



Montana Head Start Association

The Montana Head Start Association brings together families, staff, directors and friends of all Montana families to provide leadership, education, information and advocacy on behalf young children, pregnant women, and families in Montana.

January 25, 2007
Helena, Montana

Present: Scot Anderson, Mindie Bentick, Anita Birdinground, Barb Brophy, Wendy Bull Child, Phil Burgess, Susan Carlson, Patty Dahl, Joan Davies, Pam deRosier, Marie V. Eckhardt, Cara Elias, Melissa Evans, Rob Everingham, John Filz, Brenda Fisher, Susan Goffena, Wendy Martin, Shawna Hooper, Vivian Jones, Kathy Leary, Sally Leep, Elizabeth Springfield Old-Chief, Tom Richards, Rose Rosenberry, Christi Rusk, Stacey Scarborough, Gail Smith, Betty Williamson, Viola Wood, Alma Young, Robert Fox, Kamie Bristol, Rose Swan, Linda Dagget, Mary Jane Standaert
Guests: Melinda Edwards, Todd Lester, Elaine Shea

Tom Richards, President, opened the meeting and introductions were made.

Indian Education for All: Denise Juneau, Director of Indian Education at the Office of Public Instruction and Chris Lohse, Policy Research Specialist, presented information on poverty and Indian Education for All. A question was raised on how Indian Education for All could be incorporated into early childhood curriculums. The Indian Education for All office is interested in developing an early childhood curriculum that aligns with the k-12 curriculum.

Program Updates:

HRDC 9 Bozeman: A member of their education staff was selected as MT Preschool teacher of the year. They will be having a review this year, most likely in April. The classroom staff voted in the union, negotiations will be underway. Joan announced she will be leaving the program and is searching for a new Director. She will use this next year to train a new Director and will go half time when they have hired someone.

Child Start Inc. Missoula: Enrollment is good. They have an on-site the second week in February using the latest PRISM. Scot is working fewer hours as the Head Start director and has taken a part-time job with Community Development Institute in Denver. Their advocacy efforts have included talking to Board and Policy council about state and national level issues, including Reauthorization. They have answered Staff questions on gaining an understanding of what they can do off work time when they want to be more active in advocacy. They are currently involved in union negotiations.

Kootenai Valley Head Start (KVHS) Libby: Their planned child care on site is on hold. They are overenrolled by 2 children. KVHS had a good review and have received another grant for playground improvements and outdoor lighting. They are partnering with public school to build an outdoor restroom. Three staff from their program went to the Governor's School Readiness Summit in June. Libby School Readiness Community Team has developed a Power Point presentation on school readiness and has presented it to the local Rotary club, recruited a local business owner to be part of the team, purchased phonics kits, and have partnered with the local Day Care Assoc. to do a parent training. Their community has difficulty in finding oral health services for their Head

Start children. They have a meeting scheduled with a provider to provide mental health services for their program.

Deer Lodge County Head Start: They are fully enrolled and have a good waiting list. Their Health Coordinator recently retired and they have hired a nurse to fill that position. Their program went through a federal review in December. Advocacy: Put packet to good use and had training. Parents and staff will be attending Head Start Day at the Capitol. They are incorporating MBI activities into their program. Enjoyed lots of good community support during the holidays; all of the children were allowed to go on the Polar Express.

NW Montana Head Start Kalispell: NWMT Head Start had an on-site review last year; they had some deficiencies and are working on those. They are fully enrolled. There are lots of challenges with staff turnover and the hiring of new staff.

Central Montana Head Start Lewistown: Pam deRosier is the new director, replacing Debra Lindstrand. Their program is getting ready for review. The Ronald McDonald mobile out of Billings has helped with medical and dental needs from an anonymous donor. They are fully enrolled. They are watching carefully how full-time kindergarten would affect their program; as they have classrooms in elementary schools in the area. Two wonderful parents have joined the Association from CMHS.

Butte Head Start: They have had some problems hiring staff. They are working with Altercare to provide mental health services.

AWARE Early Head Start Butte: They are trying to find additional funding sources. They are trying to maintain current level of service while having to cut staff and asking staff doing more and more, which makes it a struggle.

