

**July 23, 2024**

**EE/NCPK Meeting Minutes**

**10:00am-11:22am**

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 throughout the meeting.

**Committee Members:** Erin Anderson, Ann Benfield, Andrea Mayle, Dana Stikeleather, LaShonda Houston, Jennifer Baucom, Starr Batts, Elizabeth Heston, Debra Pless, Trina Wenzel, Austin DeMeglio, Deborah Beatty, Hoke Pittman, Jordan Maddux, Lora Lipe, Nicole Sessoms, Sue Rebich, Waynett Taylor, Wynter Sexton

**Committee Members Present:** Erin Anderson, Ann Benfield, Andrea Mayle, Dana Stikeleather, LaShonda Houston, Jennifer Baucom, Starr Batts, Elizabeth Heston, Debra Pless, Trina Wenzel, Austin DeMeglio, Deborah Beatty, Hoke Pittman, Jordan Maddux, Lora Lipe, Nicole Sessoms, Sue Rebich, Waynett Taylor, Wynter Sexton

**Committee Members Absent:** Andrea Mayle, Deborah Beatty, Wynter Sexton

**Guest Present:** N/A

**Staff Members Present:** Patricia Sehorn, Tu'Nicquia Bradley

**Welcome and Introduction:**

Ann Benfield, committee co-chair, welcomed everyone and allowed everyone to introduce themselves that were online and physically present.

**Action Items:**

**Minutes of June 12, 2024, and June 18, 2024**

Ann Benfield mentioned that there were some first and second motions missing on both the June 12<sup>th</sup> and June 18<sup>th</sup> minutes that needed to be updated. After discussions about the motions, it was revealed that the Sue Rebich made the first motion and Nicole Sessoms made the second motion for the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, while Nicole Sessoms made the first motion and Waynett Taylor made the second motion for the June 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ann Benfield asked for a motion to amend the minutes for June 12<sup>th</sup> and for June 18<sup>th</sup>. Nicole Sessoms made the first motion and Waynett Taylor seconded.

**Review and Vote to Approve Local Plan**

Ann Benfield introduced the topic of reviewing and voting on the local plans and turned it over to Patricia Sehorn to explain.

Patricia Sehorn gave an overview of the local plan and the purpose of the NC PreK Committee. She explained who can serve as a member of the committee, as well as the type of committee members that are required to serve on the NC PreK committee. Patricia also informed everyone that the staff of the Cabarrus Partnership for Children are only there for support and does not have any voting rights within the NC PreK committee.

Patricia explained that there were updates made to the local plans regarding the Conflict-of-Interest Policy and added the policy from the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting about maintaining the class size of 18. Sue Rebich pointed out that the dates on the policy needed to be updated and Patricia Sehorn stated that she will send out an amended copy.

The committee asked if there were any questions regarding the Local Plan, and no questions were presented.

### **Nominate and Select Contracting Agency**

Ann Benfield asked the committee if there were any other agencies or groups that would like to be over the NC PreK Program for the 2024-2025 school year. No agency or group was identified, and it was motioned that the Cabarrus Partnership for Children will remain the contracting agency. Nicole Sessoms made the first motion and Elizabeth Heston seconded the motion with everyone in favor.

### **Adopt Conflict of Interest Policy**

Patricia Sehorn explained what the new conflict of interest policy entails, such as what is considered conflicted and nonconflicted, and listed who the committee members were. Nicole Sessoms motioned, and Lora Lipe seconded, and everyone was in favor.

### **A written plan to prevent the suspension and/or expulsion of children with unique needs/challenging behaviors and to ensure their families have access to appropriate resources and supports to maintain their child's placement in NC Pre-K Program**

Ann Benfield asked if everyone was able to look at the policy. Patricia Sehorn informed everyone that the policy has not changed. Ann Benfield asked if there was a motion for the policy, Nicole Sessom motioned, and Waynett Taylor seconded the motion. Everyone was in favor.

### **Developing and implementing a written transportation plan**

Ann Benfield alluded to the transportation plan. Patricia Sehorn explained that it states that Cabarrus County does not provide transportation. Ann Benfield added that children should be placed as close to their home as possible. Nicole Sessoms motioned, Starr Batts seconded, and everyone was in favor.

