

## WNCSource Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Minutes April 19, 2023

\* Indicates a vote is required

Kim Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM.

**Present:** Kim Wilson, Kathleen McDavid, Linda Carter, Dan Edwards, Amy Phillips, Heather Brewer-Jones, Donecia Santana, Margit Nelson, Veronica Galvan-de-Unda, Eric Hoffman, David White, Lavonna Ruth, Bridgett Librado, Yecenia Sandoval, Patty Burgess, Yessica Araujo, Shannon Marlowe, Kiki Jackson, Paige Bronson, Christian Cornwell, Jessica Ownbey, Carolyn Chandler, Danielle Richardson, Dylan Allanson, Laura Durham, Elizabeth Whitten, Adriana Abee, Maria Guadalupe Zamudio, Kristian Toro

**Establish a Quorum** - It was determined that there were not enough members present to constitute a quorum. Items needing a vote will be sent out electronically for voting in addition to the attendees who will vote during the meeting.

\* Review and Approve Minutes from the March 22, 2023 meeting: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Christan Cornwell, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, parent members Brian Spreng, Liza Berry, and Elide Gonzalez voted their approvals via email after the meeting. The March 22, 2023 minutes were approved with a quorum.

### **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.

### **Additional Announcement - Kim Wilson**

Kim announced that at next month's meeting, we will discuss the format of future Policy Council meetings, specifically if anyone has any input regarding whether the meetings should continue to be held virtually or if they should be held in-person or if a hybrid option would be desirable. Attendees should bring their thoughts to the May 17 meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Proposed 2023-2024 Program Year Calendars - Amy Phillips \***

- Six program calendars have been created that closely align all of our sites with the public school system calendars in three different counties and are differentiated by program (HS and EHS) as well as building in time for staff professional development. HS requires a minimum of 1020 instructional hours and our proposed calendars provide for 1118 hours, while EHS requires 1380 hours and our calendars provide 1423 hours, so that we will provide service beyond the minimum requirements. Annual leave days will be transformed into

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optional teacher work days for this year. A motion to approve the 2023-2024 program year calendars was made by Laura Durham and seconded by Donecia Santana, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, parent members Brian Spreng, Liza Berry, and Elide Gonzalez voted their approvals via email after the meeting. The proposed 2023-2024 program year calendars were approved with a quorum.

#### **COVID-19 Testing for Unvaccinated Staff Policy Update - David White \***

- The Office of Head Start (OHS) has historically required employees to be COVID vaccinated or undergo weekly COVID testing for unvaccinated employees with a medical/religious exemption. WNCSource had recently (February) enacted a policy of weekly COVID testing for a few such staff who had been working remotely as well as any new unvaccinated employees (in order to bolster staff recruitment). A US federal court vacated the OHS vaccination requirement as of 4/7/23. Due to this ruling, there is no longer a Head Start requirement for vaccination or the testing of unvaccinated employees. As a result, the WNCSource Board of Directors voted to repeal the testing policy and now asks the Policy Council to do the same. A motion to approve the repeal of the COVID-19 Testing for Unvaccinated Staff Policy was made by Donecia Santana and seconded by Shannon Marlowe and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, parent members Brian Spreng, Liza Berry, and Elide Gonzalez voted their approvals via email after the meeting. The repeal of the COVID-19 Testing for Unvaccinated Staff Policy was approved with a quorum.

#### **REPORTS:**

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

- Children's Services Employee Recruitment/Retention: Continued efforts to recruit and retain staff include: a 5.6% COLA wage increase; hiring a full-time recruiter and a bilingual employee engagement specialist; contracting with an outside consultant to survey current and former employees; and targeted direct email recruiting. Progress has been slow but steady.
- Jim Brewer was hired as the Community Relations and Engagement Manager to work on private fundraising and donor relations.
- The latest WNCSource Annual Report (2021-2022) is now available to view on our website.

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

- Financials and Credit Card Expenditure Reports: March's expenses were below budget due to lower enrollment and teacher shortages; all grants should be at 75%, but range from 54%-72% except for the Expansion grant which is at 35% of the fiscal year-to-date budget. Plans are being made for any potential residual funds to go toward staff retention bonuses for next year. March's credit card spending was \$8155, with most of the expense coming from classroom and outdoor learning environment supplies.

