

# Partnership for Excellence in Early Childhood Education - A Gateway to B.A. and B-K

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*FY2021 Early Childhood Grants*

## ***Warren Wilson College***

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# Application Form

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## ***INSTRUCTIONS***

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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](http://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***

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

### **Project Name\***

Partnership for Excellence in Early Childhood Education - A Gateway to B.A. and B-K

### **Strategy\***

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

Implementing workforce development strategies to recruit and retain qualified teachers

### **Funding Request\***

How much funding is this project requesting for FY2021?

\$380,240.00

### **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](mailto: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.

Warren Wilson College is a private, 4-year college, whose unique approach to education and personal growth is based on the triad of academics, work, and service to the community. Warren Wilson is known for its pioneering work in community engagement and long tradition of social justice and inclusion.

In response to County Commissioners' strategic initiative, Warren Wilson College, along with Verner Center for Early Learning, Owen High School, Buncombe County Schools and A-B Tech, entered into the Partnership for Excellence in Early Childhood Education (PEECE) Project. Warren Wilson College has served as the lead institution to attain the following goals:

- Increase the number of highly qualified early childhood professionals by providing a clear avenue to obtain a 4-year degree. Three students are working towards obtaining a B.A. in psychology, with an emphasis in early childhood education. They are expected to graduate in December of 2020 and in the Spring of 2021.
- Establish a pipeline for developing high quality professionals in the field of early childhood education, by offering foundational early childhood courses taught through A-B Tech at Owen High School. To date twenty one students have completed college level coursework: Introduction to Early Childhood Education, Child Development I, and Child Development II. As of December 2019, A-B Tech decided it was no longer feasible for them to participate in the PEECE Project.
- Increase the quality of training of early childhood professionals through a Mentor Teacher and apprenticeship program. A Mentor Teacher at Verner worked closely with the Owen students to support their classroom experiences and interactions with the children at Verner, and support the completion course assignments. In addition, the MT currently provides outreach, training and mentoring to all Verner teachers, and will be working with the staff of Children and Friends in Black Mountain to support their expansion.

### 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?

Buncombe County continues to face a significant shortage of highly trained and qualified early childhood education teachers to work in a variety of care and education settings. The well documented teacher shortage contributes to challenges in increasing availability and access to early childhood classrooms, and is known to have significant long-term impact on children and families in our community.

Findings from, "Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation" (2015) also suggest young children receive great benefit from having teachers who are well educated. One of the primary recommendations from the report is make strong efforts to hold a bachelor's degree as the minimum qualification requirement for all lead teachers in early childhood education settings. This standard would likely contribute to improving the quality of professional practice, stabilize the workforce, and achieve greater consistency in the learning experiences and ultimately optimize outcomes for children (p.438). The

aforementioned outcomes are all consistent with the goals put forth by the Buncombe County Commissioners.

The primary purpose of our project is to continue the work started in the pilot Partnership for Excellence in Early Childhood Excellence (PEECE) Project.

- Increase the number of highly qualified early childhood teaching professionals by providing a clear pathway for obtaining a 4-year degree at Warren Wilson College
- Establish a pipeline for developing high quality professionals in the field of early childhood education by offering early childhood classes at Owen High School.
- Increase the quality of training of early childhood professionals by strengthening and sharing a mentor teacher model, currently in use at Verner, with Owen High students and area care providers.
- Establish and support a clear pathway to post baccalaureate Birth-Kindergarten Licensure at Brevard College.

## 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?

The Partnership for Excellence in Early Childhood Education Project (PEECE) is an ongoing collaboration between Warren Wilson College, Verner Center for Early Learning, Owen High School, and Buncombe County Schools. New to the partnership is Brevard College, supporting the community need for Birth-Kindergarten licensure. The collaboration offers a direct response to the strategic priorities and supports the education and training of early childhood educators from the high school to post baccalaureate levels, with all parts being implemented simultaneously.

Warren Wilson College will provide:

- the Pathways Partner and faculty to outreach and complete educational planning to identify clear pathways to attain a Bachelor of Arts or when appropriate, B-K licensure

Brevard College will:

- accept a BA with a minimum 2.75 GPA.
- develop an academic plan will determined length of program, estimated to be 2 semesters: one semester of coursework and one semester of supervised teaching at current place of employment.

Verner will provide a site for students to learn high quality early childhood education practices in action. The Mentor Teacher will be responsible for:

- providing students, staff and area care providers constructive feedback and support to learn and grow skills.
- build on the strengths and enhancing areas of needed improvement, utilizing a growth mindset in the mentoring relationship
- Provide reflective supervision

Research suggests effective teachers are not born; they are made (Transforming, 2015). Mentor support is critical in expanding a teacher's capacity to apply what they have learned in formal coursework, trainings, or workshops to their teaching practice.

