

Elevating & Expanding Pre-K

An equal opportunity for every child to thrive

Background

- On October 30, 2018, the Board of Commission passed a resolution creating an Early Childhood Education and Development Fund and committee in order to administer \$3.6 million in local grants each year (with a 2% increase annually) to support the following strategies:
 - to prioritize creating new preschool and Pre-K classrooms to serve more children;
 - implement workforce development strategies to recruit and retain qualified teachers;
 - to support strategies for scaling up effective programs; and
 - to provide support services for children and families enrolled in preschool and Pre-K programs

Two years of grantmaking to date

- Year 1

- Committee formation
- First round of grantmaking, including building systems
- Portfolio of grants that support all four strategies
- Site visits
- Data collection systems

- Year 2

- Increased focus on equity
- Improved grantmaking and decision making process
- COVID-19 response
- Portfolio of grants that support all four strategies
- 240 new slots have been created
- Exciting expansions of programs and new collaborations
 - Verner Early Learning & BCS
 - New Pre-K classroom at ACS

Organization Name	Project Name	FY2021 Grant
Asheville City Schools	Local Preschool	\$ 851,411
Asheville City Schools	Maintaining Classroom at Hall Fletcher Elementary	\$ 159,000
Asheville Jewish Community Center	Sustaining ECE Professionals through Recruitment and Training	\$ 13,375
Buncombe Partnership for Children	Buncombe County Early Childhood Teacher Workforce Development Program	\$ 138,019
Buncombe Partnership for Children	Child Care Resources: Professional and Systems	\$ 153,000
Buncombe Partnership for Children	Developing a Comprehensive Staffed Family Child Care Network to increase FCCH slots	\$ 15,882
Buncombe Partnership for Children	Early Childhood Systems Coordination and Shared Services Development	\$ 98,644
Buncombe County Schools*	Increasing Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education at Emma Elementary School	\$ 450,000
CCCS of WNC, Inc. DBA OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling	SECURE Matched Savings for Buncombe County Childcare Workers	\$ 79,000
CIMA-Compañeros Inmigrantes de las Montañas en Accion	PODER Emma Bilingual ECE Shared Services Cooperative & Network	\$ 36,729
Community Action Opportunities	Boost Buncombe Children, A School-Day School-Year Pre-Kindergarten Project at Johnston Elementary	\$ 138,262
Community Action Opportunities	Boost Buncombe Families, A Full-Day Full-Year Pre-Kindergarten Program at the Lonnie D Burton Center	\$ 234,675
Eliada	Eliada Child Development	\$ 106,384
Irene Wortham Center	Early Learning Center Program Expansion	\$ 97,706

Priorities Moving Forward

2025 Strategic Plan At-A-Glance

The graphic on the following page summarizes the work of the Strategic Plan process. However additional details are available in the appendix related to the process for public and employee engagement, as well as the community trends that were analyzed during this process. For even more details, please go to buncombecounty.org/2025 where the materials from all sessions have been stored.

VISION
A caring community
in harmony with its environment
where citizens succeed, thrive, and realize their
potential.

VALUES
Respect – Integrity – Collaboration – Honesty – Equity

COMMUNITY FOCUS AREAS

Educated & Capable Community

Vision: A county
where all
residents thrive
and demonstrate
resilience
throughout their
lives.

**Environmental
& Energy
Stewardship**
Vision: High quality
air, water, farmland
and renewable
energy for future
generations.

**Resident
Well-Being**
Vision: Our residents
are safe, healthy,
and engaged in their
community.

Vibrant Economy
Vision: A robust and
sustainable regional
economy that builds
on our homegrown
industries and
talent and provides
economic mobility
for residents.

2025 GOALS

Increase third
grade literacy rates
especially among
underperforming
students

Increase
kindergarten
readiness

Improve college
and career
readiness

Protect older
residents' ability to
age in place

Reduce greenhouse
gas emissions

Preserve farmland
and environmentally
sensitive tracts

Expand and maintain
cultural and recreational
assets

Increase access to
public transportation,
including public
transit and paratransit
services

Reduce jail population
and enhance public
safety

Eliminate deaths as
a result of substance
abuse

Increase median
household income
to North Carolina
benchmark

Increase total
employment in
region's targeted
industries

Implement land
use strategies that
encourage affordable
housing near
transportation and
jobs

FOUNDATIONAL FOCUS AREAS

Equity: Systems, policies, and practices that support equity for all people and an organizational culture that embraces diversity and inclusion.

Operational Excellence: Proactively managing an infrastructure that contributes to best-in-class performance.

Resources: Ensuring funding, talent, and partnerships that enable high quality delivery of services



Funding

- As discussed at our 12/10 retreat, increase general fund contribution to Early Childhood fund by approximately \$851,000 to offset the local tax contribution that Asheville City Schools uses to fund its Preschool Program.

Elevating & Expanding Pre-K

- Decades of research documents the impact of quality Pre-K on learning, graduation rates, lifelong learning potential, and overall health; as well as the overall return on investment for communities;
- Local experts and stakeholders recommend that expanding Pre-K is most effective when paired with upstream strategies, such as trauma and equity informed early childhood programs and workforce development;
- With two years of lessons learned, strong alignment with the Strategies Plan, and increased commitments to equity work, it's a strategic time to accelerate efforts to expand access to quality Pre-K, including exploring the goal of achieving universal Pre-K in Buncombe County.

Proposed Next Steps

Process:

- 1) We charge the committee to work with county staff to develop recommendations for increasing access to quality Pre-K that:
 - are informed by targeted equity strategies to reduce the opportunity and achievement gap;
 - include longitudinal research to measure impact, including around kindergarten readiness and 3rd grade literacy (strategic plan priorities); and
 - Include recommendations about the goal of achieving universal Pre-K.
- 2) Based on these recommendations, adopt an updated version of the October '18 resolution to set the course for the next phase of this work.

Timeline

When:

- By June 2021: Committee to present recommendations to Commissioners
- By July 2021: Commission update resolution
- August 2021: Implementation of new strategies