

Montana Head Start Association
April 10-11, 2008
Polson, MT

Present: Mary Jane Standaert, Clyde Wolf Black, Wendy Bull Child, Minnetta Iron Pipe, Betty Williamson, Caroline Yellow Robe, Jeanne Christopher, Viola Wood, Jewel Four Star, Jay Viall, Shawna Hooper, Phil Burgess, Karla Seaman, Rose Swan, Sarah Bruer, Pam deRosier, Kamie Bristol, Alma Young, Carol Davison, Gail Mickey, Barb Brophy, Renee Funk, Helen McGary, Roemary Rosenberry, Wendy Glass, Bonnie Cheyney, Luke Wells, Patty Dahl, Cindy Sinclair, Melissa Evans, Rebecca Hixon, Scot Anderson, John Filz, Brenda Fisher, Emily Randash, Shona Thompson, Sharon Gehrke, Alexander Eanes, Chrstel Marks, Ken Miller, Christina Barto, Christy Hill Larson
Guest: Mark Heinert, Ross Weaver, Todd Lester, Melinda Edwards, Mike Kelly

Wendy Bull Child, Vice President, opened the meeting, introductions were made, a prayer was offered by Viola Wood, Pam de Rosier facilitated the meeting and Brenda Fisher was timekeeper.

Sally Leep and Stacey Scarborough sent messages of good-bye and thank you for their time on the Association. Joan Davies could not attend this meeting, which would have been her last and asked that a letter be read on her behalf. Scot Anderson is retiring from Child Start, Inc. and was honored for thirty years as a Head Start director and leader in the Association.

Ross Weaver, Program Manager for Region VIII Head Start Office, presented information and answered questions on Reauthorization, and Risk Management.

Program updates:

Ravalli Head Start & Missoula EHS: There is a vacancy for EHS Director; applications are being accepted. There was an article written by the School Readiness team for the newspaper. They have many community partners in Missoula for Early Head Start but few in Ravalli County. The Ravalli AEYC Chapter is very active.

Child Start Inc.—Missoula:

- NAEYC Accreditation through 2013! (One of the largest in our region and one of the first in the nation to go through accreditation under the new system)
- Montana Behavioral Initiative affiliation and support for program-wide violence prevention and positive behavior support.
- New social skills curriculum and training to use Second Step.
- Connections with Missoula Aging Services, and more foster grandparents (8) than ever before.
- State Day Care Extended License.
- Annual celebration of the Week of the Young Child with fantastic events like this year's cultural sharing booths, parade of flags, and inspirational teaching in classes about diverse countries.
- Recruitment and enrollment – we have been able to consistently recruit enough families to maintain full enrollment and a robust waiting list over the past several years.

- Family and Community Partnerships –we have been able to establish and maintain a 90 to 95% of successful partnership agreements with parents.

School Readiness Team Activities:

- Preparation for the State School Readiness Summit in May.
- Tabling Events to provide public outreach about school readiness.
- Expanding the Missoula team.
- Child Find events.
- Radio advertising campaign.

Mental Health/Early Childhood Consultation that takes place in your program:

- Agreement with Western Montana Mental Health Center.
- Provides services of a clinical social worker for 30 hours per week (individual, family, and group therapy), a behavior specialist for 30 hours per week (classroom intervention), and a psychiatrist as needed (pharmaceutical consultation).
- Medicaid is billed for eligible children and services; Head Start pays the balance of approximately \$18,000 per year.

How your program conducts a community needs assessment:

- Team of staff, parents, and Board members assisted by community volunteers.
- Review of data sources including Census information, PIR and other program statistical reports, and reports of other community organizations.
- Interviews with community agency personnel and parent focus groups.
- Analysis of information and preparation of recommendations.

