

Maintaining Classroom at Hall Fletcher Elementary

FY2021 Early Childhood Grants

Asheville City Schools

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Application Form

INSTRUCTIONS

Buncombe County requests proposals for community based projects to enhance outcomes for young children and their families in our community. Grants made through the Early Childhood Education and Development Fund will be focused on access to quality early childhood care and education.

Please refer to the Grant Guidelines published on the Early Childhood Grants website at buncombecounty.org/grants for complete information about the grant program, including: Purpose; Funding; Eligibility; Timeline; Grant writing workshop; Review process; Awards; and more.

Applications are due by 5:00 pm on February 14, 2020.

BASIC INFORMATION

BASIC INFORMATION – Before completing the application, please tell us a little about the request.

Project Name*

Maintaining Classroom at Hall Fletcher Elementary

Strategy*

Recognizing that some projects will use more than one strategy, select the strategy that most closely applies to this project:

Creating new classrooms to serve more children in early care and education settings

Funding Request*

How much funding is this project requesting for FY2021?

\$170,910.67

Grant Guidelines*

Have you read and understand the information presented in the FY2021 Grant Guidelines for Early Childhood Grants (Grant Guidelines)?

If no, please contact County staff to request assistance: Rachael Nygaard, (828) 250-6536 or rachael.nygaard@buncombecounty.org.

Yes

APPLICATION

APPLICATION QUESTIONS – Responses to these questions will be scored by the grant committee. Each question is worth 10% of the final score.

Organization*

Give a brief history, including date of founding, focus, services, and record of success.

Founded in 1887, Asheville City Schools (ACS) serves 4,310 students in grades PK-12 with 220 children enrolled in preschool. The district's vision is to empower and engage every child to learn, discover and thrive and the mission is to create learning environments that ensure excellence with equity for all students. ACS has 10 schools: 6 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and 2 high schools. Demographically the district serves 50% boys and 50% girls, while 37% are minority students and 63% are non-minority. The graduation rate is 90.7% with 75% of our schools meeting or exceeding growth in 2018-2019.

Asheville City Schools Preschool Program (ACSP) opened at the current location at 441 Haywood Road in 1992 with a total of 8 classrooms. In 1993, the program secured a AA license for child care. The demographics of ACSP are similar to ACS as a whole; however, our program design focuses specifically on serving children who qualify for needs-based and subsidized programs (e.g., Head Start, NC Pre-K and Child Care Subsidy). As the demographics of Asheville have changed in recent years, we have seen the same shift in our program demographics. Historically, 80% or more of Preschoolers have met or exceeded widely held developmental expectations each year.

The mission of ACSP is to prepare children to reach their full potential through developmentally appropriate and family-guided education. Currently, the program is serving 220 children across ACS at 4 elementary sites. Demographically, we serve 46% girls and 54% boys, while 37% are minority students and 63% are non-minority. Initiatives for this school year include Storytelling/Story Acting grounded in research-based work by Vivian Paley and Culturally Responsive Education (CRE). Funding sources for the 2019-2020 school year include: NC PreK (74 children), Head Start (55 children), Developmental Day (6 children), Child Care Subsidy (15 children), Scholarships (26 children) and Tuition (95 children).

Need for the Project*

What is the main issue this project is established to address? What data or qualitative factors/stories are available to show that need?

ACSP received a grant from Buncombe County Commissioners to open a second classroom at Hall Fletcher Elementary School. This classroom opened on August 21, 2019 and has maintained full enrollment along with no teacher turnover. This allowed the program to add a total of 18 slots for three and four year old children. In order to keep classrooms heterogeneous across the district, these 18 slots were spread out across all classrooms within the district. Applications for income-based programs (e.g. Head Start, NC Pre-K and Child Care Subsidy) vary from year to year, but ACSP typically maintains a wait list. The majority of our income-based slots are designated for the NC Pre-K program for 4-year-olds, limiting the number of 3-year-olds we can serve each year. Maintaining scholarship slots that are not specific to 4-year-olds helps us serve more families in need of high-quality preschool education.

Maintaining tuition slots addresses the community need for affordable childcare. The average cost for childcare in Buncombe County exceeds the current market rate of \$775 per month. As noted in "Asheville's child care dilemma: Access, affordability issues loom large", families just over the limits to qualify for

subsidized care often have the hardest time finding quality child care. Currently, ACSP has a wait list of 18 families for 2019-2020 tuition slots and a growing wait list for 2020-2021.

Project*

Explain the project and how it will work. Include the overall purpose and any models or evidence-based practices that will be included. What specific activities and milestones are included in the project plan?

