; they received computers a number of years ago from the Hatch grant. They are changing their application to include an e-mail address for parents. Because of cutbacks, they no longer have a technology person, so it is difficult to keep the computers up and running. They are included in the Blackfeet Tribe's emergency preparedness plans and training, they also partner with the school district. They are now working on their continuation grant. Many of their staff is wearing two or three hats and they are tired. They may have to cut transportation but the costs are so high, can't keep qualified drivers because they can't pay them enough. They held a fundraiser: a "Crawl, Walk, or Bike-a-thon" to raise money for advocacy efforts. It was a great activity and they will donate the money to MT HS Association advocacy, NW Indian HS Coalition, NHSA, etc. They are looking forward to receiving the 1.5% cost of living increase and continue to be creative and inventive with their resources. Other than that, they continue to be creative and inventive.

Child Start Inc has two computers in each classroom. They recently had an on-site review that went well. They are still in labor negotiations with the union. They are participating in WOYC activities with a cowboy-cowgirl theme. Their insurance premiums increased by 40%; in order to pay for the increase they will have to cut staff positions. They had a CHIP outreach and worked with Montana People's Action; Senator Baucus came and read to children.

Head Start/State Collaboration Project Report

1. Mary Jane reviewed the blending of Collaboration Project and ECCS work with the focus on all target areas under the umbrella of School Readiness. She handed out target area comparisons and a school readiness summit summary document.
2. School Readiness Task Force: Working with the National Governor's Association, developed a logic model, governance, data and communication are the focus areas. There is a planned Follow up small School Readiness Summit to meet with Community Team representatives. Mary Jane handed out a summary of community team activities. There are now nineteen teams.
3. Oral Health – Community Based work group – train peers on latest advances in oral health and primary prevention, encourage medical and dental to work together to serve children, support education of parents. Food Stamp bonus money has been designated to use for parent education through the community teams and Head Start/Early Head Start program and a portion of the bonus money will be used to provide Toothbrushes for HS/EHS programs.

4. Bill of Rights for children of Incarcerated Parents – working on a tool kit for families that will include things such as “Ten Things You Need to Know When a Family Member Is Incarcerated.”

5. Early Childhood Consultation – will be focusing on a comprehensive model entering through the early childhood mental health door. The model will include health, safety, and quality early childhood care and education. The consultation model will compliment and work with licensing and R&R.

6. Early Childhood Partnership for Professional Development (ECCPD) applied for TA with National Professional Development Center on Inclusion. The requirement is to review what has been accomplished in professional development having to do with inclusion and what needs improvement. For example: cross sector training/education between early intervention, early childhood, family support and education.

7. ABCD technical assistance grant was just awarded to create universal, standardized developmental screening of all young children in MT (often called the well-child exam or Early & Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment EPSDT). We will be working with Medicaid, Children’s Special Health Care, MT Medical Associations, etc. to design. Health Coordinators will be asked for input. A representative from HS and EHS is on the stakeholders group.

8. Mary Jane talked about OPI plans to develop early childhood curriculum information for Indian Education for All, Head Star/Early Head Start will be a partner.

9. Mary Jane received an Invitation to NYC on Disparities in EC – National Center for Children in Poverty, at Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health, sponsored by Project Thrive, who provides TA for ECCS grants. Denise Juneau from OPI will attend with Mary Jane; they will bring information from Montana about the disparities in education between Native and Non-Native children.

11. Attended the Education Managers meeting in Lewistown and will attend the upcoming Family Service Providers cluster in Helena and Health Managers cluster in Billings.

12. Went to Ronan to learn about Touchpoints and shared information.

14. MOU on disabilities – needs to be signed.

Head Start/Early Head Start and Mental Health

Todd Lester reported that the TA Network has formed a work group on early childhood Mental Health and has identified promising practices in early childhood mental health. He discussed:

- How do you use your mental health consultants? Observations, mental health screening tools,

- If you go into community and ask for mental health services, often get a good response, but mental health partners are not necessarily versed in early childhood issues.
- Toolkit for early childhood mental health that is being developed
- Todd would like to propose to the Association to form a group very similar to the Fatherhood group and partner up and strategically plan what could be done in the area of early childhood mental health in Montana. Create a state Head Start/Early Head Start task force and put ideas together, find champions in each state come up with a state plan. One of the things he would like to tie in is the PIR questions that directly relate to mental health.
 - It was mentioned to be cautious and not to reinvent the wheel. Children's mental health symposium, Neal Horen's work, and work with MBI.
 - Karla reported that the Great Falls program took two days to explore their mental health services; staff took another look and brought someone else in to look objectively at their services; they made changes that impacted the program in a positive way.

