EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMITTEE

Committee Report to Board of Commissioners

September 5, 2023

Presenters: Martin Moore, Carol Steen

& Buncombe Partnership for Children
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**
FY2023 GRANTEES

Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 (FY2023)

- AB Tech
- Asheville Jewish Community Center
- Bent Creek Preschool
- Buncombe County Schools/ Verner Center for Early Learning
- Buncombe Partnership for Children
- Colaborativa la Milpa
- Community Action Opportunities
- Eliada Homes
- Evolve Early Learning
- FIRST
- Irene Wortham Center
- On Track Financial Education & Counseling
- Read to Succeed
- Southwestern Child Development
- Swannanoa Valley Child Care Council (Donald S Collins Center)
- The Christine Avery Learning Center
- YWCA
FUNDED PROJECTS

- Behavioral health support
- Classroom supplies & furnishings
- Cooperative & home-based care
- Curriculum, assessments & licensing
- Matched savings program
- Outdoor space
- Outreach & parent engagement
- Student nutrition
- 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, 2022 – June 30, 2023 (FY2023)

69% of all goals were met across 22 funded projects

- Most difficult goals to attain this year were around enrollment, attendance & staffing
- Good success on goals related to student achievement
SUCCESS EXAMPLES
Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 (FY2023)

- **292** Parents improved their education or income status (YWCA)
- **7** Classrooms received new technology (Bent Creek Preschool)
- **17** Participants in the bilingual early childhood cooperative network (Colaborativa la Milpa)
- **100%** of staff who earn a living wage (The Christine Avery Learning Center)
- **13** Individuals received Start-Up Technical Assistance (Partnership for Children)
- **22** Early care & education professionals and parents completed the matched savings program (On Track)
NC PRE-K EXPANSION IN BUNCOMBE

• Partnership for Children was awarded $3.2M ARPA 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
• Year One report is online: www.buncombecounty.org/prekreport
NC PRE-K EXPANSION IN BUNCOMBE

Strategy 1: Fully Funded NC Pre-K

- 100% of pre-k teachers got a pay increase (avg lead teacher increase $8,500)
- 90% lead teacher retention (after strategies were implemented in August 2022)
- 4 NEW NC Pre-K private sites applied and approved (2 opened mid-school year; 2 opening August '23)
NC PRE-K EXPANSION IN BUNCOMBE

Strategy 2: Higher Ed Supports

- 26 participants enrolled (avg. years experience: 10.7)
- 54 additional teachers have expressed interest
- 100% responded they are more likely to keep teaching in ECE because of supports.
NC PRE-K EXPANSION IN BUNCOMBE

Strategy 4:
Coordinated Outreach & Enrollment

638 apps submitted; goal for FY23-24 is 680, the pre-COVID high
88% of applicants were placed at their first choice
17% of applicants were English language learners
NC PRE-K EXPANSION IN BUNCOMBE

Strategy 3: Ramp up to NC Pre-K

10 classrooms will participate in ramp up

Strategies 5-6: Wrap-around & transport

60 families will participate in pilot programs
Thank you!