RMDC Head Start--Helena: General update on program activities – During the month of February the **Pennies for Progress** committee of the Friends of Head Start group conducted a Ten Million Penny Campaign. The goal was to earn \$100,000 – half of which would be given to Head Start to use as seed money to begin building a Head Start center/Community Center on the Rossiter School campus in the north Helena valley and the other half to go to the Central Asia Institute to build a school in central Asia...this is all based on Greg Mortenson's Three Cups of Tea book. Donors contributed approximately \$80,000 and then the local school children and local businesses would collect the other \$20,000. As of today, between \$100,000 and \$101,000 has been collected! This has just been an amazing effort in Helena and also in our rural communities of Townsend and Whitehall. We are all celebrating with a Ten Million Penny March this weekend! February was also "**Reading Instead of Television**" month where families read to and with their children to try and reach a goal of 35,000 minutes. We had 99 families participating for a total of 37,954 minutes. Our school/business partner, Mountain West Bank, gave the program \$500 to use as match for our RIF book give-away each year. Since fall we have continued to do **Creative Curriculum** training for our classroom staff (using the 4th Edition). We are now using Creative Curriculum program-wide with the same expectations for all classrooms. We were accepted as a **United Way** agency last year so we have just submitted our United Way grant for the next funding stream. Being part of United Way gave us another opportunity to be on several local radio stations and our civic television station to promote Head Start. Our **SPARC** team, and SPARC stands for Strengthening Partnership and Resources in Communities (for Family Literacy), completed their second training in Concord, CA the first part of March. Working on a local Family Literacy coalition has opened up many doors for Head Start in Helena. We are surprised that our **enrollment** continues to be around 246 here in the middle of April; generally we see more families moving this time

of the year. We are in the process of doing our program self-assessment, working on next year's calendar, updating work plans and procedures, etc. We anticipate being overspent by about \$20,000 as we finish our grant year on April 30.

New partnerships - We have begun working with the local Workforce committee and the School District/University of Montana-Helena around young adults furthering their education whether that be GED, High School Diploma and working toward higher ed. These have both come out of the Family Literacy Coalition begun as part of SPARC.

School Readiness Team Activities - our School Readiness Team just this week finished preparing book bags for preschool age children as part of reading activities that will take place during the Week of the Young Child. Reading events will take place in local elementary school libraries, public libraries, and at the rotunda of the State capitol. We will be doing an oral health survey at Helena's "Kite Festival" on May 4. Our SR team applied to United Way for funds to help us buy books for this event and they awarded us \$1,000. Speaking again of United Way, one of the three focus areas for United Way this year is Early Childhood Development so it might be a good time for any Head Start that is not in a UW funding stream to consider applying.

Mental Health/Early Childhood Consultation - We have continued to partner with Intermountain (which used to be Intermountain Children's Home and Services) to do classroom observations, consultations with teachers, etc. but the ECD/Disabilities Advisory Team has spent the past several months learning about AWARE services in Billings and the possibility of AWARE providing services in our program. We expect that the Team will make a recommendation to our Policy Council in the near future.

Cluster training suggestions - It seems that most any training could be done in a cluster format if there were a few programs that had the same interest.

Community Needs Assessment - We first develop a CA committee from our HS Leadership Team that consists of several people (including the parent who sits on the LT). Different people take different areas to research, we send out a questionnaire to agencies and individuals in our communities, we use our family surveys, have done focus groups, use lots of info from other sources...the committee reviews all the info, determines what the consistencies are, determines what they think are the over-arching community needs, bring this info forward to our LT for review and further discussion. After all that, then the recommendation is made to the PC and Board about what the CA needs are.

Last but not least, I would like to invite all of you to our Third Annual **Eggstravaganza** to be held on Thursday, April 24 from 6-8 p.m. at Valley Farms in Helena. There will be a live music, silent and live auction, beverages and hors d'oeuvres.

Kootenai Valley Head Start—Libby program update: submitted by Peggy Rayome who could not attend as she has board and staff meetings this week.

General

We had our review March 10 – 14. Stressful but we made it through the week.

We are gearing up for our annual year-end picnic.

School readiness

We are offering *Love n Logic* classes to parents and community members. We were able to purchase books for the parents and only charge the parents \$10 for the books. The books are free for parents not able to pay. We received a grant from Plum Creek for school readiness. Books will be purchased to send home with children and additional books purchased for Love n Logic classes.

Mental Health Consultation:

We have a licensed consultant come to our program to consult with staff with behavior concerns. Parents are given referrals to the licensed consultant. Our Mental Wellness Coordinator who has a BA in psychology consults with our LCPC to get information for the staff and families. We have the following curriculums implemented in our classrooms: Stranger Danger, Be Kind to Animals - Dog Bite Prevention, Body Rights, Respect Value each Person and Death and Dying.

