

## **NC Pre-Kindergarten/ Early Education Committee**

**Wednesday September 21, 2016**

**10am**

The NC Pre-Kindergarten/ Early Education Committee met on Wednesday September 21, 2016 in the Auditorium at Department of Human Services. Ann Benfield led the meeting that was attended by Danielle Mauldin, Teresa Aldridge, Debbie Johnson, QuWanya Thompson, Tanisha Jones, Jason Irving, Kelly Burgess, Annie Parker, Deborah Beatty, Sue Aschenbrenner, Lora Lipe, Ashley Reid, Skylla Solomon, Dee Almond, Debra Pless and Elizabeth Albright. *Committee Members not present:* Maureen O'Bryan, Kimberly Hutchins, Jennifer Baucom, Katherine Boudet, Linda Roberts, Roslyn Dixon, Trina Wenzel and Jamie Clark.

### **Welcome and Quorum**

Ann Benfield welcomed everyone to the meeting. A voting quorum was confirmed among non-conflicted members.

### **Action Items**

#### **Conflict of Interest Statements**

Ann requested that all members sign a Conflict of Interest Statement. This is a yearly requirement. Elizabeth noted that this is not stating if you are or are not a conflicted member, just that you will remove yourself from voting when you would be considered a conflicted member. All present committee members signed the provided statements.

Ann also reminded the committee that members are required to submit updated designee letters, so someone else could represent and vote in their place, should they be unable to attend meetings. Please get those to Elizabeth or Jamie before the next meeting.

#### **August 17, 2016 Minutes**

Minutes from the August 17, 2016 meeting were distributed. Lora Lipe moved to approve the minutes. QuWanya Thompson seconded the motion.

#### **Local Guidelines**

Ann reminded the committee that the main action item on today's agenda is the review and potential amendment of the Local Guidelines. These were emailed to the full committee two weeks ago, along with the minutes from the August meeting. Elizabeth gave a brief account of the purpose of the Local Guidelines and reminded the committee that only non-conflicted members were allowed to vote on changes, which excludes Partnership staff, NC Pre-K sites and members connected to those agencies. For a full description of conflicted status, see the Conflict of Interest statements.

Elizabeth walked the committee through the changes that were made last fiscal year, including those suggested during the state monitoring visit in May 2016. Those sections included fees for meals, Care Team, Family Engagement and the Transition Plan. Both school sites have been asked to advertise the

NC Pre-K Committee meetings on their websites so that we are in compliance with the open meeting laws. Elizabeth also noted that the Family Engagement Plan is still under consideration for changes, as NC Pre-K monitors suggested establishing required minimum numbers of family engagement activities for sites. Ann informed the committee that a comprehensive transition plan is being discussed on the state level, with recommendations being presented this month. The group expressed a desire to wait until after January 2017 to address the Family Engagement Plan after the new recommendations were released from the state.

A printed copy of an email from Cindy Yount (DHHS licensing) was distributed to the group. This states that sites who are replacing staff need to keep in mind that if the former staff had a higher level of education than the replacement staff, they are at risk of a lower amount of points during a licensure assessment. Ann noted that she had asked Cindy to come and speak to the group about this, if there was a need for clarification. A copy of the email is provided with these minutes.

According to NC Pre-K Committee Policy, Annie Parker from Kannapolis City Schools submitted a written request for review to the Partnership previous to the meeting. She addressed the committee, requesting that they consider changing the requirements for eligible teacher assistants. She explained that they have had several candidates who all have high levels of education, and were eligible under the state NC Pre-K guidelines, but were excluded because of the Local Guideline requirements. The committee was provided with the current state and local guidelines and were asked to review each section. Both Dee Almond and Danielle Mauldin commented to the committee that they have experienced similar issues when trying to hire teacher assistants for their non-public sites. A conversation continued about the similar concerns for turnover and hiring of teacher assistants at both public and private sites.

Teresa Aldridge provided a history of the stronger local requirements, stating that they were created during the time Head Start began to require additional qualifications for teachers and assistants. At that time, the committee felt strongly that they needed to raise the bar for then More at Four so that they were creating a standard of excellence across all levels of pre-k in the county.

