

Montana Head Start Association
September 27 & 28, 2007
Great Falls, MT

Present: Wendy Bull Child, Deb Hedin, Andrea Savage, Mindie Bentick, Cindy Sinclair, Cal Spangler, Sally Leep, Rob Everingham, Betty Williams, Minnetta Iron Pipe, Christi Rusk, Phil Burgess, Scot Anderson, Shawna Hooper, Rosemary Rosenberry, Karla Seaman, Ken Miller, Joan Davies, Patty Dahl, Jena Grub, Stacey Scarborough, John Filz, Clyde Wolf Black, Christina Barto, Brenda Fisher, Cheryl Jefferson, Barb Brophy, Cara Elias, Alma Young, Viola Wood, Robert Fox, Mary Jane Standaert, Christy Hill Larson, Rose Swan, Kamie Bristol, Jolene Mahoney, Peggy Rayome

Vice President Wendy Bull Child opened the meeting by welcoming everyone; introductions were made. Christi Rusk led an ice breaker. Raffle will be held at the end of the meeting.

Facilitator: Patty Dahl

Time Keeper: Mindie Bendick

Note takers: Mary Jane Standaert & Christy Hill Larson

Strategic Planning: Christy opened by reminding everyone that the strategic plan needs to mesh with the Collaboration work. She summarized her meeting with other Association directors in Chicago and stressed that marketing of Head Start/Early Head Start has to be a priority nationally, statewide and locally. It is very important that HS/EHS have a key role in any state funding of Pre-K (early childhood).

Stacey informed group about Region VIII HS Assoc. priorities: advocacy, communication, training, and Regional and National involvement. She shared a draft of their strategic plan.

Members divided into small groups to review and revise parts of the Strategic Plan. John suggested a fifth goal of making a centralized concerted effort for fund raising. Each small group presented their work to the entire Board. Christy will put it all together in draft form and send out to members for review.

Networking meeting – Directors, staff reps and parents all met in small discussion groups.

Senator John Tester's Office Field Representative – Cheryl MacArthur read a message from the Senator in support of Head Start. A discussion took place around Head Start and Early Head Start issues. Head Start Reauthorization is sitting in committee in Congress. Rachel Stag is Education person for the Senator. Matt Jennings is Ed person in Tester's Office in DC. Rachel's contact is: 406-252-0297. Blackberry: 406-794-1779. Christy shared that Head Start needs to create a marketing/public relations plan in response to the Pre-K movement. Ready Equation shared. John Filz remarked that there is no state funding in Montana Head Start like other states. Match is usually soft and donations. We have lost 15% against consumer index and expectations have grown. We are supposed to get this additional money from private or the state. Region 8 is in rough shape financially more than other regions. Noted tribal involvement and leadership in state association unlike other states. What is the challenge to get state money? Cal said that NCLB led to full day Kindergarten so that children are more ready for elementary testing. EHS/HS is stuck at a number serving, we need expansion money. The population of the young and poor are growing. Cal could serve double the number that he has now. Cheryl asked if HS serves only low income. No fees paid. Creating a larger problem by not serving these young parents. Competing with too many other non-profit groups for dollars. Average cost per child in

Montana is \$7000-\$8000 per child. New building codes in state are causing great financial difficulties. HS/EHS are heavily monitored. Ken – Does not think state legislature would ever consider funding children under 5. Bozeman area has such high cost of living; it is hard to serve all the families we really should be serving. Cal – mentioned the Federal Reserve support of early childhood. Sees more change in children in EHS/HS than he ever saw in K-12. Stacey stressed the need for comprehensive services. Christy asked for parent comment. Rob – talked about keeping HS comprehensive and not just focusing on literacy. It is about the families, not just the child. Mindie – HS helped with transitioning into K. Robert – county counts Indian children but can't be served on reservation. Viola – we invite you to learn more about us, come to our meetings, contact Tester's Office in local communities and invite them to the meeting. Christy has an appointment next week in Baucus', Rehberg's and Tester's offices in DC.