Blackfeet Early Childhood Services Browning: They serve 115 children in EHS, 290 in children HS and 88 children in child care in three centers. They have some special programs including SIDS, home visiting, and a prenatal project. Tribal Council put together a paper on unmet needs and presented it in Washington, DC. They took a big hit with under enrollment and as a result their funding was reduced. There is a waiting list at in the Early Head Start program, but they would not let them use the funds for EHS. They had to cut back on technical equipment and support; which makes it very difficult because technology is a very skill specific field. Recent high winds have caused a lot of damage and problems. They struggle with health services, not enough Indian Health Service staff to do the work. They are working on getting computers in the classroom. Another struggle is finding money to pay subs; not sufficient staff, they are wearing two & three hats and it is taking its toll and they are tired. Another area that was cut was security. Minnetta & Susan and went to a leadership training and used what they learned to visit with Senators Baucus and Tester. Ten parents are planning on attending Head Start day at the Capitol and have a display to put up. Parents recently held a triathlon and raised \$900 for St. Jude's Hospital.

RMDC Head Start: The program is worried about classroom space if the districts decide to go to full-time kindergarten. They have playground equipment they are holding off on installing on public school property until the decision is made about full time kindergarten. They are fully enrolled. A staff issue they struggle with is for people to be gone for long absences. They are an MBI Pilot site. They had great community support

for the program during the holidays. So far their transportation contract with the city of Helena is working well. A major fundraiser they began last year and will hold again this year on March 22 is called Eggstravaganza. Tickets for the event are \$20.00, drinks and appetizers are served, and there is a silent and live auction of donated items. They were able to raise \$15,000 last year. They pay someone out of other funds to organize the event.

Opportunities Inc Head Start: The Great Falls programs had an on-site review in December. They are still waiting on the final report. During the review, they had close to 50 community partner's show up for the partners meeting. This included personnel from the Great Falls, Shelby and Choteau school districts. Several parents will be attending the HS/EHS Day at the Capitol. In March they will collaborate with QLC and Family Connections to offer a joint in-service training for staff. The program is in the process of union negotiations, since the current contract will expire in February. They had parents go to legislature to testify for CHIP and full day kindergarten.

Northern Montana Child Dev. Center Havre: They are fully enrolled and working on self assessment. They received a three year extension on EHS child care license. There are a group of parents coming for HS/EHS Day. They have had a high turnover among staff. They are hiring a new family advocate for EHS. They exceeded their required in kind match. They started a kid cash store. The Chinook classroom has been temporarily closed; they are currently serving Blaine County with Home Based services. A new Wal-Mart recently opened in Havre. .

Ft Peck Tribes Head Start: Enrollment is good; working on only a couple of slots to fill. They are working on their funding application and have not discussed reducing funding. They have experienced staff turnover. They have had two professional workshops. Finally were able to replace the bus that was damaged in an accident. Ft Peck has been chosen as a cluster site in conjunction with the annual Early Childhood Conference in March. The conference will focus on two tracks one for disabilities and the other for directors. Viola introduced Vivian Jones, the staff representative from their program.

Crow Tribes Head Start: They are fully enrolled. They had an onsite last fall and were able to fix the six things they were cited on. They are preparing for their annual HS parade. Crow Tribe bought every HS child a coat & mittens.

Ravalli Head Start: They asked and received an approval for a reduction in enrollment. They asked for more but received a reduction of 10 slots as a budget management issue. They worked with the Regional office; it took a lot of time, but they did get the reduction. They have an active school readiness project going in their area. Have a partnership with a health center in Missoula to provide services. John attended the UCLA Advanced Management training in January. He attended a session on succession planning for directors that are thinking about retiring. They cut a classroom float position and made some other changes to deal with the funding cut and increasing costs.

Missoula Early Head Start: They held advocacy training for parents in October and then again in January. They have had lots of turnover. They have enhanced home visiting for center based including screening for post partum depression.

Mary Dalton, Division Administrator for DPHHS Health Resources Division: gave an update on activities including legislative activity in her division. They are looking at an increase to CHIP to 175% of the FPL. She encouraged people to call their legislators saying that one or two calls from someone who is not a lobbyist is very powerful. If a legislator gets six calls or e-mails on an issue that gets their attention. You are a powerful group. They like to hear from people in their home community. Numerous other CHIP bills are out there including taking it 200% of FPL and to increase dental coverage.

