

## MESD's Wraparound Oregon: Early Childhood A STORY OF SUCCESS

By Mark Skolnick

When **Rob Abrams** reflects on the past four and a half years of MESD's Wraparound Oregon: Early Childhood grant (WO:EC), he is justifiably proud.

As project manager, Rob's steadfast vision for the program has never wavered. He knew from the start that his 18-member staff had to pioneer a new way of working with young children with significant social and emotional health needs. He also understood that demonstrating a new "system of care" was not going to be easy.

With a long background in child welfare and his network of contacts in Multnomah County, Rob was ready for the high stakes venture that became Wraparound Oregon. And he was absolutely the right person for the job.

Now, Rob can recount the program's success with families and also witness the impact the initiative has had on local and state policies. In fact, the encouraging results of WO:EC has convinced lawmakers that the approach should be adopted statewide.

"Legislation has been passed to start the statewide Children's Wraparound Initiative," said Rob. "There are state level agencies now charged with implementing the concept. By 2015 all agencies have to adopt the Wraparound and pooled funding models. Other communities are working on the statewide piece of this as well."

### A six-year, \$9 million grant

When MESD was notified in 2005 that it has won a six-year, \$9 million grant from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration,

**Seated (L to R):** Dori VanAlstine, Aniko Campbell, Mo Naanyane, Naomi Bledsoe.  
**Middle row (L to R):** Amy Getman, Martha McCormack, Martine Coblentz, Ermila Rodriquez. **Back row (L to R):** Bev Stephens, Crystal Meehan, Rob Abrams, Greg Cussen, Darline Hill, Vickie Creel, Darcy Wilde.

**Not pictured:** Dave Masanuga, Micah Thomas and Aisha Wallace-Hollands

MESD became one of a very few educational entities to success fully win the highly competitive award. That was the good news. But it also signaled the start of a complex collaboration that required careful planning, tactful political maneuvering and a sea change in the way agencies and schools worked together to provide mental health intervention.

Working with a host of partners, among them Albertina Kerr and the child welfare system, WO:EC is now regarded as one of the most successful examples in the nation of collaboration among education, mental health and human services.

### Family voice, family choice

Of all the concepts that underpin Wraparound, none is as fundamental as "family voice and family choice." According to Rob, families who receive services have too frequently been regarded as having deficits, rather than strengths. Consequently, they have not had a strong voice when it comes to developing individualized services.

In Wraparound, family assets are viewed as a reservoir of resources that encourage shared responsibility and accountability. To strengthen this voice, WO:EC's four "family partners" gain the trust and respect of the parents and children with whom they are working. Family partners

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## ▶ **Wraparound** *Continued from page 1*

attend IEP and other meetings which, according to Rob, leads to sharper focus on the needs of a child.

Another hallmark of Wraparound's direct service component is their facilitation process that brings together family teams. With a sensitivity to cultural differences, a healthy dose of inter-agency collaboration and teamwork, and the persistent use of natural supports, Wraparound's outcomes include:

- Reduced psychiatric residential treatment or hospitalization stays
- Fewer foster care transitions
- Less extended use of detention facilities
- Fewer highly restrictive educational settings
- Better transitions for children entering school
- Children served in less restrictive placements
- Greater family participation and satisfaction
- Increased collaboration among child serving agencies

As WO:EC heads down the home stretch of its grant funding, plans are underway to continue developing the new system of care. Rob is adamant that education stay

an active and engaged partner. "I think there is a lot work to do listening and understanding the needs of education. It's not just a mental health program, it's a community program. We have to be very careful not to let mental health take over everything. That's why the pooled funding is so important," he said. 📌

### **The Wraparound Oregon: Early Childhood Team**

**Family Partners:** Bev Stephens, Crystal Meehan, Ermila Rodriguez, Vickie Creel

**Facilitators:** Greg Cussen, Darline Hill, Darcy Wilde, Martine Coblenz, Dori VanAlstine

**Intake/Facilitator:** Amy Getman

**Clinical Supervisor:** Martha McCormack

**Public Information Specialist:** Naomi Bledsoe

**Project Manager:** Rob Abrams

**Cultural Linguistic Coordinator:** Aisha Wallace-Hollands

**Youth Engagement Coordinator:** Micah Thomas

**Training Coordinator:** Sandy Bumpus

**School Liaison:** Dave Masunaga

**Social Work Intern:** Mo Naanyane

## **Listening Tour reveals common themes**

Over the past month I have been meeting with staff, listening to their concerns, hearing their suggestions and sharing updates on MESD's future plans. The questions and comments at each tour stop are usually unique to the location of program and staff in attendance. However, the common themes are:

### **1) The lingering effects of the recession will continue to create budgetary pressures for school districts, the State of Oregon and MESD.**

The news out of Salem is that we will continue to see large shortfalls in revenue for all public services. Against this backdrop, I anticipate continued interest from the Oregon Legislature in January of 2011 on changing the regional delivery system now concentrated in 20 ESDs around the state. As you may have read or heard, several options have been put on the table including giving 90% of all resolution funds directly to school districts to use for themselves, to spend at their local ESD or with any other ESD or provider; a change in governance from publicly-elected boards to appointed boards; requiring districts to use ESDs for business and other administrative functions formerly done by districts. Previous discussions about merging ESDs may also be part of the mix.

### **2) MESD staff continue to demonstrate interest in reconnecting youth, and in creating new connections with entities outside K-12 who are also engaged in serving children.**

MESD is working closely with component districts to develop a new approach to reconnecting out-of-school youth with an education program. Under the leadership

of **Kelvin Webster**, MESD now has agreements with five of our largest districts to allow youth to reengage in programs without regard to district residency requirements. The success of Portland's Transition Center and the Education Success Center at D. E. Long School indicate that this strategy is working. MESD is also pursuing partnerships and alliances with non-public and charter schools, and with local nonprofits that may result in wider provision of services.

### **3) There is lots of interest in the vision to provide ESD services across boundaries throughout the Zone A Region: Multnomah, Clackamas, Columbia Gorge and Northwest ESDs.**

We now have agreements with all the ESDs in Zone A that allow school districts in any of these regions to use resolution funds at any of the four ESDs. This is a major shift in the way ESDs have traditionally operated. It is unclear yet as to whether school districts will make use of this option next year.

### **4) Staff have expressed pride in MESD's ability to stabilize student services, program capacity and even add value to our services in a time of sizable reductions across the region.**

MESD is using its working cash balance to stabilize programs and services during a time of budget shortfalls. While deficit spending allows us to avoid the cuts we are seeing in other entities, it cannot go on forever. We anticipate this budget approach will get us through the 2011-13 biennium while we work to market our services to a broader constituency and increase fees for services, grants and contracts. 📌

*By Ron Hitchcock*



## MESD studies future options for facility use

By Mark Skolnick

Unlike some of our neighboring school districts, MESD doesn't own an inventory of antiquated buildings. In fact, the three structures MESD does own - Alpha School, Arata Creek School and Ainsworth - are in great shape, having been constructed within the last two decades.

MESD does, however, lease four schools - Helensview, Thompson, Edwards and Pathways Community School - that house instructional programs. Each of these buildings were constructed more than 50 years ago and have maintenance as well as structural concerns expected in schools from that era.

Motivated by considerations of future costs, suitability for instruction and the long-term outlook for program capacity, MESD contracted last year with Dull Olson Weekes (DOWA - the firm that designed Alpha and Arata) to study the physical conditions of Helensview, Thompson and Edwards and review storage usage at Ainsworth, Alpha and Arata Creek sites. The review was the first such comprehensive facility examination in more than ten years.

The purpose of the review was twofold: For the buildings that MESD owns, the report examined current storage usage which could lead to more efficient use of space. For MESD's leased schools, the objective was to provide MESD with an overall assessment of the buildings' conditions.

### Methods included site visits

The DOWA team visited Helensview, Thompson and Edwards and observed both interior and exterior conditions. They conducted architectural, mechanical, electrical and plumbing assessments and reviewed available plans and prior maintenance issues. They worked closely with MESD's Facility Coordinator **Mark Wheeler** and Chief Program Officer **Barbara Jorgensen**.

To examine the buildings that MESD owns, the team made physical observations, interviewed staff, and looked at factors such as frequency of storage access, proximity to storage and the type and quantity of what was being stored.

### Reports provide data for future decisions

The report on Helensview, Thompson and Edwards schools provided valuable baseline data that will help MESD make decisions on how to accommodate students

in facilities that meet both their educational needs and address budget pressures for cost containment. Each of these three buildings have immediate, mid-term and long-term priority needs. Although the report provided rough estimates of how much these improvements might cost, all solutions must be reached in cooperation with the buildings owners - Parkrose School District which owns Helensview and Thompson, and Portland Public School which owns Edwards.