Mark Heinert presented information about an online toolkit for the PIR. It will be up and running soon: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/region8>

Literacy Training power point presentation by Jerry Hindman from the National Head Start Family Literacy Center, Sonoma State University, 81 University Drive, Camarillo, CA 93012, Phone: 800-849-7810. She presented a PPT presentation: What is Family Literacy?

AI-TAN update:

- A few note-worthy changes from the American Indian/Alaska Native TA Network –they are adding Alaska Native programs. Details not complete yet, but will be discussed at next quarterly meeting in Washington, DC in July.
- FCP position will not be filled – CAS moved end of March. Duties were integrated into other CAS responsibilities.
- Health CAS left position; a new CAS will be hired.
- 17th annual early childhood education conference and cluster training at Poplar was a big success. Congratulations Viola Wood and team! Howard Rainer, Salt Lake City and Jarma Wright, DC were keynote speakers.
- Next AI-TAN cluster training will be in Watertown, SD April 24-26th – early childhood education and program design and management.
- Blackfeet nation kicked off Montana's tribal school readiness month in March. Congratulations!

- NIHSDA conference: June 17-21st Anchorage, Alaska: “Lighting the Way from a Rich Past to a Dynamic Future.” Registrations welcome! (405) 360-2919 or www.nihsda.org
- Crow Tribes Head Start has a new director, Franco Little Light.

BAH: Todd Lester and Melinda Edwards gave an update on Region 8 Technical Assistance. Literacy position has been eliminated and the FCP has been eliminated. Craig Hart will be local specialist in another state and is still fatherhood specialist. Content specialists will be available but limited in on-site visits. TA Specialists are asked to be a lot more playful. There had been a request for a Managing for Quality type cluster and need to get the request in as soon as possible. Fatherhood group has been doing work will present at the fall association meeting on the products they have generated. May 22, 2007 is a possible date for Craig Hart to come to Great Falls. Cluster meetings: The Education Managers had cluster in Lewistown and have scheduled another meeting November 8 - 9 in Billings. Spring meeting will be in Fairmont on March 13-14 and the Butte Head Start program will host it. Health Coordinators are meeting on May 11, 2007. Social Services Cluster will meet in Helena on May 14-15, 2007.

Committee Reports:

Finance/Nominating/Personnel:

Wendy Bull Child was nominated to fill the Vice Presidents position that was vacant.

Consensus was reached for Wendy Bull Child to become the Vice President.

Reminder to get Region 8 NHSA awards in before the fall meeting.

There is a problem with the non profit status of the MT Head Start Association. Patty Dahl and Christy will work on resolving the issue.

Dues: We have received \$9,788.00 in dues for the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

\$2 per child campaign has collected \$1120.00 so far this year.

The Family Literacy cluster training costs were high, but the Association meeting costs were low and should off set any imbalance.

Checking Balance: \$30,962.71
 Savings Balance: \$15,441.56
 Money Market Balance: \$20,634.25

Native American Committee:

They are working diligently on school readiness issues and planned statewide school readiness meeting in Havre where all seven tribes were represented. It was very

informative; plans were made for statewide school readiness activities. There is a school readiness follow up meeting scheduled in May in Helena and they will join the other state teams.

Governmental Affairs:

Montana Advocates for Children (MAC) 2007 legislative agenda was discussed. The Governor has signed the child care monthly rate bill. The Head Start child care eligibility issue ran into road blocks and will be pursued through other avenues after the session. The other agenda items are still working their way through the legislature. A discussion took place around how to get the legislative e-mail alerts out to interested individuals. Programs were encouraged to contribute to the \$2 per child campaign for advocacy efforts. Head Start Reauthorization: The Senate and House each have their own reauthorization bill. NHSA has a side by side comparison that highlights the differences. Letters from Sarah Green CEO of the National Head Start Association and the President of Region VIII HS Association were sent to the Association encouraging programs to join those associations. After serving for many years, Renee Funk's tenure as representative to Region VIII and NHSA will end soon; need to be thinking about a replacement for her. Governmental Affairs Committee will review the annual Regional Office Feedback Report, e-mail Stacey Scarborough if you have suggested changes.

T/TA Committee

- TA Committee recommended holding a Governance Training for Board members, Policy Council and interested management team staff in September; it would be through the MetNet System. **Consensus was reached to hold this training with the costs being shared among the participating programs.** Debbie Stinson from Colorado Springs will be asked to do the training. *update: Debbie is not available in September.
- **Consensus was reached for a managing for quality type training to be held in conjunction with the fall Association meeting.**
- The TA Committee will send out an online survey to help plan the cluster trainings for the next two years. Watch your e-mail for the survey.

