

**WNCSource Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Minutes  
June 6, 2024**

\* Indicates a vote is required

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

**In Attendance:** Candice Freeman, Hunter Weatherford, Dan Edwards, Claudia Gutierrez, Jessica Ownbey, Heather Brewer-Jones, Madeline Ortiz Méndez, Shannon Marlowe, Mary Hanson, Caitlin Cole-Ekman, Linda Carter, Amy Phillips, Candy Doncevic, Amy Smith, Eric Hoffman, Margit Nelson, Erin Outlaw, Yecenia Sandoval, Angie Davis, Jeanette Rodriguez, Jissel Zamudio, Eric Blore, Kasheiva Jackson, Fatima Garcia Aleman, Natalie Daugherty (joined at 9:10), Veronica Galvan de Unda (joined at 9:25), Lisa Brown (joined at 9:27), Maria Angeles Ramirez (joined at 9:30)

**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 May 16, 2024 meeting: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Angie Davis and seconded by Shannon Marlowe, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Liza Berry Jenkins, Kayla Hernandez, Morgan Carbajal, Laura Durham, Kristian Toro, Jennifer Scroggs, and Ailimys Santi voted their approval via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The May 16, 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 in lieu of breakfast that otherwise would have been served at the meeting. Parents in attendance should provide their address in the chat box in order to receive a gift card.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**CCP Waitlist Pilot Program - Madeline Ortiz Méndez**

- A general waitlist is maintained that prioritizes placement of children by the highest need. We will try maintaining separate waitlists by center sites beginning with CCP sites, in the hope of aiding parents with their preferred site choice(s) and supporting the goal of full enrollment at each site.

**Proposed 2024-2025 Policy Council Meeting Dates \* - Linda Carter**

- Virtual meetings seem to work best for everyone so we will continue that format

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next year, though we would like to try to have the November meeting in person. The following meeting dates are being proposed for next program year: The third Thursday of the month at 9:00 AM: 9/19/24, 10/17/24, 11/21/24, 1/16/25, 2/20/25, 3/20/25, 4/17/25, 5/15/25, and 6/5/25, with no meeting in December. A motion to approve the proposed meeting dates was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Fatima Aleman, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. Additionally, Liza Berry Jenkins, Kayla Hernandez, Morgan Carbajal, Laura Durham, Kristian Toro, Jennifer Scroggs, and Ailimys Santi voted their approval via email after the meeting, thereby reaching a quorum. The proposed 2024-2025 Policy Council meeting dates were unanimously approved.

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

**Chief Financial Officer's Report - Erin Outlaw for Elizabeth Whitten**

- All grants should be at 83% of funding spent. HS/EHS is on track at 80%, CCP is 72%, NC Pre-K is at 55%, EHS Expansion is 52%. Some grants are under budget due to teacher shortages and fewer open classrooms.
- Credit card spending for the month of April was \$13,063, with the majority of expenses stemming from staff training/travel and the purchase of program supplies.

**Children's Services Director's Report - Linda Carter**

- Highlights: All Children's Services staff attended a Celebration of Learning event on May 24 where each department and site presented an overview of the year's successes and achievements. A new fleet app for company vehicles will be installed soon in each car to support safety and reduce costs for maintenance and fuel while ensuring that each car receives the needed maintenance at the appropriate time. The next Health Services Advisory Committee meeting will take place virtually on June 11, contact Caitlin Cole-Ekman if you would like to attend, all are welcome.
- Classroom Closures: A Hillview classroom closed one day for lack of staff, two Etowah rooms closed one day for lack of staff, and all Etowah classrooms were closed for three days due to flooding.
- Staff Updates: Seven employees were hired including two interns, and seven staff left employment in May.
- Facilities: On May 10 United Way Day of Caring volunteers provided landscaping help at the Tebeau site. The Etowah center experienced flooding; Henderson County owns the building and is working on possible solutions to prevent future flooding.
- OHS Update: The Office of Head Start issued a memo with suggested strategies for integrating mental health supports across all HS programs for children and adults.
- Hillview Property: Per David White's report that was provided via email, zoning and design plans are being discussed with the city of Brevard to maximize use of the property WNCSource owns and which would include replacing the current Hillview child care center as well as adding more apartment housing.