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

- The ITERS review at the Forest City site received high scores.
- A job fair was held at the new Tebeau site; the hope is to open one classroom in May.

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- New recruiter Anna is doing a fantastic job with outreach and sourcing teacher candidates.
- The COVID testing policy allowed remote staff to return to the office and new staff to be hired.
- A recent HS memo was issued reminding programs to test for and mitigate any toxic hazards at sites, including lead in water; WNCSource is compliant with all such testing.
- The classroom at Hillandale was closed on 3/28 due to lack of staff.
- Staffing Update: 8 staff were hired in March, 3 staff left employment; 50 open positions.
- Facilities: Thank you to our Facilities Team for maintaining all sites; spring planting is gearing up in the outdoor learning environments; shade structures were installed at the Tebeau site.

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

- All sites are under-enrolled due to teacher shortages: The center-based EHS enrollment rate is 45%, home-based EHS is at 50%, EHS Expansion is at 15%, EHS/CCP is at 60%; HS enrollment is 45%, NC Pre-K is at 56%. 318 children are on the waitlist.

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

- March average daily attendance: The average attendance rate goal is 85%: EHS was at 81%, CCP at 82%, HS at 82%, and NCPK at 83%. Most of the 551 absences were due to non-COVID illnesses or the decision of the parent to keep the child at home (only 1.8% were related to COVID). March absences decreased by 459 compared to February.

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

- 263 first home visits have been completed thus far; 135 second home visits have been done with five past due; 221 first family conferences have been completed with none past due.
- 187 coaching contacts were made during March including 24 intensive sessions. The coaching pattern was a little different in March with coaches spending half-days dedicated to a single site for side-by-side coaching in addition to the regular 187 coaching sessions.

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

- Disabilities: 11% of funded HS enrollment and 7% of EHS funded enrollment are receiving disabilities services, with diagnosed disabilities that include autism; hearing, speech, language or orthopedic impairment; and developmental delay.
- Development Screenings: ASQ screening completion rates are 100% for HS and the Expansion program, 96% for EHS and 95% for the CCP sites, with 4 referrals and a CSP being initiated as a result of March's screenings.
- Mental Health: More children are needing behavioral support now compared to pre-COVID numbers; a total of 72 children across all sites are being served.
- Early Intervention: 53 children are receiving private therapy, and over 79 hours of individualized support has been provided by community therapists. Two early intervention staff (behavior and development positions) have resigned. Adrienne is training a parent in the Triple P positive parenting skills program.

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

- Well child check status (physicals): 48 children are not up-to-date, while 83% of child physicals are up-to-date program-wide; we are working with center staff and sending reminders to families to ensure children receive check-ups consistently.

- Dental status: 66% of children over age 1 are up-to-date (we have received paperwork for) and 81% have dental homes; 48 children over age 1 do not have dental homes; most Transylvania County dentists don't accept pediatric patients; some of the not up-to-date children do have scheduled upcoming appointments.
- CACFP February reimbursement was \$23,602. Reimbursements have increased during the year due to increased enrollment and better program management.

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

- 93% of Family Strengths and Needs Assessments have been completed, with none being past due.
- Parenting Curriculum: 235 families are now connected to the Ready Rosie school readiness and parent engagement curriculum; there were over 140 video views last month.

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

- Our Family Child Care Home provider has begun mentoring a teacher at a separate CCP site.
- We are supporting our CCP directors with staff recruitment and retention strategies (including potential bonuses) as we work toward the goal of being fully staffed and consequently enrolling more children at the CCP sites.
- Laurie's has full enrollment, but the other three sites are under enrolled.

#### **Professional Development - Amy Phillips**

- Community of Practice sessions led by the coaching team allowed groups of staff to look at child assessment data (increased attendance results in improved school readiness scores) and informed us about system flaws that we can improve.
- HS and NCPK teachers received CLASS training.
- Professional development days will be built into next year's program calendar.

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

Laura reports that everything is going well at the Forest City site. Christan reports that there are no updates for Hillandale or the other stand-alone classroom sites. There were no further comments or questions.

\* **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Donecia Santana and seconded by Christan Cornwell and Laura Durham simultaneously. The meeting was adjourned by Kim Wilson at 10:01 AM.

**Next virtual meeting date: May 17 at 9:00 AM**

**Future Meeting Schedule:** June 7