

The Exceptional Children's Laboratory School

**A PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A
PILOT PROJECT TO ENGAGE,
EDUCATE, AND EMPOWER
DISABLED CHILDREN
IN OREGON**



JANUARY 2017

**THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S LABORATORY SCHOOL:
A MAGNET SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN THE STATE OF
OREGON**



Project Name:

The Exceptional Children's Laboratory School (ECLS)

Table of Contents

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Description of PATHS	4
Goals	5
Key Project Elements	6
Relevance of Goals and Objectives	7
Schedule and Timeline for Completion	8
Project Activities	9
Activity Relevance and Measurement of Efficiency	10
Special Education in Oregon	11
Impact	12
Method	14
Strengths and Innovation	15
Scaling	16
Key Personnel/Organizations	17
Budget	18

Executive Summary

Our team will develop the Exceptional Children's Laboratory School (ECLS) to provide a high quality education to 150 children with disabilities in a state-of-the-art setting. The ECLS will function as an academic setting of K-12 student development in special education and will serve as a model in developing best practices in the art and science of teaching students with disabilities through our teacher training program.

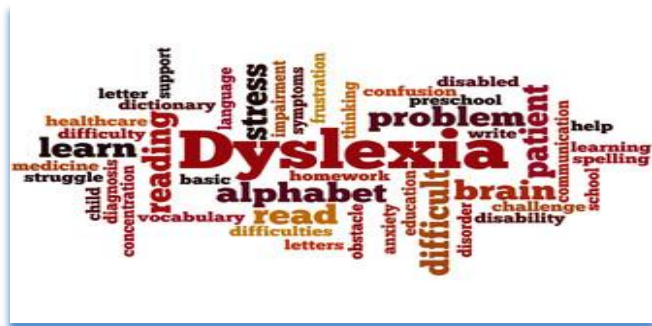


At issue is the lack of an appropriate educational setting for these special children, as well as the lack of highly-trained educational professionals with experience in teaching students with disabilities. This in-turn creates an environment

of reduced opportunities for the disabled to constructively contribute to society and the future prosperity of their communities. The ECLS will provide an academic environment focused on K-12 student development in special education through our teacher training and mentoring initiative.

The ECLS is committed to preparing teachers through our special education teacher training program while delivering high quality instructional programs for children with disabilities in the classroom. Our school will be affiliated with a college or university for specific purposes that go beyond the scope of traditional public and private schooling institutions, and will reflect the diverse needs of the teaching professional and assist in improving the science and art of teaching children with special needs.

The ECLS will engage in practices of teacher training, curriculum development, research, professional development, and educational experimentation for the purpose of developing best practices in special education and as a voice speaking for the improvement of learning for all disabled children. Our teacher mentoring model is fully-exportable to other locations and there is currently no other K-12 institution, private or public, engaged in this kind of activity in Oregon.



Description of PATHS



PATHS, a registered 501(c)(3) established in 2006, has a mission to expand educational opportunities so that students may receive the best possible education, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. PATHS understands the important role that education plays in society - it allows students of all abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, and ethnicities to come together to learn not only about academics and the world around them, but also about each other. To this end, PATHS seeks to address special education teacher training initiatives and educate children with disabilities in a state-of-the-art facility for research and development of best practices. PATHS Executive Director, Debbie Smith, has advocated for the rights of disabled children for nearly three decades and also raised a child with special needs.

Goals

The strategic goals of the ECLS will include:

- Strengthening civil society through our comprehensive special education teacher training program and development of best practices as part of our ongoing research initiatives. The ECLS is unlike a conventional school since we will focus mostly on teacher, student and environmental interaction rather than on traditional lectures.
- The objective is to improve the quality of instruction to children with special needs by integrating newly available electronic learning materials as well as exposing students to best practices through our teacher training initiatives. We will work to continually evaluate the usefulness of program elements and constantly adjust operations for maximum effectiveness. Ultimately, this program will serve as an example and a model for other K-12 educational institutions and promote wide-ranging collaboration between educational organizations, on both a local and a national level.
- The ECLS will promote greater inclusion of our students in local communities through youth education and vocational training initiatives. The ECLS will foster an environment in which children and teachers alike have meaningful experiences that lead to growth—that will open them up to more, higher-level experiences creating informed, engaged and contributing members of society.



