

**WCCA Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Minutes
October 20, 2021**

❖ Indicates a vote is required

Donecia Santana called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

Present: Amy Phillips, Margit Nelson, Donecia Santana, Dan Edwards, Bobby Kimmons, Shannon Marlowe, Magali Perales, Darlene Cabe, Emily Edmunds, Rachel Walker, David White, Bridgett Librado, Amy Smith, Simone Wertenberger, Crystal Robles, Jessica Ownbey, Kristy Johnson, Michelle Stills, Yessica Araujo, Meghan Arnold

Establish a Quorum - There were not enough community partners or family representatives present to be able to establish a quorum, thus items needing a quorum will be sent out electronically for a vote.

❖ Review and Approve Minutes from June 2021 and September 2021 meetings: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Simone Wertenberger and seconded by Marisol Juarez. There were not enough members present for a quorum, so an electronic vote was sent out after the meeting. The following members cast their votes electronically and the June 2021 and September 2021 minutes were approved with a quorum: Amanda van Duyne, Ashley Dardas, and Katie Robinson.

New Business:

❖ **Self-Assessment _ Amy Phillips**

Amy presented the WCCA Self-Assessment (SA) process beginning in the winter of 2020-21 with an overview of the planning, ongoing monitoring, data collection, analyzing, and dialoging phases. WCCA's SA process team includes participation and input from community partners. The 20-21 SA focused on staff education levels, family engagement, enrollment processes, and referral services. The SA process was then shifted to a summer start time to prepare for the new school year, with a focus on finding qualified staff, creating safe and inclusive environments, and motivating family engagement. The SA team came up with recommendations and an action plan that included staff training and development, communication processes, family engagement tools, digital presence improvement, and community partnership focus. Simone Wertenberger made a motion to approve and Marisol Juarez seconded the motion. There were not enough members present for a quorum, so an electronic vote was sent out after the meeting. The following members cast their votes electronically and the Self-Assessment was approved with a quorum: Amanda van Duyne, Ashley Dardas, and Katie Robinson.

❖ **CDA Pipeline Program _ Amy Phillips**

One of the actions stemming from the Self-Assessment is to create an in-house plan or pipeline for hiring and educating staff to attain a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, since this is the minimum requirement for Head Start/Early Head Start teaching staff. Candidates can start at any level (e.g., volunteer, trainee, substitute, afterschool) and WCCA will design a pathway and assist candidates

with attaining the CDA. Simone Wertenberger motioned to approve the CDA Pipeline Program and Shannon Marlowe seconded the motion. There were not enough members present for a quorum, so an electronic vote was sent out after the meeting. The following members cast their votes electronically and the CDA Pipeline Program was approved with a quorum: Amanda van Duyne, Ashley Dardas, and Katie Robinson.

❖ **COVID – CAP Memos _ Bobby Kimmons**

Two memo documents were shared: the first one clarifies that Wellness and COVID Vaccination PTO must be used as time off only (there will be no cash payout). The second memo outlines WCCA's new mandatory vaccination policy which requires that all WCCA employees must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by 12/17/21, unless an employee has an approved medical or religious exemption, in which case that employee will be asked to have a weekly COVID test. Marisol Juarez motioned to approve and Simone Wertenberger seconded the motion. There were not enough members present for a quorum, so an electronic vote was sent out after the meeting. The following members cast their votes electronically and the COVID CAP Memos were approved with a quorum: Amanda van Duyne, Ashley Dardas, and Katie Robinson.

Policy Council Representatives Updates / Nomination of PC Officers - Margit Nelson

Great appreciation is extended to everyone who has served or is continuing to serve on the Council, especially Simone Wertenberger, who has given five years of service and thus will not serve any further this school year. We are also very grateful to all of the new representatives, both community partners and parents, who have agreed to serve this year; we welcome you and look forward to working together.

Margit presented and defined the three Policy Council Officer roles: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. She asked the members to send nominations for each role to Dan Edwards by using the private Chat Box for confidentiality/anonymity or by sending an email to Dan. Donecia Santana was nominated for the role of Chair. No other nominations were submitted. The nominated members will be voted on at the November Policy Council meeting.

Reports:

Chief Financial Officer's Report - Ibby Whitten

- Financials and Credit Card Expenditure Reports: Ibby Whitten was not able to be present at the meeting due to illness. She will provide her current reports in document form, which will be emailed to all Policy Council members at a later date.

