

## WNCSource Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Minutes January 18, 2023

\* Indicates a vote is required

Kim Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

**Present:** Amy Phillips, Pearl Saddler, Kasheiva Jackson, Amy Smith, Kim Wilson, Dan Edwards, Linda Carter, Lavonna Ruth, Miranda Dudney, Christan Cornwell, Paige Bronson, Kathleen McDavid, Patty Burgess, Yessica Araujo, Eric Hoffman, Maria G Zamudio, Jessica Ownbey, Kiara Gash, Kristian Toro, Margit Nelson, David White, Lisa Brown, Dylan Allanson, Jeanette Rodriguez, Yecenia Sandoval, Adriana Abee, Carolyn Chandler, Erin Outlaw, Shannon Marlowe

**Establish a Quorum** - It was determined that there were enough members present to constitute a quorum. Items needing a vote were voted on and approved with a quorum during the meeting.

\* Review and Approve Minutes from the November 30, 2022 meeting: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Jessica Ownbey and seconded by Kristian Toro, and the November 30, 2022 minutes were unanimously approved.

### **Announcement for Parent Representatives- Margit Nelson**

Margit announced that any parent representative who attends the Policy Council meeting will receive a \$20 McDonald's gift card in lieu of breakfast typically provided at in person meetings. 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 Bylaws - Linda Carter \***

- We worked with an attorney to update the PC Bylaws to reflect more accurately the current purpose, responsibilities, structure, and processes of WNCSource's Policy Council. Some highlights: At least 51% of PC members should be parents/guardians, this section stays the same; the secretary and treasurer positions were combined; PC membership may be terminated if the member misses three consecutive meetings vs four; electronic voting (via email or chat) is allowed. Kristian Toro motioned to approve the updated Bylaws, Lisa Brown seconded the motion, and the Policy Council Bylaws were unanimously approved.

#### **Program Goals - Amy Phillips \***

- Update and details were presented on the status and progress of program goals for the three grants, with the request that PC members provide input or feedback as desired.
- HS/EHS Grant: School Readiness goals include increasing education levels of staff, teaching curriculum to fidelity, and implementing Outdoor Learning Environments, all of which we are making progress on. Family Engagement goals include increasing participation in Parent

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Committees and Policy Council, training staff in the Family Development Model and providing educational events to support families of children with disabilities. Health Services goals consist of forming strategic partnerships with community partners and focusing on mental health by implementing Trauma Informed Care (TIC) practices.

- CCP (EHS) Grant: Educational Program goals involve increasing education levels of staff and teaching curriculum to model fidelity. Family Engagement goals include increasing the online submission of enrollment applications (achieved), raising the level of participation in Parent Committees and Policy Council, training staff in the Family Development Model, and increasing non-federal share generated by family involvement. Program Service goals consist of a focus on mental health (TIC) and a development of a behavioral support and intervention system.
- Expansion (EHS) Grant: School Readiness goal is to be met by hiring highly qualified staff, increasing the number of family child care homes, creating a pathway for community or HS/EHS family members to gain employment in Children's Services, as well as implementing curriculum to fidelity. The Wellness for Staff and Families goal aims to promote holistic wellness through use of a dedicated task force, building a culture of diversity and inclusion, and ensuring that EHS families have representation on the Health Services Advisory Committee.

A motion to approve the Program Goals was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Miranda Dudney, and the Program Goals were unanimously approved.

#### **Disabilities Waiver - Amy Phillips \***

- Because of COVID-related low enrollment and teacher shortages, WNCSource has had to request a disability waiver for each of the previous three years, due to not reaching the required 10% of funded enrollment for serving children with disabilities. One of our grants has reached 10% of actual enrollment which tells us that our selection criteria is prioritizing children with disabilities. We are screening children early and referring promptly as needed as well as working with local community partners and pediatricians to support children with high or special needs. A motion to approve the Disability Waiver request was made by Kristian Toro and seconded by Carolyn Chandler, and the Disability Waiver request was unanimously approved.

