

Mason County Early Learning Coalition Retreat
Tuesday, March 5th, 2013 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Mason County Public Works Building, 100 W. Public Works Drive

In Attendance:

Name	Organization
Jenny Blumenstein	Sound Learning
Roxanne Bryson	Holly Ridge Center
Lydia Bucheit	Mason County Public Health
Cindy Canon	Mason County Family Resources Coordinator
Annie Cubberly	Child Care Action Council
Elizabeth Custis	Mason County Public Health
Linda Ferguson	Shelton School District
Jennifer Forster	Reading Foundation
Betzy Mulwee	VEL Project Coordinator ESD 113
Ruth Nitz	WSU-Extension, Americorps
Holly Porter	Headstart/ECEAP
Patti Ayala Ross	Shelton Timberland Library
Ellen Shortt-Sanchez	Evergreen State College
Rhonda Stone	Read Write Systems
Gail Strauss	Shelton School District
Dan Teuteberg	WSU-Extension, Youth Development
Lynn Urvina	Family Education & Supplementary Services
Bill Weismann	Facilitator
Linda West	Private Practice
19	17 organizations

10:00 AM Welcome and Introductions: Bill Weismann facilitated.

10:10 AM Overview of the Day: The facilitator explained his role as a neutral presence and reminded the coalition of the meeting guidelines already opted by the group as Hear All Voices, Respect Each Other, Respect Time and Strive for Consensus.

The facilitator asked for attendees to volunteer questions that would frame what the coalition wanted to answer over the course of the retreat. The questions were offered as follows:

- 1- What is our governance structure going to look like?
- 2- What is going to be our communications system?
- 3- How are we going to record our history and keep track of our advances?
- 4- Do we know everything we need to know about reading theory to be successful?
- 5- What's our main purpose?
- 6- How does the work of the MCELC tie into the regional coalition, and how does the work of the regional and other counties' early learning coalitions tie into ours?

10:20 AM Capacity and Structure Issues: Dan Teuteberg offered a reminder for the group's immediate goals as a coalition and the existing work plan and commitments, such as the Week of the Young Child event on April 20th and the Mason County Early Learning Needs Assessment.

A reminder was also given that the coalition needed to focus on not only single events but the bigger picture of engaging agencies and comparing what the coalition has to do compared to where they want to go. An example was given of the Skookum Rotary pledging finances due to successful publicity from the January Stakeholder's Luncheon put on by the MCELC. The Mason County-specific professional development event that happened in February was also brought up. These were all explained to be examples of things the coalition has to do in order to fulfill their grant requirements, with the understanding that these would generate momentum and work groups to help the coalition sustain itself into the future.

The question of whether the Needs Assessment Committee needed any help was brought up by Sound Learning, with the response that help would be asked of the general coalition at a later time, and for now, everything would be handled by the committee.

10:30 AM Team Building- Collaboration Principles: The facilitator directed attention to the handout (following) titled "Elements of a Successful Early Learning Coalition." The 7 elements listed were based on the facilitator's personal experience building coalitions from the ground up all over Washington State. The elements were identified as Clear Purpose, Common Vision, Inclusiveness, Road Map, Success, Governance and Sustainability.

ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL EARLY LEARNING COALITION

- 1. CLEAR PURPOSE:** Mission Statement
Formal, short written statement of the purpose of the organization.
- 2. COMMON VISION:** Vision Statement
Serves to unify all stakeholders towards a common goal - recognizing that short-term priorities may not be shared by everyone. Serves to help new partners to understand the coalition's long-term goal.
- 3. INCLUSIVE:** Community stakeholders are represented
All community stakeholders that support healthy child development from birth to age 8 are invited to participate.
- 4. ROAD MAP:** Long Term Strategic Plan
If you don't know where you are going, then any road will get you there. A Strategic Plan - informed by a needs assessment - can guide the coalition's short term action projects and efforts to seek resources to implement needed program services.
- 5. SUCCESS:** Concrete Results Making A Positive Difference
Partners and community supporters need to see that specific, concrete results that make a positive difference in the lives of children, parents and providers.
- 6. GOVERNANCE:** Simple Decision Making Structure
The coalition has a clear model detailing who has the authority to make policy and financial decisions, how those decisions are made, and how leaders are selected and accountable.
- 7. SUSTAINABILITY:** Adequate Resources Attained
Money, time and in-kind resources ensure the Coalition's permanence and implementation of needed services. Success depends on growing community investment in early learning.

Continued→ The coalition discussed how important road maps and stakeholders are to them in order to keep their success and momentum going. History of the group and being inclusive were also identified as being important to the group, while structure and a road map were deemed especially important to “sell” the coalition to potential stakeholders.

