

## WNCSource Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Minutes September 21, 2022

❖ Indicates a vote is required

Donecia Santana called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.

**Present:** Donecia Santana, Kashevia Jackson, Amy Phillips, Dan Edwards, Claudia Campaña, Pearl Saddler, Bobby Kimmons, Linda Carter, Margit Nelson, Amy Smith, Adriana Abee, Jeanette Rodriguez, David White, Dylan Allanson, Yessica Araujo, Kathleen McDavid, Shannon Marlowe, Paige Bronson, Miranda Dudney, Elizabeth Whitten, Amanda Vanduyne, Kristian Toro, Carolyn Chandler, Maria G Zamudio, Jessica Ownbey, Yuririana Lopez Conejo (former parent/current community member)

**Establish a Quorum** - It was determined that there were not enough members present to constitute a quorum at the start of the meeting, but by 9:15 AM, enough members had joined to constitute a quorum. The first two items needing a quorum vote (approving the June minutes and the HR Policy) will be sent out electronically for a vote. The remaining items needing a vote were voted on and approved with a quorum during the meeting.

❖ Review and Approve Minutes from the June 2022 meeting: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Amanda Vanduyne and seconded by Shannon Marlowe. 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 2022 minutes were approved with a quorum: Megan Keiser and Michelle Cade.

### **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 Officers Nomination Process - Linda Carter**

It's time to elect a Policy Council Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary for the 2022-23 program year. We hereby call for nominations for these roles as well as ask anyone interested in serving to please contact Linda Carter, Dan Edwards, or a Family Advocate to make their wishes known. We kindly ask all current Council members to remain engaged and attend October's meeting to ensure that we are able to vote in new officers at that meeting. Community members are requested to continue with us in the new program year, with the exception of Amanda Vanduyne who has reached her term limit and will be replaced starting in October, as well as Diane Nelson, who has declined to participate in the Policy Council this program year.

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❖ **HR Policy: Program Enrollment of Employees' Children - Bobby Kimmons**

This new policy clarifies that employees are allowed to apply for Head Start, Early Head Start or NC Pre-K services for their children and must meet the same eligibility criteria as any other child. Whenever an employee's child is enrolled, that employee may not serve as a teacher, assistant teacher or floater in their child's classroom in order to ensure the safety and quality of education for all children in that room. Furthermore, whenever an employee's child is enrolled, the parent (employee) would be afforded all the same privileges and opportunities as all enrolled families and be subject to the same WNCSource program requirements, schedule, and policies. A motion to approve the HR policy was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Amanda Vanduyne. 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 HR Policy was approved with a quorum: Megan Keiser and Michelle Cade.

**PC Training Survey / FA2 Preparation and Training Calendar - Margit Nelson**

WNCSource's Focus Area 2 Review by the Office of Head Start (OHS) has been scheduled for the week of October 17, at which time OHS reviewers will be onsite to analyze program data and ask questions/have discussions with staff, parents, Policy Council, and Board members to assess the quality and compliance status of the HS/EHS programs. As we prepare for this federal review, WNCSource along with an outside consultant will provide training and review of performance standards to staff as well as to interested parents for what to expect. FA2 reviewers will ask parents about their experiences and how the HS program has impacted them. A lunch training session is scheduled for parents on 9/29 to which all interested Policy Council parents are invited; please RSVP to Margit or your Family Advocate if you'd like to attend.

❖ **Self-Assessment - Amy Phillips**

WNCSource Children's Services Self-Assessment took place in the summer of 2022 with the collaboration of HS/EHS families, internal staff, and community partners in the assessment of program goals and data. Major focus areas included family physical and mental health, school readiness, parenting curriculum, staff wellness, and community resources for literacy and math. Strengths were identified including staff wellness support, improved work processes, community partnerships, increased training, and better staff-family relationships. Areas for improvement include increasing family engagement and presence in the classroom and making staff physical and mental health a priority to ensure growth and retention as strategies to combat the teacher shortage. Thus, key goals to work on include the promotion of parenting curriculum Ready Rosie, implementation of family engagements, focusing on staff-family communication and connection to community resources, and supporting staff wellness as we continue to strive to fill vacancies and build strong teams. A motion to approve the Self-Assessment was made by Carolyn Chandler and seconded by Amanda Vanduyne. The Self-Assessment was unanimously approved with a quorum.

❖ **Hiring Bonuses for Teaching Staff - Ibby Whitten**

Hiring bonuses have been put in place in an effort to attract teachers who already have the qualifications that are required by the Office of Head Start. Bonuses are paid out incrementally over a period of 18 months post-hire in order to encourage retention, and the bonuses are being funded by excess HS funds not otherwise designated or utilized in the current budget. A fully licensed NC Pre-K teacher would receive a total bonus of \$4500. A Head Start teacher with an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) would receive a total bonus of \$3500. An Early Head Start teacher

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with an ECE Associate's would receive a total bonus of \$4000; an undegreed EHS teacher (who meets minimum hiring criteria and has a plan in place to become credentialed) would receive a total bonus of \$2000. A motion to approve the Hiring Bonuses was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Jessica Ownbey. The Hiring Bonuses plan was unanimously approved with a quorum.

## **Reports:**

### **Chief Financial Officer's Report - Ibby Whitten**

- Financials and Credit Card Expenditure Reports: July expenses were below budget due to lower enrollment due to teacher shortages and summer break. July's credit card spending was also low due to fewer purchases being made during the summer as well as the transition to the new fiscal year, which resulted in a shorter July reporting period.

