On October 14, 2016, the Umatilla Learning Connection Town Hall meeting brought together community leaders from Umatilla and Morrow counties to strengthen local networks and engage a broad range of stakeholders in supporting the link between health and education.

Leaders from education, school nutrition, extension, public health, health care and agriculture joined together to consider how nutrition, physical activity, health and education impact student success. Speakers included:

- Heidi Sipe, 2016 Superintendent of the Year, Umatilla School District
- Rikkilynn Larsen, Child Nutrition Director, Umatilla School District
- Catie Brenaman, Good Shepherd Health Care System
- Kevin Campbell, CEO, Eastern Oregon CCO
- Tyler Hansel, Oregon Wheat Growers League and Hansel Farms

The day’s activities highlighted best practices and put the spotlight on Umatilla School District for their outstanding commitment to child health. Breakfast After the Bell and a School Lunch Showcase featured innovative approaches to ensuring all kids are nourished for learning. Recess Before Lunch was a walk on the new fitness trail at Umatilla High School, partially funded by Fuel Up to Play 60 and built by committed community members.

A “Give and Get” speed sharing session highlighted existing health and wellness programs in the region:

- MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS AND ACEs
- SCHOOL WELLNESS
- ORAL HEALTH
- HEAD START AND WIC
- PLAN4HEALTH/PLANNING
- SNAP-ED
- PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/PARKS AND RECREATION
- HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
- HUNGER
- PUBLIC HEALTH

“The support for our students from teachers, child nutrition, after school and community programs has a clear and direct impact on their success.”

—Heidi Sipe, Superintendent, Umatilla School District
“Food and physical activity fuel kids for success. Since 2004, Farmers Ending Hunger has donated over 20 million pounds of food crops to help fight hunger here in our community and across the state.”
—Tyler Hansel, Hansel Farms

Town Hall participants were asked to join the effort by committing to school and community wellness with time and resources in the next school year. They each identified 90-day goals to stay engaged with the town hall discussions. Some of these goals included:

- Educate others about the importance of nutrition in school lunches, especially when they post/say negative things.
- Use the information and connections that were mentioned today with patients to let them know of the resources that are available in our community.
- Work to strengthen school and community wellness policies through the involvement of school districts, healthcare partners and community leaders.
- Explore the possibility of starting school garden programs to allow students to actively participate in their food choices.

Goals will be revisited at 45 and 90 days in hopes of keeping the connections alive and advancing community health. Participants will reconvene in one year to share their successes and continue their commitment.

“We need to do everything we can to stay connected and ensure the success of our students, families and community.”
—Kevin Campbell, CEO, Eastern Oregon CCO

The Learning Connection Town Hall planning team included representatives from:
OSU Extension SNAP-Ed, Family and Community Health, Umatilla School District, Intermountain ESD, Good Shepherd Health System, Umatilla County, Oregon Dairy and Nutrition Council, Oregon Department of Education and Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon