

WNCSource Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Minutes June 15, 2022

❖ Indicates a vote is required

Donecia Santana called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Present: Meghan Arnold, Linda Carter, Pearl Saddler, Adriana Abee, Kasheiva Jackson, Amy Smith, Donecia Santana, Paige Bronson, Claudia Campana, Amy Phillips, Margit Nelson, Bridgett Librado, Carolyn Chandler, Maria Guadalupe Zamudio, Jeanette Rodriguez, David White, Dylan Allanson, Kristian Toro, Itzel Palacios, Adrienne Chaney, Kathleen McDavid, Amanda Van Duyne, Dan Edwards, Elizabeth Whitten, Diane Nelson (joined the meeting late).

Establish a Quorum - It was determined that there were not enough members present to constitute a quorum. Items needing a quorum will be sent out electronically for a vote.

❖ **Review and Approve Minutes from the May 2022 meeting:** A motion to approve the minutes was made by Amanda Van Duyne and seconded by Itzel Palacios. Electronic votes were sent out, because there were not enough members to reach a quorum. The following members cast their votes electronically and the May minutes were approved with a quorum: Diane Nelson, Shannon Marlowe and Rebecca Jones.

Announcement for Parent Representatives- Margit Nelson

Margit announced that any parent representative who attends the Policy Council meeting will receive a \$15 McDonald's gift card. Parents in attendance will provide their address in the chat box to Dan Edwards who will mail them the gift card.

New Business:

Policy Council Participation Next Year-Linda Carter

- This meeting is the last one for the program year.
- Next meeting is in September but if new business should arise beforehand, it will be sent to be voted electronically.
- Everyone that is serving now will continue through October until we can transition to the new Council for the next program year. In September, we will ask for nominations and recommendations for PC Officer positions.
- The schedule for the Policy Council meetings will remain the same for the September meeting.

❖ **Proposed Change in Scope - Linda Carter, Elizabeth Whitten**

- We have 2 grants that we will be requesting a Change in Scope to enable us to raise the salaries

for our teaching staff, and reimburse our CCP partners at a higher rate in order to be competitive, and retain and attract partners as well as staff.

- Since the writing of this report we have reduced the staff shortages from 72 to 67 employees not including our Tebeau site (still in renovation) and 96 if we include Tebeau and Forest City sites.
- Based on self-assessment and exit interviews we know that wages are an issue.
- With primarily set grant funding, it is very difficult to raise wages significantly, so the changes in scope will allow us to request a reduction in the children served and request to keep the current funding in order to raise wages.

❖ **HS/EHS Grant #04CH011737**

With the current HS/EHS grant, which is the oldest grant that WNCSource has, we currently have:

- Home-Based: 60 EHS slots, we proposed to reduce by 36 and a reduction of 20 HS slots (all HS HB slots). We currently have 2 Parent Educators that will be retained and continue to serve the 24 families we have. We have not been able to hire more Parent Educators, so those potential positions will go away with the reductions.
- Center-Based, 104 EHS slots, we propose to go down to 96, because of space. One classroom we were subleasing from East Coast at Sugar Hill, is no longer available and we don't have another space that we could use to provide that service. This will result in having 2 less EHS positions that will not need to be filled.
- Center-Based HS slots will be reduced from 225 to 185 center slots, a big portion of those are dual enrolled, which means they are part of HS and part of NCPK, a large part of those will be only NCPK. We won't displace children, but will have an additional HS classroom only.
- From a hiring perspective the HS teacher won't have to have the NCPK credentials making the hiring process easier.
- This is a net reduction of 104 children (36 EHS HB, 20 HS HB, 8 EHS classroom based, and 40 dual enrolled NC PRE K), which will help increase our wages. For example, a potential teacher candidate with a High School/GED diploma (working towards their CDA) would receive an approximate starting pay of \$15.00 up from an actual average of \$14.23; a candidate with a CDA or Early Childhood certificate would receive \$18.27 up from \$15.19, a candidate with an Associates in Early Childhood Education would receive \$21.20 up from to \$16.40 and someone with a Bachelors would receive \$25.20 up from \$20.98. The rates are based on the average current rates of pay.
- The total amount of budget will remain the same, we will use the cost savings generated by reducing the number of children and staff positions to cover the costs of staffing increases and any additional expenses incurred, especially in our Child Liability and Workers' Comp Insurance, as well as other general supply increases such as gas prices, etc. About 80% of the funds goes towards wages and the rest to supplies and other types of support costs.
- **Questions and comments:** Kristian Toro asked if her daughter, currently in EHS-CCP has less chance to get a HS voucher for next program year due to fewer slots/budget change. Meghan Arnold suggested that enrollment staff call her to discuss based on their individual situation. Elizabeth Whitten explained that the majority of HS slots converted are dual enrolled, (HS and

NCPK), it doesn't mean less slots, but that the children are served under the NCPK grant only, which might help open more slots for 3-year olds. Linda Carter mentioned that by raising wages we might be able to fill the 96 staff vacancies, which will allow us to open more classrooms.

