

Marsing Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Needs Assessment

September 30, 2020

Introduction-

The Marsing Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) began meeting in July 2020 with the overall goal of assessing the Early Learning needs in the community and identifying solutions to meet those needs. The ELAC is made up of the following community members-

- Norm Stewart, Marsing School District (MSD) Superintendent
- Tim Little, Marsing Elementary School (MES) Principal
- Angie Malmberg, MES Administrative Assistant
- Patty Garcia, MSD Migrant Liaison
- Wendy Ramirez, Community Member and mother of 6 MSD current and former students
- Rosa Espejel, Head Start Instructor and Family Outreach Coordinator
- Debbie Elizondo, MES K-2 and English Learning Instructor of 43 years, now retired
- Angela Cuevas, MSD Data Technician and parent of an MSD student
- Ken Price, MSD 21st CCLC and Husky Pups Preschool Director. ELAC Project Coordinator

All committee members are long time Marsing residents except for Norm and Ken. We have met 3 times to discuss the Marsing Needs Assessment and how we can achieve our long term goals of improving Early Learning program quality, access and capacity.

Overview of Marsing-

Marsing is a town of about 1,000 located on the edge of the Snake River in Owyhee County, geographically the second largest county in Idaho. About 12,000 people live in the county. The Snake separates Owyhee and Canyon county. Even though Marsing is only 12 miles from Nampa, it's rural, open landscape makes it feel quite different than the major population centers in Canyon and Ada County.

We have 40% Hispanic population in Marsing. About 20% of those families speak only Spanish at home. The Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) rate at Marsing Elementary School (MES) has averaged about 72% the last five years- indicating many low-income families. Poverty is a major barrier to quality early childhood development. There is significant language, literacy, social and emotional learning (SEL) gaps with many of our young students.

Our Migrant population is about 12% of K-12 students. Homeless student rate is about 7%. The economy in Marsing is reliant upon the agricultural and dairy economies. Many parents have to work 15-35 miles away from Marsing. Many children feel locked in to following their parents' lifestyle and employment. According to 2014-18 census.gov data, only 11.2% residents aged 25 or older in Owyhee County had graduated from college. Only Lincoln County had a lower rate in Idaho.

All K-3 Idaho students take the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) test in the fall. Over the last several years, an average of 75% of Marsing incoming Kindergarten (KG) students have been found to NOT being "Ready for KG" based on their scores. In short, they have known few of their letter names and sounds. Many have social-emotional learning gaps. Thankfully we have had an Extended Day KG program at MES for the last 12 years. Those students leave KG with about 75% being "Proficient" in Literacy and ready for success in 1st grade. We essentially flip their grade level literacy skill.

Clearly we need to help our incoming KG students be better prepared before they start KG instead of playing catch-up during their KG year.

The only high quality preschool in Marsing has been Head Start for the last 20 years. Head Start (HS) preschool serves 3-5-year-old students. The last ten years HS has been on a waitlist after they have reached their capacity of 19 students. Families must qualify for enrollment based on income. This year Head Start is limiting student enrollment to just 10 students due to Covid-19. The newly opened Husky Pups preschool funded by the PTIW grant has 15 students enrolled and is full because of Covid precautions. Five of those students are special ed students.

Marsing KG class sizes have averaged 63 students the last ten years. This leaves Marsing with many four and five year olds who turn five after September 1, 2020, with no local access to a high-quality preschool. In September of 2019, MSD administrators conducted a survey to assess family needs for a high-quality preschool. We collected 127 surveys from our community.

One question was- "If the District had offered a high-quality preschool during the last ten years, would you, or anyone you know, have enrolled children in the preschool?" 109 respondents, or 86%, said "YES." That is the remarkable demand that we wanted to address. Additionally, 91% of our parents stated that they believe "attending a preschool significantly helps children achieve greater Academic, Social and Emotional success in school."

