Early Childhood Education Committee

Update to Board of Commissioners

June 1, 2020
Early Childhood Education & Development Fund

- Early Childhood Education and Development Fund established Oct 2018 via Resolution #18-10-16
- Focus on increasing the availability of high-quality early childhood care and education with an emphasis on pre-k programs
- Annual investment of $3.6 million beginning in the FY2020 budget with an annual increase of 2% in future years:
  - FY2020: $3,600,000
  - FY2021: $3,672,000
  - FY2022: $3,745,440
- Investment to date: $11,017,440
Early Childhood Education Committee

Purpose is to engage with community partners, solicit public input and make policy and funding recommendations to the Board of Commissioners

• 15 members:
  • 3 members of the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners
  • 1 business community or economic development professional
  • 1 funder or community investment professional
  • 1 parent
  • 1 pediatrician or medical professional in service to young children
  • 1 professor or higher education professional
  • 1 retiree from the field of early childhood education
  • 6 members of the public representing the community at large
FY2020 & FY2021 grant results

• Program-level goals are set by each grantee, and results are reported on www.buncombecounty.org/grants

• Some highlights:
  • 239 early learning spots added
  • 13 projects including professional & workforce development
  • 5 projects including behavioral specialists
  • 2 projects supporting teacher pay increases
Focusing our impact

Jan 2021 charge by Commissioners:
• Early Childhood Education Committee to work with staff to develop recommendations for increasing access to quality pre-k

• Over past 4 months:
  • Formed ad hoc working group
  • Established definitions
  • Reviewed data
  • Studied existing models
  • Gathered input
  • Created recommendation direction
Purpose

ALL Asheville City and Buncombe County students enter kindergarten ready and fully prepared for success in school.
31% of children in Buncombe County are not ready for kindergarten.
Better data needed

• The use of the same k-readiness instruments by both local public school systems would facilitate the ability to evaluate program success

• Pre-k data linked with k-12 data would facilitate analysis of long-term benefits of pre-k program

• Data that is disaggregated by race, ethnicity & income would provide more revealing information about targeting particular programmatic & community needs

• Measurements of whole-child readiness with data on several domains (social emotional, gross/fine motor, language & literacy, self help etc.) would better inform program focus
# Current Buncombe Landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-year olds enrolled in licensed early care/education in Buncombe County</td>
<td>1,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population of 4-year olds in Buncombe County</td>
<td>2,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent served in all licensed early care/education in Buncombe County</td>
<td>46%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

17.1% of children in Buncombe County are living below the federal poverty level (American Community Survey 2019) (Family of 4 = $25,750 per year)

Almost 42% of children in Buncombe County are living below 200% of federal poverty level

Learn more about The State of Childcare in Buncombe County at Buncombe Partnership for Children’s Reports & Research website: [https://buncombepfc.org/reports/](https://buncombepfc.org/reports/)
NC Pre-kindergarten Program (NC Pre-K)

• Provides free, high-quality educational experiences to enhance school readiness for eligible 4-year-old children

• Serves families at or below 75% state median income (about 200% Federal Poverty Level) & children who have risk factors (educational needs, developmental delays, chronic health conditions, English Language Learners, children recovering from trauma)

• High quality program with proven effectiveness

• Current utilization in Buncombe: 435 slots by 8 providers across 27 locations
Pre-k works

• **DUKE UNIVERSITY STUDY**

• **FRANK PORTER GRAHAM CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE, UNC CHAPEL HILL**

• **IMPACT OF NC'S EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS**

• **THE CASE FOR UNIVERSAL PRE-K JUST GOT STRONGER**

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**QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT:**

7-10% ROI

“The rate of return for investment in quality early education for disadvantaged children is 7-10% per annum through better outcomes in education, health, sociability, economic productivity and reduced crime.”

James Heckman
Nobel Laureate in Economics

[LEARN MORE AT HECKMANEQUATION.ORG]
### Barriers in the local system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges for families</th>
<th>Challenges for providers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Lack of information about services</td>
<td>-Start up costs not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Complex process to apply and enroll</td>
<td>-No start up timeframe to meet program requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Cost for wrap around services</td>
<td>-Expensive to meet program requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Site locations not convenient</td>
<td>-Reimbursement rates less than cost to deliver the service</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Lack of transportation</td>
<td>-Very low teacher pay and incentives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Hours/schedule doesn’t meet family needs</td>
<td>-Lack of qualified teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Trauma/behavioral health needs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-Outside eligibility for services</td>
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</table>
Other NC county-funded models

**Forsyth County:** County-specific pre-k program

**Durham County:** County-specific pre-k program

**Mecklenburg County:** County-specific pre-k program

**Wake County:** Supplemental approach to increase the reach & capacity of NC Pre-K
Other Context

My Future NC:
• Statewide initiative to close the educational attainment gap
• NC Pre-K enrollment goal to increase the percent of eligible 4-year olds served 53% to 75% statewide
• For Buncombe, this would mean expanding from 435 to 915 slots (additional 480 slots)

American Families Plan:
• Presidential proposal that includes federal universal pre-k in partnership with state NC Pre-K
Key elements for a local pre-k model

• Diverse, inclusive and equitable (for children, communities and the Early Childhood workforce)
• High quality program model
• Accessible for all families
• Reflective of family & community voice
• Data focused
• Appropriately financed (fully funded)
• Responsive to changes in the early childhood system
Planned Direction

• Establish a local model to supplement and expand the existing NC Pre-K program to increase kindergarten readiness
• Offer more robust support to existing providers
• Create access for new providers join the program
• Include career development partnerships to address the workforce desert
• Build infrastructure to address data gaps
Intended Result

• Responsive to changes in Early Childhood Education System
• Position our community with capacity to expand NC Pre-K with State/Federal funding
• More children served
• Increased access
• Strengthened Workforce
• Enhanced data
• Higher levels of kindergarten readiness
• Narrow the achievement gap
Thank you!

• Board of Commissioners
• County Staff
• Asheville-Buncombe Preschool Planning Collaborative
• Buncombe Partnership for Children
• Durham, Forsyth, Mecklenburg & Wake Counties
• NC Early Childhood Foundation
• National Association for the Education of Young Children
Next steps

• Design model and develop a multi-year implementation plan, including:
  - Community participation to shape the program
  - Data agreements with public school & pre-k systems
  - Workforce planning
  - Cost modeling
  - Other funding partners
  - Process for selecting an administrative entity & enrolling providers
  - Structure for results monitoring
  - Potential expansion phases (e.g. expanding to include 3-year olds)

• Next phase of planning process expected to take at least 6 months