Owen High School and Buncombe County Schools will be responsible for providing the Early Childhood Education (CTE) coursework including, Parenting and Child Development and Early Childhood Education I and II at Owen High, with Verner as the hands on training site.

## People Served\*

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

Given that this project will serve the early care and education workforce, it is most appropriate to reference the recent Workforce Study (2018) for demographic information.

- The majority (98%) of the workforce identify as women. Our program is of course open to all individuals regardless of gender identity.
- Respondents indicated the median age for Directors to be 49 years, and the median age for teachers at 36 years. Age of the participants in the PEECE Project is not a factor.
- Approximately 28% of the 277 early educators responding to the survey identified as a person of color, (e.g. Asian, Black, Bi-Racial, Native American, and Latinx). All are welcome and encouraged to participate.
- Approximately 44% of the workforce earns less than \$30,000 per year.

During outreach with area care providers, many reported anecdotally that returning to school to obtain a bachelor's degree would not significantly increase their earnings. It is important to note several studies suggest the opposite to be true, and these factors will be shared in outreach.

- The Workforce study (2018) suggests individuals who held a bachelor's degree tended to earn \$2.75 more per hour.
- Hershbein, Kearney, & Pardue, (2020) report that when individuals working in lower paying jobs (e.g., childcare), completed bachelor's and associate degrees, the degree supported an increase in long term economic security and reduced the likelihood that a person lived in poverty or near poverty.
- Wehby, Kaestner, Lyu, and Dave, (2020) found that an \$1 increase in the minimum wage of a parent was associated with the increased probability their child would be in excellent health. There was a corresponding decrease of 25-40% of a child missing school days due to an illness. Healthy children mean a healthy workforce, and this relationship was found to be particularly strong for children between the ages of birth and aged 5.

## 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

Within a finite timeline of 3 years we seek to:

- Graduate the three currently enrolled PEECE students in December of 2020, and May of 2021.

Evaluate if any seek to complete their B-K licensure.

- The Pathways Partner and Warren Wilson faculty will provide outreach and educational planning for area care providers.

We will implement more systematic and formal outreach procedures to document the educators with whom we have met for outreach and educational planning.

- o In year 1, we will focus on the larger centers that have stronger institutional supports for their teachers.

- o In year 2, we will focus on smaller centers and family home care providers. The year will allow us to increase the diversity in the delivery of course offerings, to provide greater flexibility for staff in smaller centers or family home care providers to take classes.

- We will recruit 7 additional participants to begin classwork towards a BA or B-K Licensure in the fall of 2020. Based upon outreach, we will identify the cohort numbers for year 2 and 3.

- In the fall of 2020, we will begin offering Parenting and Child Guidance at Owen High School. In the spring of 2020, Early Childhood Education I will start. Fall of 2021, students will take Early Childhood II, which includes an internship which makes up 50% of instructional time. The mentor teacher from Verner will provide supports to all interns.

Over the summer of 2020, faculty of Warren Wilson and Brevard will evaluate Warren Wilson coursework and integrate edTPA Performance Standards. edTPA is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system used by teacher preparation programs throughout the United States to emphasize, measure and support the skills and knowledge that all teachers need to be successful in teacher licensure programs. Integrating these requirements into our coursework will allow for a more seamless transition to complete post baccalaureate B-K licensure.

## Evaluation\*

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

We know we will be successful by reducing the five barriers to professional learning identified in Transforming the Workforce (2015)

1. A lack of time to pursue professional learning
2. A lack of funds to pay for professional learning
3. A lack of professional community, especially in settings outside of schools systems-an isolated feeling that is present especially in early childhood settings outside of school systems, particularly small organizations.
4. Staff turnover and the need to constantly retrain
5. A lack of professional learning activities, especially in rural and resource constrained areas for special training.

In outreach completed with area early childhood educators, the above ring true. It is also of interest to note many individuals seem overwhelmed by the prospect of returning to school. With the addition of our part-time Pathways Partner, we will be able to meet individually with area educators, accurately assess any potential barriers and create an education plan that best meets the individual's needs. We also believe that the Pathways Partner and Mentor Teacher from Verner will support the development of a more robust learning community. When individuals face challenges they will have known mentor teachers and fellow cohort members to turn to for support. We also seeking to offer convenient and alternative course delivery methods to address the time factor. Most importantly, our program seeks to reduce the aforementioned financial barriers by providing significant scholarships. The cost of attending Warren Wilson will remain at @ \$1,500 per year.

