

January 18, 2023

EE/NCPK Meeting Minutes

10:00-11:00 am

The Cabarrus Partnership for Children's local NC Pre-K Committee Meeting was called to order at 10:00am by Ann Benfield, NC Pre-K Committee Co-Chair, with a quorum present and maintained throughout the meeting.

Committee Members: Trina Wenzel, Waynett Taylor, Danielle Mauldin, Teresa Aldridge, Lashonda Houston, Jennifer Baucom, Samelia Jones, Elizabeth Heston, Debra Pless, Ann Benfield, Annie Parker, Deborah Beatty, Nicole Sessoms, Sue Rebich

Committee Members Present: Trina Wenzel, Teresa Aldridge, Lashonda Houston, Jennifer Baucom, Samelia Jones, Elizabeth Heston, Debra Pless, Ann Benfield, Nicole Sessoms, Sue Rebich

Committee Members Absent: Waynett Taylor, Danielle Mauldin, Lora Lipe, Annie Parker, Deborah Beatty

Guest Present: Isha Goode, Spencer Swain, Kris Parker

Staff Members Present: Ann Benfield, Patricia Sehorn, Hannah Wareham

Welcome and Introductions

Ann Benfield, committee co-chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Action Items

Agenda Overview and Approval of Minutes for September 21, 2022

Ann Benfield presented the meeting agenda and asked the committee to review the September 21, 2022 minutes. A request was made by Ann Benfield for any corrections. No corrections were needed for the minutes. Ann Benfield requested a motion to approve the minutes without any corrections. Nicole Sessoms approved the motion and Elizabeth Heston seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Selection of 2023-2024 Contracting Agency

Ann Benfield presented to the committee the need to select a contracting agency for the 2023-2024 school year. She asked if anyone would like to nominate an agency to be the contracting agency. Lashonda Houston made the motion for the NC Pre K Contracting Agency be approved as presented for the next school year and Nicole Sessoms seconded the motion. There being no questions/discussion, all voted in favor.

Approval of 2023-2024 Local Plan and Meeting Schedule

Ann Benfield requested for a motion to approve the 2023-2024 local plans. The Plans included the Cabarrus County Local Guidelines and Plans/Policies for Transitions, Family Engagement, Transportation, Suspension and Expulsion, Inclement weather policy, list of committee members and Working with LEP families. July, January, March and May will have meetings scheduled with the possibility of special called

meetings as needed. Nicole Sessoms made the motion to approve the local plans and Samelia Jones seconded to approve all plans. All voted in favor.

2023-2024 Plan/Preliminary Allocation budget

Ann Benfield and Patricia Sehorn explained that we cannot decrease our budgeted slots of 358. Even though we are voting now, we can still amend the budget once we know where the applications are from. Sue Rebich requested the motion for the budget to continue as presented and Lashonda Houston seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Smart Kids

Ann Benfield explained how Smart Kids required their NCPK children to purchase uniforms. Per the NCPK guidelines, NCPK sites are not able to charge the NCPK families for anything. Trina explained that for as long as she knows, NCPK has never been able to charge a family for anything. Jennifer explained that for their school system, they require uniforms. However, she does not see the requirement for preschool. She discussed the need to support the family if they are not able to find uniforms. Lashonda asked what the next steps are. Patricia explained that the site director was notifying corporate that the uniforms were not allowed and Trish has not heard from the director. Lashonda Houston stated that the site should reimburse the cost of the uniforms. Trina Wenzel suggested to have a flat rate to reimburse the families and Lashonda Houston, Jennifer Baucom agreed with this thought. Ann Benfield asked the committee for their opinion for what the flat fee would be, discussion of \$25-\$30 to \$60. Nicole Sessoms asked if they do not pay the families, then what are the next steps? Patricia stated that would be a violation of their contract since the committee has the authority to enforce this policy. Ann Benfield stated that she thinks we need to get the uniform policy from corporate before stating they have to pay back the families. There was discussion about making sure sites know they are not able to tell parents to pay anything (school supplies, uniforms, etc.) and adding this statement in the local guidelines. Trish asked if the committee wanted this stated on the assurance statement and/or on the local policy. The committee discussed that this should be stated everywhere for multiple opportunities to be read. Ann Benfield stated that we will amend the local plans that we voted on during this meeting. Ann Benfield clarified that the committee wants more information from corporate. Nicole suggested to contact the regional Manager for Smart Kids. Everyone agreed.

NC Pre-K Updates-

Enrollment/Applications Update:

Patricia Sehorn stated that our application is live and she predicts we will receive a lot of applications right away.

2022-2023 Monitoring

Patricia Sehorn stated that all of the monitoring is completed. Everyone was okay besides Smart Kids- they received an action plan for curriculum and supervision. We also already turned in our agency monitoring to the state.

NCPK Outreach Update

Patricia stated for centers to start spreading the word about the NCPK program and telling families that applications are open. Hannah stated that she will start outreach soon. Many families are hearing the word about our program somewhere. We have already received many phone calls this year inquiring about the NCPK applications.

Possibility of Expansion Slots

Trina Wenzel stated that on average 83-84% NCPK slots are filled across the board. Trina Wenzel stated that as a committee, knowing we have over 100 children on the Cabarrus County waitlist, to write a request for expansion funds for 100 more slots. Patricia Sehorn stated that we would need to be careful in requesting more slots than capacity. Trina Wenzel discussed lowering the reimbursement rate for CCS in order to serve more children. Jennifer Baucom stated that across the state, 3 and 4-year-old enrollment is down in Head Start. Ann Benfield suggested to add a letter to the contracting documents. Nicole Sessoms asked what the turnover is for teachers and if we get the slots, can we have staff in those classrooms. Patricia Sehorn stated we do not had any turnover for NCPK teachers so far this year. The committee decided to get letters from the school system superintendents and including them in the contracting documents.

Agency updates

Smart Start update:

Ann Benfield stated that she is working with the program oversight committee to approve the programs for 2023-2024. They are working to find family programming.

The Coming Together for Children Conference will be on 2/25/23 at Crossroads church. There will be a Conscious Discipline workshop on 3/18/23 at Great Wolf Lodge.

DHS Subsidy:

Elizabeth Heston stated they have served 590 applications since opening the subsidy application, 152 pending vouchers and no waiting list for a voucher. A lot of them cannot find space in centers.

CCRI:

Samelia stated that they are hoping to find out more information in Feb about ERS. They have a new staff member, Amanda Vestell.

CCS:

Trina Wenzel stated they are continuing to work on evaluations but referrals are coming in faster than they can turn over. She stated they are hoping to look out how to serve more kids.

KCS/HS:

Jennifer Baucom stated that their building flooded over the holidays but they are back in the building. She stated the parents did virtual learning but it was nice to see the parents interact with their child. Jennifer discussed their new building and what they are including in it.

RCCC:

Nicole Sessoms stated in December they had a pinning ceremony which is an acknowledge of their graduates. 7 participants participated in the pinning ceremony in December. There are 114 participants in the program. Isha Goode stated that at RCCC will be attending NCScript, they are looking for part time and full time instructors. For the week of the young child, RCCC staff will be going to classrooms to read stories.

Endless Opportunities:

Lashonda Houston stated that they are pivoting for the next 2 quarters, with transitioning new staff. She stated that if they need anything for their families to reach out to her.

With there being no other Committee business, the meeting concluded at 11:30. The next meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2023 at 10:00.

Minutes taken and submitted by Hannah Wareham, NCPK Coordinator