

**WNCSource Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Minutes
April 18, 2024**

* Indicates a vote is required

Jessica Ownbey called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM.

In Attendance: Josie Sanchez, Fatima Aleman Garcia, Dan Edwards, Heather Brewer-Jones, Hunter Weatherford, Kathleen McDavid, Ailimys Santi, Yecenia Sandoval, Kasheiva Jackson, Madeline Ortiz Mendez, Jessica Ownbey, David White, Eric Hoffman, Lisa Brown, Margit Nelson, Natalie Daugherty, Jennie Lee, Jen Scroggs, Eric Blore, Yessenia Garcia, Amy Smith, Jissel Zamudio, Candice Freeman, Rachel Walker, Elizabeth Whitten, Candy Doncevic, Mary Hanson, Claudia Gutierrez, Nicole Villalon, Misty Lovelace, Angie Davis, Shannon Marlowe, Kristian Toro (arrived at 9:35 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 March 21, 2024 meeting: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Lisa Brown and seconded by Rachel Walker, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Kristian Toro voted her approval via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The March 21, 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:

Consolidating Grants 04HP000443 and 04HP000306 (Effective 8/1/24) - Elizabeth Whitten*

- Throughout 2022 and 2023, WNCSource struggled to recruit and retain staffing levels and was eventually put on an Under Enrollment Plan by the Office of Head Start (OHS). As part of our Full Enrollment Initiative (FEI), WNCSource created a recovery plan that included a focus on hiring and retention of qualified staff and the recruitment of eligible families. WNCSource also requested a Change in Scope to reduce enrollment levels for its primary HS/EHS grant (04CH011737) and its Expansion grant (04HP000443). The OHS met with WNCSource on 4/2/24 to suggest a possible solution to adjusting the enrollment and funding levels by consolidating grants 04HP000443 and 04HP000306 into the existing CCP grant (04HP000306) to take effect 8/1/24. The new consolidated grant will serve 115 EHS students using

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federal funding of \$4,291,755, which includes \$89,779 in T/TA funds. WNCSource will request a waiver for the non-federal share amount of \$1,072,939. A motion to approve the Consolidation of the Expansion Grant (04HP000443) and the CCP Grant (04HP000306) into one CCP Grant (04HP000306) was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Rachel Walker, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Kristian Toro voted her approval via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The request to consolidate grants 04HP000443 and 04HP000306 was unanimously approved.

Program Goals for Grant 04HP000306 - Eric Hoffman *

- New Program Goals and accompanying objectives have been established for the consolidated CCP grant, including a focus on developing stronger partnerships with families to empower them to be actively involved full partners in all aspects of the EHS and Children's Services programs. Another goal is to support and empower staff in creating a dynamic and safe learning environment while ensuring they thrive and feel valued as early childhood professionals. A motion to approve the Program Goals for the consolidated CCP Grant (04HP000306) was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Angie Davis and Yessenia Garcia, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Kristian Toro voted her approval via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The Program Goals for consolidated CCP Grant 04HP000306 were unanimously approved.

Training/Technical Assistance (T/TA) Plan for Grant 04HP000306 - Hunter Weatherford *

- The T/TA Plan for the consolidated CCP grant has been updated to reflect the emphasis on staff and family empowerment that is part of the new program goals. Supervisors will receive leadership training and families will be offered training in trauma-responsive care and diversity initiatives. The OHS and DCDEE required trainings remain the same as does our support of staff in their continuing education and professional development endeavors. The focus on various trainings that support implementation of a high-quality curriculum and program will also continue. A motion to approve the T/TA Plan for the consolidated CCP Grant (04HP000306) was made by Yessenia Garcia and seconded by Shannon Marlowe, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Kristian Toro voted her approval via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The T/TA Plan for the consolidated CCP Grant 04HP000306 was unanimously approved.

2024.2025 Program Calendars - Margit Nelson *

- The WNCSource program year calendars align with the public school system calendars for each county where a WNCSource center is located, which helps both families and staff who have children in the school systems. The HS program runs for ten months, while the EHS program is year-round. The calendars show school days, holidays, and teacher inservice or workdays. A motion to approve the 2024-2025 Program Calendars was made by Rachel Walker and seconded by Angie Davis, and

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approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Kristian Toro voted her approval via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The 2024-2025 Program Calendars were unanimously approved.