On mental health side not nearly as many bills for kids as adults. But what effects parents affect children. One proposal is for setting up “System of Care” account that would allow a child who was going into a higher level of care to see if a plan could be put together to keep the child in the community and the fund would allow to use the money for non Medicaid eligible services. A discussion took place around Early & Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT). A few years ago a summit was held around EPSDT and work groups were formed including one around mental health screenings and Montana adopting a tool to use for well child social emotional screenings. Mary stated that the work groups would not meet and that she will not push for requiring family practitioners and pediatricians to adhere to a specific protocol. She felt that doing so, families may end up with access to fewer services. Medicaid does not cover the full cost of a well – child exam, if more is required, fewer doctors would be willing to see Medicaid patients.

Head Start/State Collaboration Office Report: Mary Jane Standaert

1. **Most of our work is focused on the School Readiness Initiative.** October was the Early Childhood Summit for Businesses. It was sponsored by the Governor’s Office and the Washington Foundation. The National Governors Association (NGA) assisted and presented and the Federal Reserve presented their research on the importance of investment in EC. Each of the Community teams sent a representative. The key think I learned is that we have to ask.
2. **Each of the Community Teams** received a small \$3000 grant to implement their action plans. I hope more money will be available to assist them. I also hope each of you are involved in some way with your teams and can encourage some of your parents to be involved.
3. Lewistown community team proposed having a **School Readiness Day in March.** Might be something you all would like to encourage in your communities. Could link with other efforts already planned like Kindergarten Roundup & Screenings, Child Find, Week of the Young Child, etc. Just giving it all a central focus and theme.
4. The **School Readiness Task Force** at the State Government is my responsibility. We are following guidance and directives of our grant with NGA to identify state level changes that could best support school readiness. We have identified governance, data and communication. It is very complicated and tedious work, but has to be done. It is important that all state agencies that serve young children see their work through the school readiness lens. The same is true for all of you. How does what I do, impact school readiness??
5. **Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents** project is moving along. We have chosen to focus on right #5 & 8. The larger group had our first meeting with the TA person. It was very inspiring and I was amazed at the number of passionate people that want to work together to make changes. But again, it is going to be long rocky road attempting to impact the Corrections System.

6. **Family Early Learning Guidelines.** If you are a licensed program you can request. We are buying enough to give each program about 25-75. While it would be great to give one to every parent, we feel they would be most effective if used with parents by home visitors, family advocates, in parent trainings, etc. Just handing them to people without instruction would probably not be most worthwhile. So look at them and see what you think and think about how you could use them. (Help parents make that important connection between classroom and home).
7. **MOU on Disabilities is complete.** It just needs the appropriate signatures.
8. **Oral Health Information.** Food Stamp bonus money is proposed to be used to buy toothbrushes for Head Start/EHS programs as well as other oral health supplies and training. I will be communicating with your Health Coord. As that becomes a reality. I am on a state committee addressing community outreach which is one major item from the Head Start Oral Health forum a few years ago and you will be hearing more about that. It is important to work in oral health info. With parents during parent trainings and home visits.
9. **Head Start/Pre-K Meeting in DC.** Last week we attended our national meetings. One was focused on state funded pre-K and how those programs should be working with Head Start in each state. While that does not exist in MT, there are many conversations about it and even some legislators are beginning to think about it and propose various ideas about investing in young children. Our hope is that we would only think about it in relationship to community partnerships with Head Start. It is important that we give our legislators the same and correct information. NHTSA position statement on Pre-K.
10. **Full time Kindergarten Bill.** Is a big one this legislative session. Head Start people should be part of every community conversation and decision about full time K. But don't wait to be invited or asked. Contact your superintendent and request that you be involved as they consider what action to take.

Statewide Fatherhood Strategic Plan: Rob Everingham reported on the state fatherhood plan. In November, Craig Hart facilitated a meeting in Helena. A plan was developed and individuals took responsibility for pieces of the plan. A follow-up meeting will be held in Bozeman in February. See attachments to these minutes.