Read Write Systems interjected to offer a possible partnership to the coalition, with the response that in the future when the main purpose and strategies of the coalition are in place, there will definitely be a place for a partnership.

10:45 AM Performance Grading Scale: Hard copies of the performance grading scale that coalition members filled out before the retreat were handed out to attendees for them to see the collected results. The highest grades the coalition gave themselves were in the areas of meeting often enough and taking ownership of projects. The lowest were in the areas of clear roles for coalition members and handling conflict between members appropriately. The coalition agreed that the results were consistent with the members’ own understanding.

10:50 AM Split into Small Groups: The attendees were split into three groups to work on answering two questions: *What does an effective coalition team environment look like?* and *Which collaboration principles will support team success?* Examples were provided of possible answers, based on the principles of other regional and county coalitions. The groups came back together and presented their conclusions, with the collective results as follows:

Team Environment Principles of the MCELC

- **Diversity**
 - Different viewpoints, common goal
- **Inclusiveness**
 - Everyone is valued
 - Everyone feels safe to speak up
 - Welcoming environment
 - Shared Values
- **Common Knowledge**
 - Purpose stated
 - Road map in place
- **Shared Time**
 - Committee reporting and brainstorming time built into meetings
 - Information offered for new members and current involved members

Team Collaboration Principles

- **Collaboration:**
 - Working together towards our common purpose we support each other's programs and partner together to grow greater resources.
- **Communication:**
 - We provide a safe environment where participants communicate openly and with respect for each other.
 - Dialogue is inclusive and balanced between members.
 - All opinions are valued.
 - Conflicts are dealt with respectfully and restricted to the subject matter at hand.
 - A key element of our work is maintaining communication to and from both the regional coalition and the Mason county community.
- **Diversity:**
 - We recognize that to be effective it is essential that coalition membership, services and activities reflect the diversity of Mason County, and that all members voices are heard.
- **Respect for Different Perspectives:**
 - We recognize that there will be a variety of points of view regarding community needs, and we are flexible in our perspective.
- **Self-Assessment and Evaluation:**
 - We stay current in the early learning field and in the assessment of community needs; we show a willingness to change and grow, to learn from each other and to accept criticism as an opportunity for growth.

12:10 PM Lunch Break: The attendees were given an activity to do during the break in which they voted on what they viewed as the biggest benefit of being a partner with the Mason County Early Learning Coalition, and wrote down stakeholders that they viewed as missing from the current coalition. The results are as follows:

Benefits of being a Mason County Early Learning Coalition Partner

As voted by coalition members 3-5-2013

#1) Increase public awareness of the importance of early learning (e.g., brain development in the first five years of life). [27 Votes]

#2) Expanded community investment (volunteers, funding) in the healthy development of our youngest children. [24 Votes]

#3) Achieve collaboration with other partners in service planning and securing resources that benefit families of our youngest children. [17 Votes]

#4) Help in identifying gaps in early learning opportunities and in developing strategies to address unmet needs or service gaps. [17 Votes]

#5) Gain increased understanding of diverse community perspectives. [16 Votes]

#6) Craft a common vision and work for positive changes in Mason County's early learning system. [13 Votes]

#7) Leverage additional resources to achieve your agency's initiatives. [11 Votes]

#8) Improved ability to focus and integrates existing agency resources and efforts into a cohesive early learning system. [8 Votes]

#9) Collective impact. [5 Votes]

#10) Promote availability of your agency's service's through agency partners. [4 Votes]

Mason County Early Learning Coalition Missing Stakeholders

- 1) Sheriff-Law Enforcement
- 2) Parents/Community Members
- 3) Immigrant Community
- 4) Non-EC Business Community
- 5) Childcare Providers
- 6) Squaxin and Skokomish
- 7) Kinship Caregivers

12:40 PM Governance Discussion: The facilitator provided an overview of a sample governance structure (following), showing a model of steering committee, executive committee, then work groups.

MASON COUNTY EARLY LEARNING COALITION
Draft Governance Structure

Steering Committee

- **Composition.** The Steering Committee shall have a maximum of x# members. The Steering Committee will be representative of early learning stakeholders in Mason County. The Steering Committee is empowered to appoint members to vacancies.
- **Duties and Responsibilities.** The Steering Committee shall direct the affairs of the Coalition; shall determine and amend Coalition policies; and shall actively pursue the Coalition's mission and vision.
Specifically, the Steering Committee is responsible for:
 - ✓ Making policy and financial decisions related to the Coalition.
 - ✓ Entering into formal agreements on behalf of the Coalition.
 - ✓ Developing, adopting, reviewing and revising the Coalition's Strategic Plan.
 - ✓ Providing oversight and approval of the Coalition grant applications and project budgets.
 - ✓ Providing annual review of grant activities, and progress on objectives and budget.
 - ✓ Developing a meaningful process to encourage ongoing input from Coalition members and partners.
 - ✓ Creating Works Groups and standing, ad-hoc or advisory committees, as needed.
- **Orientation.** An Orientation binder with essential Coalition documents will be provided to all new Steering Committee members at the beginning of their term.
- **Quorum.** A quorum shall be 50% (plus one) of the total current Steering Committee members.