#### **Selection Criteria - Kasheiva Jackson \***

- The selection criteria used to determine enrollment eligibility allows us to prioritize children with the highest need or risk factors and is developed using a comprehensive community assessment that is completed every five years (last done in 2019) and re-reviewed annually. An in-depth reassessment was completed in 2022 due to COVID's impact, and no changes in criteria point values were made in the categories. A motion to approve the Selection Criteria was made by Jessica Ownbey and seconded by Shannon Marlowe and Christan Cornwell, and the Selection Criteria was unanimously approved.

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#### **ERSEA Training - Kasheiva Jackson**

- The ERSEA Coordinator presented an overview of the role, responsibilities, and processes covered by ERSEA within the Head Start program, with a focus on determining, verifying and documenting eligibility for HS services. The ERSEA team manages Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance of children/families in the program.

#### **REPORTS:**

##### **Chief Executive Officer's Report - David White**

- With the Change of Scope being approved, approximately 60 teaching staff received raises as of January 1, 2023. Additionally thanks to the advocacy of the National Head Start Association, Congress passed a budget for 2023 that should provide a COLA for HS/EHS staff plus additional program improvement funds, which should translate into help with recruiting and retaining qualified staff thereby increasing the number of families we can serve.

##### **Chief Financial Officer's Report - Erin Outlaw for Elizabeth Whitten**

- Financials and Credit Card Expenditure Reports: November's expenses were below budget due to lower enrollment resulting from teacher shortages; all grants should be at 40%, but range from 28%-34% except for the Expansion grant which is at 13% of budget. November's credit card spending was \$10,074, with most of the expense stemming from recruitment spending, including "boosting" job ads on the Indeed website (WNCSource jobs show up first in job searches and feeds), and from program supply purchases, such as diapers.

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

- WNCSource honored teacher Delores Davis for 40 years of service and as WNCSource's 2022 Employee of the Year at the winter luncheon in December.
- A well-attended "listening" session was held in Rutherford County on 12/8/22 to dialogue with parents and community partners about the early childhood education needs in that region.
- The previously mentioned wage increases for teaching staff ranged from 2% to 25% depending on education levels and time with the agency.
- The WNCSource management team toured a new Head Start center in Maxton, NC and came away with good ideas to incorporate into future WNCSource child care centers.
- There have been no classroom closures recently due to COVID.
- Staff: Three staff were hired in December and two left employment. There were 58 open positions at the end of December.
- Facilities: The new Tebeau site is getting closer to being ready to open, with classrooms being set up and inspections taking place. The new center in Forest City opened on 1/5/23. The Flat Rock center was able to reopen on 11/28/22. The Sunny View location's license has expired and due to the inability to find staff for that location, the center will remain closed.

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

- All sites are under-enrolled due to teacher shortages: The center-based EHS enrollment rate is 44%, home-based EHS is at 62%, EHS Expansion is at 8%, EHS/CCP is at 60%; HS enrollment is 44%, NC Pre-K is at 55%. 309 children are on the waitlist.

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

- December average daily attendance: The average attendance rate for all programs was 77%. Most of the 645 absences were due to non-COVID illness (only 4.1% were related to COVID).

#### **Education and Child Development Report – Lavonna Ruth**

- Child Development Outcomes from autumn are as expected for this time in the school year with two-thirds or more of students meeting/exceeding expectations in physical, literacy, social-emotional and other areas of assessment.
- Family Engagement: Nearly all home visits (done upon enrollment) and parent conferences have been completed, sharing children's assessments and progress and suggesting ways families can support their children's learning and development.
- Coaching: 120 coaching contacts were completed in December with 22 staff receiving intensive coaching. Four rooms participated in multidisciplinary data review chats, and one coach achieved QCIT certification.