Region VIII Office update - Deb Hedin – thanked everyone for support during Lyla's death. We hope that reauthorization will be completed by the end of October. There is a bill about EHS expansion. Channel Wilkins has been transferred and replaced by Pat Brown from Region 7. Deb shared OHS organizational structure. Region VIII office is hiring new program specialists. There are some changes to protocol for PRISM. Classroom observations by component. Take care of concerns as they come up so reviewer can see that it has been taken care of. Don't throw NRS away until reauthorization is complete. "I am moving, I am learning" training in Salt Lake, in March. Wants information on how transportation costs have changed things in your programs. Patty stated that it is not fair that programs can not count parent transportation as in kind. Risk analysis process will be taking place. She congratulated on our model of tribal and regional collaboration. MJ will get copy of risk analysis document from Deb.

Region XI report - Viola suggested Region 11 Program Bureau Chief Renee Perthuis come and speak to us.

2008 NW Indian Head Start Coalition Conference will be held in Billings next August. Clyde and Viola are on planning board. They are looking for presenters and would like to arrange for tours of Billings programs.

Region VIII Conference planning for 2009 – Stacey said we have to decide on site, funding and focus. She did research in Missoula and nothing seemed like it would work out. Billings might be only possibility. Do you want to partner with MtAEYC? Regional conferences have not been financially successful the last few years for a variety of reasons. Cal led a discussion around getting funders to underwrite the conference. **Consensus given to partner with MtAEYC.** Consensus given on having it in Billings. Christy – reminded everyone that each program needs to choose what they will be able to do. Conference Coordinator and planning committee should be chosen.

Collaboration Office update: Mary Jane Standaert reported on-
Assuring Better Child Development (ABCD) – ECCS is taking part as core team member with the state Medicaid Office and other partners to ensure that all young children in MT receive adequate and appropriate health and mental health screenings. We attended a three day training session in Houston in July. We have two doctors (Lewistown & Bozeman) that are the pilot sites for using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire with parents. Committees have formed to conduct outreach and education, training for medical staff and to recommend state policy changes. While the state policy part is focused on low income children that have Medicaid (EPSDT, the project is focused on **all** children 0-3. This technical assistance project is sponsored and guided by the National Assoc. of State Healthy Policy (NASHP)

Early Childhood Partnership for Professional Development (ECPPD) – creating a Careers Pathway booklet for potential and new early childhood people that will chart all the possible careers in early childhood and what education is needed and what is offered at different Montana colleges.

School Readiness Trainings – conducting across the state, invited by the CCR&Rs who are now required to include on their training calendars. The purpose is to give child care providers and others an opportunity to look at their jobs in regards to school readiness, to make a connection to the local community teams and to learn about how the state government is supporting this initiative.

School Readiness Task Force – The Follow up School Readiness Summit was held in May and seems to have been very successful. Many of the recommendations that were given at that time have been turned into a work plan for the Task Force. We met last week and included reps from the community teams. This group is also advisory to Collaboration/ECCS. One of our next steps is a Children’s Budget that lists all the departments with state and federal funding for young children in Montana. An Economic Impact Study on how early childhood contributes to the economy of Montana is also being done. This is being professionally conducted by an outside source and funded by the Washington Foundation, National Governor’s Association, the Governor’s Office and Early Childhood Services Bureau. MJ reported on the NGA report that the National Governor’s Association sent to the Office of Head Start praising Montana for the inclusion of the Indian communities in the school readiness work.

Oral Health – Through a Food Stamp bonus received by DPHHS, the school readiness community teams are being offered \$1500 to distribute oral health information, children’s books and to conduct an oral health survey for the Family and Community Health Bureau (which is the grantee for ECCS). HS programs that take an on-line oral health training will get free toothbrushes.

Bill of Rights for Children of Incarcerated Parents – first draft of our toolkit for families is about to be assembled. Applying for a VISTA.

MOU on Disabilities – waiting for OPI approval. Need signatures still.

Family Early Learning Guidelines – you have to order and you will get some, over the number you will have to pay for. Call or contact Lisa Murphy – 444-1400 or limurphy@mt.gov