Key Project Elements

ECLS will promote and contribute to the betterment of students with disabilities by providing an environment of adaptive learning and critical skills development through our laboratory school setting and teacher training program. Educational engagement is premised on the knowledge that mutual understanding, the development of future leaders, and the benefits of education programs influence societies and affect official decision-making almost everywhere in the world today.

Ultimately, the lack of educational opportunities for children with disabilities remains a key reason for their exclusion from wider community affairs. Furthermore, deficiencies in marketable vocational training for youth with disabilities results in a lack of opportunity for further personal development and diminishes their access to employment and other future prospects. Individuals with disabilities have the potential to contribute to the development of their communities and they deserve an opportunity to receive the type of education provided by the ECLS.



Relevance of Goals and Objectives

At issue is the lack of properly trained special education teachers which result in reduced opportunities for the disabled to constructively contribute to society. Educating students and



providing them with a supportive environment is only part of the puzzle; training teachers that will help them to succeed in the wider world of work and, perhaps more importantly, conditioning society to be more accepting of them is the challenge. The ECLS will address these issues specifically through the full engagement of both families and the community at large. Vocational training programs for students and mentoring opportunities for teachers are all relevant here.

Our goals are attainable, measurable and replicable. The only 'new' concept is that of focusing on the disabled student in the larger context of education, vocation and societal acceptance and teacher training initiatives. The ECLS will accomplish the first part through adaptive technologies (appliances, speech to text applications) and through active measurement (Individualized Education Plans, IEPs) of not just performance, but effectiveness and continual adjustment of our methods.



Our personal and professional experience provides a measurement tool for feasibility: nothing in ECLS' plan is unreachable or unworkable. Selection and training of all teaching staff will be done in the fullest cooperation with the Oregon Department of Education.

Schedule and Timeline for Completion

The project includes a three year timeline represented in the table below and begins with school construction, curriculum development, and equipment procurement. The project team will meet initially to establish protocols and reporting requirements for all key members of the team. Project management, reporting and evaluation will be an ongoing process to include financial management, progress reporting, metrics evaluation and overall project tracking.

Quarterly and annual reports will be prepared and provided to the Executive Director as well as key stakeholders of the team. During the course of educational delivery, periodic evaluations will be conducted by both instructors as well as management to assure project objectives and goals are being met. Adjustments to curriculum and teaching methods will be developed and implemented as the project progresses. A final evaluation report will be prepared to provide key stakeholders an understanding of the lessons learned, and best practices for a project such as this. Recommendations for improvements to the concept will be developed and distributed to the key stakeholders of the project team.

Task	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Project Initiation			
Construction			
Curriculum Development			
Equipment Procurement			
Educational Delivery			
Performance Tracking and Reporting			
Project Evaluation			

Project Activities

Disabled children's needs will be served through providing assistive communicative and mobility devices where appropriate. It is vital to note that without these assistive technology and mobility devices children with disabilities are unable to rise to their full potential or fully recognize an improved quality of life and greater independence.

The ECLS will serve students with a wide-range of disabilities in grades K-12. Our comprehensive program will support the inclusion of disabled children in their communities through greater involvement in community affairs at all levels (where age appropriate) to ensure equal participation and a greater stake in their own destiny. In addition to academics, students will also study independent living skills and social integration within the broader community.



The ECLS curriculum will consist of comprehensive vocational training for students in the upper grades and will respond to genuine market needs within the community with special considerations given to assistive technology and job modifications in an effort to achieve successful placement of the student. Specific vocational training opportunities for students will include carpentry, cosmetology, tailoring, electrical engineering and plumbing.

