

**WNCSource Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Minutes  
March 21, 2024**

\* Indicates a vote is required

Jessica Ownbey called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

**In Attendance:** David White, Kathleen McDavid, Dominique Marzan, Lisa Brown, Linda Carter, Kasheiva Jackson, Maria Angeles Ramirez, Amy Phillips, Heather Brewer-Jones, Eric Hoffman, Caitlin Cole-Ekman, Shannon Marlowe, Amy Smith, Jessica Ownbey, Jissel Zamudio, Hunter Weatherford, Litz Zaldivar, Yecenia Sandoval, Madeline Ortiz Mendez, Candy Doncevic, Natalie Daugherty, Jennie Lee, Rachel Walker, Dan Edwards, Margit Nelson, Mary Hanson, Jennifer Scroggs, Yessenia Garcia, Fatima Garcia Aleman, Josadry Sanchez, Ibby Whitten (arrived at 9:30 AM), Kristian Toro (arrived at 9:40 AM), Veronica Galvan de-Unda (arrived at 9:40 AM)

**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 to absent members for voting in addition to the attendees who will vote during the meeting.

\* Review and Approve Minutes from the February 15, 2024 meeting: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Lisa Brown, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Morgan Carbajal, Laura Durham, and Kristian Toro voted their approvals via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The February 15, 2024 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 in order to receive a gift card.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**New Program Goals: CCP Grant - Kathleen McDavid \***

- The CCP team has initiated two new program goals to coincide with the first year of funding the 5-year (2024-2029) grant that is being renewed. These goals were developed based on data from the Community and Self Assessments as well as ongoing internal monitoring. The first goal establishes a collaboration between WNCSource and the CCP providers to ensure recruitment, hiring, and retention of highly qualified and well compensated staff that will promote high quality, consistent services to children and families. Objectives include retention of 75% of teachers for a minimum of two years, and the provision of staff resources and support at all CCP

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sites to ensure that staff feel valued and adequately compensated. The second goal aims to build a collaborative system to support children as they age out of EHS ensuring that they continue to receive high quality care and education. Measurable objectives include transitioning children into appropriate programs as soon as they turn three, and building a waitlist for all sites that equals 20% of contracted EHS enrollment. Several multi-step action plans have been created for meeting each objective within each goal. A motion to approve the New Program Goals was made by Rachel Walker and seconded by Shannon Marlowe, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Morgan Carbajal, Laura Durham, and Kristian Toro voted their approvals via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The New CCP Program Goals were unanimously approved.

**Training/Technical Assistance Plan (Expansion Grant) - Amy Phillips \***

- The T/TA Plan for next year will focus on program goals by supporting new staff, the apprenticeship program, and diversity education as well as ensuring that curriculum is implemented to fidelity. Staff are also required by the Office of Head Start (OHS) and the NC Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) to participate in numerous individual trainings, many of them related to health and safety. A total of \$54,229 in government funding will be requested for the 2024-2025 program year. A motion to approve the T/TA Plan for the Expansion Grant was made by Rachel Walker and seconded by Fatima Garcia, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Morgan Carbajal, Laura Durham, and Kristian Toro voted their approvals via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The T/TA Plan for the Expansion Grant was unanimously approved.

**Training/Technical Assistance Plan (CCP Grant) - Amy Phillips \***

- The structure of the T/TA Plan for next year has not changed significantly from previous years and will be used to support CCP program goals including teacher and manager professional development, as well as various training that is mandated by OHS and NC DCDEE. Quarterly training topics may include: 5R training for supervisors, as well as social-emotional, challenging behaviors, and curriculum implementation for all staff. A total of \$35,550 in government funding will be requested for the 2024-2025 program year. A motion to approve the T/TA Plan for the CCP Grant was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Lisa Brown, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Morgan Carbajal, Laura Durham, and Kristian Toro voted their approvals via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The T/TA Plan for the CCP Grant was unanimously approved.