### **Developing and implementing a written transition plan**

Ann Benfield referred to the transition plan for kindergarten. Starr Batts motioned, Sue Rebich seconded, and everyone was in favor.

### **Developing and implementing a written family engagement plan**

Ann Benfield alluded to the family engagement plan. Patricia Sehorn mentioned that there were no changes to the plan. Starr Batts motioned, Lora Lipe seconded, and everyone was in favor.

### **Developing and implementing a policy for inclement weather**

Ann Benfield presented the inclement weather policy. Sue Rebich motioned, Elizabeth Heston seconded, and everyone was in favor.

## **Approval of 2024-2025 Meeting Dates**

Ann Benfield brought up the approval of the meeting dates. Patricia Sehorn stated that the meeting dates are the third Wednesday in July, January, March and May, with additional call meetings as necessary for any actions needed. Waynett Taylor motioned, Nicole Sessoms seconded, and everyone was in favor.

## **NCPK Updates**

### **Child Placements to Date**

Patricia Sehorn explained that they have started placing children as soon as the budget was approved. All but 52 of the slots have been placed, with children identified for the slots.

### **Waiting List**

Patricia Sehorn stated that they have a lot of applications for families that are eligible but over income and are towards the bottom of the list. As slots become open, they would be filled using applicants from the wait list. The wait list is added to daily with new applications coming in, with 20 or more applications added to NC PreK APP.

### **Dial Screening**

Patricia explains some of the children still needed to be dialed or their families needed to be contacted. She goes on to inform the committee that there will be a Dial on Tuesday at McGill Baptist Church with 6 volunteers helping. McKnight also has a list of children to screen as well.

### **Potential Changes to Process for 2025-2026**

Patricia Sehorn introduced the topic about possible changes on how to do the budget and slot allocations. There were discussions during the June meetings about ending the current school year applications in October, however the policy consultant stated that we cannot stop taking applications then. Another option Patricia proposed was to have centers help with taking applications while still doing preliminary allocations in May to give everyone something to start with. Patricia stated that she would get with other directors to work on implementing this. The NC PreK staff will still have to determine eligibility of applications coming in and will still take online applications. Patricia was hopeful that this would help in getting them to the office completed. Ideas on potential changes for the application process were open to the committee.

Jennifer Baucom suggested that during the meeting in January, we can put it on the agenda to plan, such as putting the dial screenings on the calendar. Patricia added on by saying that applications usually start mid-January but are looking to start right after the holidays, hopefully the first week of January. Jennifer Baucom implied that for the January meeting the committee can figure out what everyone will do as well as when to hold mass screenings. Patricia and Jennifer discussed how NC PreK could work with McKnight and Cabarrus County Schools to plan the mass screenings ahead of time to have on the calendar. Jennifer Baucom stated that they would like to know by April if there is still an influx of students that need to be dialed over the summer so that they can submit plans before then to allocate in their budget.

Ann Benfield suggests scheduling screening date as soon as applications comes in.

## **Other Agency Reports**

## **CCRI**

Starr Batts announced no harmless provision was extended, giving providers the decision to determine if they want to go through the current QRIS or the new one that comes out in 2025-2026. Child Care Resources will be there to help if anyone is going through the current QRIS or the future one. They are in training to learn more about the new QRIS that is going to be used in 2026.

Also, Starr mentioned that there are programs that can be utilized to go through mock assessments. Anyone can go through their consultant or outreach to do the mock assessments. The outreach scores would not count, but you can use the scores through the licensing consultant.

CCRI also have other trainings listed on their calendar. Ann Benfield stated that there are some centers that are looking to go through NAEYC accreditation and asked if they have anyone that could assist with the process. Starr Batts informed the committee that she would look into that question and would inform everyone.

## **CCS**

No Updates.

## **DHS Subsidy Updates**

Elizabeth Heston stated that the income guidelines changed July 1, 2024. It went up some and depending on the family guidelines, it went up more than some. DHS Subsidy has 101 pending vouchers. A lot of families fell off because they did not recertify due to not having a plan of care. Registration fees are still an issue along with parents' fees. Overages are too much for families and some providers do have spots due to lack of staff.