### **Program Director's Report – Linda Carter**

- Open Houses were held at sites at the start of the new school year and were well attended.
- The new Forest City site is set up and we hope to open it once the DCDEE licensing visit & requirements are completed. A job fair was held at the site on September 1.
- PreService training was held in-person over two weeks in late August to prepare staff for the new program year including comprehensive health and safety training. A new shoe policy has been implemented to promote staff safety.
- The WNCSource softball team finished the season as runner-up in the county's B division.
- There were no classroom closures during August due to COVID.
- We have had 12 teacher trainees in our paid pathway program since it began in March 2022. There are 78 open positions. Five staff resigned in August. A site supervisor was hired.
- Licensing visits will return to normal after the state of emergency was lifted on 8/15/22.
- Criminal background checks now expire every five years instead of three, per NC DCDEE.
- The Tebeau site renovation continues with doors for classrooms ordered and once received installed.

### **Enrollment Report – Kasheiva Jackson**

- Head Start and NC Pre-K students had a staggered entry in August; a couple more NCPK classrooms will open in October at various sites. Center-based August EHS enrollment is at 47% while home-based EHS is at 33%. EHS CCP enrollment is at 43% for August. We are receiving approximately 60 new applications per month. 398 children are on the waitlist.

### **Attendance Report - Kasheiva Jackson**

- August average daily attendance: EHS average attendance was 76%; CCP attendance was 75%; HS and NCPK attendance was 91%. Most absences were due to parent decisions with only 7.3% being related to COVID.

### **Family Services - Claudia Campaña**

- Family Advocates have been very busy doing open houses, home visits, translating the Family Handbook into Spanish, planning family engagements, and registering families on the parent curriculum platform Ready Rosie (67% so far) and encouraging families to use the platform at least twice a week with their children.

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- Home-Based visits are occurring weekly and family engagement meetings at least twice monthly. Staff are brainstorming ways to increase family participation in socializations and engagement meetings.

#### **Program Support Services Report – Amy Phillips**

- Family Engagement: Nearly all EHS home visits have been done, while HS and NCPK home visits continue. Activities on paper will soon be going home with the children related to the classroom studies and the child's goals, which contributes to meeting our in-kind goals.
- Professional Development: Being able to be in person for PreService training created team camaraderie and collaboration. The Conscious Discipline training was especially beneficial.
- Curriculum Implementation: For EHS there was a mix of increased and decreased scores when measuring the teaching of curriculum to fidelity. The decreased scores were expected due to there being new teachers and teams trying to get acclimated in those classrooms. A teacher mentoring program is being implemented as well to focus on increasing fidelity.
- Development & Behavior Screenings: Each child/family is receiving an ASQ assessment from the Early Intervention team.
- Disabilities Services: Head Start requires that we serve children with disabilities at a rate of at least 10% of funded enrollment numbers, but due to COVID, we have not been able to meet that level yet; however, we are serving above 10% of our actual enrollment numbers.
- Oral Health: Staff have received oral hygiene training for children, and classrooms have all necessary supplies to implement toothbrushing. We are developing further strategies to support children and families in finding a dental home and receiving dental care and we welcome any suggestions. CCP parent Kristian Toro suggested providing to families a list of dentists (who accept Medicaid) as part of the initial enrollment process.
- Nutrition: Henderson County Public School system is providing breakfast and lunch to our sites in Henderson County. Our center in Transylvania County has its own cook.

#### **EHS Program Manager's Report – Pearl Saddler**

- Our sites have been participating in the ExCELS leadership study, and Etowah received a stipend that they have used on facility projects.
- Our sites spent the summer decluttering and reorganizing, and Hillview won a prize for making the most improvements.
- Internal monitoring of classrooms, playgrounds and active supervision is ongoing at the sites.
- PreService training for EHS included topics such as prenatal exposure, CPR, and SIDS.

#### **CCP (Partnership) Report - Kathleen McDavid**

- A new teacher onboarding process has been implemented, creating a more formalized orientation for new teachers (existing staff will also receive the training) to ensure that all staff are trained in all aspects of program requirements, curriculum implementation and coaching, behavioral intervention supports, and care and safety.
- A new classroom has opened at the Little Blessings partnership site with four EHS Expansion slots.

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

- NCPK LETRS teacher training continues through the 2022-23 school year, and resources are being shared with HS teaching teams.

- The Henderson County NCPK Committee met on 8/17/22 to establish members and policies/plans for the new program year.
- Over half of the NCPK classrooms are “dual enrolled,” meaning HS children are present and receive the benefit that stems from additional NCPK required staff training.
- Henderson County Public School sites: The rooms at Bruce Drysdale, Dana, and Hillandale sites are up and running; the classroom at Clear Creek will open in mid-October.

**Comments and Questions / Any updates from parent representatives:**

Kristian Toro (CCP parent) reports that the playground at Laurie’s is being extended; Laurie attended a training on a day that the site was already closed; her child and the others enjoy attending Laurie’s.

Margit shared that a fatherhood focus group initial lunch meeting is being planned for October 4 at Outback Steakhouse to assess father/male caregiver interest, needs, and strategies for engagement.

There were no further comments or questions.

❖ **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Amanda Vanduyne and seconded by Kristian Toro. The meeting was adjourned by Donecia Santana at 10:17 AM.

**Next virtual meeting date:      October 26 at 9:00 AM**