REPORTS: To see all department reports, please refer to the Operation Report that was emailed

Chief Executive Officer's Report - David White

- The Change in Scope request for the primary HS/EHS grant (04CH011737) is expected to be officially approved by the end of April. Until the grant consolidation is effective on 8/1/24 for CCP grant 04HP000306, WNCSource will receive a waiver for under enrollment, with the expectation that consolidating the two grants will allow us to attract and retain staff and meet full enrollment numbers by August.
- WNCSource is a member of the Well Health Captive (WHC) corporation made up of 240 members who are self-insured for healthcare. WHC data has shown that WNCSource manages employee health risks very well due to our strong plan design, company culture and wellness program. Data has also shown how cancer screening and early detection are crucial for containing costs and improving patient outcomes and longevity. WNCSource has not had to increase health insurance premiums for three years and will continue to engage in ways to improve staff health while saving money on health insurance costs.

Chief Financial Officer's Report - Elizabeth Whitten

- Through the end of February, all grants should be at 67% of budgeted expenses. The HS/EHS grant is at 66%, the CCP grant is at 60%, the EHS Expansion grant is at 41%, and the NC Pre-K program is at 46%. We are below budget due to lower enrollment that's driven by our continued challenge with being fully staffed.
- Credit card spending for February was \$11,582, with the majority of expenses coming from travel, facilities, and program supplies costs.

Enrollment and Attendance - Madeline Ortiz Méndez

- Enrollment: The center-based EHS enrollment rate is 70%, home-based EHS is at 46%, EHS Expansion is at 22%, EHS/CCP is at 99%, HS enrollment is 84%, NC Pre-K is at 75%. 173 children are waitlisted, with most being on the HS program waitlist.
- Attendance: March average daily attendance: The average attendance rate goal is 85%. EHS was at 75%, Expansion at 77%, CCP at 77%, HS at 80%, and NCPK at 84%. During the period 2/29-3/27, most of the absences were due to illness/injury, including 27 COVID-related.

Education and Child Development - Candy Doncevic

- Creative Curriculum: The coaches use a fidelity tool to determine how well teachers are implementing the curriculum by assessing the teachers' work in six areas. The majority of HS teachers are performing in the medium score range for all six areas except for the Structure category which measures the teachers' use of routines and schedules, where they are scoring higher. EHS teachers are also scoring in the

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medium range, with higher scores in Structure, Environment (use of the environment to address needs and abilities), and Families (meaningful partnership). Cumulative data also shows that overall EHS fidelity scores have steadily increased since the summer of 2021.

Early Intervention (EI) Report - Mary Hanson

- 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 9% of Expansion enrollment are receiving disabilities services. Disabilities include autism, developmental delay, as well as speech/health/hearing impairments. The team is additionally supporting five children who have an Early Alert.
- Mental Health - March: 37 children (8%) received support for behavioral health needs. 83 behavior incidents were logged for 26 children in 12 classrooms. Small groups focusing on the social-emotional curriculum have shown positive results.
- EI Updates: The first edition of the EI newsletter was distributed in March. Parents of children with IEPs who are transitioning to Kindergarten are being surveyed for needs. We're collaborating with the Children and Family Resource Center in an attempt to implement Circle of Security training for staff and parents. As one of our behavior interventionists leaves us, we are working on ways to maintain support of current needs.

Family Services - Kasheiva Jackson

- We celebrated our Family Advocates during Social Work Awareness month.
- ReadyRosie: 262 families are now connected to this parenting curriculum. The Flat Rock site held a ReadyRosie challenge during March. The Tebeau site had the highest number of video views as well as the highest rate of teacher engagement.

HS/NC Pre-K Report - Amy Smith

- Four teachers gave presentations at the NAEYC "Week of the Young Child" conference and led two breakout sessions: "Connections Beyond the Classroom" focused on building relationships with children and families, and "Using the Love Languages in the Classroom" focused on *What, Who, Why, When, and Where* to use these strategies.
- Favorable ECERS (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales) assessments were recently completed at the Edneyville (6.5/7) and Tebeau (5.86/7) sites, which measure the quality of processes in early childhood group care.

CCP (Partnership) Report - Kathleen McDavid

- There are six CCP partner sites, with a total enrollment of 47 (of 56 slots).
- A Teaching Strategies consultant will provide Creative Curriculum implementation training for CCP staff in July.
- Little Bright Minds has moved to a larger location, allowing them to open an additional room, increasing EHS capacity from 8 to 16 students.

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Professional Development - Hunter Weatherford

- Apprentices will graduate on May 11. The apprenticeship program for next school year is accepting applications, with acceptance decisions being made in late June.
- Three teacher trainees are currently working on earning their Infant Toddler CDA.

Comments and Questions / Any updates from parent representatives:

Kristian stated that everything is going well at the Sugar Hill site. There were no further comments or questions.

* **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Kristian Toro and seconded by Angie Davis. The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 AM.

Next meeting date: Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 9:00 AM