

MINUTES

Attendees: Adrian Sandler, Al Whitesides, Carol Steen, Linda McDaniel (virtual), Maia Sloan, Mark Taft, Martin Moore, Pam Holcombe, Pat Tuttle, Sara Lappe, Emily Nicholson (virtual)

Absent: Heather Zanzig, Diana Anthony

Staff in attendance: Rachael Sawyer, Tim Love, Sara Joss, Catalina Otero

Welcome

Minutes

- Approval of minutes from January 7, 2025
 - Motion to approve by Al Whitesides. Seconded by Carol Steen. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business

- There was no old business

New Business

- Funding Update
 - Staff presented information to Board of Commissioners regarding Early Childhood Education fund and Community Investment Grants as a whole for FY26. The consensus was to hold off on moving forward with the application process until County management has a better understanding of budgetary needs and priorities. All applicants from the last three years have been notified that staff will communicate a plan for moving forward with the FY26 funding cycle no later than March 20, 2025.
 - ECE fund will be able to hold the \$78,000 in rollover funds from last year's cycle to utilize for FY26 if needed.
- Buncombe Partnership for Children – State of Child Care Presentation
 - Caroline Rodier, Anya Robyak, Deanna LaMotte presented
 - Snapshot of where we are:
 - From September 2019 to September 2024, enrollment dipped from 4230 to 3760 children aged 0-5.
 - Dr. Lappe requested data on # of children ages 0-5 in Buncombe County for last 5 years to assist in enrollment comparison.
 - Staffing is on the upswing since 2019-2020.
 - Teacher turnover has dipped significantly since 2020 (down to 15% turnover from 19% in previous years post-pandemic).
 - Helene's impact on local ECE:
 - 8 centers with significant physical damage in Buncombe County; 3 are still closed (Christine Avery Valley Childcare Development, Little People's Place, Building Blocks).

- BPFC put out emergency grant applications December 20 - January 10 and received a good response.
- Total reported lost revenue September 27, 2024 – January 10, 2025 was \$1,544,522
- \$2,000,000 granted to BPFC through Dogwood Health Trust of which \$1,310,193 has been distributed so far.
- ECE enrollment Impacts were fairly minimal:
 - Enrollment as of September 26, 2024 = 3710
 - Enrollment as of January 10, 2025 = 3688
- ECE staffing impacts have mostly bounced back:
 - September 26 = 924
 - January 10 = 910
 - Majority of centers reported no change in staffing
- Is there an opportunity for County Commissioners or Chamber of Commerce to provide feedback to DCDEE based on their response to recovery efforts?
- NC Pre-K Updates (year 2 outcomes):
 - 84% lead teacher retention (compared to 51.9% retention the two years pre-COVID)
 - 97% average monthly child enrolled
 - 4 new private sites applied and approved to provide NC Pre-K
 - Families also received transportation, wrap-around service, and summer care support through the program.
 - Advanced teacher's ECE education through additional credit hours and achieving an ECE Certificate, AA, BA, or BK degree.

Announcements

- Q2 grant reports are now available to review on www.buncombecounty.org/grants.
- Angelyn has been temporarily reassigned to Grant Administration for the remainder of FY25. Sara Joss will be the committee contact moving forward.

Public Comment

- There were no public comments.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be March 4, 2025, 1:00-2:30 pm, 200 College St, Ground Floor Conference Room.