

FY2022 Buncombe County Early Childhood Grant Report

Organization Name:	Buncombe County Schools	
Project Name:	Increasing Access to High-Quality and Inclusive Early Care and Education at Emma Elementary School	
Reporting Quarter: (Check one)	X	Quarter 1 (July 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021)
		Quarter 2 (October 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021)
		Quarter 3 (January 1, 2022 - March 31, 2022)
		Quarter 4 (April 1, 2022 - June 30, 2022)

Narrative summary of grant related activities

Please provide brief responses that fit within the box provided

Overall project updates:	<p>All of the modular units arrived on the building site, and the building is almost complete. In addition to the work on the building itself, work has begun on the construction of the outdoor learning environments (a.k.a., playgrounds). There have been several delays due to weather, supply chain issues, and subcontractors being short-staffed, very busy, and experiencing delivery delays. We were hoping that the building would be ready for occupancy in September, but this was not possible due to these circumstances outside of our control. Based on what we know right now, it is looking like it will be the middle to the end of November before we are able to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) from Mobile Modular. Once we have the CO, before the building can be opened to children we need to pass fire, health and sanitation, and licensing inspections, and we need one week to transfer all classroom furniture and materials from the current classrooms at Pisgah View Head Start to the new building. Verner is actively working on recruiting the necessary staff and faculty for full operation of the new center. We are, like most other child care providers in our county, in our state, and across the country, experience significant staffing challenges. We are doing our best to use recruitment and retention strategies that will allow us to hold on to the excellent teachers we already have and grow our workforce to staff the new center.</p>
Activities related to increasing equity, diversity and inclusion:	<p>Verner is working to identify a Talent Acquisition Consultant with whom we can work to develop sustainable, equitable hiring strategies. We have worked hard for the last 18 months to cultivate a culture of inclusion and belonging in our centers and programs. We also recognize that we have plenty more work to do and are committed to continuing to do it. For example, the Verner Leadership Team is currently collaborating on the Whiteness at Work training series with a focus on how we can incorporate these learnings into our organizational work at all levels, including our policies and procedures. We are also looking to provide more leadership opportunities for our staff members from marginalized identities. Two of our team members will be participating in a collaboration of funders and nonprofit partners who are interested in developing a set of supports to help leaders of color and their organizations in the early childhood field. This collaboration is being hosted by the Bridgespan Group, a nonprofit that "works to build a better world by strengthening the ability of mission-driven organizations and philanthropists to achieve breakthrough results in addressing society's most important challenges and opportunities [including find solutions to economic and social barriers that perpetuate inequities and prevent individuals, families, and communities from having access to opportunities they need to thrive]."</p>

Activities related to increasing operational excellence:	<p>Part of our Talent Acquisition strategy is to identify and hire excellent educators, and to retain them once they are on board. Continuity of care (i.e., educators staying with the same children from the ages of 0-3) is an important component of operational excellence, and we are doing what we can to make sure it is a big part of how we do our work. Some of our family members and caregivers are being paid to offer Spanish and American Sign Language classes to our whole team and families, which is an important component of our anti-bias curriculum and promotes the brain development of all children and adults. In addition, we chose furniture and materials for the classrooms at the new center that will make for excellent learning environments for all of our children. We continue to look at additional ways to increase operational excellence, including making sure we have the right level of support staff for our children, families, and faculty. Another priority, especially given the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, is to support the mental and physical health and well-being of all members of the Verner community. One way we are doing so is offering free, on-site mental health check-ins with classroom coverage to our teachers with a contracted, licensed therapist.</p>
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Progress toward annual goals

Measure	Annual Goal	Actual Results (Enter Data)				Progress
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Percent completion of remaining site work, including paving	100%	90%				90%
Percent completion of building construction	100%	85%				85%
Percent completion of outdoor learning environments	100%					0%
Number of classrooms opened)	10					0

Comments:

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Use of funds to date and any budget considerations

Spending Category	Starting	Total Spending (Enter Data)				Amount
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Personnel						\$ -
Travel/Training						\$ -
Technology						\$ -
Curriculum/Assessments						\$ -
Licensing/Dues						\$ -
Nutrition						\$ -
Transportation						\$ -
Supplies/Materials						\$ -
Building Maintenance/Repair	\$ 500,000					\$ 500,000
Rent/Occupancy/Utilities						\$ -
Furniture						\$ -
Playground/Outdoor space	\$ 80,000					\$ 80,000
Printing/Marketing/Website/Postage						\$ -
Admin Expenses (Legal, Accounting, Insurance,						\$ -
Other (Design/site prep, financing costs)	\$ 212,657					\$ 212,657
Total	\$ 792,657	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 792,657

Comments:

Buncombe County Schools has not received any of the \$792,657 funds for FY21-22 as of 9/30/2021. I invoiced the county on 10/8/2021 for the full amount (792,657.00)