This project proposes supporting the ACSP Program by maintaining funding to support the newest classroom at Hall Fletcher Elementary School in order to serve 220 children across the district.

ACSP serves children on 4 ACS campuses, licensed as 5-star centers through DCDEE. ACSP classrooms serve 18 children each, with a lead teacher and 2 teaching assistants. The 2 assistants have staggered schedules for ratio compliance (1:9) throughout the day. ACSP operates a school-day (8:00-2:30), school year option at all locations and a full-day (7:30-5:30), full-year option at APS.

ACSP classrooms are staffed with highly qualified educators; lead teachers possess Birth-Kindergarten teaching licenses. Assistant teachers meet NC Pre-K and school district requirements. In addition to high-quality classrooms, ACSP provides comprehensive services to ensure student success. ACSP offers aftercare and summer care at APS, and works with community partners at our other locations to support aftercare offerings as available. Transportation is provided as possible within route, ratio, and space constraints. Our transportation plan is revisited regularly to keep the program viable.

The 18 current slots are spread across all 11 classrooms rather than isolated in 1 specific classroom, consistent with our blended funding model, to support representational and equitable classes. We provided 9 scholarship slots to serve children who demonstrate a level of need equivalent to NC Pre-K criteria but who do not qualify for the program, such as 3-year-olds who do not meet the age requirement. We provided 9 slots for tuition-paying to ensure heterogeneous groups. This evidence-based enrollment design is grounded in equity, and ensures young children are not grouped solely based on need.

We propose continued funding for the 18 slots across the program, which added staffing and classroom materials during the 2019-2020 school year.

People Served*

Who will be served by this project? Include demographics for children and families served, workforce, and/or any other relevant groups.

This project will maintain 18 slots with ACSP. The current demographics of the 18 slots consist of:

- 14 - 3 year olds
- 4 - 4 year olds
- 44% Male
- 56% Female
- 55% White
- 33% Black
- 6% Asian
- 6% Multiracial

Each school year, the demographics of the children will vary. Staff who serve in the classroom include a lead teacher and 2 teacher assistants with a combined 34 years of service.

Results*

What results do you hope to achieve with this project? Be specific about how much impact the project will have in line with the goals of the fund, and how many people will be served.

For projects requesting funding for slots, also please include:

- Total new slots created
- Total slots maintained
- # of Subsidy slots created
- # of Subsidy slots maintained
- # of teachers/staff positions created
- # of teachers/staff positions maintained

Total Slots Maintained = 18

of scholarship/tuition = 9 scholarship/9 tuition

of staff positions maintained = 3

ACSP benefits from being part of ACS, which allows collaboration with our K-12 counterparts and supports a coordinated systems approach. Maintaining the second classroom at Hall Fletcher Elementary School allows for access to high-quality early childhood education. We address issues of affordability for families by offering 9 scholarship slots and 9 slots at more affordable tuition rates for school-day (\$525) and full-day (\$775) care. Scholarships will serve children who do not qualify for a subsidized program but whose families cannot afford high-quality care. Priority for these scholarships are given to three-year-olds who may not qualify for other subsidized programs. Our program design and priorities (e.g., NC Preschool Pyramid Model and Conscious Discipline) cultivate a system that responds to the needs of families, such as those impacted by trauma, poverty and addiction. Finally, staff members will maintain access to the ACS benefits and pay structure as well as a strong system of professional learning support, in turn supporting a robust early childhood education career track.

Evaluation*

How will you know you have succeeded? Explain the project evaluation process, including specific measures that will be tracked.

Project evaluation will occur through analysis of program enrollment as well as enrollment for these 18 slots. The goal is to ensure overall program access and participation is representational and equitable based on the demographics of the district. In addition, children's developmental progress is monitored 3 times per year to ensure teaching practices and support resources are responsive to needs and that children are meeting and/or exceeding widely-held expectations as outlined by the North Carolina Foundations of Early Learning and Development. Further, our regular program evaluation process includes ongoing review of demographic, learning/growth, procedure/policy and perception data. Using this data, we engage in a continuous improvement process to ensure our program is capitalizing on strengths, responsive to needs, and accessing and utilizing resources effectively.

Equity*

Describe your approach to racial and socio-economic equity, both inside and outside the organization. What are some specific examples of practices that are in place or to be put in place with this project?