Trainings Needs

HR – Human Resources Jim Nys Personnel Plus would be great
Social Service Clusters
Mental Wellness Cluster

Community Assessment

We will be doing a full community assessment this fall.

AWARE EHS--Butte: Tom Richards is in Iraq doing a fifty day tour. They had their NAEYC accreditation visit and have still not heard anything on their Federal Review. The continuation grant was recently submitted. AWARE is hosting a mental health consortium in Billings in May. Contact the TA Specialists if you would like to attend. The School Readiness team has fallen aside; Christina not been able to devote time to it; plans are to focus on it again soon.

Northwest Montana Head Start: Kalispell—Renee Funk is Interim Director. They are working on developing more meaningful community partners. They do not have an active school readiness team, but collaborate a lot with school districts. They are looking for new classroom space at two sites. **Whitefish:** Mountain West Bank is a community partner and contributes to the program in a variety of ways, including reading projects, art studio, and end of the year holiday party. Head Start participates in Whitefish Winter Carnival and held a first annual Family Olympics.

Butte Head Start: They have lots of partnership agreements with community partners. They do a lot of school transition activities with school districts, but have not been active with a school readiness team. They are considering school district space for the Dillon classrooms. They sent people to *I am moving I am learning* training and doing a wellness program for staff and parents.

Anaconda Deer Lodge County Head Start: same with others regarding needs assessment, they gather data, put in report form. Their partnerships are strong and going well. They do not have a formal school readiness team, but have transition process in place. Their mental health services are provided on site. The mental health consultant does classroom observations, staff training & counseling with parents and staff.

Ft Belknap Head Start: The School Readiness team is working with the school districts to develop an MOU. Harlem school has a Reading First grant; they will work with Head Start program on literacy. Transition: there are plans in place to bring the four year old Head Start children to the elementary school at least once a month and the kindergarten teachers are going to come to the Head Start classrooms once a month as a way of helping the children transition out of Head Start. They will be working with the disabilities coordinator as well. Another transition activity is for Head Start children each spring to have a week long experience in the public schools. They are continuing with their work

with Hopa Mountain. They are in the process of updating their community assessment and getting ready for Risk Management training in Washington, DC. They partner with Indian Health Services to provide mental health support for the program. They are collaborating with tribal health and having a health fair.

Opportunities Inc. completed a self assessment and will doing strategic planning based on the assessment. The governing board has a retreat planned. Head Start is working with pediatricians in the area on preventing childhood obesity. The School Readiness team participated in a community health fair and children's activity fair. They have a mental health consultation in their program as well as a mental health provider. Great Falls has an early childhood mental health coalition and is addressing the increase in behavior problems in young children.

Rocky Boy Head Start: School Readiness is an issue in their community because children are not ready for school and schools are not ready for the children. They have a community team working on the issue and have an Early Reading First grant opportunity. They completed their follow-up review. Behavioral health issues are a concern and teachers are stressed out.

Ft Peck Head Start: They are fully enrolled and have a small waiting list; relocating one classroom to another community helped solve the enrollment problem. They have many active partnerships. The School Readiness Team is an active committee that they borrowed from health services advisory. They work with Child Find and have lots of transition activities each month. They have lots of advertisements, bumper stickers, posters, cluster trainings and just completed annual spring conference. Teacher conferences are scheduled. CAN is in progress; many local partners do one with parents and go out in community to talk to with partners. They will be participating in community health fair. Behavior problems exist, but have special teachers and resources to work with the children. They have limited services from Indian Health Services but have the LEAs and contract with another entity.

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Early Childhood Services are in the analyzing phase of a community needs assessment. For first time, they asked both tribal and non tribal organizations what they were going through and it has been really good. They hosted the annual Early Childhood Services POW Wow and fed 575 people. Head Start centers are finishing the year this week; they are finishing 11 days early, which is not a popular thing, but they are out of money. Partnerships: have found psychologist that works for them and charges only \$25/hour. They have formed a new partnership with Job Corp to do a CDA program. They will accept anyone not just Job Corp students. Hopefully the CDA participants will be served by CS&K early childhood services. They also have a partnership with Indian Relief and participate in the Food Coop and have found that it saves money. School Readiness activities: have been doing Touch Points, they had a fatherhood panel for staff and the dads learned from each other as well. They will hold the 3rd annual baby fair this fall; they have radio ads advertising the program, and were fully enrolled all year with an active waiting list. In doing the community needs assessment it was discovered that Indian Health serves 179 other tribes in addition to the 8000 Salish Kootenai members; tribal numbers are a minority on this reservation.

