

**WNCSource Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Minutes
October 19, 2023**

* Indicates a vote is required

Kim Wilson called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.

Present: Linda Carter, Tim Camp, Amy Phillips, Natalie Daugherty, Jennie Lee, Margit Nelson, Carolyn Chandler, Kathleen McDavid, Kim Wilson, Hunter Weatherford, Candy Doncevic, Heather Brewer-Jones, Mary Hanson, Amy Smith, Bridgett Librado, Lisa Brown, Kasheiva Jackson, Shannon Marlowe, Eric Hoffman, Miranda Dudney, Litz Zaldivar, Rachel Walker, Josadry Sanchez, Natasha Levi Perkins, Dylan Allanson, Jessica Ownbey, David White, Yessica Garcia, Dan Edwards, Kristian Toro, Morgan Carbajal, Yecenia Sandoval, Candice Freeman, Andrea Paniagua, Fatima Aleman Garcia, Veronica Galvan-de-Unda, Angie Dyer, Danielle Richardson

Establish a Quorum - It was determined that there were enough members present to constitute a quorum at the beginning of the meeting, so all items needing a vote were voted on and approved with a quorum during the meeting.

* Review and Approve Minutes from the September 21, 2023 meeting: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Angie Dyer and seconded by Natasha Perkins, and the September 21, 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. Parents in attendance should provide their address in the chat box to Dan Edwards who will mail them the gift card.

NEW BUSINESS:

Future Columbus Child Care Center Update - Tim Camp

- Facilities Director Tim Camp gave an update with photos on the construction progress of the new Columbus Children's Center in Polk County, which will be about 7500 sq feet with five classrooms to provide care and education for 24 EHS children. Building plans have been outlined, ground prep work has been completed, and the foundation and framing work has begun. Work will continue throughout the autumn and in spring 2024, with a tentative goal to receive licensing in late 2024 and welcome students in January 2025.

Policy Council Overview Training - Dan Edwards

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- A slideshow presentation was given as a way of providing training to the Council members defining what the Policy Council is, how it functions, explaining the role and responsibilities of parents and community members and how they contribute to and participate in the Council. WNCSource's Standard of Conduct was also shared.

Policy Council Officers Nominations * - Linda Carter

- It's time to elect a Policy Council Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary for the 2023-24 program year. The following officer nominations have been made: Jessica Ownbey (HCPS) for Chair, Rachel Walker (Impact Health) for Vice Chair, and Carolyn Chandler (guardian of current EHS student) for Secretary. No other nominations were received. A motion to approve all three nominations was made by Natasha Perkins and Shannon Marlowe seconded the motion. The new Policy Council officer nominations for 2023-2024 were unanimously approved. Thank you to Kim Wilson for her service as 2022-2023 Chairperson, which ends immediately with the installation of Jessica Ownbey as the new Chair. Thank you also to Jessica who served as the Vice Chair last year and is willing to continue this year as Chairperson, and thanks to Carolyn Chandler who served as the Secretary last year and will be continuing in that role this year.

Policy Council Bylaws Approval * - Linda Carter

- Linda presented an overview of the PC Bylaws which outline the purpose, responsibilities, structure, and functional processes of WNCSource's Policy Council. The Policy Council provides a way for parents and community partners to be involved by voting on policies that determine the best operation of the program in areas such as recruitment, enrollment, financial, training, and educational goals. Other Bylaws highlights: at least 51% of PC members should be parents/guardians; PC membership may be terminated if the member misses three consecutive meetings; electronic voting (via email or chat) is allowed. A proposal was made to amend the Bylaws to allow former employees to serve on the Council by waiting at least two years from their employment departure date before serving. This will be addressed and voted on at November's Policy Council meeting. A motion to approve the Policy Council Bylaws (addressing the proposed revision in November) was made by Shannon Marlowe and Carolyn Chandler seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Selection Criteria Update * - 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 evaluates issues impacting local families and is completed every five years and re-reviewed annually. The impacting factors that apply to each child are assigned points which then determine who has the highest need. Proposed changes to the point factors include: Add SNAP as a point determinant; simplify income guidelines (due to the increased current economic struggles of families); clarify, condense, and remove redundancy within the disability

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factor; and add having a subsidy voucher as a factor. A motion to approve the proposed selection criteria updates was made by Natalie Perkins and seconded by Shannon Marlowe, and the selection criteria updates were unanimously approved.

REPORTS:

Chief Executive Officer's Report - David White

- Recruiting and Enrolling Children: David shared a graph which depicted the progress that has been made in increasing enrollment from August 2022 to August 2023 in all programs. We have hired more teachers and opened more classrooms, enabling us to enroll more students so far this program year. We are brainstorming and focusing heavily on recruitment of families in order to fill any remaining open classroom slots.
- Government Shutdowns: Another potential shutdown may occur mid-November if the government doesn't take action. Our Head Start and transportation grants are funded through June 30, 2024, whereas the housing voucher program starts on January 1. We have some additional resources available to help fund our programs should a shutdown occur. Thus far in its history, WNCSource has weathered each shutdown without having to suspend services or send employees home.

Chief Financial Officer's Report - Ibby Whitten

- No report was available.

Program Director's Report – Linda Carter

- Highlights: Staff hiring has increased steadily, recruiter Anna is busy with job fairs.
- Classroom Closures: Four separate one-day room closures occurred during September due to lack of staff.
- Staffing: 14 staff were hired, five staff departed; there are 51 vacant positions.
- Facilities: Annual safety and facility walk-throughs are occurring at all sites.