ACS prioritizes ensuring excellence with equity for all children and has developed a district-wide equity plan for the current school year. Goals for the 2020-2021 school year will be added. ACSP is fully engaged in the equity work and ensures all classrooms are representational and equitable to the extent possible. We have adopted practices that are evidence-based and support equity (e.g., the NC Preschool Pyramid model, Conscious Discipline, etc). All ASCP classrooms are fully inclusive settings for children who qualify for Exceptional Children's services. Currently, 35% of the district's preschool-aged children with disabilities are served within our classrooms. Finally, ACSP does not suspend or expel children but rather uses evidence-based practices to support ALL children.

During the current school year, ACSP has embarked on a new initiative to increase Culturally Relevant Education (CRE) using One School One Book alongside APS. Culturally Relevant Education is a conceptual framework that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural backgrounds, interests, and lived experiences in all aspects of teaching and learning within the classroom and across the school (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2009; Milner, 2017). Culturally relevant education is viewed as critical in improving student engagement and achievement, and college readiness and success for all youth, particularly for students of the global majority. Based on the monthly theme, a children's book is chosen for read-aloud. Based on the theme and the book, an activity is created by the teachers through weekly professional learning community. At the end of the month, teachers complete a self-reflection tool that was developed by the director of ACSP. This initiative has shown growth in our teachers based on their reflections. As one teacher stated, "I realized its of the utmost importance to address differences so that every race is acknowledged, acknowledged, and appreciated."

Collaboration*

List any formal and/or supportive partners. Describe their roles in the project. How will they make it stronger?

While we have many partners contributing to the design and success of ACSP, there are no formal partners involved in this proposal. Internally, all ACS Departments support the implementation and success of ACSP, including Student Services, Nutrition, Curriculum and Instruction, Exceptional Children, Maintenance, Finance and Human Resources. Our partnerships with Head Start, NC Pre-K, and Child Care Subsidy will continue to support other subsidized slots within all classrooms, enhancing overall program quality. The services and support we receive to implement Storytelling and Story Acting, the NC Preschool Pyramid Model, and other community partnerships (e.g., school-based mental health services, Buncombe Partnership for Children, SUNSHINE Project, etc.) will continue to be implemented program-wide, supporting the 18 slots as well.

Budget*

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Explain how grant funds will be used, specifically what type of expenses will be covered by County funds. Describe other sources of revenue, including type of funding, source, restrictions and status.

FY21_ECE_Grant_Budget_Form HFE.xlsx

The budget includes costs to maintain 1 classroom for 2020-2021. The request includes salaries, digital curriculum resources, supplies and materials, nutrition, and outdoor space materials. ACS provides no-cost access to all departments and relevant partnerships including: utilities, maintenance, human resources,

finance, technology, student services, and curriculum and instruction. The budget also outlines costs for maintaining 1 classroom with 18 slots with 9 of the slots being tuition funded intended to ensure representational and equitable enrollment groupings and increase affordable access to childcare. Personnel costs include a lead teacher and 2 teacher assistants.

Sustainability*

How will the project continue to succeed after the funding of the grant? Explain your plan for making this an ongoing effort.

During the spring of each year, ACSP will work with ACS to assess the overall Preschool budget. Based on this assessment, it will be determined the sustainability of this classroom. There are several options for sustainability which can include: increase NC PK slots and Head Start slots based on needs through local partnerships, increase developmental day slots across the district, and increase tuition enrollment across the district. Without the continued funding for the classroom, the amount of scholarship offerings will have to decrease. Currently, the district offers 26 scholarship slots to 3 year olds across the district with 9 of those funded through Buncombe County Early Childhood Fund

OPTIONAL INFORMATION

OPTIONAL INFORMATION – This information will not impact grant scoring but will be helpful to the committee.

Partial Funding

If the project were to be offered a grant for partial funding, what factors would need to be considered?

If we were to be considered for partial funding, factors to consider are: 1. Cost of staffing for the classroom, 2. We would need to reduce the amount of scholarships and offer more tuition based enrollment or increase NC PreK slots.

Multi-Year Funding

If you would like this project to be considered for multi-year funding (up to 3 years), what amounts would you request for years 2 and 3? What milestones would this funding allow you to accomplish? Explain why more years are needed to accomplish goals.

This request is for year 2 of this classroom. After projecting an anticipated salary increase for staff from the state legislature, the program would need \$170,910.67 in year 2 and \$170,910.67 in year 3 in order to maintain this classroom. The cost of providing high quality childcare is rising along with the cost of living in Buncombe County.

Resource Support

How can Buncombe County support your organization with this project and in strengthening your work (related to equity, scale, or impact)?