**Expansion Grant Refunding Application (#04HP000443) - Linda Carter \***

- WNCSource will be submitting an application to the Office of Head Start requesting funding continuation for Grant #04HP000443 to fund the budget for EHS Expansion program services and goals for the 2024-2025 program year (Year 4 of the grant cycle). The total amount will fund daily services in center-based slots or Family Child

Care Homes for 99 EHS students/families. The requested funds of \$3,061,750 include \$2,395,171 in federal base funding, \$54,229 for T/TA plus approximately \$612,350 as a 20% non-federal share match (which comes mainly from donations of needed goods/services/volunteer time or state/other grant funds). In January WNCSource filed a Change in Scope (CIS) application to meet OHS enrollment requirements, which would ultimately reduce the number of EHS student slots from 99 to 35. While the CIS is undergoing review by OHS, we are required to submit the full refunding application as usual. A motion to approve the Expansion Grant Refunding Application was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Rachel Walker, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Morgan Carbajal, Laura Durham, and Kristian Toro voted their approvals via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The Expansion Grant Refunding Application was unanimously approved.

**CCP Grant Refunding Application (#04HP000306) - Linda Carter \***

- WNCSource will be submitting an application to the Office of Head Start requesting baseline funding for Grant #04HP000306 to fund the budget for Childcare Partnership (CCP) program services and goals for the 2024-2025 program year (Year 1 of the ongoing 5-year grant cycle). The total amount will fund daily services in partnership center-based slots for 80 EHS students/families. The requested funds of \$2,302,944 include \$1,806,805 in federal base funding, \$35,550 for T/TA plus approximately \$460,589 as a 20% non-federal share match (which comes mainly from donations of needed goods/services/volunteer time or state/other grant funds). A motion to approve the CCP Grant Refunding Application was made by Lisa Brown and seconded by Fatima Garcia, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Morgan Carbajal, Laura Durham, and Kristian Toro voted their approvals via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The CCP Grant Refunding Application was unanimously approved.

**REPORTS:**

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

- Henderson County Comprehensive Pre-K Plan Subcommittee: Linda and David are appointees to this committee and attended a presentation on February 23 to hear how other WNC counties structure their Pre-K programs.
- Adult Daycare Transportation: WNCSource is working on a contract to provide transportation for the MountainCare adult day care program starting July 1, 2024.

**Chief Financial Officer's Report - Elizabeth Whitten**

- Financials, Numbers for January 2024 are not yet available.
- Credit Card Expense, Numbers for January 2024 are not yet available, but the majority of the expense came from the purchase of program supplies.

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

- CCP site Little Bright Minds is expanding and has moved into the facility at St James

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Church in Hendersonville.

- WNCSource staff focused on very successfully increasing the number of families with dental homes during February.
- The CS Director has been busy participating in several local committee meetings related to early childhood education.
- There were quite a number of classroom closures in February due to a lack of staff available to work.
- Staff Update: 10 employees were hired during February, and three employees left. 37 positions are currently vacant. A graph for 2020 through the present was displayed that indicated an upward trend for hiring and retention.

#### **Enrollment and Attendance - Kasheiva Jackson**

- Enrollment: The center-based EHS enrollment rate is 68%, home-based EHS is at 50%, EHS Expansion is at 25%, EHS/CCP is at 97%, HS enrollment is 75%, NC Pre-K is at 74%. 140 children are waitlisted, with most being on the HS program waitlist.
- Attendance: February average daily attendance: The average attendance rate goal is 85%. EHS was at 82%, Expansion at 76%, CCP at 79%, HS at 82%, and NCPK at 83%. During the period 1/27-2/28, most of the 1445 absences were due to illness/injury, including 45 COVID-related.

#### **Education and Child Development - Candy Doncevic**

- Winter 2024 Checkpoint: GOLD Data was assessed for 372 children in 42 classrooms and compared to Fall 2023 data.
- Social-Emotional skills grew from a score of 62% to 78% who are meeting/exceeding expectations.
- Physical skills increased from 71% to 84% meeting/exceeding expectations.
- Language skills rose from 62% to 73% meeting/exceeding expectations.
- Cognitive skills grew from 62% to 80% meeting/exceeding expectations.
- Literacy skills increased from 57% to 75% meeting/exceeding expectations.
- Math skills rose from 58% to 73% meeting/exceeding expectations.
- 42% of total children being served are 4 year olds. The Social-Emotional domain saw the most growth (for 223 kids, WNCSource is their first experience in a classroom). The least amount of growth occurred in the language domain; 38% of enrolled students are dual language learners. The coaches are implementing initiatives to boost language use and skill levels; 50% of teaching staff have set goals in this area.