State funded Pre-K - Other people besides myself and other EC people are receiving considerable pressure about state funded pre-K. I think all of our state EC groups need to start discussing and making plans because we have to be ready for the next session in 2009. Gary Branae who is a legislator from Billings has been on the SRTF and has kept in touch. He was recently at a meeting of state legislators in the states without state funded Pre-K. He is presenting to the Education and Local Funding interim legislative committee today about what he learned and he will make some recommendations to them, one of which is to invite me to talk to them. And my message is that state funded pre-K is not necessarily the answer, but funding EC services that exist and that work is very important – such as subsidizing certain quality of child care, strengthening infant/toddler programs, raising income levels for Head Start and Early Head Start (ex: paying for kids 100%-125% of poverty), focusing on EC health/mental health consultation, starting Touch-points in other communities, expand scholarships for child care and private preschool, there are many things that work, that better serve children and families, that don’t end up closing programs that strive to do their best for children. But we have to all agree on what we all are going to be telling legislators. **Do we support State funded Pre-K or state funded early childhood?** The Governor’s Office is also receiving considerable pressure in this regard and we have to have a message and a plan. Our Governor talks the talk of supporting early childhood and his Ed Policy and Health Policy advisors are totally on board, but they need our guidance and assistance and we have to be ready.

Evaluation: Evaluation for the Collaboration Office occurs every fall and early winter. The evaluator usually sends out a written survey of questions and follows up with some phone interviews of partners. The Head Start Association is a main partner. The evaluation is then put together like a case study and the Association part is separate from that of other partners. We try to track needs being met, impressions and experience and what you know about our work and what might need to change or improve. Oftentimes people have answers that are not things that we could or should be doing. The federal government has given us some guidelines over the years and on some issues we have to be very careful

HS/EHS Program Updates:

- Opportunities Inc. Head Start, Great Falls – fully enrolled, new buses, full compliance, collaboration with Helena Dentist – Dr. Rencher and a retired dentist does all the screenings, new staff oriented, welcomed us and thanked us for our understanding in meeting in a different location tomorrow. Little Learners – 75 children in collaboration with school district for Pre-K is working very well.
- Young Families EHS, Billings – fully enrolled, new building next weekend, review coming up, all is good, long waiting list, working well with Head Start, suggested to work with school district for fund raising. Has raised \$750,000 to date to pay for their building.
- Kootenai Valley Head Start, Libby – Peggy Rayome is the new director and has had to deal with many staff changes, over enrolled, review in the spring, handicapped equipment for playground and eagle scouts installed, Plum Creek donated dental supplies, school readiness group very active, started using Zoo Phonics, Love and Logic will be offered as a parenting class, because of the school readiness team they are better connected to child care providers and EHS.
- Northern MT Child Development Center, Havre – completed reorganization into one 0-5 program, some jobs had to be rearranged, added teacher mentor, rotating helper position, fully enrolled, \$ for playground.
- Central MT HS – (written report submitted electronically) Our year started on September 10 and we are happy to say we are and have been fully enrolled. However, we would like to say we are fully staffed. Since August 8, we have experienced incredible turnover – to turn this to the positive we can only say that first it was not due to internal turmoil and secondly, we have filled all but one position (of course that is as of today). The unemployment in Lewistown is about 2% and we are being affected greatly as I am sure the rest of the state is also.
 - We are excited to have the opportunity to get our medical and dental taken care by the Ronald McDonald Mobile. This is the second year that a donor has graciously given us that wonderful gift. Our 45 days will be up the end of October but are further ahead this year than we have been in the past – most of our requirements have been met.
 - Last year we received monies to put in new safer playground equipment in Roundup, Stanford and Lewistown. It looks great and we are thankful to have it.
 - Recently we have collaborated with RSVP for a maintenance person. It has worked out great for us and the things that have been on my list for months have been taken care of in a couple of days.