We appreciate the support the county has given us these past few years. With the increase funding, we have been able to provide additional scholarship slots to support three year olds who may not qualify for quality care.

Scale-up

What is your vision for how the strategies from this project could contribute to a significant scale-up the overall system to collectively address the child care crisis?

This project will give more children access to high quality child care and education within Asheville City Schools. As we continue to work on equity issues across the district, this project allows for access for all children. Our teachers have embedded themselves into the equity work of the district that will continue next year as well.

Other

Is there anything else that you want the committee to know?

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- FY21_ECE_Grant_Budget_Form HFE.xlsx

Early Childhood Education and Development Fund Proposed FY2021 Project Budget (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

Organization Name:	Asheville City Schools Preschool Program
Project Name:	Maintaining New Classroom at Hall Fletcher Elementary
Grant Amount Requested:	170,910.67

FY2021 Proposed Project Revenue	Amount	Notes
Proposed Buncombe County Early Childhood Grant	\$ 170,910.67	
Private Pay/Tuition	\$ 69,950.00	9 children for 10 months
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
Total	\$ 240,860.67	

FY2021 Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Grant	Other Funds	Total	Notes
Personnel	\$ 158,680.67		\$ 158,680.67	1 certified teacher - 2 teacher assistants
Travel/Training			\$ -	
Technology			\$ -	
Curriculum/Assessments	\$ 430.00		\$ 430.00	\$10/child for portfolio and \$250 for classroom digital resources
Licensing/Dues			\$ -	
Nutrition	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 10,000.00	Monthly charges for breakfast, lunch, and snack
Transportation			\$ -	
Supplies/Materials	\$ 1,500.00		\$ 1,500.00	
Building Maintenance/Repair			\$ -	
Rent/Occupancy/Utilities			\$ -	
Furniture			\$ -	
Playground/Outdoor space	\$ 300.00		\$ 300.00	
Printing/Marketing/Website/Postage			\$ -	
Admin Expenses (Legal, Accounting, Insurance, etc.)			\$ -	
Other (please list in comments section)			\$ -	
Total			\$ 170,910.67	

Overall Organization Budget	Amount	Notes
FY2019 Actual Year-End Revenue		
FY2019 Actual Year-End Expenses		
FY2020 Adopted Budget Amount		
FY2021 Proposed Budget Amount		

Organization Name:	Asheville City Schools	Project Name:	Maintaining Classroom at Hall Fletcher Elementary
COVID-19 Response:			
Currently, our program is closed as we follow Asheville City Schools. In regards to both of our applications, nothing has changed and we are moving forward with planning for next year.			
Response to Committee Questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What plan do you have to sustain the classroom after year 3? Currently, our other three classrooms at Hall Fletcher, Jones, and Dickson are funded with NC PK and subsidy funds. This classroom can receive the same funding with support from the district to support scholarship slots for three year olds. • Can we see a breakdown of salaries and benefits? Teacher salary is \$47,000/ Teacher assistant #1 is \$21,598 (10 months)/Teacher Assistant #2 is \$25,706 (12 months). They all receive the annual supplement from ACS that is 9-16% of their salary based on years of experience with ACS. Benefits - FICA = 7.65%/RET 19.44%/HOSP \$6306.00. Since we are part of the school system, we are mandated to follow the state salary schedules for staff. Each year the general assembly sets the benefits and salaries. • Does the project expand the number of children served by ACSP? 220 is cited and does not seem to be an expansion. This is not an expansion. It's sustaining the current classroom that was opened last year with county funding. • How are they preparing children to be ready for school success? Curricula? NC PreK? Research shows that focusing on social emotional development in preschool prepares children for success in school. Our program uses Conscious Discipline to guide our social emotional strategies and have been sharing these strategies with the entire school district. By using this program, we are teaching our children skills they can use as they navigate their education. Our program uses Creative Curriculum and the investigation studies associated with the curriculum. Each investigation gives children a foundation along with flexibility to follow the child's lead. Our second benchmark data details 82% of African American Children meeting or exceeding expectations and 89% of white children meeting or exceeding expectations. Historically, our children are ready for Kindergarten as we have a strong transition plan in place. This includes completing All About Me Forms for receiving Kindergarten teachers, sharing all data including behavior plans if needed, and meeting with ACS Kindergarten teachers to discuss incoming Kindergarten children. • The budget shows income exceeding \$240,000 but shows only the expenses associated with the grant amount. How will the additional income--that coming from private pay students--be included in the overall budget? These funds are used to support our program overall where needed. This year, we were able to make some improvements to the playground for the Hall Fletcher classrooms. 			