Enrollment Report – Kasheiva Jackson

- All sites are under-enrolled due to teacher shortages: The center-based EHS enrollment rate is 55%, home-based EHS is at 50%, EHS Expansion is at 24%, EHS/CCP is at 80%; HS enrollment is 60%, NC Pre-K is at 58%. 130 children are waitlisted, with most being on the HS program waitlist.

Attendance Report - Kasheiva Jackson

- September average daily attendance: The average attendance rate goal is 85%. EHS was at 85%, CCP at 84%, HS at 87%, and NCPK at 88%. During the period 8/30-9/28, most of the 764 absences were due to non-COVID illness or injury.

Education and Child Development Report – Candy Doncevic

- Family Engagement: 219 children have had a home visit with their teachers, which helps build trust and community. Seven classrooms are using the *My Family* app to share curriculum resources with families, such as Mighty Minutes and Modeled

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Moment investigational videos.

- Coaching: Coaches are using the *Coaching to Fidelity* app and observing in classrooms to determine needs and support for the implementation of curriculum. 17 teaching staff are receiving intensive coaching, 13 are receiving standard coaching, and four are self-coaching.

Early Intervention Report - Mary Hanson

- 222 children have received development and behavior screening as of the end of September, with areas of need being identified and strategies/resources provided to both teachers and parents. 65 children have a “referral recommended” status (with needs being either developmental, behavioral, or both). Parents are being supported as they request referrals, and some children will be reevaluated after the first checkpoint. 40 children are scheduled to have ASQs completed within the timeline.
- Disabilities: Each program requires us to serve 10% of our funded enrollment with children who qualify for an IEP or IFSP. Currently, 9% of funded HS enrollment, 8% of funded CCP enrollment, 2% of funded Expansion enrollment, and 6% of funded EHS enrollment are receiving disabilities services, with diagnosed disabilities that include autism; health, speech, or language impairment; and developmental delay. The percentage rates of the actual number of enrolled students being served is higher and exceeds 10% in all programs except the Expansion grant program which is at 9%. Six children have an early alert and are being supported and monitored for needs.
- Mental Health: 6% of enrolled children received support in September. 94 behavior incidents were logged during the month for 22 children in nine classrooms. Three children with an early alert are being supported and monitored for behavioral needs. 23 children are receiving private therapy.
- Multiple supports and resources are being provided by the EI team, collaboration with community partner agencies and communication with parents is ongoing.

Nutrition and Health Services Report - Dylan Allanson

- Well child check status (physicals): 69% of EHS, 72% of CCP, and 81% of HS child physicals are up-to-date. We are working with center staff and sending reminders to families to ensure children receive check-ups consistently.
- Dental status: All families have been screened during health enrollment calls for dental exam status and dental homes, and referrals are made as needed. Approximately 90 children over the age of one don't have a dental home, and the health team is working to confirm dental homes for all children by November 30.
- Vision and Hearing Referral Status: The health team is currently completing initial screenings for this program year, prioritizing new students but also updating returning students, with 270 hearing tests completed and 295 vision screenings completed. 13 failed vision screenings have been referred to primary providers.
- CACFP meals reimbursement for August was \$21,269.

EHS Report - Bridgett Librado

- All EHS staff attended professional development training on 8/21 and 9/5. The hiring

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of after school staff has helped provide more work/life balance for teachers. EHS families regularly participate in family engagement events planned at each site.

HS/NC Pre-K Report - Amy Smith

- There are 29 teachers, assistants, and support staff in our HS/NC Pre-K program.
- *The First Six Weeks* curriculum focuses on building a classroom community and relationships with children and their families, where kids learn through play, build confidence, make discoveries, embrace curiosity and gain academic success skills.
- This year's focus on family engagement will emphasize creating responsive relationships and safe, welcoming environments, while encouraging active parent participation and two-way communication with the goal of empowering families to be advocates for their children and involving them in ongoing improvement processes.

CCP (Partnership) Report - Kathleen McDavid

- Six of ten EHS slots are filled at Little Red and they have hired a permanent teacher; new FCCH site God's Gifts is fully enrolled; Laurie's and Kids Kingdom are fully enrolled. Our new CCP partner Little Bright Minds has four of eight slots filled. We will continue to partner with Little Blessings until Nov 30 and are talking with the new owner to assess any potential future partnership.
- A new brochure for recruiting FCCH partners has been created and recruiting continues in Transylvania County. We have one other new FCCH in Henderson County going through the pre-licensing process.
- A Family Advocate, Litz Zaldivar, has been hired for the CCP sites.

Professional Development - Amy Phillips

- Our four apprentices have now moved into their second rotation of classrooms.
- 35% of staff are engaged in continuing their education.
- A Professional Development Coordinator has been hired, Hunter Weatherford.
- A full day of training was held on 9/5 for all staff with topics such as ERSEA, safety, coaching, early intervention, Family Advocate responsibilities, and our mission.

Comments and Questions / Any updates from parent representatives:

Andrea asked about the possibility of providing more OLE equipment or toys for the playground at Tebeau. She also asked if her son would be moving back into a larger size room (after moving to a smaller room due to a facilities issue). Amy Smith answered her questions and stated that she hopes to provide more education around nature-based learning to teachers and parents soon, and she's also happy to meet with Andrea at the site. There were no further comments or questions.

* **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Andrea Paniagua and seconded by Morgan Carbajal and Angie Dyer. The meeting was adjourned by Linda Carter at 10:28 AM.

Next hybrid (in-person/virtual) meeting date: Thursday, November 16 at 9:00 AM

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