Executive Committee

- **Composition:** The Steering Committee shall select a 5-member Executive Committee (Chair, Vice-chair, Treasurer, Secretary and one at-large member).
- **Duties and Responsibilities:** The Executive Committee shall prepare Steering Committee agendas, coordinate Coalition activity between Steering Committee meetings, monitor finances and take such other action as authorized by the Steering Committee. The duties of the Officers shall be determined by the Steering Committee.

Work Groups

- **Formation of Work Groups.** Standing or temporary committees (Work Groups) may be created and appointed by the Steering Committee. Each committee shall have a chairperson and at least one Steering Committee member.
- **Role of Work Groups.** Committees may act on behalf of the Coalition so long as they have explicit authority provided by the Steering Committee.
- **Composition of Work Groups.** Committee membership is open to all Steering Committee members and interested Mason County early learning stakeholders who support the Coalition's mission.

Revisions to the Operating Guidelines. The Operating Guidelines will be reviewed, at least annually by the Steering Committee.

12:45 PM Split into Small Groups: The attendees were again separated into groups to discuss two questions: *What governance model will support the coalition's success?* and *How soon should this model be implemented?* This discussion was identified as one needing to be had by the coalition before it could move forward. The small groups then reported their conclusions to the larger group as follows:

Group #1) Supported a coalition built of the broad community with a steering committee formed of different agencies representatives. The steering committee would then elect members to the executive committee, with work groups formed as needed.

Group #2) Supported a steering committee simply comprised of the coalition members themselves, with an executive committee selected by democratic voting. The possibility of the executive committee being based on geographical location was also brought up. Work groups would be formed as needed.

Group #3) Supported the basic structure of steering committee, executive committee, and work groups, with a concern that the upper committees not be exclusive. The idea was also shared that the work groups be used especially as a way to involve new members in the coalition.

All groups agreed that the final governance structure should be in action not any later than this summer, with the current grant that funds the MCELC ending on June 28th. An outline was laid out for finalizing the structure as follows:

April 2013- Review, Clarify

May 2013- Adopt official structure

June 2013- Elect members

Until finalized governance is approved, it was decided that an interim "git-r-done" committee would be formed to make decisions regarding the coalition. Dan Teuteberg of WSU Extension and Patti Ayala Ross of Timberland Regional Libraries volunteered to be on the committee with the hope that a member of the health department would be able to take a third role in it later on.

The concern was expressed that Dan Teuteberg might need help with the reporting being done for the coalition's grant. The response was that since till now, the reports being done by the coalition's various committees are what were being used for grant information, at this point in time additional help was not needed.

1:45 PM Wrap-up: The health department expressed concern that the MCELC would not have a person designated to do administrative/secretarial duties after Ruth Nitz's Americorps term was completed. It was agreed that the two would work together to prepare a position with clearly defined duties that someone else could easily take over.

The facilitator reviewed the Team Environment Principles and Team Collaboration Principles with the group, making adjustments as dictated. Holly Porter of Headstart/ECEAP

volunteered to draft an official compiling of the Collaboration Principles.

The benefits of being a MCELC partner were reviewed briefly, and it was decided that for now all 11 benefits would be kept as official coalition statements until a later time when it would be decided to add or drop some. The list of missing stakeholders was decided to be placed on the agenda of a later meeting, where the coalition would be able to give it a short discussion.

The next meeting was scheduled for April 9th at 4:00 PM. Elizabeth Custis of the Health Department volunteered to reserve the room.

Lydia Bucheit of the Health Department ordered all attendees copies of the Early Learning Plan for WA State as written in 2010, and urged the coalition to keep the principles in mind as Mason County's Early Learning Plan develops.

A brief overview of the Parent-Child Event in April was provided by Ellen Shortt-Sanchez of Evergreen College.

All attendees of the 2013 Mason County Early Learning Coalition were urged to keep the energy and good thoughts going in meetings to come.

2:00 PM Dismissal: The facilitator thanked all participants for coming and for helping in getting the essential structure of the MCELC on its way to being finalized.