## **Endless Opportunities**

Lashonda exclaims that Parent's as Teachers (P.A.T.) are excited. They have gone through the quality endorsement process this year and is one step away from getting it. LaShonda stated that they have a supervisor interview in two weeks and will know in October if they are Blue Ribbon.

The outcomes this past year were outstanding. They are trying to improve the area in which they met the essential requirements but was not at 100 percent.

## **Head Start**

Jennifer Baucom states that they have a lot of parents calling in and are just now getting started with their application. McKnight have all their children are placed and parents are still bringing in information and the packets that they need. Jennifer informs the committee that they are doing a Dial next week and that they are trying to find staff for the upcoming school year.

## **KCS**

No updates.

## **KCS EC**

No updates.

## **P.U.R.E. Excellence**

Waynett Taylor informs everyone that they have exceeded all their goals for getting more staff hired, one of them being bilingual. P.U.R.E. Excellence have updated their websites with a couple of trainings and will start working with Conscious Discipline. The first Conscious Discipline training will begin in August/September. Their new program, Teachers on Call, will train teachers for 2 weeks and will help them gather all the documentation they will need. The teachers on call will serve as a substitute in the classrooms and could possibly be hired by centers.

## **RCCC**

Nicole Sessoms informs the committee that the summer semester ends the following day and that there may be a couple of ladies who may be graduating. She goes on to mention that the Fall EDU 153 and EDU 119 courses will be offered bilingually.

A concern that Nicole mentions is with the people who are outside of the centers trying to get EDU 119 but have out of state tuition and cannot afford it. She explains that they are trying to find funding to help support those people.

Nicole then informs the committee that enrollment is still pretty good. EDU 119 is semi-full, but they usually get a big push right before school start. She states that centers are trying to get some of their new and old teachers to take the course and that they have gotten into some of the new centers. Ann Benfield stated that there was a new family home that opened but could not remember the name. Debra Pless stated that the new family home is called Shawanna's Learning Center.

## **Smart Start Updates**

Ann Benfield explains that they are in the middle of a two-year process for Smart Start, and that their programs from last year are continuing this year because everybody did well in the evaluations and monitoring. Ann states that they have also started new programs from the State Funded Grants' funds. She also explains that they are in the process of getting Cabarrus Share going with some the businesses. The Cabarrus Partnership for Children will be sharing the cost of tuition with the family and businesses.

Ann mentioned that they did increase WAGE\$ to tier 3, which has caused some problems. How they had to do it confused Smart Start, however, WAGE\$ is good to go for tier 3, as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ann states that if anyone have any questions about the programs, they are in the process of putting them all up on the website. They are in the process of starting a new page for State Directed Grant funds because it is not Smart Start. Teacher on Call is also a state directed grant fund.

## **Cabarrus County Libraries**

Hoke Pittman states that they are reaching the tail-end of their summer reading program. The numbers at all five of their branches have been generally up compared to the previous years. He also announced that the Mt. Pleasant branch of the library will be opening a new "version" of itself possibly in November, which will be an active living center/library. Hoke states, in February, Afton Ridge will potentially be getting a new branch that will also be an active living and parks center located behind Target. If all goes to plan, it will be opening on time.

Hoke informed the committee that the library system also educates a little bit differently, but educate, enrich and empower children in the early education population.

Austin DeMeglio added that the summer reading for Concord has been a little low because of all the construction going on around the downtown area. Numbers have been up as far as patron assistance, but a little bit down as far as programing.

Ann Benfield stated that she talked to Amanda Wilkinson about the reading program that they have there, and that there is either too many people for the room or none. She goes on to say that the libraries are the ones who sees the other children that we do not have access to in our preschools.

Patricia Sehorn reminded everyone of the approved meeting dates, and that next official meeting is January 15, 2025, followed by March 19<sup>th</sup>, and May 21<sup>st</sup>, and any call meetings if any actions are necessary. Also following the meeting will be a brief training for the committee members.

With there being no other Committee business, the meeting concluded at 11:07 am. The next meeting is scheduled for January 15, 2025, at 10:00 am.

Minutes taken by Tu'Nicquia Bradley.

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