

**Buncombe County Board of Commissioners  
September 26, 2017 Work Session**

**Asheville-Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative**

<b>Presenters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amy Barry, Executive Director, Buncombe Partnership for Children (BPFC)</li> <li>• Jennie Eblen, Community volunteer &amp; advocate for children</li> <li>• Jacque Penick, Executive Director, Verner Center for Early Learning</li> <li>• Caroline Rodier, Assistant Director, BPFC</li> <li>• Jenny Vial, Childcare Resource &amp; Referral Director, BPFC</li> </ul>
<b>The Collaborative</b>	Asheville-Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative is a group of early childhood leaders and supporters that came together to answer the question, “What if we could create a system in Asheville and Buncombe County that makes high-quality preschool affordable and accessible to all children”
<b>Report</b>	The Key to Our Futures: Expanding Access to High-Quality Preschool in Asheville and Buncombe County (available at <a href="http://www.abppc.org">www.abppc.org</a> )
<b>Summary</b>	Expanding access to high-quality preschool is an imperative for Asheville and Buncombe County for many reasons. The benefits of ensuring a high-quality preschool experience accrue not only to individual children, but to their families, communities and the economy in our area.
<b>The Need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High quality preschool is expensive. It is difficult for providers to cover the costs of high-quality care, and difficult for families to afford it.</li> <li>• Preschools are scarce. There are currently not enough high-quality preschool providers in Buncombe County to meet the demand.</li> <li>• The preschool profession is undervalued. Preschool teachers are paid at a low rate, and receive few incentives and supports for ongoing professional development.</li> <li>• New preschool teachers are few. There are not enough people entering the early education profession to fill vacancies that could be created by providers who wish to expand and serve more children.</li> </ul>
<b>The Model</b>	The foundation includes: tailored high-quality standards; a clear path forward for providers; a focus on the workforce; and sharing services
<b>Next Steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply a racial equity lens to all decision-making processes</li> <li>• Determine priority populations for initial expansion</li> <li>• Further define provider eligibility</li> <li>• Evaluate provider capacity to expand</li> <li>• Create a timeline for implementing goals</li> <li>• Build out the necessary supports for quality and professional development</li> <li>• Address workforce issues including access to education, professional development, and increased wages</li> <li>• Research shared services options</li> <li>• Identify and mitigate the chances for unintended consequences</li> <li>• Establish goals and benchmarks for implementation</li> <li>• Develop a plan for impact evaluation of the preschool expansion</li> <li>• Refine cost models and begin feasibility studies of various funding streams</li> <li>• Build public will for preschool expansion by enhancing community outreach and engagement efforts</li> <li>• Continue outreach and advocacy with state and local officials</li> <li>• Develop a plan for oversight and monitoring of implementation</li> </ul>