We will collect more formal outreach information. We will also assess course grades, term and cumulative GPA, and seek qualitative information to assess overall satisfaction with returning to school. In addition, we will see to evaluate the participants persistence in school and degree of job satisfaction, to assess the benefits of the Pathways Partner and Mentor Teacher.

## 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?

It is critically important for children to see themselves in the faces of their care providers, therefore we will continually strive to create educational opportunities for individuals from varied races and socio-economic backgrounds. It is imperative that participants in the PEECE program gain a deep understanding about equity and diversity in order to best serve the children and families of Buncombe County. Part of the current program requirements for the PEECE students at Warren Wilson is to take Culturally Competent Educators-EDU 3150. The students also enroll in Building Bridges in Asheville as part of course requirements. Recently, Buncombe Partnership for Children sponsored a Racial Equity Institute. The focus of the institute was on historical and institutional racism, and impact in the present day. Attending the institute was a profoundly powerful experience, and it would likely support a center director or teacher in practicing anti-racism. Attending the Racial Equity Institute will become a program requirement for participants in PEECE Program at Warren Wilson.

A primary purpose of the PEECE Program is to offer scholarships to return to school at a significantly reduced cost. The financial support provided should ideally reduce a barrier for any interested party who may not have the financial means available to return to complete either a B.A or post baccalaureate B.K. at Brevard College.

## Collaboration\*

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

Warren Wilson College has a long standing partnership with Verner. Unique lab-school experiences allow our students to gain knowledge and teaching skills through an apprenticeship model, with teachers providing ongoing mentoring and support.

In our pilot, we successfully partnered with Owen High School, Buncombe County Schools and A-B Tech to create similar apprenticeship experiences and mentoring opportunities for students from Owen. Twenty one students successfully completed coursework that allows them to obtain employment in area childcare facilities.

Although A-B Tech is not continuing in our partnership, Warren Wilson, Verner, Owen High and Buncombe County Schools are excited to move forward to provide support for Owen High to offer Career and Technical Education classes (CTE): Parenting and Child Development, Early Childhood Education I, and Early Childhood Education II, through Buncombe County Schools.

Owen students will continue to come to Verner, where under the guidance of the Mentor Teacher, they will gain experience in providing education and care for young children in classroom settings. In the event that in the future Owen High is chosen to have an early childhood center on their campus, they will already be offering the coursework. In addition, their students will have a strong foundation in direct teaching experiences from their work at Verner, which models high quality childcare practices.

Joining our collaboration is Brevard College. Brevard recently established a Birth-Kindergarten licensure program. This partnership opens the “Gateway to B-K”, and will allow two smaller schools to pool resources to begin creating innovative course work and programming to meet the needs of students, wanting to obtain a post baccalaureate B-K licensure. We will work together to provide course programming that allows students to obtain licensure in the most timely manner possible.

## 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 (2).xlsx

The bulk of the funding requested is put towards educating and training 10 highly qualified teachers to work with young children in Buncombe County. Monies continue to go towards tuition scholarships, student fees, medical insurance for uninsured students, textbook stipends, and Equity and Diversity training,

The creation of a part-time Pathways Partner will be a new part time position to provide outreach to area care providers to discuss educational pathways and to guide individuals in their education decision making. Anecdotally the current PEECE students and others interviewed indicated it can feel overwhelming and scary to think about applying to school. Very few centers have the support to assist an individual in navigating how to returning to school. A pathways partner will meet with potential candidates individually to gain an understanding of their current education status and support them in their application process.

In addition, the other major request for funds are also allocated to create the Career and Technical Educator position for Owen High School. It was suggested we allocate \$70,000 for salary and benefits.

## Sustainability\*

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

Warren Wilson continues to explore the viability of creating a B-K licensure program. In June, our new Vice President for Academic Affairs will start and has a background in Experiential Education, what we do best at Warren Wilson and what has been demonstrated in our pilot program. Over the coming months, we will have a better sense of our capacity to scale up a local B-K licensure program.

Recently the Presidents of several local private colleges met to discuss how the schools can begin to work together. In our communication with Brevard College, there is a growing sense of excitement about the potential of pooling our resource to to create unique programming. We are exploring a variety of ways to maximize both programs potential to reach a variety of students from surrounding counties, who are interested in early childhood education. For example, we are looking at how we might be able to create a faculty share. If a Warren Wilson faculty has expertise in teaching coursework in Exceptional Children in the Early Childhood Setting, would it be feasible for that faculty member to teach students from WWC and Brevard College, in a centralized location, so as to meet the educational needs of students from both colleges.