- We have not heard from the review team as of yet.
 - In an effort to find funds to build a vestibule to stabilize temperatures in our entry way, a local business in town has decided to partner with us to display a non commercial size “air curtain” (like those at grocery and department stores) at no cost to us. We have already seen a difference and are excited to get some community awareness from this venture.
 - Representatives from Board, PC and management have started our strategic planning. Though it all seems overwhelming at times trying to shuffle even more we are excited to get going in this direction and move beyond our three year goals. We have had excellent Board and Policy Council involvement this past year and are excited to say we have some of our best members returning for another year. We couldn’t do it without them!
- NW MT Head Start, Kalispell-(submitted electronically by Renee Funk). Our program has had many changes in the last few months. As many of you know Kathryn resigned last May and Renee Funk stepped in as Interim Director. We had been under a Quality Improvement Plan and are pleased to announce that we passed our QIP review with flying colors the first part of September. We have made many changes to our systems and processes and our management team has worked hard through the summer to make the QIP a success. We are pleased to announce that we have a new director starting Oct 1st. It is Jolene Mahoney. Many of you know her from the Libby Head Start Program. Classes started on September 12th with full enrollment. We are looking at alternate sites for our Tobacco Valley center and possibly merging our Columbia Falls and Whitefish Centers sometime in the next year or two. We are excited about the changes that are happening in our program and looking forward to a successful year.
 - Blackfeet Early Childhood Services, Browning – fully enrolled, they have a review in two weeks. This year they discontinued all transportation and attendance went up to 91%. They have put a third person in each classroom, want to expand. New computers in classrooms with part of transportation money. Blackfeet EHS – Native American week this week, prenatal moms making moccasins and cradle boards. Prenatal moms needed their own space and it was created. Fully enrolled, long waiting list, good attendance. More severe disabilities, working with Quality Life Concepts. 100% attendance on screenings and parent orientation
 - Fort Belknap Head Start, Harlem – fully enrolled, review follow up successful, election year for Tribal Council so will seat Parent Council after that, 2 staff vacancies, also oversee the child care program. New computers from a Rural Development grant. Cut \$171,000 and staff time to 50%. Nov.1 back to full time. Have staff that is completing their Bachelor degrees.
 - Child Start Inc., Missoula – on site follow up completed, fully enrolled, restructuring some, increase in insurance costs, combination program changes, internal changes of positions. Eliminated two rural bus routes. They did some remodeling so that Family Advocates have better office space.
 - Fort Peck Tribes Head Start, Poplar – just completed federal follow up review. Tribal Elections. Hopa Mountain book project. Fully enrolled but starting to lose children. Only 2 staff changes. IHS conducted drug testing during school hours.

- Crow Tribes Head Start, Crow Agency – fully enrolled. 4 teachers getting degree with MSU. Cheryl Jefferson is orienting herself to Head Start and being director.
- Billings HS – had to relocate 21 staff and several classrooms of children. They are fully enrolled, with a waiting list. Strategic planning with board and policy council has been done. Bus drivers are unionized. Dental was at 96% last year. Two dentists are rotating screening the children. Met Transit could be giving them a free bus.
- Butte EHS – fully enrolled long waiting list, Tom deployed, Christina is acting director, Review Oct. 21, also have some open positions.
- Butte HS – fully enrolled, Dr. Kopeland will do dental exams, 7 child care partners, struggling to find a bus driver, mental health agency that works with them only Medicaid
- RMDC Head Start, Helena – fully enrolled, waiting list, United Way Agency, playground at Rossiter and using National Guard for installation. Would like to expand to Boulder and Lincoln. Subs are an issue. Families’ phone numbers are hard to keep up with. Training in Creative Curriculum expansion. \$24,000 overspent and used CSBG money pays it back. One less bus. Parent transport seems to improve attendance. Helena Civic TV on promoting HS.

Committee Reports:

Finance/ Nomination/ Personnel/By-law Committee:

A copy of the YTD budget and account balances were passed out. No action was needed.

Nominations were made and consensus was reached for the following positions:

Region VIII Head Start Association Staff Rep: Minnetta Iron Pipe-Armstrong.

Montana Head Start Association Friend of HS Board member – Caroline Yellow Robe

Food Security Council – Mary Ellen Halverson

NHSA Awards (Region 8)—the following individuals won at the state level by consensus and will submitted to the Region VIII Heads Start Association for consideration.

National HS Leadership – Ruth Ann Quintero

Teacher of the Year - Sheila Devins

Humanitarian Award - Brian Duncan – Missoula Head Start

By-laws need to be reviewed and revised. Christy will send copies of By-laws to the committee who will review and present recommended changes at the January meeting.

Family Support Services –Mary Jane said we need a new representative on the Family Support Council. If you are interested, let MJ know before the January meeting

Native American Committee– reported on new things and issues in their programs. Crow Tribes Head Start needs help in mental health area. Clyde and Viola are on the Board of the NW American Indian Coalition.

T/TA Committee: Governance training was held on Sept. 12, 2008 and was considered a very valuable training. It was too short of a notice for some programs to get Board members to participate, some programs had many participate in the training. It was suggested that the training be done every year in November after PC is seated. November 14, 2008 was chosen. Program needs to commit 6 months ahead and will be responsible to pay a share of the costs, whether they participate or not.. Todd reported about on going new managers training. March

will be in Lewistown or Bozeman and others in conjunction with Assoc. meetings in January and April. Results of the surveymonkey.com were reviewed by the committee. Supervision was identified as a great need for training. The committee will need more specific information.