A motion to approve was made by Amanda Van Duyne and seconded by Kristian Toro. Electronic votes were sent out, because there were not enough members to reach a quorum. The following members cast their votes electronically and the HS/EHS Grant #04CH011737 Proposed Change in Scope was approved with a quorum: Diane Nelson, Shannon Marlowe and Rebecca Jones.

❖ **EHS-CCP- Grant #04HP000306**

- Our CCP grant allows us to serve 100 EHS children, 24 are in our facilities and the rest are with CCP partners; we lost Love & Learning, a private provider who served 20 EHS children due to the mask for children and vaccine mandate for staff. We have not been able to find other partners who want to be an EHS site (EHS has more requirements and standards, which makes it difficult to find). We would like to be able to raise the pay rate for teachers under this grant (6 FTE) and with the rest we will increase the reimbursement rate for our CCP partners.
- For other CCP providers, a 15% increase which will cover increased wage for staff (first large rate increases in 4 years) and any additional increase in their operational costs. We would like to add another floater for one of our CCP sites.

A motion to approve was made by Amanda Van Duyne and seconded by Carolyn Chandler. Electronic votes were sent out, because there were not enough members to reach a quorum. The following members cast their votes electronically and the EHS-CCP - Grant #04HP000306 Proposed Change in Scope was approved with a quorum: Diane Nelson, Shannon Marlowe and Rebecca Jones.

❖ **Self-Assessment Timeline**

- HS does this self-assessment and allows us to review our data, make corrections if needed and improve where we can, we consider our community and child assessment data and our program goals. We did a staff survey and looked at the HS Management Wheel. We will focus on our questions and which community members we invite to help us make good decisions. We will meet in July to update them and at the end of the month, we will have an action plan that will be presented at the PC meeting in September.

A motion to approve was made by Carolyn Chandler and seconded by Amanda Van Duyne. Electronic votes were sent out, because there were not enough members to reach a quorum. The following members cast their votes electronically and the Self-Assessment Plan was approved with a quorum: Diane Nelson, Shannon Marlowe and Rebecca Jones.

2022-2023 Budgets by Elizabeth Whitten

- Policy Council has already seen and voted on our 2022-2023 proposed budgets, we don't have final confirmation yet from the ACF Office of Children and Families services (usually late June)
- The total budget request includes almost 12 million dollars' worth of program services
- HS is about 3.1 million (Adding Federal/nonfederal, COLA and Quality Funds)

- EHS is over 4 million (with the COLA, quality funds and the federal/nonfederal share)
- EHS-CCP is about 2.1 million
- EHS IV expansion grant is about 2.7 million
- The CACFP budget has not been included (ends at the end of September)
- The ARPA fund is not included (it was awarded this year and available until September 2023)
- The nonfederal is the amount we have to raise ourselves through grants, contracts or fundraising to match the federal grants
- For the CCP grant and the EHS IV grant we have a waiver which reduces the amount we have to raise (CCP 15% and EHS IV 7-8%)

Reports:

Chief Executive Officer's Report - David White

- *Living wage certification for WNCSource and local market data:*
 - WNCSource has participated in this program since it started.
 - We have been awarded and we are proud because it shows our commitment to equity and economic justice; but this certification might not be enough in an increasingly competitive labor market.
 - Gina Dowd and Margit Nelson, WNCSource staff, conducted an extensive local survey comparing more than 150 businesses and gathered information on the starting salary offered as well as benefits, which helped us determine that WNCSource is below average in the compensation we offer for starting wages.
 - We want to retain our staff and we do this by promoting events outside the agency. We have a softball team that meets regularly. We had the agency picnic (first since 2019) where different prizes were raffled (thanks Kim Hall for arranging it). Some staff members and their families participated in the Tourists game in Asheville (the agency paid for the food).
 - Our new campaign is "live and work in the mountains" utilizing the services of WSPA and Nexstar for creative promotion and help attract new potential staff members.

Chief Financial Officer's Report- Elizabeth Whitten

- We close the books on the 15th of the month but May is not closed yet.
- We are tracking below budget due to staff shortages and lower enrollment. Most grants should be at 83% of budget and HS and NCPK should be at 90%.
- The spending is going as expected which is reflected in a higher cost per child (increased cost of supplies, services, etc.).
- Credit Card costs were \$13,437 (most expenses are for classroom materials and equipment)
- Proposed budget for 2022-23 has a total amount of \$11,981,041.00, which was previously approved by the Policy Council.
- About 2.2 million of the total amount is non-federal money that we have to raise. The NCPK contract, wrap around activities or volunteer services count as federal match portions.