**Enrollment and Attendance - Madeline Ortiz Méndez**

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- Enrollment: Center-based EHS enrollment is at 61%, home-based EHS at 46%, EHS Expansion is at 23%, CCP is at 90%, and HS is at 84%. We are in the transition phase between program years, which affects enrollment numbers.
- Attendance: May average daily attendance: The average attendance rate goal is 85%. EHS was at 81%, Expansion at 83%, CCP at 84%, HS at 79%, and NCPK at 82%. During May, most of the 1283 absences were due to families' decisions to keep the child at home. We will be monitoring attendance more closely and working on strategies to increase the attendance rates in all programs.

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

- QCIT Observations: This tool measures caregiver responsiveness and quality indicators of caregiver-child interactions as they relate to social-emotional, cognitive, and language/literacy development in children ages 0-3. Measurements completed in our EHS classrooms this spring have shown that language development is an area that represents needed growth and focus.
- Family Engagement: All classrooms use My Family app which shares curriculum resources with parents; 147 families are using this app with 887 activities being viewed.
- Coaching: This year 67 staff were coached including 39 receiving intensive coaching and 28 having standard monthly coaching, with a total of 2,304 coaching connections. 55 individual and team goals were completed along with 80 formal observations and 32 data chat sessions.

#### **Early Intervention (EI) Report - Mary Hanson**

- Development & Behavior Screenings: 208 children have a "referral recommended" status, 121 for developmental needs only, 29 for behavioral needs only, and 29 for both needs. 11 children are scheduled to have ASQs completed.
- Disabilities: Each grant requires us to serve 10% of our cumulative enrollment with children who qualify for an IEP or IFSP. Currently, 18% of EHS and HS enrollment, 12% of CCP enrollment, and 13% of Expansion enrollment are receiving disabilities services. Disabilities include autism, developmental delay, as well as speech/health/hearing impairments. The team is additionally supporting seven children who have an Early Alert.
- 2023-2024 Program Summary: 26 children received an IEP/IFSP. There were 1,616 behavior incidents, 106 early alerts, 46 child support plans, 572 completed ASQs, and 99 children supported by mental health staff.
- Updates: Parent outreach was provided to parents with children transitioning to Kindergarten; teachers were surveyed for their input about EI support; CCP site directors were provided with information about EI tools and supports.

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

- Well Child Checks through 5/30/24: 84% of EHS is up to date, 88% of HS and 85% of CCP are up to date.
- Dental for EHS and CCP through 5/30/24: 85% of children now have dental homes.

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The Blue Ridge Health dental office in Brevard will now prioritize our EHS students when setting appointments and providing a dental home, thanks to the advocacy of our Health Specialist Nicole.

- Vision and Hearing Screening: 648 hearing screenings have been completed with no referrals needed; 663 vision screenings have been done with 10 children receiving referrals.
- CACFP: April reimbursement was \$44,545. Monitoring visits have been completed with no concerns noted. Meal counts served at each site are as shown in the table.

**CCP (Partnership) Report - Margit Nelson for Kathleen McDavid**

- Enrollment numbers at each CCP site are listed on the report that was emailed and also shown during the meeting. An additional CCP partner site is being sought.
- In collaboration with Amy Smith as well as parents, children and staff, CCP sites will be building sunflower shelters and connecting the activity to books that tie in with the Creative Curriculum.

**Professional Development - Hunter Weatherford**

- Teaching Strategies will provide Creative Curriculum training for CCP staff on June 7.
- Supervisor training around team building and communication will occur on June 18.
- 15 staff members are scheduled to complete a degree or certificate program by autumn 2024. Another new CDA trainee will start soon. Applications for the 2024-2025 apprenticeship program are being accepted.

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

Fatima Aleman commented that the Forest City site is doing well and she appreciates hearing all of the reports and information and thanks the staff for their work. Maria Ramirez from the Tebeau site expresses appreciation for the program and states that a lot of parents work, making it hard to attend socialization events that take place in the mornings. Family Services Manager Kiki Jackson replied that they will take that into consideration as they plan for the new program year. There were no further comments or questions.

\* **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Fatima Aleman, and approved by all attendees present at the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM by Jessica Ownbey.

**Next meeting date:** September 19, 2024 at 9:00 AM.

**All current Policy Council members are asked to plan to attend the meetings in September and October, at which time new Policy Council officers and members will be nominated and continuing officers and members will be confirmed.**