Sue Aschenbrenner mentioned that it was important to note that the intention behind the state guidelines that allows TAs to be taking classes and teaching means they are working towards a degree in a field they wish to continue in after their classes are complete. The concern is that TAs would use this as an entry point into school systems, without an intention of staying in early childhood. Annie Parker and Jason Irving spoke to that, noting that with the lack of qualified candidates under the local guidelines, it is difficult to find personnel that is focused on Early Childhood. They feel allowing TAs to be working towards a degree would help focus on the staff who intended to stay in the field, with the understanding that turnover is high in TA spots across public and non-public sites.

After a call for last questions or discussion, Ashley Reid moved to amend the Local Guidelines to align them with the requirement of the state guidelines in regards to education of TAs at public and non-public sites. QuWanya Thompson seconded the motion and all non-conflicted voting members approved the change.

### **Information/Updates**

**PORCh (Ann)**

Ann informed the committee that PORCh is currently running normally for families, but agencies are not yet able to run reports correctly. The IT person assigned to this program has left their position, so we are waiting on their replacement to start before it can be fixed. At the Partnership, Lissy is manually working through the reports weekly.

### **Head Start (Ann)**

Ann reported that CCS Head Start is full and they are working on completing the DIAL 4 assessment screenings.

### **Smart Start (Ann)**

The new bidding cycle for the 2017-19 years will begin soon. Applications for current and new bids will be open for submission on November 1 and will be due December 15. See the Partnership website for more information on November 1. There is a spotlight community-wide on Mental Health, Childhood Obesity and Substance Abuse.

The Smart Start Scholarship program is currently full. They hope to be forecasting soon, in hopes that they can add children from the wait list.

### **NC Pre-K Update (Elizabeth)**

NC Pre-K applications are still being taken at McKnight, Long School and the Partnership. All locations are working hard to get in the health assessments and other paperwork before the 30 day deadline. Applications will continue through the Partnership for this school year until December. After that, all intake will stop in January to prepare for applications to resume in February for the next school year.

### **DHS Subsidy (Lora)**

Lora informed the committee that their funding authorization came in \$388,000 more than last year's allocation, even though they were told to expect less than last year. At the end of August, there were 479 families and 775 children on the wait list. In August, they added 106 children, removed 4 and terminated 53 from care. 24 of those were not attending. They are currently working on removing families from the wait list who applied in January 2016. They closed August with 103% spending. \$35,000 is set aside for fraud, which is allowed to be up to 2% of their total budget.

The NC Fast system call is today. There was a vote last Friday to delay the roll out by 2 months. Today's call will determine the exact date to begin. It will probably be January or February. Contracts from providers are due to be completed in the portal this month. Training for providers is coming soon.

### **Family Support (Elizabeth)**

Elizabeth thanked Ashley Reid for getting the needed DVDs to help with the new format for Schedules and Routines education for parents. Those curriculum nights are scheduled to begin this week. Also, she distributed flyers for both the Sensory Story Time at the library branches and for the Celebrating Families program that is taking last minute referrals.

### **Community Updates**

Thompson CFF has new free trainings available for teachers. Dinner is provided. Check their website for information and registration. They are also currently enrolling children with challenging behaviors to work with their specialists.

Kannapolis City Schools informed the committee that the incomplete vision and hearing screenings are being covered by staff on the school level. They have an early release day on Friday and there will be PD for all KCS Pre-K teachers at McKnight that afternoon. Next year, all pre-k classrooms will be at Woodrow Wilson, due to the re-configuration of the other schools in the system.

Dee Almond from Elite CDC said that their NC Pre-K program has been busy completing the DIAL 4 assessment screenings.

Debra Pless, CCHC from the Partnership said that they are resuming work with their Emergency Preparedness trainings. All sites in Cabarrus County must have at least 2 people trained by July 2017. When licensing visits, they will ask to see the notebook that the site has for documentation of this project. Also, Debra mentioned that they currently have 2 different strains of the Hand, Foot and Mouth disease circulating in the county. This is why it has been so difficult to get rid of it. The most common way children and adults are spreading it is through a child sneezing and not washing their hands.

Danielle Mauldin, Kids Korner- They are busy working on DIAL 4 assessment screenings in their NC Pre-K classroom.

Deborah Beatty, Logan Community CDC- Their NC Pre-K classroom is going well.

Teresa Aldridge, Cabarrus County Schools pre-k- CCS has an early release day on 9/30. They will hold a Conscious Discipline training that day for pre-k teachers.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.