Strengthening this type of innovative collaboration would likely make us stronger candidates to apply for a larger grant initiatives such as the one created by the Educator Investment Collaborative. The Collaborative is a group of national ECE-focused funders who seek to ensure that every young child has access to high-quality ECE programs led by well-prepared and appropriately compensated teachers. The collaborative



recently put out a call for proposals for a limited number of two-year grants to fund interdisciplinary partnerships to innovate transformation of early childhood education (ECE) lead teacher preparation programs. Our goal is to be prepared to write for larger grant opportunities as we move forward in growing local options.

## 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?

All the component parts of the PEECE Project would maintain as written.

- Owen High would still receive funding to support a Career and Technical Education teacher to offer 5 sections of the three early childhood courses identified earlier
- Owen students would continue to have high quality mentoring and hands on learning experiences at Verner.
- The Mentor Teacher from Verner would continue to support Owen High Students, Verner staff and early childhood staff from the surrounding community.
- If multi-year funding is not available, we would not hire an additional Mentor Teacher to provide outreach to a broader group of care providers.

Warren Wilson will continue to offer scholarships to support participants in attaining a bachelor's degree. Brevard will continue to receive support to provide scholarships to complete course work and supervision towards B-K licensure. We would likely need to scale back on the number of scholarships offered to students. Given that the expressed community need is for professionals with B-K licensure, those students who currently hold a bachelor's degree would be prioritized to begin the post baccalaureate degree. We could also prioritize students who express commitment to obtaining their bachelor's degree and going on for B-K licensure.

### 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.

We would like to be considered for multi year funding as it would lend to stronger programmatic continuity.

Students who start in the fall will complete their BA or BK in year 3, if they are able to maintain a course load of 12 credit hours. Multi year funding allows us to provide scholarships toward completion of either or both the BA or B-K degree. There would likely be an adjustment to tuition at approximately 4%.

At this point there would not be any significant changes to monies requested for staffing.

We would continue to request monies to support staffing the CTE position at Owen High until the point when Owen has an early childhood center of their own on campus, and Buncombe County Schools take over support.

## Resource Support

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

It has been our experience in piloting this project that the support from Buncombe County has been amazing. The only aspect that may be helpful is to have quarterly or biannual meetings of the programs/agencies/projects receiving funding so as to gain a deeper understanding of how these programs/agencies/projects intersect and strengthen the community serving young children and families. For example, at a “social gathering”, I could learn about the new program serving children who have experienced trauma. I would be able to reach out to see if the program could be a potential internship site for students enrolled in the PEECE Project. Conversely, the program director could learn about the PEECE Project and connect their newly hired staff member who moved from out of state, and needs to finish their bachelor’s degree to WWC.

## 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?

The pilot has informed several next steps in training highly qualified early educators. We have learned many of the barriers and challenges that the workforce confronts when considering returning to school. For example, most educators want to maintain employment as they are unable to return to school full time. Taking a full time course load of 16 credit hours is extremely challenging, as students are juggling full time employment, school work and family commitments. We continue to modify the programming to best meet the needs of our current and future students.

The project has also served as an example of a private/public partnership to address a significant community need and also clarify the funding required to offer students a high quality four-year degree program with applied experiences through an apprenticeship model. Moving forward it is our goal to:

- Continue to create multiple clear pathways for current teachers to move forward in their educational attainment.
- Based on the needs identified by the Pathways Partner, create strong course content and deliver it in convenient and flexible ways (e.g., hybrid, synchronous and asynchronous online learning, weekend coursework, late afternoon or evening course meetings, two-week intensive, summer institutes, courses on site at centralized location, faculty comes to you, and faculty share between WWC and Brevard).
- Offer the childcare community strong models of mentorship work. Expand mentorship using a growth mindset orientation.
- Mentorship and leadership support to grow each participants capacity to work collaboratively with fellow students, co-workers, and families.
- Support participants in understanding trauma, trauma resiliency, and resources for resiliency
- Educate and train participants in emotionally responsive teaching practices to improve their capacity to serve.
- Support strong anti-racist practices to help reduce the achievement gap

## Other

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

The opportunity to pilot the PEECE Project has been a privilege. We would like to thank the County Commissioners (XXXX - on the, or and the?) the Early Childhood and Development Committee for their encouragement and support.