Our laboratory school setting at ECLS will provide teacher training initiatives that are state-of-the-art for the education industry. We will offer graduate-level students the opportunity to mentor with our highly-trained teachers to learn about the latest in best practices for teaching students with a wide-range of disabilities.

The ECLS will perform as a magnet school in the art and science of teaching students with special needs in a K-12 setting, and as a result will attract students and professionals from around the state and the country.



Activity Relevance and Measurement of Efficiency

ECLS' three lines of effort (LOEs), education, vocational training, and teacher training directly support our goal of a more inclusive approach for educating disabled students. At its core, the ECLS is about empowering the disabled through adaptive and individualized educational opportunities. This would normally manifest in a school for the disabled, but the ECLS goes the extra mile and seeks to enable the best in our students and teachers through our local and national mentoring and training opportunities through internship and apprenticeship programs.



Special Education in Oregon

The number of students requiring special education is on the rise in Oregon. Currently, more than 1 in 8 students is enrolled in special education programs statewide. But graduation rates for these special students remain bleak. With a federally-mandated projected graduation rate of 65% for students enrolled in special education programs, most school districts in Oregon are failing to meet even this most basic standard. Portland School District reported graduation rates at a rock-bottom level of 29%, while Beaverton schools came closest to the federal mark with 58% of its special education student body able to graduate (Oregon Department of Education, 2015-2016). We must do better for students with special needs, and we can with the type of education provided by the ECLS and the methods and practices offered through our special education teacher training program.



- Having a better teacher for a single grade increases by 0.5 percentage point a student's probability of attending college by age 20. The institutions attended are also of higher quality as measured by the earnings of previous graduates.

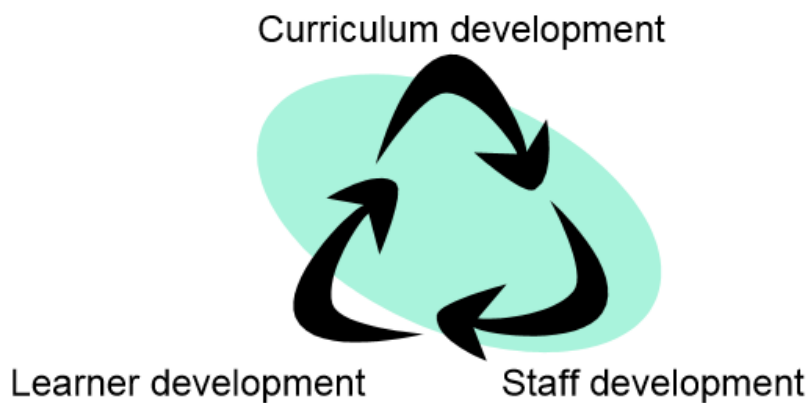


- Students with higher-quality teachers had “significantly higher earnings growth rates in their 20s.” Having a better teacher for a single grade increased a student's earnings at age 28 by 1%.
- Having better teachers was associated with a lowered probability of teenage births for a student; this factor also improved the likelihood of the students living in higher-quality neighborhoods.

The evidence is clear, highly-trained teachers have a measurable impact on student's lives that is sustained long after they graduate from high school. The ECLS special education teacher training program that is central to our laboratory school project will not only provide teachers with the training necessary to make a profound impact on disabled students lives, but also assists in developing human infrastructure to build capacity in Oregon's educational system. Our special education teacher training program is suitable in a stand-alone facility as we have proposed with the ECLS, but also would be quite effective as a training program 'plugged-in' to a university setting as part of a graduate-level experience.

