Early Learning Update
Oregon Education Investment Board, Nov. 21, 2011
Dick Alexander, OEIB and ELC member

October 18

Early Learning Council held its first meeting. Adopted a work plan and guiding principles for decision-making, broke into five work teams:

1. Coordinated system development
2. Early Identification
3. Integrated supports
4. Accountability
5. Governance

November 10

Received Oregon Commission on Children and Families report; recommendations and questions from Association of Oregon Counties; Early Childhood Symposium (OHSU/PSU recommendations); Received recommendations from Oregon Pediatric Society, feedback and list of demands from the Oregon Head Start Association.

Working to complete report by Dec. 5 to convey to OEIB.

Convening a work team to take on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.

Materials from the Early Learning Council meetings are posted online.

Nationally, important developments that you should know about:

- Building on efforts for more accountability started by the Bush Administration, the Obama administration has announced that for the first time ever the Department of Health and Human Services will require all low-performing federal Head Start grantees that fail to meet a new set of rigorous benchmarks to re-compete for continued federal funding. All 1,600 grantees will be evaluated in the next three years, and based on past evaluations the federal government estimates that 1/3 will need to reapply. We have no idea how that 1/3 is spread out or concentrated, though we all have a very high degree of confidence in Oregon's programs. The key here is that accountability and competition are being put in at every level, even in one of the most historically untouchable Great Society programs.
- Health and Human Services study that showed that Head Start results fade out around first grade; reinforces the need to connect to the K-12 system and that focus here in Oregon.
- Issued program instructions emphasizing school readiness and providing guidelines for achieving it.