The District and Supt. Norm Stewart, has a long term plan to help fill that pressing need. Almost 3 years ago, the community of Marsing passed a \$13,500,000 bond to build a new middle school, high school gym, parking lots and do a variety of district-wide improvements. The old middle school has now been renovated to become a community school and health center called the HUB. The HUB is the new home to MSD offices, a Food/Clothing pantry, PreK-KG Special Education rooms, Community Meeting room, School Nurse exam room/office, Terry Reilly & Western Idaho Community Action Partnerships (WICAP) Mental Health Services, Husky Pups and Head Start Preschools. More organizations are planning to deliver "pop up" social services from the HUB.

The Marsing Head Start (HS) Preschool moved into the district September 2019. Our new community preschool, Husky Pups is located right next to HS. Both preschools share many resources. Preschool students receive services from WICAP's new mental health services for children ages 0-8 and their family members. Through a comprehensive federal five-year grant, WICAP will provide mental health screening, intervention and personal counseling services to children and parents. As our preschool is located in the HUB, families will also immediate access to all the other services found in the HUB, playground and cafeteria. Marsing has a good foundation to deliver quality Early Learning and parent support to Marsing families for years to come.

Overview of Preschools and Child Care Centers within 13 miles of Marsing

DONNA'S DAYCARE

26016 Riverview Rd. Wilder

Director Name: Donna Barnard, 2 Assistant Teachers

Phone: (208) 337-6180

Facility Type: Small Child Care Center (up to 25 children)

ICCP Status: Certified **STQ Participating?** No

Are there openings available: No

Little Friends Preschool L.L.C. 17434 US-95 Wilder

Director Name: Marcy Hibbs, 2 Assistant Teachers

Phone: (208) 353-6024

Facility Type: Small Child Care Center (up to 25 children)

ICCP Status: Not Participating **STQ Participating?** No

Number of Children Serving now? 14. Are there openings available: Yes

Naomi's Daycare 25931 Boehner Rd. Wilder

Director Name: Naomi Brown, 1 Assistant Teacher

Phone: (208) 482-7422

Facility Type: Group Child Care Facility (up to 12 children)

ICCP Status: Certified **STQ Participating?** No

Number of Children Serving Now? 9. Are there openings available: Yes

The above centers are located between Wilder and Homedale. Coming from Marsing, they are the wrong way from going to Caldwell, Nampa, Meridian and Boise, where many of our parents work.

Husky Pups Preschool 205 8th Ave West, Marsing 83639

Director Name: Ken Price

Lead Teacher: Amber Clay. 12 credits short of a BA in Early Education

Lisa Wolfe: Asst. Teacher, BA in English

Lori Collins: Asst. Teacher, Special ED, CDA

Phone: (208) 649-5411

Facility Type: Small Child Care Facility (up to 18 children)

ICCP Status: Certified **STQ Participating?** Yes

Number of Children Serving Now? 15. Are there openings available? No. Open from 7:30-3:00pm

Marsing Head Start Preschool 205 8th Ave West, Marsing 83639

Lead Teacher: Connie Miller, BS with Early Education major

Rosa Espejel, Asst. Teacher: BA with Child Family Educator Emphasis

Jaymee Allen, Asst. Teacher: CDA

Phone: (208) 649-5411

Facility Type: Small Child Care Facility (up to 10 children)

ICCP Status: Certified **STQ Participating?** Yes

Number of Children Serving Now? 10. Are there openings available? No. Open from 8-1:00pm

Marsing Early Head Start 0-3 year olds 120 3rd Ave W, Marsing, ID 83639

Director Name: Shirley Glaser, BA. Lead Teacher- Josefina Jacobo, CDA. Teacher Aide- Adriana Adams and Maria Barajo.

Lead Teacher, Mandy Brown, CDA. Teacher Aides- Maricruz Robles and Kayla Norres

Phone: (208) 896-6041

There are 2 EHS classrooms. All 4 Aides are working on their CDA certification
Number of Spaces Available? Full for EHS. 2 spaces open during extended hours.

Hours of Operation- 6am to 6pm.

STQ Participating? No

Volunteers? Pre-Covid they had 12 parent volunteers. They started this year with none, but are working on bringing volunteers back slowly.

Lizard Butte Learning Center **139 Canal St. Marsing 83639**

Director Name: Becky Frazier

Phone: (208)249-5982

Facility Type: Small Child Care Facility (up to 6 children). Open from 6:30 to 6:00pm

ICCP Status: Certified **STQ Participating?** No

Number of Children Serving Now? 3. Are there openings available: Yes

Wings2Fly Daycare **212 Main Street Marsing 83639**

No longer open.

Planting Seeds Daycare **123 E Wyoming Ave. Homedale 83628**

No longer open.

Looking forward to Improving Early Education Opportunities in Marsing and Idaho

Our purpose is to continue to gather data, identify resources and build a high-quality preschool in Marsing that can be replicated in other communities. The long range goal is to motivate Idaho Legislators to pass legislation that funds early learning in Idaho for the long term. We will help make this happen by creating a high-quality preschool and producing data that makes the decision more attractive for Idaho Legislators.

Part of the data we are collecting is showing community need, especially during this pandemic caused by COVID-19. It is estimated that over 50% of child care centers have closed, or are in danger of closing within the year because of COVID-19.

Early Learning in Marsing Community-

Since Marsing School District (MSD) became involved with the Idaho AEYC Preschool the Idaho Way (PTIW) program, and now the PDG project, we have gathered survey information about the Early Learning landscape in Marsing and its surrounding community. This overview will report on what we have found.

We have used the Idaho PDG "Needs Assessment" Worksheet questions to build a parent survey to assess their situation and experiences with Early Learning. We have collected 104 surveys from Marsing community parents

We have also conducted a "Covid-19 Family Stress" survey. It has 15 questions asking how Covid-19 has affected their lives. We received 61 completed surveys from parents of PreK-3rd graders from Marsing Elementary School. Both the PDG Needs Assessment survey and Covid-19 Family Stress survey results are being analyzed now. Final results from both surveys will be submitted to Idaho PDG project managers by the middle of October. For now, we can share some general conclusions from the surveys.

PDG Needs Assessment Highlight Conclusions from the following questions-

1- Most often when parents/guardians are working or attending school, your child:

1. Stays home with another parent or adult living in the home 2. Stays home with a neighbor or adult that does not live in the home. 3. Goes to someone else's home 4. Goes to childcare 5. Goes to kindergarten

RESULTS- Over 50% children stays home with a parent or adult. About 20% stays with a neighbor or goes to someone else's home. The remaining 30% attended KG or the question was not applicable or answered.

2- In your opinion, what skills and abilities are most important for children to be successful when starting school?

RESULTS- This was an open-ended question. 95 of the 103 responses generally represented parent priorities of 1) wanting their children to learn the letters/literacy skills; 2) learn how to follow directions and listen; and 3) develop their social skills and acquire a desire to learn on their own.

3- How important or necessary is preschool for your child(ren)?

1.) Not Important, 2.) somewhat important, 3.) important, 4.) very important, 5.) extremely important

RESULTS- 22 of 103 responses said that Preschool was "Important or Somewhat important." One said "Not important."

About 80, or 80% said that Preschool "Very important or Extremely important."

4- Do you know where to find information about preschool programs in your community?

RESULTS- 67 said they knew. 17 said they did not know. 9 said they were unsure

5- Are there any preschool programs in your community?

RESULTS- 85 respondents said there were. 17 said there were not (despite taking the survey at the elementary where we were promoting the preschool with the survey, signage and registration forms.)

6- What are the most important factors in selecting a preschool program? Select all you like.