# File Attachment Summary

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## ***Applicant File Uploads***

- FY21\_ECE\_Grant\_Budget\_Form (2).xlsx

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

<b>Organization Name:</b>	<b>Warren Wilson College</b>
<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Partnership for Excellence in Early Childhood Education-Gateway to BA and B-K</b>
<b>Grant Amount Requested:</b>	<b>352, 400.00</b>

FY2021 Proposed Project Revenue	Amount	Notes
Proposed Buncombe County Early Childhood Grant		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

FY2021 Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Grant	Other Funds	Total	Notes
Personnel	\$ 165,000.00		\$ 165,000.00	Program Director, Adjunct Faculty 15,000, Pathway Partner PT \$25 per hour@ 20
Travel/Training	\$ 600.00		\$ 600.00	attend in year 2 of their program
Technology	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 2,000.00	synchronous learning materials
Curriculum/Assessments	\$ 176,400.00		\$ 176,400.00	There is no space for scholarships so the request was placed for here for 10 students
Licensing/Dues	\$ 900.00		\$ 900.00	licensure
Nutrition	\$ -		\$ -	
Transportation	\$ 600.00		\$ 600.00	
Supplies/Materials	\$ 100.00		\$ 100.00	
Building Maintenance/Repair	\$ -		\$ -	in kind
Rent/Occupancy/Utilities	\$ -		\$ -	in kind
Furniture	\$ -		\$ -	in kind
Playground/Outdoor space	\$ -		\$ -	
Printing/Marketing/Website/Postage	\$ 500.00		\$ 500.00	
Admin Expenses (Legal, Accounting, Insurance, etc.)	\$ 9,300.00	15%	\$ 9,300.15	
Other (please list in comments section)	\$ 24,840.00		\$ 24,840.00	Students would take 2 per semester. Brevard is working on a reduced cost estimate
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 380,240.15</b>	

Overall Organization Budget	Amount	Notes
FY2019 Actual Year-End Revenue		
FY2019 Actual Year-End Expenses		
FY2020 Adopted Budget Amount		
FY2021 Proposed Budget Amount		This information will not be available until May

<b>Organization Name:</b>	<b>Warren Wilson College</b>	<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Partnership for Excellence in Early Childhood Education - A Gateway to B.A. and B-K</b>
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**COVID-19 Response:**

There is no change to the Warren Wilson College degree or course offerings portion of the application.

- Warren Wilson is offering a bachelor's degree in psychology with a concentration in early childhood education. Currently there are three students enrolled. All three were in the process of completing research this semester, which has been put on hold because it was being completed in childcare centers. They will receive and incomplete in this course and we hope to complete the work over the summer. They are completing their remaining classes online and are doing well.
- All three students will take classes over the summer. 1 student has 6 credits till graduation, 1 has 12 till graduation, and the third has 20 credits or 2 semesters until graduation (she came in with fewer credits).
- We have recruited two additional students. One starts the program this summer. The second student is up in the air right now because of finances. It is my hunch that many early childhood educators are nervous about their finances and job security during this time.

Recruiting for new students to enter the bachelor's degree is the biggest challenge I see right now. The grant application indicated recruiting 7 students. The spring is primary recruitment time. Obviously because of school and child care center closures, recruitment will have to shift to online and or be delayed until summer. I am honestly not sure how recruitment will be impacted by the COVID-19. I am realistic in that many individuals will be impacted financially. The idea of reducing hours to complete school may be untenable. It is also possible that as new federal stimulus packages are being created, we may see additional monies towards returning to school full time. I think so many people who are currently home caring for one or more young children are just now becoming aware that being an early childhood educator is a DEMANDING job.

Were the grant application funded, we would be hiring a Pathways Partner to complete outreach in addition to myself. We know there are many individuals in the field who are interested in returning to school, but are uncertain as to how to do it. For example, completing the Common Application to apply for college is new for most. Gathering the appropriate financial papers and completing financial aid forms is daunting. Does the person want face to face classes or online learning? What is the best option if they need to keep working? The goal in having a Pathways Partner was to meet individually with early childhood educators to complete educational planning and identify clear pathways to attain a Bachelor of Arts, or when appropriate, B-K licensure. In addition, some teachers simply need support and a clear pathway to go on for a B-K licensure. Hence the reason we have partnered with Brevard College. Brevard College is good to go. There are no changes here in the grant application. Once a student has completed a bachelor's degree, they are eligible to pursue a post baccalaureate Birth -Kindergarten Licensure. We will also have to recruit for this program over the summer.

**Brevard College will:**

- accept a BA with a minimum 2.75 GPA. and develop an academic plan to determine the length of program, estimated to be 2 semesters: one semester of coursework and one semester of supervised teaching at current place of employment.