Technology Committee –Webmaster, Andi Everingham – created new look and she posts all that we send her. Each program has a page. www.headstartmt.org

Governmental Affairs – Christy will be traveling to Washington, DC for the NHSA Leadership Institute, meetings with other state association directors and visits with Congressman Rehberg, Senators Tester and Baucus. There will be a reception honoring Senator Kennedy and his support of Head Start, all senators and congressman have been invited. It is designed to draw attention to HS Reauthorization. Ed Ziegler is the featured speaker.

- The committee recommended donating \$200 to help with the costs and purchase chocolate covered huckleberries to put in the gift bags. Montana HS Association will be listed on the program as a sponsor of the reception. **Consensus on the recommendation**
- On the Hill visits, Christy will: thank them for their support and vote for SCHIP, thank for their support and vote for Reauthorization, discuss Head Start Reauthorization and the need for more funding, present information about MT HS Association, discuss the Montana School Readiness Initiative, and PreK issues.

A discussion took place around the state and national elections. It is important that HS/EHS at the local, state and national levels market the uniqueness of the program. MT HS Association needs to develop consistent talking points.

Technical Assistance AIAN:

Elaine Shea reported that there have been several personnel changes in AIAN TA Network. “I am Moving, I am Learning” training will be held April 14 in Albuquerque. Clusters are being planned for the coming years. She will be attending the Region VIII Conference in Rapid City.

Steve Yeakel: MAC Lobbyist

Steve began by saying there is nothing more important in the system than your voice; they don't go for the power voices but the real voices of the real people who could vote for them and your role is more important than the role your lobbyist plays. There are no barriers between you and your legislator. How important what you do is tied to several legislative issues.

The 2007 session from the MAC agenda perspective was wildly successful because several hundred of you all were able to tell the legislature what they needed to know, along with a committed governor with a good budget.

It is not too early to begin developing issues agenda for the next session

Organize agenda

1. Develop value statement
 - a. What is it that Head Starts do that is critical, put that in a phrase and statement
2. Identify barriers to the success
3. Figure out what you can do within the next two years that could take away those barriers
4. Follow 2008 election
 - a. based on who is elected decide on what on your agenda you can get accomplished

Developing Advocates

1. Three main audiences exist

- a. Exec. Branch (EPP- Executive Planning Process)
 - b. Legislative branch
 - c. and general public
2. Primarily focus on the 2008 Elections; Steve discussed specific legislative seats and passed out information on seats that are up for re-election or vacant.
 3. Urge everyone to support a candidate now
 4. Filing season between Jan and March

Not too early for the public to think about open houses to invite legislators to, you get both public and legislative participation. Steve will be identifying champions over the next few months, invite those champions; keeping in mind there are legislators that won't accept the invitations.

In 2009: have issues tracks and developing agenda; prioritize, election process, find majority party, committees, then make decisions on how much agenda to move forward on. You did really great work on the Head Start Day and coalition day. He suggested holding similar events in 2009 one early in the session and one later. Educate legislators in advance. Think ahead to reserve time in March or April to have a number of folks from HS community to travel the hallways and sit in on key committees Count on lobbyist to hold meeting with key decision makers so message does not get lost.

Early childhood has been large and active and need to continue...can't have too many people involved in the network or on the e-mail list.

Remember:

1. If we don't get something done at the beginning as the process goes on there are more chances
2. No doubt that the interaction with your legislator is the most important.
3. **You can do nothing but help this process.**

Senator Mike Cooney would be eligible again to be President of the Senate if the Democrats retain majority and Carol Williams would stand to be majority leader again for the same reason.

Steve Yeakel contact information
 888-446-1674
 Key-sy@sy-key.com

Meeting evaluation:

It was decided that a written evaluation of Association meeting would be a good tool to use for planning future meetings. Christy will send out an evaluation form, electronically.

Comment:

Rob Everingham brought up the Kid's Management Authority (KMA) that is located in several communities around the state. KMAs meet around mental health issues of children diagnosed with an SED, their efforts are focused on serving the child in his/her home community. HS/EHS are partners with some KMA groups.

Next Meeting: SAVE THE DATES
January 10-11, 2008 Helena, MT
April 9-10, 2008 Ronan/Polson, MT