Region VIII HS Association: Stacey Scarborough reported at the last RHSA meeting the majority of the meeting was spent on strategic planning. A draft will be sent out to members soon. Stacey said that membership of the Board is great and individuals are committed. NHTSA has made a commitment to having more training for management not just teaching staff. Channel Wilkins from the Office of Head Start said we need to find other money not just from the government. There is a constant need to educate about HS/EHS issues. NHTSA has a lot of partnerships including one with NBC who has provided NHTSA with lots of donations of all sorts of stuff that HS/EHS programs can access for free, they would have to pay for shipping costs. If interested call: Serenity Atkinson (703) 739-0875 ex 7506 satkinson@nhsa.org. NHTSA has not focused on Native American issues and really trying to learn more. The next Region VIII meeting scheduled for Oct 17-20, 2007 in Rapid City, SD with the annual conference. The theme is Monumental Opportunities. A survey indicated that people preferred the Wed-Fri to format rather than Thursday - Saturday. The 2008 Regional Conference is in Wyoming and they are going to do it differently; limiting attendance to 650 spots; a Tues-Thurs schedule and bumping up the registration fee with eight meals provided. Other states

have done similar surveys. Other regional issues discussed: A lack of COLA funds causes a morale problem in programs, difficulties following lead screening, no funding for fatherhood initiative; program having options meeting the budget constraints, etc.

NW Indian Head Start Coalition: Susan Carlson, the chair of the coalition gave the website for the coalition and said it will be updated soon: www.nwihsc.org. The coalition was founded to provide quality training at the lowest cost. The NWIHSC also networks together with all of the Regions. This year the conference is located in Worley Idaho with an expectation of 150-200 participants and working on increasing it. The goal is to educate and network. Power is in numbers; we can link our voice, in Indian country. We are realizing the importance of communicating in a variety of ways. Indians have an oral history tradition and are learning they sometimes need to step out of their cultural traditions to communicate. They have partnerships and MOU with the SW coalition and National HS Directors Association. In our region Tribal programs are starting to reach out to build that relationships and voice our opinions. We are connecting as humans. Conference will be in August and it is still in the planning stages, still building the agenda, it all volunteer time. Topics will include different sessions for all service areas. Susan represents NWIHSC on the National Indian Head Start Directors; www.nihsda.org the next meeting in Anchorage. They generate money from dues and have a lobbyist, meet quarterly, and have phone conference monthly. March 14-16 there is the annual conference in Ft Peck; this includes a training cluster.

Montana Early Childhood Advisory Committee (MECAC): The MECAC last met on November 29-30, 2006.

National Governor's Association (NGA) - Sarah Daily from the NGA attended the meeting and provided an overview of a grant she is working with the ECSB and the ECCS/Head Start Collaboration office.

Collaboration/ECCS Report - Mary Jane Standaert reported that she submitted the Collaboration grant for renewal on Nov. 1.

The Business/Early Childhood Summit was Oct. 4 and was very successful. Speakers were Art Rolnick from the Federal Reserve, Governor Schweitzer and Anna Lovejoy from the NGA.

The collaboration office is currently working on a project called the *Bill Of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents*. They will meet with the technical assistance person to create action steps for technical assistance throughout 2007.

Medication Administration - Becky Fleming-Siebenaler reminded the council that child care providers are now required by Dane's law to document any medications that are given to children in their care.

ELG Family Companion - Lisa Murphy reported that this publication is now complete and ready for dissemination. The Head Start Collaboration office will pay to have some printed for Head Start parents,

Budget Report - Chris Hettinger reviewed the 2005- 2006 budget history and future budgeted amounts. The Department is beginning to see an increase in non-TANF child care expenses while at the same time, TANF is seeing a decrease in case load amounts.

Child Care Data Report - Melody Olson presented the latest version of the program performance report. There were minor corrections that were needed. (Corrected handout - attached)

Pre-K discussion - As per Mary Jane Standaert's request there was general discussion regarding the topic of State Funded Pre-K. Mary Jane will relay the ideas generated in this discussion, to participants of the national school readiness the meeting in January.