Verner Center for Early Learning- There is no change to this portion of grant application. Verner will provide a site for students to learn high quality early childhood education practices in action under supervision of the Mentor Teacher. Both students taking courses at Warren Wilson College have the opportunity to embed at Verner to watch teachers in action. In addition, Verner will be the site where Owen High School students complete their practical learning. The Mentor Teacher at Verner will be responsible for providing students, staff and area care provider's constructive feedback and support to learn and grow

skills. They will also build on the strengths and enhance areas of needed improvement, utilizing a growth mindset in the mentoring relationship and provide reflective supervision.

PEECE at Owen High School, is also good to go with no changes. I have been in touch with the administration at OHS. They are very much still wanting to have an funding to support a Career and Technical Education teacher to offer 5 sections of the three early childhood courses: Parenting and Child Development, Early Childhood Education I and Early Childhood Education II. Owen students would continue to have high quality mentoring and hands on learning experiences at Verner Center for Early Learning.

Response to Committee Questions:

1. Committee Question: How long would it take a student to receive a BA plus BK?

Each student enters the PEECE program having completed a different number of credit hours in their associate degree program. Warren Wilson has an articulation agreement with North Carolina Community Colleges that accepts the students' associate degree and waives general education course requirements for Warren Wilson.

In a best case scenario, a student enters with the equivalent number of credits to classify them as a junior, and they enroll in 16 credits per semester. A typical full time load is between 16-18 credit hours per semester, though most students typically take 16 credit hours per semester. Based on federal financial aid guidelines, "full time student" is classified as one taking a minimum of 12 credit hours.

In a typical year a student is able to complete 32 credit hours. In two years, they would have completed all degree requirements for psychology and completed additional credit hours towards their bachelor's degree. Students must graduate with 128 credit hours.

Following graduation a student can seek Post Baccalaureate B-K Licensure. Brevard College can accept any student who has completed their bachelor's degree. The faculty at Brevard College (Betsy Burrows, Ph.D. and Megan Keiser, Ed.D.) would complete an audit of the students transcripts to evaluate any additional courses needed towards teacher licensure. Based on the audit, the necessary coursework is identified, the student completes the coursework, then completes their student teaching, and fulfills necessary B-K licensure requirements. It is assumed it would take a student an additional academic year to complete coursework and student teaching. In the best case scenario, it will take three years total to complete the bachelor's degree and post baccalaureate B-K licensure.

Most Likely Case Scenario: Most students entering the program seek to maintain full time employment while attending school full time. The students currently enrolled in the PEECE Program have taken three classes per semester (13 credit hours). They complete a total of six classes, or 26 credit hours per year. If enrolled in 16 credit hours, they would have completed four classes per semester, or eight classes per year. The fewer number of credit hours attempted, simply means it takes longer to finish coursework.

To highlight the issue of differences in credit hours at enrollment, we have one student who entered with more credit hours and will graduate at the end of summer 2020. Another student who enrolled at the same, but entered with fewer credit hours from their associates degree, must still complete 32 college credits in order to graduate with 128 credits. In this case it will take the student three years to complete the bachelor's degree, whereas the first student will graduate in two years, and a summer semester.

Warren Wilson continues to support students by utilizing creative course program offerings. We have created early childhood education courses that meet one day per week. We have also offered classes in late afternoon or at night, times that are more flexible for early childhood educators. Warren Wilson is also part of an online learning consortium which affords online access to classes from other schools. This has offered current PEECE students greater flexibility to complete coursework in a more timely manner.

2. Committee Question: Why is the budget so high when the three students in the pipeline will graduate in May?

We will address this question in two parts. First, the current PEECE students do not graduate in May of 2020. Only one student will have completed degree and credit requirements by the end of the summer 2020. The remaining two students will complete degree and credit requirements between December 2020 and May of 2021. These students will continue to be enrolled in coursework over the coming academic year. In addition, one new student is starting this summer and will work to complete classes during academic year 2020-2021. As explained above, each student enters with a different course credit profile. We must work with each student individually in order to assess the number of credits with which they enter to support their degree attainment and completion of 128 credit hours. The majority of the grant monies are put towards tuition scholarships so that students can complete their degree with minimal debt. We continue to recruit candidates for the program, however outreach has been limited due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Second, the budget increased because we are attempting to grow the capacity of the program. We are requesting funds for two additional positions, the Career and Technical Educator position at Owen (this position is explained in more detail below), and the Pathways Partner at Warren Wilson. We know there is an identified need from employers to increase the number of early childhood educators with bachelor's degrees, and more importantly individuals with B-K licensure. Warren Wilson has been working on increasing the number and variety of early childhood education courses, so that our offerings are more consistent with other Birth-Kindergarten licensure programs. As indicated in the original application Warren Wilson has a new Vice President starting in June. The discussion of starting a full time B-K program at Warren Wilson had been put on hold during the management transition. The Education Department sees the need for a B-K Program and will begin working closely with the new Vice President to further explore Warren Wilson creating the program in Buncombe County. If it is in fact feasible, the increased funding request will be put towards hiring additional faculty to develop and teach additional B-K course work.