#### **Early Intervention Report - Patty Burgess**

- Disabilities: Child Support Plans category was added to the report, as an additional way to measure/document early intervention (EI) support. Seven referrals were initiated. Resources are provided to both parents and teachers on an ongoing basis.
- Development & Behavior Screenings: 286 ASQs have been completed with new enrollees screened promptly, leading to a high rate of completion for all programs (92-100%).
- There will be a parent education event on 1/19 from 6:30-8:00PM, more details can be found in the EI newsletter that is being sent out monthly to families.

#### **Nutrition and Health Services Report - Dylan Allanson**

- 100% of children now have medical homes; agency-wide, an average of 48% of children have up-to-date health services status, which is due mainly to lack of information/documentation for dental or other provider visits. The health team has prioritized communication with site staff and families in an effort to schedule provider appointments and update health statuses.
- Vision: All hearing and vision screenings have been completed; all children who failed vision screenings have been referred to a healthcare provider.
- Nutrition: This program year's first CACFP internal audit has been completed. We're working with the Henderson County Public School nutrition departments that supply meals to WNCSource children to ensure that the highest nutritional standards are met and HS regulations are being followed. An external CACFP audit is being conducted now with a focus on October 2022 and the Bruce Drysdale and Hillandale sites, checking accuracy of reported meals served compared to financial reports. Results will be available after 1/23.
- A CoOperative Extension agent is preparing an education event for families (cooking & nutrition skills, budget shopping) and this will be piloted at SH to see if it's viable for all sites.

#### **Family Services Report - Eric Hoffman**

- Family Strengths and Needs Assessments were at 86% completion in December. 203 families are connected to the Ready Rosie parent curriculum, with 97 families actively participating and giving positive feedback. Families are being encouraged to do the activities in the videos.

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**Early Head Start Report - Pearl Saddler**

- The Sugar Hill site received an unannounced site visit from DCDEE which resulted in 100% compliance.
- Internal health and safety monitoring is being carried out at all sites.
- Successful family engagement events took place in December at Hillview, Sugar Hill, and for the home-based families.

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

- New Family Advocate Yecenia Sandoval is managing the new Forest City site as well as CCP site Kids Kingdom and led a family engagement activity in December. The CCP team meets weekly and the CCP Directors meet monthly, with Policies & Procedures review occurring at each meeting.

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

- NC Pre-K annual monitoring continues for all sites, including sites with some HS students. Program components assessed for compliance include curriculum implementation, family engagement, health & developmental assessments, staff licenses/credentials, and there were no corrective actions noted.
- Teacher Professional Development: Upcoming opportunities include: multicultural/planned language approach/inclusion training, conscious discipline, and communities of practice (which trains how to understand and aggregate curriculum data for growth).
- Outdoor Learning Environments: Planting for spring will soon begin.
- Recruitment for teachers continues with slow but steady progress being seen.

**Professional Development Update - Amy Phillips**

- The new employee orientation process has been updated, and the trainee program continues to be fine-tuned for several different job roles. Several professional development opportunities will be provided during January and February.

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

Laurie's (CCP): Kristian reported that all is going well at Laurie's; she asked about the reapplication and waitlist process (and the procedure for communicating any changes in eligibility selection criteria or circumstances), since her child will be aging out of EHS soon and would like to have a HS/NCPK spot. Kasheiva answered her questions and offered to speak with her separately.

Etowah: Miranda reported that there was a parent meeting on 1/10, and it was suggested to have a family photo day as the next family engagement event in February (date TBD) in order to update classroom photo boards. The next parent meeting will be 2/7 at 8:30AM.

There were no further comments or questions.

\* **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Miranda Dudney. The meeting was adjourned by Kim Wilson at 10:33 AM.

**Next virtual meeting date: February 15 at 9:00 AM**

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**Future Meeting Schedule:** March 22 ■ April 19 ■ May 17 ■ June 7

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