MECAC: Because of mistakes in the save the date information the Association representatives were not able to attend. The minutes from the last meeting may be accessed on the Early Childhood Service Bureau's website: www.childcare.mt.gov, they will be posted soon. The 2007-2008 Merit Pay Brochure is posted on the same site or <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/mtecfiles/mrpy%20brochure%20rev%2004-07.pdf>.

NW Indian Head Start Coalition targets all of the NW tribes and is non profit organization whose purpose to provide low cost training. This year's conference will be held in Worley, ID Aug 13-17. There will be training in all of the content areas, and networking sessions. There is pre-conference focused on the meth issue (how to work with children affected by meth, what to do if a child is in a home where meth is used, etc.). Registration information will soon be on the web: www.nwihsc

John Thomas, Region VIII Head Start Program Specialist

John has been assigned to Montana as a Program Specialist to the AEM, Billings HS and Billings EHS programs. The Regional Office was reorganized based on the reorganization at the Office of Head Start. It is designed to be less fragmented and it is hoped that they can be more of a presence and accessible. As most have heard every program will get 1.5% COLA. It is a priority and as soon as they get it from Craig Turner they will get it to programs. It is expected that all staff receive an increase. OHS has pulled the program improvement dollars back. There are dollars to help if programs need money after a review to help them be in compliance.

There will be training on "I am moving I am learning" (a curriculum that combines literacy health, nutrition to address childhood obesity) in March or April of 2008 in Denver.

Elaine Shea noted that I am moving I am Learning training will be offered in October for Tribal programs.

Meeting dates and places for next year:

September 27-28, 2007—Great Falls

January 10-11, 2008—Helena

April 10-11, 2008—Polson or Lewistown

(A raffle will be held at each meeting; programs are asked to bring raffle items)

Evaluation:

- Great chance for us to share and feel that we have support if we have issues; enjoyed the meeting
- Request to combine Native American Committee and NW Indian Head Start reports
- Good meeting/thanks to the Billings people
- Enjoyed the meeting and thank you for voting me as the vice president; I enjoyed the networking time
- Good learning experience
- Meeting always fun; appreciated the humor/ likes that Mary Jane always brings materials to share
- I enjoy coming to the meetings, I learn from the rest what is happening statewide. I miss Viola.
- I really enjoyed being here, opened my eyes to what Head Start does and enjoyed hearing what goes on around the state
- Agree with all, great weather, civilized distance from Glendive
- Great meeting, I miss Viola. Billings staff accommodating thanks
- Very nice to have everyone here, thank you for making me feel welcome
- Refreshing to see so many faces that care about children in Montana. Because it makes our state better. Thanks to John Thomas for coming.

- Echo what everyone else said, good to hear that others struggle with some of the same things we do.
- I have really enjoyed hearing about other programs and getting other ideas
- Thanks Billings, Cal made the meeting, it was refreshing and Cal did a great job
- Welcome Sally, good room to do this in because we can hear well, People need to go away from this experience knowing how powerful this work is. What we do spills over. This group is unique. We can talk about the whole state.
- I appreciate such a warm welcome, great to be back in the state. Looking forward to working in the state.
- Thank you, proud of this group. Nice to see everyone
- Thanks Sally nice place to have a meeting. Appreciate the e-mails. Connected. Gain a lot of valuable information and look up to a lot of you. Get good information.
- Short time I was here went smooth, good to be involved with Mt HS programs. We serve the same families. Good to connect.
- Enjoyed the networking; thanks for the humor
- Thank you for inviting the parents and policy council; gives a lot of insight on how deep the program is, great to talk others
- Thanks for having us, appreciate the work that goes into the Head Start program.
- I liked the networking and setting
- This is a great example of a systems process
- Echo all of the other comments.
- Thank you Billings, nice room, nice to see so many at an April meeting. Appreciate the Regional Office coming and T/TA. So nice to see everyone and all the updates and information Mary Jane brings.
- Cal should always be facilitator
- This meeting was refreshing to me, I feel I'm over the hump and back to enjoying what I do.
- This is my second association meeting, the first one was so serious, and networking was helpful. Really productive.
- Thanks to host and providing the good food, great meeting, would like to remind people that this is an intimidating group and that could be scaring off some of the parents. We need to be more welcoming and slow down and let people know what is going on. Hard for new staff and parents but particularly parents to come to this meeting the first time.
- Thank you for hosting, appreciate that parents are allowed to attend and speak up and treated as equals.
- I always enjoy the networking
- It was a really good meeting. Only meeting I look forward to attending.
- I would like to see Steve Yeakel at the next meeting.