Method

We will achieve our goals by using a triangulated approach to education including: student-to-teacher, student-to-student, and student-to-society. Our goals are attainable, measurable and replicable. The only 'new' concept is our laboratory school setting with a focus on the disabled student in the larger context of providing an education, training teachers and in developing educational best practices. Additionally, measures of effectiveness for the ECLS will track closely with students' performance. Progress measurement for teachers and students is highly individualized and driven by the student IEP, or Individualized Education Plan. The main difference will be the way in which IEPs relate to vocational, social and societal successes of our students, which we will track post-graduation.



Our teacher training/mentoring program will consist of a hands-on approach with a practical model in further addressing the challenges of educating youth with special needs. Our model school, The Career & Community Studies Program at The College of New Jersey, currently receives ongoing delegations of teachers and administrators from around the country and as such we believe will offer our teaching staff the best possible example of how children with disabilities can and should be educated.

- Metrics: Adoption of best practices from model school evidenced in daily lesson plans;
- Periodicity: Each iteration;
- Monitoring method: Daily self-reporting via PATHS website; and
- Weekly reviews of best practices.

Strengths and Innovation

The ECLS is a laboratory school specializing in the comprehensive education, care and support for children with special needs. ECLS is also a setting for faculty research and where undergraduate and graduate students work together serving as assistants in the classes and as participant observers in the ongoing life of the classroom. The ECLS will serve as a model of comprehensive care, education practice, and as a fieldwork site developing best practices in the art of teaching students with disabilities.

The ECLS aims towards a more inclusive approach in educating children with disabilities in Oregon. Comprehensive policies implemented in the ECLS for children with disabilities can be applied with equal success in government-run as well as in private facilities. The key to success is in

offering children afflicted with either physical or cognitive impairments proper supports. Children with disabilities deserve the same chance at success as their regular education peers which is best realized in an educational environment tailored and

modified to meet their specific needs more adequately, allowing them to become contributing members of their communities.



Scaling

Possible avenues for scale-up of the ECLS could include a combination of both public and private sector development. Our model for the ECLS, the Career & Community Studies Program at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) in Ewing, New Jersey, has shown commercial success since its inception a decade ago. We will work towards this same level of commercial success for the ECLS by establishing a proof-of-concept of this unique K-12 educational model in Oregon.

We fully understand the challenges in addressing the status quo in how children with special needs are valued and further, how resources are delivered to these exceptional children. But we believe that by providing a proof-of-concept of our comprehensive laboratory school and teacher training program, we can offer a viable and cost-effective alternative to this significant issue that will work equally well in a private vs. public education setting.

It is the mission of the ECLS to expand care, support, educational and vocational training opportunities for children - regardless of ability. We understand the important role that education plays in society - it allows students of all abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, and ethnicities to come together to learn not only about academics and the world around them, but also about each other.



Key Personnel/Organizations

Debbie Smith, Executive Director of PATHS

Debbie Smith created PATHS in 2006 as a result of her experiences raising her disabled daughter and the constant battle to get her daughter an appropriate education. These experiences also ignited her passion for advocating on behalf of all children with special needs, and in developing educational alternatives to better meet the diverse needs of disabled children. Debbie holds a Master's degree in Diplomacy & International Conflict Management from Norwich University.

Kelly B. Allen, M.A.

Kelly Allen is experienced in the development, implementation, and evaluation of special education. She is skilled in the use of positive behavior supports to improve school climates and cultures, and highly qualified in designing, producing, and delivering curricula and training to ensure achievement of goals. Kelly is well-qualified in monitoring and evaluating education programs and excels in collaborating with others to develop education improvement plans. She holds a Master of Arts in Teaching Special Education from The College of New Jersey, and currently works for the state of New Jersey Department of Education.

Triplett-Wellman, Inc.

Founded in 1982, Triplett-Wellman Contractors has been satisfying customers' construction needs through exemplary service for over 30 years. Triplett-Wellman provides Construction Management, General Contracting, and Design-Build services for colleges, K-12 schools, medical facilities, churches, and commercial buildings in Oregon and southwest Washington. For the past decade, Triplett-Wellman has been named in the top 150 Oregon Private Companies by Oregon Business Magazine and is honored to be included in the list of top 50 contracting companies in Oregon and Washington.