However, in the mean-time WWC and Brevard are willing to work together to develop creative course programming. If the grant application is funded we can begin planning to share faculty members to maximize our teaching capacity and course offerings. Both colleges have catered to the "traditional student" who lives on campus and takes classes during the day. Funding allows us to hire additional faculty to offer courses during "alternative" times, e.g., nights, weekends, or during short summer sessions. It also allows the flexibility to explore varied locations to offer classes, for example, creating an equi-distant classroom location between Brevard and WWC which requires minimal commute for area educators. It is possible that even if WWC has a B-K Program, a creative collaboration with Brevard College will only strengthen both programs.

The primary goal in creating the Pathways Partner position was to have a person who could focus all efforts on outreach to those currently working in the field. We do not currently have a clear understanding of the number of early childhood educators who are wanting to return to school for a bachelor's degree or B-K licensure. The Pathways Partner would meet individually with teachers and identify the specific barriers impacting their capacity to obtain a bachelor's degree or B-K licensure. For example, is the candidate almost done with their Associate's degree, but still needs to complete a practicum, because they could not afford to stop working to "student teach"? Is the candidate interested in taking classes, but is afraid of online learning? Does the candidate need to start out taking face to face classes to build confidence and skill, then transition to online learning? In the past it has been a challenge for center management to find a substitute for a "student" to leave to complete return to school. Is there still a barrier to releasing staff to go to school to take classes?

Creating the Pathways Partner would allow us to assess the actual needs of the teachers. We would use the information to create an educational plan that would identify the fastest route possible to obtaining a bachelor's or B-K Licensure. The Pathways Partner would also create a relationship with the candidates allowing for a greater understanding of individualized education strengths and areas of needed support. It



can be a daunting and overwhelming experience to think about returning to school. It would be ideal to have a support system that can mentor and advise those individuals hoping to return to school.

2a. Committee Question: Are those (the PEECE) students going to explore their Bachelors at Brevard?

In our grant application, Warren Wilson College partnered with Brevard College to provide Post Baccalaureate Teacher Licensure pathway. The Gateway to B-K, will allow Warren Wilson students who successfully complete their bachelor's degree in psychology/concentration in early childhood education, with a "C" or better average, to transition to Brevard College to complete teacher licensure.

The PEECE student, who will complete their credit requirements in August 2020, is in fact interested in going on to complete the Post Baccalaureate Teacher Licensure at Brevard if the program is funded.

3. Committee Question: Can you say more about why AB Tech left the program? Why did A-B Tech decide it was "no longer feasible for them to support the PEECE project?"

In March, after the grant application had been submitted, Warren Wilson College received a letter from A-B Tech indicating more clearly why they were withdrawing from the partnership. A PDF copy of the letter received by Warren Wilson is attached to email. Dr. Davis also reached out to Jennifer Bosworth last week to see if she would like to elaborate further on their decision making. Ms. Bosworth shared A-B Tech will send their response directly to the committee.

According to A-B Tech, the program had not provided a return on investment in terms of increased enrollment to the A-B Tech Early Childhood Program, and A-B Tech did not have the resources to cover additional class sections or provide administrative support to the project.

While A-B Tech hoped to see a direct increase in enrollment, the other members of the partnership sought to create interest and enthusiasm about the field of early childhood education. We continue to believe that most young people in high school and college need exposure to rich experiences as they ponder their career pathways. Interacting with highly skilled professionals, who love working with young children, and exemplify best practices is critical in creating the energy, interest, and enthusiasm for the next generation of professionals to work with young children.

From the perspective of Owen High Administration, Verner staff, and Warren Wilson staff, the primary challenge we encountered was related to the personnel hired to teach the courses. According to Gina Toomey, the Assistant Principal at OHS, you can easily identify those "shining teachers". These are teachers who create connections and build relationships with students. As a result students "flock" to these teachers. The connections between the A-B Tech instructor and the high school students did not flourish. While the PEECE partnership and Owen High School sought to support the instructor, this support was declined. The instructor was hired again by A-B Tech in the second year and then resigned unexpectedly in October leaving Ms. Bosworth to finish the remainder of the semester as the instructor of the course.