Quality Committee, presented by Kelly Rosenleaf

Action Item: There are some facilities who are accredited and do not have an extended license. The CCR&Rs will be notified of who these facilities are and be asked to do some follow-up with them.

Recommendation: The committee recommends that the 1ft Merit Pay and Merit Pay 50-hour track stipends be equitable. The bureau shall make the decision about the amount of the award.

Action Item: Libby needs to identify who are CDA advisors in the state. The Quality Committee does not have is Head Start representative and would like this group to join the committee.

Public Policy Committee, presented by Linda Tracy

Jamie Palagi reported that the ECSB will begin to serve all CPS child care and the funding for this program will be transferred to the ECSB. Transitions will be taking place after the first of the year.

The committee spent time talking about full time Kindergarten. There is a 10 million dollar start-up bill to support Full Time Kindergarten. This money would be used for school districts that do not currently have full time Kindergarten or districts that need to enhance current programs.

A discussion about equalizing Head Start eligibility with child care assistance guidelines occurred. Scot Anderson presented to the full council a proposal that would equalize Head Start with Child Care Income Eligibility for Head Start families. **The Public Policy Committee is requesting support and approval from the full MECAC. Consensus reached and agreed on.**

Program Policy presented by Linda Reinhart

The Program Policy committee finished their work looking at the high-cost of housing in certain areas (Bozeman, Missoula, Kalispell & Whitefish) potentially making a sliding fee scale adjustment. Information from the Kids Count book was also reviewed to try and determine if this information could justify changing the sliding fee scale in certain areas. The committee was unable to make a justifiable argument to change the sliding fee scale based on the information presented.

The committee talked about the CCDF performance measures and how they compared the ECSB benchmarks. The program policy committee recommended the ECSB count and track potentially eligible families compared to who is actually served.

The committee would like to take on CACFP policy issues. The CACFP representative should attend the committee to educate the committee o

Montana Advocates for Children (MAC):2007 Legislative Agenda

- 1. We support maintaining eligibility for child care payment assistance at 150% of federal poverty rate and annually updating eligibility at that rate. To:**
 - Stabilize the workforce by maintaining family eligibility.
 - Allow low income working families to qualify for child care payment assistance by annually adjusting family eligibility for child care assistance to stay current with inflation.
 - Stabilize the care and education for young children so they can be ready for school.

- 2. We support conducting an annual Market Rate Survey and annually updating child care reimbursement rates. To:**
 - Assure that low income families have equal access to high quality child care services at 75% of the available child care facilities. High quality care is critical for the development and school readiness of young children at risk due to poverty.
 - Stabilize small child care businesses by providing cost of living increases and encourage providers to improve the quality of care and education.

- 3. We urge that the Montana Child Care Act be revised to allow the flexibility for monthly rates to meet provider's needs. To:**
 - Allow flexibility for hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly rates for child care assistance and allow DPHHS to pay child care providers monthly, the same as private clients do.
 - Reduce paperwork requirements and increase efficiency in administering child care assistance.
 - Reflect the true costs of maintaining available child care slots.

- 4. We support Equalizing the Eligibility for Head Start and Child Care.**
 - Conflicting and inconsistent eligibility requirements for early childhood programs cause hardships for low income families.
 - Children eligible for Head Start services may not be eligible for child care payment assistance or may become ineligible due to changing circumstances and the means by which eligibility is determined
 - Working families of children enrolled in and income eligible for Head Start or Early Head Start would be determined eligible for child care assistance for one year.
 - The estimated maximum cost to serve approximately 400 additional children would be less than \$3,400 annually per family (a total of \$1.4 million).

- 5. We support providing child care assistance to working caretaker relatives.**
 - Provide more support for children on TANF who are being raised by working grandparents and other relatives.

- 6. We support enforcement of seat belt and child safety seat laws as a primary offense.**
 - Montana is the only state in the nation with secondary child safety seat laws. Drivers must be stopped for other offenses before being cited for seat belt or child seat offenses.

- Primary enforcement allows officers to stop drivers who are not wearing seat belts or have children in their vehicles that are not properly secured. It increases use and saves lives.