#### **Early Intervention Report - Mary Hanson**

- 452 children have received development and behavior screening as of the end of January, with areas of need being identified and strategies/resources provided to both teachers and parents. 171 children have a "referral recommended" status (with needs being either developmental, behavioral, or both). Parents are being supported as they request referrals, and other referrals result from classroom monitoring and teacher reporting. 38 children are scheduled to have ASQs completed within the required 45-day timeframe.

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- **Disabilities:** Each grant requires us to serve 10% of our cumulative enrollment with children who qualify for an IEP or IFSP. Currently, 16% of EHS and HS enrollment, 12% of CCP enrollment, and 7% of Expansion enrollment are receiving disabilities services. Disabilities include autism, developmental delay, as well as speech/health/hearing impairments.
- 17 children currently receive private therapy.
- The new developmental specialist is helping embed IEP goals into lesson plans, supporting children with IEPs and IFSPs, and coordinating services.
- Two EI team members were trained in the Circle of Security caregiver-child relationship and attachment program in order to provide classes to parents in the future.

#### **Nutrition and Health Services Report - Caitlin Cole-Ekman**

- **Well child check status (physicals):** 80% of EHS, 82% of CCP, and 85% 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. 331 of 409 children over the age of one now have a dental home.
- **Vision and Hearing:** Screenings are completed annually: So far, 367 children have had hearing screenings with no referrals needed, and 366 children have had vision screenings with 14 of those currently in the referral process.
- **CACFP monitoring in the classrooms** has not revealed any significant issues. November reimbursement was \$33,861.
- The WNCSource COVID policy will be updated based on CDC guidelines, which basically now treat COVID the same way as influenza or RSV.

#### **Family Services - Kasheiva Jackson**

- All Family Advocates participated in a Kindergarten Readiness event at the Henderson County Public Library that highlighted Ready Rosie and literacy in general.
- **ReadyRosie:** 10 additional families are now connected to this parenting curriculum.

#### **HS/NC Pre-K Report - Amy Smith**

- Kindergarten Readiness activities include the development of transition plans, rallies at the elementary schools, and parent committee meetings focused on Kindergarten readiness skills.
- Family Engagement events focusing on male role models were held throughout February and March with male family members and staff participating.

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

- CCP sites continue to focus on the goal of full enrollment, achieving success at several sites, with an overall enrollment of 48 students at six sites.
- With their move to a new facility, Little Bright Minds will increase their capacity from 8 to 16 EHS students.

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### **Professional Development - Hunter Weatherford**

- CCP teaching staff attended a Teaching Strategies training focused on Responsive Planning for EHS-aged children.
- A 2-day Motivational Interviewing training was held with 30 staff attending.
- One current trainee is progressing well with obtaining her CDA, and there are two more trainees being onboarded.
- Two of our current apprentices have accepted teaching positions with us. WNCSource was the pilot site for Blue Ridge Community College's early childhood education apprenticeship this year, but the college plans to open up the program to include other private child care providers going forward.

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

Fatima from the Forest City site reported that things are going well and parents appreciate the staff. She suggested that more male-focused parent activities would be appreciated, and Family Services and the site staff will work on promoting this.

Yessenia representing King Creek expressed appreciation to the teachers for all that they do. Kristian from Sugar Hill let us know that the center is having spirit week this week; there will be a graduation event on 5/17; and staff have been providing Kindergarten resources.

Jennie, also representing Sugar Hill, reminded everyone that Pisgah Legal Service offers free tax help.

There were no further comments or questions.

\* **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Kristian Toro and seconded by Jennie Lee. The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 AM.

**Next meeting date: Thursday, April 18, 2024 at 9:00 AM**