Enrollment Report – Kasheiva Jackson

- Enrollment is at 40% in all of our programs.

- Home visiting is at 31% and center base is at 41%.
- Our waitlist is 324 participants, 30 for the HB Program, 124 for the EHS or CCP Program and 170 for HS or NCPK Program.
- During April 2022, we received and processed 47 new applications for enrollment.

Attendance Report - Meghan Arnold

- Attendance is increasing; we have fewer absences related to Covid (only 2.9%).
- Family Advocates, site supervisors and teachers are doing great following up with families and the Policies and Procedures to treat absences and encouraging attendance.
- All new staff have been trained in attendance and Meghan monitors twice a week.

Family Services - Claudia Campaña and Meghan Arnold

- Ready Rosie is being used by Family Advocates to promote Family Engagement
- There was an incentive of \$10 for families who watched 10 or more videos, which seem to have increased the use of Ready Rosie (there has been a noticeable increase from September 2021 to May 2022).
- As we hired new FAs, the number of Family Strengths & Needs Assessments increased, which allows us to have nearly 100% of the assessments completed. FAs and PEs have received trainings to help them understand the importance of these assessments
- Services to Expectant Families: new Policies and Procedures have been developed to guide the Expectant Family services and have been reviewed by our consultant and will be finalized by the end of this week.

Program Support Services Report – Amy Phillips

● *Child Development Assessments:*

- Our children have seen growth in all areas (Social-emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy and Math).
- We will work with teachers to determine if children are growing at an appropriate age level.
- School readiness goals, we have different items/skills we want to work on to make sure the children are well prepared for kindergarten.
- Nutrition Program partnered with Bearwallow Farms and ASAP to bring 115 bags with some fresh produce and resources for our families.

EHS Program Manager's Report – Pearl Saddler

- ITERS AND ECERS reviewed at Etowah. Licensing consultant will contact us with the results.
- We conducted 4 playground internal monitoring with 100% compliance.
- Hillview had a field trip to the elementary schools for kids to visit the school they will attend
- At Sugar Hill, 38 families participated in different Ready Rosie Family Engagements.
- Staff participated in active supervision training offered by the OHS.

HS/NC Pre-K Program Manager's Report – Amy Smith

- We provided school readiness kits for 32 HS children with early literacy materials.

- Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE): hope to have HS and NCPK children back in Main St. next school year.
- We fixed the playground on the Main St site, using materials that promote children's learning skills.
- We took our teaching staff to a day in the Farm, we all had a great time where we enjoyed and shared.

Program Director's Report – Linda Carter

- Highlights
- We attended the National Head Start Association Conference in Baltimore, MD May 2-5th (David White, Linda Carter, Amy Phillips (presenter), Karyl Carney-Jackson, Alexandra Greene and Gabriella Matayabas). The common theme was mental health
- As members of NHSA, we will have access for staff and their families to a virtual platform with a variety of mental health resources
- UCLA -Organization Wellness Training concluded June 1st, our team is working on developing SHIP (Staff Health Improvement Plan) with goals and objectives centered in our Wellness Program
- Gina Dowd and Margit Nelson completed the wage compensation study of local employers that we will use to determine competitive wages for our teaching staff.
- Agency Declutter Campaign began in March 2022, this helps improve the agency appearance, enhance safety and prevent accidents.
- The renovation for the Forest City EHS classrooms is almost complete. Tim Camp reported that the keys will be turned in to Children's Services soon; we will start the licensing and work with staff to open the classrooms.
- We have 4 individuals who are taking classes at BRCC for the CDA or Early Child Development Certificate Trainee Program
- 5 interns departed from our program, which is part of the normal collaborating process with Brevard College, 1 Substitute teacher and 2 floaters also departed.
- We hired an EHS-CCP Program Quality Support (Paige Bronson) and 2 CDA Pathway trainees (Dashan Vail and Andrea Christopher).
- We have reduced our staff shortages from 72 to 67 employees
- We have not had many applications for teaching positions and will have a job fair soon.

Comments and Questions / Any updates from parent representatives:

- There will be no meetings in July or August, the invitations for the 2022-2023 program year will be sent out by early September 2022. There were no additional questions or comments.

❖ **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Amanda Van Duyne and seconded by Carolyn Chandler. The meeting was adjourned by Donecia Santana at 10:15 AM.