# Elevating & Expanding Pre-K

An equal opportunity for every child to thrive

# Background

- On October 30, 2018, the Board of Commission passed a <u>resolution</u> 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 <u>prioritize creating new preschool and Pre-K classrooms</u> to serve more children;
  - implement workforce development strategies to recruit and retain qualified teachers;
  - to support strategies for scaling up effective programs; and
  - to <u>provide support services</u> 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

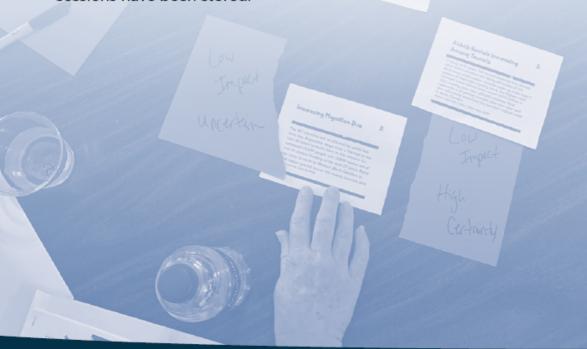
- Year 2
  - Increased focus on equity
  - Improved grantmaking and decision making process
  - COVID-19 response
  - Portfolio of grants that support all four strategies
  - 240 new slots have been created
  - Exciting expansions of programs and new collaborations
    - Verner Early Learning & BCS
    - 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	
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# 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 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 culturalandrecreational 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 C arolina 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 <u>targeted equity strategies to reduce the opportunity</u> and achievement gap;
  - include <u>longitudinal research to measure impact</u>, including around kindergarten readiness and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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