Montana Advocates for Children is a coalition of state level professional organizations including Montana Association for the Education of Young Children, Montana Child Care Association, Montana Head Start Association, and Montana Child Care Resource & Referral Network.

Website/technology committee: A discussion took place about the need for a technology committee. It was decided there is a definite need for one; the Association's website needs serious updating to be useful. Susie Goffena agreed to serve as chair of the committee.

Montana Behavior Initiative (MBI): Susan Bailey Anderson from the Office of Public Instruction and Liz Moore from RMDC Head Start presented information on MBI and discussed recruiting new teams and the positive impact that MBI will have on programs if they adopt the philosophy. They handed out brochures on MBI and the MBI conference. For more information contact Susan Bailey-Anderson at: sbanderson@mt.gov, 444-2046. Look on the Office of Public Instruction website: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/> for information on the Comprehensive System for Personnel Development including, resources, scholarships/mini grants, strategic plan, toolkits, etc.

Governor's Office of Indian Affairs: Reno Charette, coordinator of the office and a former Head Start parent who served on PC in Missoula, gave an overview of the scope and activities of her office.

Technical Assistance Reports:

Region VIII BAH:

Todd and Melinda reported they are working on planning cluster trainings and working with the technology committee. There is a Fatherhood meeting on Feb. 16 in Bozeman at the new library. Craig Hart will again facilitate. On Mar 2, Health Coordinators are meeting at the Chamber of Commerce in Butte. Education Managers are meeting Mar 22 in Lewistown and May 11 in Billings. The PIR has been put into an online training. An online toolkit will be available soon. In December Todd attended the first fiscal pre-institute and attended the Directors institute. Craig Turner, in the office of HS will be retiring. No rumors and talk about who might replace him. Channel Wilkins the Director of the Office of Head Start focused on Region 8 the last day of the Directors Institute. A DVD on Region 8 was put together, highlighting institutes; work on medical and dental projects and, Latino efforts. TA contracts are being renegotiated this year. Denver office is going through reorganization.

Region XI (AI-TAN): Elaine Shea said that the American Indian-Technical Assistance Network is also changing with a restructuring and reorganization. She passed around some resources for people to take a look at and mentioned the Cluster training in conjunction with the Fort Peck Head Start annual conference in March.

Committee Reports:

Native American Committee: Susan Carlson reported for the Native American committee. They discussed the early childhood curriculum for Indian Education for All at the Office of Public Instruction and seeing that a Head Start person is on the committee that develops the curriculum. The committee scheduled a School Readiness meeting for Tribal Head Starts for February 12, 2007 in Havre. The agenda will be developed. The School Readiness Equation document will be used at the meeting. The committee members will continue to recruit tribal programs to become active members and encourage HS Association Tribal members to serve on other committees.

TA Committee: They decided on a disabilities training in Billings with Autism focus. Todd and Melinda will help put the cluster together.

Governmental Affairs: Stacey handed out the 40 days legislative alert document. Stacey reviewed activities for Head Start/Early Head Start Day at the Capitol. Scot reviewed the Head Start/Child Care eligibility bill and House Bill 2. The joint subcommittee for Human Services will discuss funding child care that is in the Governor's Budget. A reminder was given that every program needs to contribute \$2/per child per year for advocacy efforts. Missoula Early Head Start, Deer-Lodge County and Central Montana Head Start have paid their \$2 per child for this year.

Finance/Nominating/Personnel Committee: The committee recommended a raise for the Director and accepting the proposed budget, consensus was reached in favor of both recommendations. Susan Carlson was nominated as the Association's representative on MECAC, consensus was reached. John Filz will attend MECAC meetings at the expense of the Association to help transition Susan into the role. Stacey Scarborough was nominated as the MAC representative to replace Debra Lindstrand, consensus was reached. Three parents were nominated to represent the MT HS Association on the Region VIII HS Association, Christi Rusk from Missoula, Mindy Bentick from Shelby, and Kamie Bristol from Lewistown. A ballot vote took place and Christi Rusk was selected as the representative.

Technology Committee: Andi Everingham has agreed to serve as webmaster; a contract will be written and sent out for signatures. Software will be purchased that will be used to maintain the website. Andi will work with Christy, Todd and Melinda in updating the website.