When the OHS students were at Verner, we saw engaged, able and enthusiastic students interacting with the children. Having exposure to the Verner staff, Mentor teacher, and WWC faculty, all of whom are enthusiastic and passionate educators seemed to make the difference in creating a thriving educational environment. Although there were challenges with the courses, the connections the students created with the children, classroom teachers, and the mentor teacher during their visits to Verner were very real.

4. Committee Question: There is no mention of the CTE Teacher in the grant until the budget. Please explain.

Not mentioning the need for the CTE teacher to teach the CTE coursework was an oversight of the application writer Maura Davis, and I take full responsibility and offer apologies for the omission. I will share

that in my head the CTE program and a CTE teacher are so closely aligned, they could be used interchangeably. However, that clearly created unnecessary confusion.

Clearly, Owen High needs a CTE teacher to teach the CTE classes proposed in the application. When A-B Tech withdrew from the program, we very much wanted to maintain the momentum the PEECE project had started in creating interest and enthusiasm for careers in early childhood education. We were seeking a logical alternative to the A-B Tech course offerings, one way we saw to do this was to offer Early Childhood Education through the Family and Consumer Sciences section of Career and Technical Education. If the committee sees other pathways to offer early childhood educational content to Owen High students, we would be happy to explore other options as well.

5. Committee Question: Do Buncombe County schools pay the salary and benefits for the Career & Technical Educators positions at the other CTE high schools? If so, why should the Fund pay for this position?

Buncombe County Schools currently pays for the Career and Technical Educator positions at the schools that have an early childhood education center on site. These schools include Clyde A. Erwin High School, A.C. Reynolds High School, and T.C. Roberson High School. More recently North Buncombe High School added a CTE teacher and childcare facility. It is uncertain as to which organization pays for this position. Owen High School does not have an on-site childcare facility, so the feasibility of hiring the CTE teacher to teach the early childhood coursework has been limited.

Part of the reason we initially sought to create the partnership between Owen, Verner, A-B Tech, and Warren Wilson was to begin creating interest and enthusiasm about early childhood education. The partnership circumvented the need for an onsite facility, by allowing students to have the direct interaction and learning experiences with young children at Verner. Experiential education allowed the students them to see themselves as an educator. As Marian Wright Edelman stated "you can't be what you can't see."

Owen High is in process of registering students for the coming year. According to Assistant Principal Toomey, they already have 41 students requesting the Parenting and Child Development class. The current 10th and 11th graders are registering this week and they will be the group to enroll in the Early Childhood Education I class. They will complete registration by April 20th and we will have a better understanding of the registration numbers. Over the past two years, we have seen consistent growth in student interest in early childhood education. In the first year, 8 students enrolled in classes, the second year 14 students enrolled. Now we are seeing 41 students seeking to register for Parenting and Child Development. In creating the connection to Verner, we have created an educational opportunity that is likely to open a door for some students to pursue a career.

The benefits to the students at Owen seem stronger if courses are offered through CTE. First, Owen has input on who is hired as the teacher. As previously indicated, the teacher who engages the students can make or break the learning experience. Second, when the courses were offered through A-B Tech, the instruction had a missing element of connecting the students to the Common Instructional Framework (CIF) used by Buncombe County Schools. The students access instruction through a process known as CIF, which focuses on a base for instruction in each classroom that is consistent for students from teacher to teacher. Third, if Child Development and ECE courses can be offered through our CTE program, OHS can then have that teacher working together with colleagues in our building and throughout the county offering a stronger connection to the resources offered to support teachers

5a. Committee Question: They need to take it on now as program ramps up?

In answering this question we understood it to mean that Buncombe County Schools should take on funding the position for the CTE teacher at OHS. At the point we made the application, we had not pursued this

avenue because Owen High does not have a child care facility. Priority for funding typically would go to the sites who have an on-site facility. Owen High is one of the smaller schools in the county. As a result the school experiences under resourcing in comparison to the larger schools in the system. We are uncertain as to when Owen might have a childcare center on their campus.

Our goal in seeking funds through the grant was to maintain the momentum we had achieved and capitalize on the existing the framework to have OHS students take classes at Owen and engage in experiential learning in the classrooms at Verner. Our partnership however, would certainly be open to discussing with Buncombe County Schools the possibility of partial or full funding for the position.