EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMITTEE

Committee Report to Board of Commissioners

September 6, 2022

Presenters: Kit Cramer, Leslie Anderson, Wendy Wieber
BUNCOMBE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN

GOAL: INCREASE KINDERGARTEN READINESS
EARLY CHILDHOOD FUND

• Resolution # 18-10-16, adopted October 30, 2018
• Authorized the creation of an Early Childhood Education and Development Fund for the purpose of annually investing $3.6 million, beginning in the FY2020 budget with an annual increase of 2% in future years
EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMITTEE

15-member committee charged with:

• engaging with community partners,
• soliciting public input, and
• making policy and funding recommendations to the Board of Commissioners
FUNDING STRATEGIES

Support early care & education for children birth through kindergarten with an emphasis on pre-kindergarten:

• Increase slots for enrollment
• Increase quality
• Develop/diversify early childhood workforce
• Support families
• Enhance effectiveness of overall system
FY2022 GRANTEEES
Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 (FY2022)

• Buncombe County Schools/Verner Center for Early Learning
• Buncombe Partnership for Children
• Colaborativa la Milpa
• Community Action Opportunities
• Eliada Homes
• Evolve Early Learning
• Irene Wortham Center
• On Track Financial Education & Counseling
• Read to Succeed
• Southwestern Child Development
• Swannanoa Valley Child Care Council (Don Collins Center)
• The Christine Avery Learning Center
• YWCA
FUNDED PROJECTS

- Behavioral health support
- Classroom supplies & furnishings
- Construction of new classrooms
- Cooperative & home-based care
- Curriculum, assessments & licensing
- Matched savings program
- Outdoor space
- Outreach & parent engagement
- Student nutrition
- Take home library
- Teacher pay
- Technology
- Workforce development for existing & new professionals
PERFORMANCE REPORTING

• Grant awards are administered via performance contracts
• Grantees submit quarterly reports on project performance
• Grant reports are published on the Early Childhood Fund website at www.buncombecounty.org/grants
PERFORMANCE RESULTS

Fiscal Year July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 (FY2022)

71% of all goals were met across 21 funded projects

- Most difficult goals to attain this year were around enrollment, attendance & staffing
- Good success on goals related to student achievement
IMPACTS OF COVID

• Young children weren’t yet eligible for COVID vaccinations
• Programs unable to have as many classrooms open due to lack of staffing
• Enrollment lower as families chose other care/learning options
• Non-program staff repurposed for classroom operations
• Teacher/student attendance impacted by COVID exposures & infections
• Volunteer engagement limited due to public health precautions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success Example</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>382 Parents improved their education or income status (YWCA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164 Family learning kits were provided for kindergarten readiness (Read to Succeed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 Participants in the bilingual early childhood cooperative network (Colaborativa la Milpa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>708 hours of behavioral therapy were provided (Irene Wortham Center)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Workforce development participants successfully completed EDU119 (Partnership for Children)</td>
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<tr>
<td>89 Early care &amp; education professionals enrolled in the matched savings program (On Track)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
OVERALL IMPACT
Fiscal Years July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2023 (FY2020-2023)

$14.8 + M invested so far, supporting the creation of 393 new slots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2020</th>
<th>FY2021</th>
<th>FY2022</th>
<th>FY2023 (projected)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount Granted</td>
<td>$3,600,000</td>
<td>$3,672,000</td>
<td>$3,745,440</td>
<td>$3,820,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Projects</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Funded Agencies</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># New Slots Created</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Slots Supported</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>899</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMMUNITY INDICATORS:
Children Served

All Children Birth-Kindergarten (0-5 pre-k)

- Children enrolled in licensed care
- Child population
- % of Children enrolled in licensed care

Pre-k Only (4 y.o. & 5 y.o. pre-k)

- Children enrolled in licensed care
- Child population
- % of Children enrolled in licensed care
COMMUNITY INDICATORS:
Workforce

Staffing Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Employees working in licensed facilities</th>
<th>Licensed early care &amp; education facilities (centers &amp; homes)</th>
<th>Linear (Employees working in licensed facilities)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>1,045</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMMUNITY INDICATORS: Kindergarten Readiness

- New unified assessment used by both school systems at kindergarten entry
- NC Early Learning Inventory (NC ELI) administered by teachers within the first 30 days of entering kindergarten
- Includes 14 developmental measures with a focus on 7 that address early language, literacy & math

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language and Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Notices and discriminates rhyme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Notices and discriminates alliteration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tells about another time or place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Follows directions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognition and General Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Counts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Quantifies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Connects numerals with quantities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches Toward Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Attends and engages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Well-being and Motor Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Uses fingers and hands</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social and Emotional Development</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Manages feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Follows Limits and Expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Responds to emotional cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Interacts with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Solves social problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COMMUNITY INDICATORS: Kindergarten Readiness

- 1,819 children in were assessed in 2020
- 69% of children met or exceeded the majority of selected objectives
## COMMUNITY INDICATORS: Disparities in School Readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children Assessed</th>
<th>Met or Exceeded Majority of Objectives (4+)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1,196</td>
<td>892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,819</td>
<td>1,247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Bar chart showing percentages of children meeting or exceeding expectations across different objective counts and race categories.](chart.png)
KINDERGARTEN READINESS DATA

New data partnership will allow us to:
• Study impact of participation in pre-k
• Understand disparities
• Map trends & impacts
• Adjust investments and programming to meet needs
NC PRE-K EXPANSION IN BUNCOMBE

• Partnership for Children was awarded $3.2 M COVID Recovery Funding through Buncombe County

• 2-year pilot project, FY2023-FY2024

• Intended to increase stability and equity, expand high-quality providers and licensed teachers, and make it easier for eligible families to take advantage of NC Pre-k’s proven benefits
SUMMARY

• Proven, lifelong benefits of early learning as part of an educated and capable community
• A wise investment in children & families, existing and future workforce
• Early Childhood Fund off to a great start, demonstrating early successes
• Unprecedented circumstances with pandemic
• Strategies at the ready to build a strong and equitable recovery from the pandemic
Thank you!