

## **WNCSource Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Minutes September 19, 2024**

\* Indicates a vote is required

Jessica Ownbey called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM.

**In Attendance:** Margit Nelson, Linda Carter, Shannon Marlowe, Dan Edwards, Natalie Daugherty, Kasheiva Jackson, Candice Freeman, Victoria Garner, Amber Buchanan, Jissel Zamudio, Eric Hoffman, Elizabeth Whitten, Jessica Ownbey, Caitlin Cole-Ekman, Dominique Marzan, Ivania Convento, Brionna Moss, Eric Blore, Heather Brewer-Jones, Yecenia Sandoval, Desiree Jackson, Angie Davis, Fernanda (Paola) Olgúin, Vicenta Ruiz, Margarita Mendoza, Fatima Garcia, Emily Webb, Allison Clayton, Kathleen McDavid, Maria Angeles, Bridgett Librado

**Establish a Quorum** - It was determined that there were enough members present to constitute a quorum. Items needing a vote will be fully voted on during the meeting.

\* Review and Approve Minutes from the June 6, 2024 meeting: A motion to approve the minutes was made by Shannon Marlowe and seconded by Victoria Garner, and approved by all attendees. The June 6, 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:**

#### **Policy Council Officers Nomination Process - Linda Carter**

- Linda explained the process for nominating members for the three Policy Council officer roles (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary) for the 2024-2025 program year. Three nominations have already been received: Jessica Ownbey for Chair, Kristian Toro for Vice-Chair, and Lisa Brown for Secretary, but everyone is welcome to make other nominations as desired by contacting Dan Edwards via email, phone, or chat. The Policy Council members will vote for the officers at the next Policy Council meeting (in October).

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

- Linda put forth a request to remove the 6/5/25 Policy Council meeting and in its place add a meeting in December on 12/19/24, since the June 5 meeting would occur after the school year has ended. A motion to approve the proposed change in

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meeting dates was made by Natalie Daugherty and seconded by Shannon Marlowe, and approved by all attendees. The proposed change in the 2024-2025 Policy Council meeting dates was unanimously approved.

#### **Self-Assessment Plan \* - Eric Hoffman**

- The Office of Head Start requires an annual self-assessment from participants receiving grant funds; this assessment helps us formulate our program goals. Eric presented a timeline for planning and implementing the plan for the 2024-2025 program year, including the creation of workgroups, dialoguing and analyzing historical and current data, making recommendations and creating a report. Focus areas will include classroom quality (child development and teacher professional development), parent and family engagement in the program events and parent committees, and staffing issues (hiring, retention, attendance, employee satisfaction). Policy Council members are welcome to participate in any of the three assessment workgroups and should reach out to Eric to get connected to a group. A motion to approve the self-assessment plan was made by Fatima Garcia and Angie Davis and seconded by Shannon Marlowe, and approved by all attendees. The self-assessment plan was unanimously approved.

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

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

- Elizabeth briefly outlined the budgets and funding for each grant including the amounts allocated for training.
- Through the end of July, all grant spending was under budget which should be at 8%, since the new fiscal year begins on July 1. HS/EHS is at 5.2%, CCP combined grant is 6.5%, NC Pre-K is at 1%.
- Credit card spending for the month of July was \$856, with the majority of expenses stemming from data processing subscriptions and services.

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

- Highlights: The new child care center in Columbus is moving closer to completion. The annual all-staff inservice training took place over several days in August and was extremely beneficial to staff, increasing professional development and skill sets. Starting in October, the Transylvania County Public School system will begin to provide breakfast and lunch to the Hillview Children's Center.
- Classroom Closures: One classroom experienced an unplanned closure on August 27.
- Staff Updates: Ten employees were hired recently including two apprentices, while eight left employment.

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

- Enrollment: Center-based EHS enrollment is at 97%, CCP/Expansion Combined enrollment is at 79%, and HS is at 100%. 182 applicants are on the waitlist.
- Attendance: The average attendance rate goal is 85%. August average daily

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attendance: EHS was at 82%, CCP/Expansion Combined at 84%, HS at 87%, and NCPK at 93%. During August, most of the 548 absences were due to illness or the families' decisions to keep the child at home.

#### **Early Intervention (EI) Report - Eric Hoffman for Mary Hanson**

- Development & Behavior Screenings: 36 children have a "referral recommended" status, 27 for developmental needs only, 4 for behavioral needs only, and 4 for both needs. 51 children are scheduled to have ASQs completed.
- Disabilities: Each grant requires us to serve 10% of actual enrollment of children who qualify for an IEP or IFSP. Currently, 16% of EHS and HS enrollment and 13% of CCP/Expansion Combined enrollment are receiving disabilities services. Disabilities include autism, developmental delay, as well as speech/health/hearing impairments. The team is additionally supporting three children who have an Early Alert.
- Mental Health: In August, 21 children received behavioral health support, 13 families received mental health support, and 59 behavior incidents were logged in nine classrooms. Our mental health consultant visited two classrooms to observe and offer support.

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

- Well Child Checks through 8/28/24: 74% of EHS students are up to date and 77% of CCP/Expansion Combined are up to date. We're waiting for paperwork on many of the HS students.
- Dental: The Health team is assessing students' access to oral health services and has requested documentation from new students.
- Vision and Hearing Screening: 224 enrolled children are up-to-date with hearing screenings; 225 children have up-to-date vision screenings. Newly enrolled children are prioritized to receive screenings within the first 45 days. Two failed screenings result in a referral to the child's medical provider.
- CACFP: June reimbursement was \$6,727 (for snacks only; meals were provided at no charge through the public schools). Meal and snack counts served at each site are as shown in the table.

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

> Victoria (Etowah) commented that the families are enjoying working with the teachers but they were sad that the Family Advocate Claudia left. She asked how to enroll in the apprenticeship program, which was answered by Linda Carter who explained the timeline and process.

> Fatima (Forest City) asked if there is a process or required checklist for parents who would like to volunteer in the classrooms. Margit explained that there are no requirements or background checks needed for parents/guardians, and the parent should talk to their site supervisor or teacher to make those arrangements.

> Maria (Tebeau) asked if there's any way to provide more parking since the lot is always full at Tebeau. Linda explained that due to the high enrollment at the site, they are actively looking for ways to increase parking, but the city must approve any additional property

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changes and engineering plans would need to be developed as well as funding established, thus no changes would be able to happen immediately.

\* **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Natalie Daugherty and seconded by Brionna Moss and Angie Davis, and approved by all attendees. The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 AM by Jessica Ownbey.

**Next meeting date:** October 17, 2024 at 9:00 AM.