The companion analysis on storage provided information that MESD is acting upon this year. By looking at what is being stored and how it is being used, MESD's challenge is to maximize use of space for students, staff and instruction while either moving or disposing of materials and supplies no longer needed.

### Changes already taking place

There have already been several modifications of space at the Ainsworth Building with more to come as MESD prepares for the 2010-11 school year.

**Wraparound moves in:** In late April, MESD's Wraparound Early Childhood's staff moved from Thompson to the Ainsworth Building. Their move opened up space that MESD has since leased to classrooms operated by the Columbia Regional Program. To accommodate the move to Ainsworth, Special Education Director **Nancy Anderson** asked Office Assistant **Lucy Chiotti** to plan and coordinate the rearranging of cubicles and partitions. The result is a more efficient use of space for staff. In addition, the room that previously housed special education materials and supplies is being converted into a meeting room.

**Mail room and vault:** Another planned modification is the conversion of the Ainsworth mail room and vault into a repository for records. Departments have been clearing out supplies that have been stored in the mail room to make room for the records that need a long-term storage solution.

**Business Office:** As staff from the MESD Business Office transitioned to Human Resources earlier this year, it opened an opportunity to change how their space is used. One option now under consideration is moving the Business Office to a smaller area and leasing the space to one of MESD's partners. **i**

# Milestones

## Milestones of Achievement 2010 • May 26, 2010

3:45 p.m. Ainsworth Auditorium

*Join your colleagues and friends as we honor them for their years of service to children, families, schools and our community*

### Instructional Services

#### 35 Year Honoree

Sally Kissell

#### 30 Year Honorees

Margaret Eng  
Carol Ann Wong

#### 15 Year Honorees

Linda Antolic

#### 10 Year Honorees

Scott Sievertsen  
Janie Zimmerman

#### 5 Year Honorees

Evan Armstead  
Thomas Baker  
Shirley Dunn

Laura Eagle  
Mishanette Wright  
Sara Kinsey-Wright

### Special Education Services

#### 25 Year Honorees

Mary Sechrist  
Karen Robar  
Paul Sigel

#### 20 Year Honorees

Constance Botteron  
Sheila Boyd  
Mary McGinn  
Kathy Shannon

#### 15 Year Honorees

Sara Bridenbeck  
Madonna Coats  
Kimberly Jo Fairbanks  
Pamela Hellesto

#### 10 Year Honorees

Mary Cox  
Shirley Currey  
Bill Hjelseth  
Merrie Seal

Christopher Salter  
Mary Louise Sams  
Denise Wood

Gloria Soderquist  
Martha Ward  
Monica Wright

#### 5 Year Honorees

Gail Barnard  
Randi Bost  
Caroline Caulfield  
April Kilstrom  
John Lynch  
Megan Markiewicz  
Aki Nakagawa

Jared Prost-Hughart  
Bonnie Robbins  
Robin Rogers  
Rachel Strasler  
Sheila Thompson  
Matthew Turcotte  
Melissa Williams

### Administration/Facilities/Human Resources

#### 30 Year Honorees

Mark Wheeler  
Jeff Elsasser

#### 15 Year Honorees

Duro Oni  
Kelly Schwartz

#### 10 Year Honorees

Marc Staino  
Carmen Stover

#### 5 Year Honoree

David Smith

### Health and Social Services

#### 25 Year Honoree

Ann Vrabel

#### 20 Year Honorees

Olivia Beasley  
Patricia Campbell  
Jeanne Fratto  
Carolyn Kay Guerra  
Carol Hill  
Mary Johnson

#### 15 Year Honorees

Loretta Elder  
Michele McCall

#### 10 Year Honorees

Gail Andrews  
Gail Bowden-Wade  
Melissa Collins-Lee  
Christine Gray  
Debra Moore  
Nancy Miller  
Ann Occhi  
Annette Simms

#### 5 Year Honorees

Dana Askew  
Pamela Bachand  
Debra Baker  
Debra Deluca  
Eileen Ellis  
Teresa Felix  
Dominique Harrison  
Kristine Hickman  
Janice Klumpp  
Patricia Moro  
Pamela Pestalozzi  
Robin Senn  
Julia Stead  
Jane Stolle  
Victoria Wilson  
Lynn Zimmerman-Lind  
Kristine Kay Hickman

### Technology Services

#### 20 Year Honorees

Steven Crandell  
James Barnett

#### 15 Year Honoree

Heidi Johnson

#### 10 Year Honorees

David Bower  
Eric Harrison

#### 5 Year Honorees

Dimple Doherty  
Mary Svela

### INTERACTION

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