Blackfeet Early Childhood Services: are in the process of updating service plans and MOU with other agencies. They do not have many resources. The community needs assessment will be completed tomorrow. Right now directors are working on the grant. Head Start has updated the transition process. The School Readiness Team is made up Head Start/Early Head Start, public schools; the school superintendent has joined the team. The team is participating in Child Find and kindergarten roundup and. They developed a measurement tool before entering Kindergarten. Head Start will close their doors are May 2. Graduations are planned, as well as a staff appreciation celebration. They were able to provide families with three Reading are Fundamental book distributions. They make an effort to collaborate with all agencies in Browning. They held a Bike –a-thon for \$1 per child. They make referrals to Indian Health Services for Mental Health. EHS uses Touch Points which is a mental health model. The program allows staff ½ hour of wellness throughout the day. Health fair coming up locally at the Blackfeet Community College and HSEHS has been invited to participate.

Crow Head Start: In October they had self assessment training, in November they planned how to conduct it, did the assessment in December and compiled and presented the results n January. In May, they will have Cultural activities with many partners of their community partners. They have a new oral health partnership. In April they implemented a family reading activity with parents, grandparents, siblings and anyone who wanted to participate; the fifth week they held a celebration. They partner with Indian Health to provide mental health services. First year director submitted three year grant on April first.

Northern Cheyenne Head Start: is finishing up the year. They recently completed a community assessment and are using the results of the self assessment and PIR to set priorities. They have been dealing with under enrollment but glad to report they met enrollment. They are lacking an ophthalmologist and audiologist in the area. They are looking to strengthen their mental health component with Indian Health Services serving children that have been impacted one or way or another by Mesh . They contracted some mental health services with an outside provider. This year have tried to support staff mental health and inspire to build a stronger team. Regarding School Readiness, they are working with the public schools on transition; they take the children to public school once a week, hold an end of the year picnic, and coordinate calendars so teachers of both programs can work together.

Friday April 11:

Denise Incashola and Jeanie Morrow, CS & K Tribes Early Childhood Services, shared their program’s Family Service Plan Review schedule, procedure and self assessment, and Food Service Manual and Early Childhood Services forms manual.

Head Start/State Collaboration Office Report:

The most notable events in my work since the last time we met have been two national meetings. The first was the National Collaboration Directors’ meeting in February where we learned much more about what our roles will be in reauthorization. The most immediate concern for all of you is that each Collaboration Director is directed to conduct a needs assessment of each Head Start and Early HS program in our states regarding collaboration and coordination in each of the eight target areas with the

addition of: reading readiness and library programs, professional development and connections between curriculum and state Early Learning Guidelines.

The process will be very similar to the ongoing evaluation process that occurs each year in the late fall/early winter, but it will not focus so much on your impression of what we do, but you will be reporting to us about what you do. Our job is to assist you in accomplishing what you are supposed to accomplish. We will then analyze that information, find trends and gaps and those will then become our focuses for our work plan for the next year. This is supposed to happen annually and I promise we will make every effort to make it painless. What I need from you is commitment to follow through, feedback on what works best for your program as far as timing and ways to get information and then honest feedback after the first round so we can improve the process for the following year. This is a very concerted effort from the federal level to link us all forever and to ensure that Head Start programs have a direct line to state government.

The second large discussion at that National meeting was the Early Learning Councils. They are not councils to oversee Head Start or the Collaboration Office, but the Collaboration Director and Head Start are to be members. There is no money or direction at this point so each state will continue as is. In Montana we see the MECAC as that entity.