Chief Executive Officer's Report – David White

- COVID: A policy of mandatory testing for unvaccinated employees was initiated on 9/30, which has encouraged more employees to get vaccinated; several employees (mostly part-time or intermittent staff) resigned as a by-product of the policy.
- There is an Infrastructure Bill working its way through Congress that could potentially provide significant funding for early childhood education which could help to address staff shortages and salaries

and under enrollment. The National Head Start Association is working hard to advocate for local Head Start sites and flexibility in terms of FA2 survey and full enrollment requirement timelines.

Enrollment/Attendance Report – Meghan Arnold

- The enrollment and attendance numbers for September are below the full level but as expected relative to the current situation; under enrollment is a by-product of COVID and parent choice. A few more classrooms had attendance above 85%; there were some classroom closures due to COVID and staffing issues. Enrollment continues to increase gradually. There are two full-time bilingual ERSEA Specialists: Margaret Hannon and Crystal Robles; recruiting continues for another bilingual specialist.

USDA Meal and Snack Report – Meghan Arnold

- Meghan presented the numbers of breakfasts, lunches and snacks served in September, which were as expected and are slowly increasing. Henderson County Public Schools continue to provide breakfast and lunch meals to our Henderson County child care centers; Hillview's meals and snacks as well as all infant food continues to be reimbursed through the CACFP program.

Program Director's Report – Margit Nelson for Linda Carter

- COVID: COVID infections continue to impact classrooms and staff: in September ten classrooms were closed due to exposures, and eleven rooms were closed due to lack of staff.
- Facilities: Director Tim Camp is busy working on the EHS Expansion sites, as well as preparing all sites for the FA2 survey that will occur in 2022; the Tebeau site and the need for renovation funds was publicized in a WLOS TV news report.
- Kindergarten Transition: WCCA continues to collaborate with Henderson County Public Schools as part of a statewide Transition Pilot project.
- Staff Recruitment: the need for teachers continues especially NC Pre-K staff; we are attending multiple job fairs as well as implementing creative recruitment efforts; we have hired for a few key positions.

Program Support Services – Amy Phillips

- WCCA is serving close to the required percentage of children with disabilities when based on current enrollment numbers (vs. funded enrollment), except for EHS which is typical and partly due to parents keeping younger kids at home due to multiple other issues including medical.
- 45-day Developmental Screenings: the lower numbers for Hearing and Vision are due to COVID closures and a higher absence rate.
- Coaching this year will be more informal and will focus on physical environment and child-teacher interactions; 280 coaching contacts were completed in August.
- Great progress has been made in identifying medical provider homes of children; we're working hard to do the same with dental provider homes.
- Professional Development: Several half-days are being used to provide training in Active Supervision, Head Start Performance Standards, and FA2 preparation, in addition to other individual and department-focused training.

EHS/CCP Report – Kristy Johnson

- We have been working hard to assist employees with earning their CDA certificates to help alleviate the shortage of teachers; we still need to hire Family Advocates.
- Discussions continue in regard to providing Trauma Informed training and developing a behavioral support system to serve teachers and children.
- Kristy will be transitioning to a part-time role due to family commitments; Margit Nelson will take over management of the CCP program with assistance from Kathleen McDavid; a new EHS Manager will be starting soon.

NC Pre-K / Head Start Report – Amy Smith

- NC Pre-K: WCCA Site Supervisors will begin the monitoring process using the tool provided by the state; validation visits and tool verifications will be completed by the end of January 2022.
- WCCA is collaborating with Henderson County regarding Kindergarten transition plans and activities at six pilot school sites to enhance school readiness.
- Required professional development training for NC Pre-K teachers and site administrators to support implementation of the Teaching Strategies curriculum will take place throughout the school year.

- ❖ **Next meeting dates:** Meeting times: 9:00 am - 10:30 am
- November 17th
 - December 15th
 - January 19th
 - February 16th
 - March 23rd (week after Spring Break)
 - April 20th
 - May 18th
 - June 15th

A motion to approve the dates was made by Simone Wertenberger and seconded by Jessica Ownbey. There were not enough members present for a quorum, so an electronic vote was sent out after the meeting. The following members cast their votes electronically and the meeting dates were approved with a quorum: Amanda van Duyne, Ashley Dardas, and Katie Robinson.

Comments and Questions: There were no comments or questions.

- ❖ **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Simone Wertenberger and seconded by Jessica Ownbey. The meeting was adjourned by Donecia Santana at 2:38 PM.