1.) Price, 2.) availability, 3.) location, 4.) educational offerings, 5.) hours of operation, 6.) licensing requirements, 7.) trust in educators, 8.) curriculum, 9.) indoor/outdoor environment, 10.) staff: child ratio, 11.) national accreditation, 12.) transportation provided, 13.) other

RESULTS- 35 respondents selected 5 or more of the factors. The factors that were most commonly selected were Price, Availability, Location, Hours of Operation, Trust in Educators and Transportation Provided.

Factors NOT selected very often- Indoor/outdoor environment, Staff: Child Ratio and National Accreditation

7- What is the biggest challenge you have in placing your child(ren) in a preschool program?

1.) Price, 2.) availability, 3.) location, 4.) educational offerings, 5.) hours of operation, 6.) licensing requirements, 7.) trust in educators, 8.) other (specify)

RESULTS- 40 respondents said that Price was the primary challenge. Location was named by 28. Only 12 named four or more challenges with placing children in preschool. We conclude that reflects parents have a variety of specific challenges facing them with preschool placement.

8- Where would someone find information to determine what skills are needed before entering school to ensure success in kindergarten and beyond?

- 1.) Other parents, 2.) family members, 3.) friends, 4.) local school district, 5.) social media groups, 6.) state websites, 7.) company offering early learning products, 8.) mailings, 9.) local news outlets, 10.) state agency, 11.) federal agency, 12.) other. Explain.

RESULTS- 29 said "Other Parents." The other answers were almost all a combination of Family Members, Friends, Local School District, Social Media and State/Federal Agencies.

9- Do you believe your child has the skills necessary to succeed in kindergarten and beyond?

Four said that "No, their child does not have the skills necessary. Eight said they were "Unsure". **82 respondents said "Yes, their child has the necessary skills for KG success.**

This is interesting in light of the Marsing IRI scores that show on average over the last ten years that 75% of children entering KG do NOT have the literacy skills necessary to succeed in KG. Parent perceptions don't always match up with Standardized Literacy test scores.

10- What is the biggest challenge you face in finding services for your child(ren) within your community? Not all respondents answered the next 3 questions, but many of them did.

13 Parents said "Cost and Price" were the biggest Challenges

4 Parents said "Language" was a challenge

8 Parents said "Availability" was a challenge

4 Parents said "Transportation" was a challenge

Here is a list of the most relevant short answers regarding parents' challenges with preschool

Covid-19

To have someone take care of them because I take them with me

Here in our community we do not have centers that can help us and if there are we do not qualify

That it is a full day

Not having a child care center in the community

I do not have challenges

Affordable day care

Don't know where to go

Sadly, here in the community we do not have a center that helps us as workers.

I do not qualify but I do would like to have a preschool.

COVID! Hours of operation. Price

Transportation/childcare with both parents working full time

Price cause I'm low income

Days / hours with multiple children in school, balancing half, and full days schedules

pricing and hours

Daycare or babysitter during summer

trust and price

I personally don't have a challenge. But do know that for some parents it is hard to find transportation, information in their language or just do not have the time to go because of work schedule

Cost and Availability

Marsing is a small community so options are very limited

Hours and Location

Not knowing what's available

The challenge is finding time for everything that my child needs

Cost of Services

Not really sure

Price, Availability and trust

it is hard to find services in our community

Cost. With a family of 5 with 1 income we can't afford to pay for one

Daycare choices

Trust its's a challenge for me as a parent. I always hope the staff care for my children as much as I do

work schedule

I feel like I have advantage resources to find services for my children

small community with a limited resource

not very many- too far of travel not convenient, very limited resources

availability mainly there are waitlist for preschool and head start

11- What gaps do you see in your community's early childhood services? From your perspective, how could these gaps be filled?

