

WNCSource Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Minutes February 15, 2023

* Indicates a vote is required

Kim Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

Present: Kim Wilson, Lavonna Ruth, Pearl Saddler, Kathleen McDavid, Amy Phillips, Kristian Toro, Bridgett Librado, Linda Carter, Lisa Brown, Amy Smith, Dan Edwards, Margit Nelson, Yessica Araujo, Yecenia Sandoval, Kiki Jackson, Donecia Santana, Eric Hoffman, Shannon Marlowe, Danielle Richardson, Paige Bronson, Jessica Ownbey, Jeanette Rodriguez, Dylan Allanson, Veronica Galvan-de-Unda, Christan Cornwell, Laura Durham, Adriana Abee, Maria Guadalupe Zamudio, David White

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 January 18, 2023 meeting: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Lisa Brown, and the January 18, 2023 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:

Training/Technical Assistance Plan - Amy Phillips *

- The proposed T/TA Plan for 2023-2024 was presented and includes a request for government funds of \$66,819 to be used for T/TA for the EHS program and \$30,349 for T/TA for the HS program. The plan and requested funds will ensure that staff, families, and governing bodies receive the skills and knowledge needed to fulfill their roles through a variety of both individual and group training modalities. Training will also support our program goals in the areas of family engagement, school readiness, and health services while simultaneously focusing on teacher education & development, implementation of curriculum to fidelity, outdoor learning environments, and trauma resilience. Additionally, all staff participate annually in training areas that are required by the Office of Head Start (OHS) and the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education. We provide a comprehensive orientation program for new staff as well as job role-specific professional development opportunities that equip staff to successfully fulfill their responsibilities, thereby ensuring the success of our students and programs. A motion to approve the Training/Technical Assistance Plan was

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made by Lisa Brown and seconded by Shannon Marlowe, and the Training/Technical Assistance Plan was unanimously approved.

EHS/HS Refunding Application - Linda Carter *

- WNCSource will be submitting an application to the Office of Head Start requesting funding continuation for Grant # 04CH011737 to fund Early Head Start and Head Start program services and goals for the 2023-2024 program year (Year 4 of the grant). Services are delivered daily in classrooms and weekly to families in the home-based program. The requested funds of \$7,216,801 include \$5,773,441 in federal base funding (which incorporates \$97,168 for T/TA) plus \$1,443,360 as a 20% non-federal share match. The total amount would fund center-based slots for 96 EHS students/families and 185 HS students/families, as well as 24 home-based EHS student/family slots. A motion to approve the EHS/HS Refunding Application request was made by Donecia Santana and seconded by Jessica Ownbey, and the EHS/HS Refunding Application request was unanimously approved.

COVID Mitigation Policy - Dylan Allanson *

- On 1/6/23, the OHS removed the universal mask requirement for all individuals 2 years and older in HS centers while also requiring HS programs to have an evidence-based COVID-19 mitigation policy, developed in consultation with their Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC). Thus, our existing COVID policy has been revised in collaboration with our HSAC, specifically to be able to scale up or scale down precautions based on the level of local community spread of the virus. WNCSource will use a CDC tool daily in conjunction with the local health departments to determine the level of COVID-19 spread and the corresponding precautions to be taken relative to whether the community spread level is designated as Low, Medium, or High. Criteria for testing, masking (including mask wearing procedures), and exclusion from work or class for positive cases have been updated and were reviewed. The process for communication of both general and current specific COVID information with families was also reviewed. A motion to approve the COVID Mitigation Policy was made by Lisa Brown and seconded by Donecia Santana, and the COVID Mitigation Policy was unanimously approved.

REPORTS:

Chief Executive Officer's Report - David White

- Trauma Resilient Communities Project: Over the next three years, WNCSource will be participating in a project funded by the Dogwood Health Trust and led by Crossnore with the goal of enhancing resilience for both staff and the clients we serve. Ongoing training, coaching and implementation support will be provided.
- Full Enrollment Initiative: Many HS programs across the nation are under-enrolled, with staffing shortages being the main cause, thus the Office of Head Start has informed us that we must reach full student enrollment by February 2024 or we will possibly face a loss of grant funding. We have already undertaken multiple steps to counteract the staff shortage and under-enrollment, including but not limited to increasing staff pay, giving hire and

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retention bonuses, offering paid trainee/apprenticeship programs, and increasing advertising and recruiting for both staff vacancies and enrollment slots. We expect OHS to also offer recommendations and technical assistance.

Chief Financial Officer's Report - Elizabeth Whitten

- Financials and Credit Card Expenditure Reports: December's expenses were below budget due to lower enrollment and teacher shortages; all grants should be at 50%, but range from 28%-44% except for the Expansion grant which is at 15% of budget. December's credit card spending was \$6,788, with most of the expense coming from recruitment and onboarding.

Program Director's Report – Linda Carter

- Professional Development: We've been able to offer more localized professional development training in Transylvania and Rutherford Counties to accommodate staff in those areas.
- Three new vehicles will soon be added to the CS fleet including a minivan to transport families to socialization events.
- There have been no classroom closures recently due to COVID. Closures did occur for staff professional development training and one class closed early one day due to staff shortage.
- Staff: Since the last meeting, we have hired 4 new staff members and lost 9 employees.
- Facilities: The new Forest City center opened with one classroom on 1/5/23. The new Tebeau site is getting closer to opening, with fire and building inspections completed and preparations underway for licensing visits. The EHS classroom at Sunny View Elementary School in Polk County will officially close in February; and due to the Main Street center's license being surrendered because it has been without students (teachers) for so long, we are working to terminate the lease with St. James church and vacate those classrooms.

Enrollment Report – Kasheiva Jackson

- All sites are under-enrolled due to teacher shortages: The center-based EHS enrollment rate is 43%, home-based EHS is at 58%, EHS Expansion is at 12%, EHS/CCP is at 57%; HS enrollment is 44%, NC Pre-K is at 55%. 286 children are on the waitlist.

Attendance Report - Kasheiva Jackson

- January average daily attendance: The average attendance rate goal is 85%: EHS was at 79%, CCP at 84%, HS at 80%, and NCPK at 83%. Most of the 843 absences were due to non-COVID illnesses or the decision of the parent to keep the child at home (only 3.1% were related to COVID).

Education and Child Development Report – Lavonna Ruth

- Family Engagement: 259 home visits have been completed so far this program year. 142 family conferences have been completed so far, with only 2 being past due.
- Coaching: 256 coaching contacts were made since the last update, with 24 intensive coaching sessions being completed. Curriculum fidelity checklists were completed for 8 EHS classrooms in January, the other rooms will be completed soon and results shared at the next Policy Council meeting. An abbreviated QCIT observation focused on social-emotional support was completed for 9 EHS rooms with most rooms scoring 5 on a scale of 1 to 7.

Early Intervention Report - Amy Phillips for Patty Burgess

- **Disabilities:** Eleven referrals have been initiated with 2 more pending plus 8 support plans that may lead to referrals, resulting in 12% of funded HS enrollment being served. Resources continue to be shared with parents one-on-one and with teachers as well as during ASQ completion.
- **Development & Behavior Screenings:** 289 ASQ screenings have been completed.
- **Mental Health:** One mental health consultant is no longer providing services for us, but one consultant and two staff continue to provide behavioral support for 77 children and families.
- **EI Updates:** The EI team has made 117 site visits. 30 children are receiving private therapy. There was a parent education event on 1/19; tools, strategies, and resources are being provided to teachers and parents; individualized support is being provided to students and referrals are being made to a variety of services and agencies in the community.

Nutrition and Health Services Report - Dylan Allanson

- 100% of children have medical homes; agency-wide, an average of 45% 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 and Hearing:** 6 children have received glasses thanks to our screenings. 16 children failed screenings and are in the referral process.
- **Nutrition:** CACFP audit occurred in January; three designations on the menus needed correction and were easily fixable; a meeting was held with Henderson County Public Schools Nutrition Office to address these concerns since they provide the meals to our students; overall the audit was a success.

Family Services Report - Eric Hoffman

- Family Strengths and Needs Assessments increased to a 92% completion rate in January. 217 families are now connected to the Ready Rosie parent curriculum, with 152 families actively participating and giving positive feedback. There were over 200 video views in the last month. Families are being encouraged to do the activities in the videos.

Early Head Start Report - Pearl Saddler

- Internal health and safety monitoring at sites continues and the sites visited had no concerns. The Forest City site received unannounced licensing and sanitation inspections with no findings. A weekly healthy cooking and nutrition class is being held for families at the Sugar Hill site. Other family engagement activities took place at all sites in January with family attendance increasing by 5% over December's events.

CCP (Partnership) Report - Kathleen McDavid

- The Change of Scope allowed the CCP sites to increase the pay rate for their teachers with the hope of increasing retention and hiring. CCP team meetings occur weekly. CCP Director meetings occur monthly and include a focus on program updates and in-depth training on a different policy/procedure each month. Paige dedicates part of her time to recruiting for student enrollment in Rutherford County. Efforts continue to recruit a FCCH.

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

- We're continuing to recruit and interview teacher candidates.

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- Farm2Preschool grants will help our Outdoor Learning Environments (OLE) to focus on gardening, healthy eating and OLE equipment. Teachers will be surveyed soon to assess needs, interest, and engagement in OLE.
- The new Tebeau center is progressing toward opening with the goal of serving EHS, HS, and NC Pre-K students when fully staffed.
- Kindergarten Rallies will soon be held for Henderson and Transylvania Counties, with WNCSource staff attending and promoting Head Start services.

Comments and Questions / Any updates from parent representatives:

Laura (FC) voiced some questions about requirements; someone from EHS will reach out to Laura.

Christan (HCPS/Hillandale) stated that the kids are thriving and like their teachers.

Kristian (SH) stated that her daughter moved from Laurie's to SH, and the transition has been easy and she loves being with kids her own age; Kiki will reach out to Kristian to answer a question for her.

There were no further comments or questions.

* **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Lisa Brown and seconded by Donecia Santana. The meeting was adjourned by Kim Wilson at 10:25 AM.

Next virtual meeting date: March 22 at 9:00 AM

Future Meeting Schedule: April 19 ■ May 17 ■ June 7