The National ECCS meeting was the best and most intellectually stimulating meeting I have ever had the pleasure to attend. We were invited to bring partners in children's mental health, child care and child protection services and the Collaboration Directors were invited. From Montana, I went, Christy went, we had three people from child protection and child care. We learned a lot, but best of all we have new partners with our Child Protection reps, which is a marvelous step for both ECCS and Collaboration. Our priority as a team is to bring together all Bureau Chiefs from state government that are part of the Early Childhood System and do some planning and problem solving. And while that has happened before in varying degrees and for different reasons, this will be unique because we will be focused entirely on how we function as an early childhood system and what we can do better – data sharing, money sharing, information sharing, decision making. The other outstanding aspect of the national gathering was the great minds gathered – the absolute best and brightest people in early childhood were gathered and for the first time we got a real sense that the feds are making every possible effort to coordinate. There is a National Early Childhood Work Group that oversees these events, grants, etc and all have committed to working together and it is beginning to show. They are listening to us at the state level and we have ready access to these people on a daily basis and that is a first in my experience.

School Readiness Update:

- \$1000 grants to 11 community teams
- I have been to Great Falls, Kalispell, Helena, and Missoula and will be going to Glasgow to conduct the school readiness initiative presentation and discussion with child care people.
- School Readiness Summit is the evening of May 21 and all day May 22 for teams to send representatives. I have invited Beth Rous from the National Early

Childhood Transition Center to present on various community strategies for transitioning all children into school. There will be sessions of small group discussion, sharing and planning.

- If you are connected and knowledgeable about your community team – congratulations to you. If you aren't and need help, please let me know. You do not have to be the one doing the work and attending and leading, but you should know what is going on. And your program should be represented. If leadership is waning, let me know that also. We can and will help and support however we can.
- I have spoken with your Health Managers, Education Managers and to the small group that attended the New Managers training and will be at the Disabilities Managers session on April 23.
- As part of this work, I reported last time that I was working with Indian Education for All and the Achievement office of OPI to better support Rocky Boy reservation regarding transitions and appropriate early childhood practices. The first meeting with all administrators, and teachers occurred last week with the people from Mid Continent Education Labs. If this model proves to be successful, we hope to replicate in other places.

Thank you for the great response to Safe Kids/Safe Communities.

Bill of Rights project has visited the Men's Prison and will visit the Women's prison in May. We are in line for a VISTA and our document to support adults talking to children about a family member being incarcerated is being edited and we hope the VISTA will be able to assist us in getting printing and distribution completed.

Materials that I have for you: ELG, Family Early Learning Guidelines (Education Managers wanted more), Grandparents Raising Grandchildren materials, Promoting Strong Communities booklets, School Readiness posters and brochures.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Mary Jane Standaert**

Region VIII Board Meeting Report: Minnetta Iron Pipe and Kamie Bristol They attended a Board meeting in February. The Board Updated the strategic plan and General by-laws were discussed. They elected new representatives to NHSA. The Board will meet in Billings in June and will want a report from Montana on the 2009 conference. Nominations for parent of the year and beating the odds are due by May 15. Minnetta and Kamie were asked how the on MT HS Association got the MT tribes involved. That will be Minnetta's role on the Region VIII Board to get tribal programs to join their State Associations. The next Region VIII Conference is in WY in Oct and the WY Indian programs will be helping with that conference. Kamie and Minnetta both joined committees.

American Indian Alaskan Native TA report: Todd Lester gave a report for Elaine Shea. This is the 5th year of the TA contract and all positions are full. *I am moving I am learning* training will be held in Albuquerque next week. Northwest Indian Head Start

Coalition Conference will be held in Billings Aug 11-14. There will be a fiscal cluster pre-session on August 11th. Everyone is invited.

BAH TAS report: BAH TAS and MT HS Association put together a Disabilities Managers cluster; Anne Garfinkle, an expert in autism, is the featured speaker. The Education Managers met in Butte recently. They would like to meet the first Wed and Thurs in November and March on permanent basis. The November meeting will be held in Havre and the March meeting will be in Bozeman. Through a partnership with AWARE Billings Head Start will host a family advocate cluster May 6-7-8. There will be a mental health training and focus. There was a good turn out for the “*I am moving I am learning*” training from MT. It is a curriculum enhancement for preventing childhood obesity promoting healthy lifestyles and how to implement in a program. Plan is to have a regionally based training team that goes on the road. The teams have been established and will receive training; you will be hearing more about it in the future. There is also *Little Choices for Little Voices*, a program of healthy choices for EHS population. The Art of Managing training is completing its 4th and final module.