Here is the list of answers-

That they give the same opportunity to everyone who needs it

Needing more options for child care

I am not sure

Having a public preschool/ being available for everyone

I don't know where to take them

In my opinion it would be great if we had a preschool program or child care center, that would be helpful the transportation

Not having a child care center

Lack of personnel

Daycare centers for agricultural workers that are free and full day

not enough room or you don't qualify and cost

that we had a preschool program or child care for infants and helped a lot the children and us parents

Try to stay communicated

I am not sure

To help more

All day childcare with preschool

More talks w/ parents, flyers @all kids' events

They could focus more on the alphabet, numbers, words i/s. coloring, painting-

Few options of where to send kids for early childhood schooling at the end of this last year was packed

Not many options of where to send your kids for early childhood services.

Not knowing what services or locations are available.

Very few options here. and some are less than reputable. Bordering on scary

More preschools

If services are affordable and location of the service.

Love what our community and schools have to offer

more talk with parents' flyers and at all events

tried getting her into head start. went to look in 2 or 3 times always said I would get a call and never did

community does not really have any early childhood services

not enough and trust

Language, behavior, and hours of service. Having more bilingual personality and flexible hours

Very few options. I think the school starting a preschool is a huge benefit to many

Better communication

Preschools should be free so kids can enter KG ready. Teachers need to be trained to work with Spec Ed kids

Have not seen any yet

The gaps in the community are being filled

Communication

more daycare facilities

not enough options and price

with the preschool program located at Marsing school I feel the gap has been filled

open more facilities more jobs will be filled

educate those that want to work with speech delayed children

12- Has COVID-19 impacted your family's ability to find or provide services for your child?

39 respondents answered "No." 24 responded "Yes." Below are some other comments-

It has been difficult but thank God it has been ok.

Doctor office canceling appointments

Yes, a lot of preschools have closed

Covid has affected me and my kids. I cannot find anyone to take care of them. I cannot go to work because no one wants to watch them because of the fear

Yes, now there is no one that is wanting to watch my kids for fear of this illness

The cause of this pandemic in reality has affected me and my kids I cannot find somebody to take care of them. I cannot go out to work because nobody wants to take care of them because of COVID

Well I ask the people that are experts

In general, all the kids need school because they learn and Marsing is a school that see the needs.

It's a big problem in general but I would like the school to open.

We have been teaching them at home.

Yes, I had to stay home with kids instead due to Covid-19

Yes, schooling at the end of this last year was packet based which did not help parents teach their children yes, do not trust that any preschool here has taken necessary steps to lessen the spread of covid, might claim to have taken precautions followed guidelines, ect. but not confident that has happened.

Yes, it would hard to send my child to school with the virus still around.

Yes, I had to stay home with kids instead due to covid-19

Yes, nobody wants to watch kids because of covid-19 school being closed packets at home is almost impossible for a single parent who can still work during covid-19

Yes, we trade off as parents this way we can work and the other one can stay with the kids

Yes, it has since my daughter goes to head start and classes being suspended we found it a bit hard to keep her engaged in learning actively

Not so much

Yes, I have to ask the experts on what to do

Not at all

No, but it has made it more stressful

Yes, it has not affected us as long as school happens

Yes. Schools shutting down made things hard

Not really. my children really miss coming to school

Yes. Schools shutting down made things hard

Yes, child care unavailable when school closed

Conclusions-

- Marsing does not have a tradition of high quality preschools other than Head Start
- Marsing is geographically distant from other preschool options
- Families are looking for preschool options, but are looking for free, or low cost preschools as poverty is prevalent in the community
- Parents believe that their children are ready for Kindergarten, but IRI scores for incoming KG students contradicts the widespread community impression that their children are indeed ready
- The PTIW funded Husky Pups community preschool has filled a long time void in the community
- Marsing School District has invested significant funds and resources to provide classroom space, utilities, custodial and administrative support to expand preschool services for more children, especially those with special needs. MSD is committed to high-quality PreKG education
- The HUB community and health center provides a variety of mental and physical health services for students and their families in the two preschools- all located in the same building.