Budget

Budget Summary (36 months operating expenses)

The proposed project budget runs over a three year period, to coincide with the proposed project schedule. The overall budget is estimated at \$15,304,400 and includes construction or lease of a facility, salaries for key staff, procurement of adaptive equipment, all educational delivery and expenditures for maintenance and upkeep during the three year project period.

THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN'S LABORATORY SCHOOL OREGON

All figures in 2017 dollars and are for planning purposes only

<u>Item</u>	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
*Construction	\$8,800,000	\$0	\$0	\$8,800,000
Staffing	\$275,000	\$2,472,200	\$2,472,200	\$5,219,400
Therapeutic Equipment/Adaptive Devices/Curriculum Items	\$0	\$675,000	\$0	\$675,000
Media Promotion & Marketing	\$113,000	\$13,000	\$6,500	\$132,500
Other Direct Costs	\$461,000	\$8,250	\$8,250	\$477,500
Totals	\$9,649,000	\$3,168,450	\$2,486,950	\$15,304,400

Budget Narrative

The following provides a detailed breakdown for all costs included in the project.

***Construction: \$8,800,000**

*This figure represents new construction costs. It is the intent of the project team to negotiate an in-kind agreement with an existing institution. Although we do acknowledge that facilities modification costs will most likely exist to better accommodate student's disabilities in an existing facility, and/or that construction of a new facility may be the better option.

Other Direct Costs:

Transport Goods/Standardization/Maintenance

Staffing/Salaries

In order to achieve the program's goals and objectives, it is anticipated that the following staffing will be needed:

Years One, Two, Three:

Oversight Staff :

- **Project Director** - The Project Director will oversee operations for key activities of the project. This includes (but is not limited to) construction oversight; preparation and implementation of a Project Operations Plan; allocation and management of capital and human resources, ensuring all members of the project team have adequate resources to accomplish their assigned tasks; oversight and tracking of all project revenues and expenditures; assembling and tracking measures of effectiveness (MOEs); ensuring key milestones to the project are met in an efficient and timely fashion; preparing and submitting quarterly and annual reports to the Executive Director to track progress and effectiveness of the project; resolution of logistical issues that will surface from time to time; and general support for all main elements of the ECLS. The Project Director will prepare an annual Project Summary Report to identify lessons learned, evidence of successes and how the pilot project can be scaled-up and implemented in other locations.
- **Program & Curriculum Design Manager** - The Program & Curriculum Design Manager is responsible for implementing staff training; evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum and staffing; assessing learner needs and styles; defining learning objectives; and creating the learning environment and content materials. The Program & Curriculum Design Manager will use learning theory and technical knowledge based on the ECLS model to create an educational experience for learners that successfully teaches new information and improves skill level. The Program &

Curriculum Design Manager will work closely with colleagues, managers and other educators to determine needs throughout the design and implementation process of the project.

Years Two & Three:

School Staff:

- 15 Special Education Teachers
- 15 Instructional Aides
- Adaptive PE Teacher
- Art Teacher
- Music Teacher
- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Administrative Assistant
- Speech Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Psychologist
- Nurse
- 2 Custodians
- Cafeteria Manager
- 6 Cafeteria staff

Salary rates are consistent with Oregon Department of Education norms. All salaries are in accordance with ECLS practices and policies which are consistently applied to all donors/programs.

Equipment

Adaptive devices/Curriculum items:

Modified desks: \$500/each

Computers w/ modified keyboards: \$1,500/each

Wheel chairs: \$500/each

Voice recognition software: \$500/each

Vision/hearing software: \$1000/each

Textbooks: \$500/per student/teacher/mentor

Physiotherapy Equipment/Adaptive Equipment: \$100,000

Braille Reader: \$1500/each

All budget numbers are for planning purposes only.