Committee Reports and Association Business

Finance/Nominating/Personnel Committee: Patty Dahl, Chair

John Filz moved to approve the budget for the 2008-2009 program year, Shawna Hooper Seconded. Motion carried.

Dues for the Region VIII Head Start Association have been raised to \$500.00 per year for the Association beginning in July of 2008. MT State HS Association received a \$400.00 credit to be applied to the 2008 dues.

It was recommended that the Association Director receive a \$1000.00 bonus, a wage increase of \$.50/hour, and an additional three hours per week. Pam deRosier moved to approve the recommendations, seconded by Shawna Hooper. Motion carried.
Wendy needs to sign, and send Performance

Pam deRosier was nominated to represent the Association on the Region VIII HS Association Board. John Filz moved to approve the nomination, Phil Burgess seconded the motion. Motion carried.

John Filz & Patty Dahl were nominated to represent MT Head Start Association on the MT Advocates for Children Coalition. Phil Burgess moved to approve the nomination and Pam de Rosier seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Scot Anderson was nominated to serve on the Association’s Board as a statewide friend of Head Start. Shawna moved to approve the nomination, Rosemary Rosenberry seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Native American Committee: Caroline Yellow Robe, Chair

Caroline reported that all Montana Tribal HS/EHS programs are members in good standing of the state association. Tribal Head Starts are burdened with the way they are funded, it is on a cost reimbursement basis; costs have caused programs to close early.

Head Start/Early Head Start is an extremely important program to families and children on the reservation. Alma just attended a national meeting and reported that when a program is reviewed, the reviewers are observing how a teacher interacts with children.

T/TA

A new survey via SurveyMonkey.com needs to be sent out to programs to plan cluster trainings for the next two years. Christy will work with Todd & Melinda to develop questions.

Christy will work on setting up the sites for the November 14, 2008 Governance training using the MetNet system and get that information to programs as soon as possible.

Governmental Affairs:

Montana Advocates for Children (MAC) has begun meeting to work on the legislative agenda. If you have any input, contact John Filz, Patty Dahl, or Christy. Steve Yeakel has once again been selected to lobby for the organization. He will attend the fall Association meeting to give us an update and a list of key legislators. Head Start Day at the Capitol is scheduled for January 30, 2009.

State T/TA Systems: The office of Head Start put out a Request for Information regarding a state T/TA system. HS/EHS Directors met to discuss how they wanted to respond. Scot Anderson, John Filz, Patty Dahl, Clyde Wolf Black and Christy will answer the questions and submit them to OHS.

Montana Head Start Association is hosting the Region VIII Head Start Conference with MtAEYC in October 2009 in Billings.

Viola Wood and Caroline Yellow Robe gave a report on a national meeting they were invited to participate in a on the future of Head Start. They will share the results and notes from the meeting.

Raffle: The raffle generated \$190.00 for the advocacy fund. A schedule has been set up for programs to donate items for raffle at the Association meeting.

Fall Meeting

1. Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Head Start
2. Head Start Inc.-Billings
3. Rocky Boy Head Start
4. HRDC IX Head Start-Bozeman
5. Butte Head Start
6. Crow Tribes Head Start
7. Opportunities Inc Head Start-Great Falls
8. Kootenai Valley Head Start Libby

Winter Meeting

1. Ravalli Head Start
2. Fort Belknap Head Start
3. Northern MT Child Dev Center-Havre
4. RMDC Head Start-Helena
5. NW MT Head Start-Kalispell
6. Families In Partnership EHS-Libby
7. Child Start Inc.-Missoula
8. Blackfeet Early Childhood Services

Spring Meeting

1. Missoula Early Head Start
2. Ft Peck Head Start
3. A WARE EHS-Butte

4. CS&K Tribes Early Childhood Services
5. Action for Eastern Montana Head Start-Glendive
6. Young Families Early Head Start-Billings
7. Central M T Head Start--Lewistown

2008-2009 Meeting dates:

September 25-26—Billings—featured parent: Rose Swan

January 29-30, 2009—Helena (Head Start Day at the Capitol January 29, 2009)

April 9-10, 2009 Lewistown

Closing:

Each person had the opportunity to offer comments about the meeting. Jeanne Christopher and her program were thanked profusely for the hospitality.

Wendy Bull Child closed the meeting.