

Douglas-Cherokee Economic Authority, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start

Policy Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 4, 2024 | 10:00 a.m. | In Person Meeting

Meeting called to order by Clent Dunn

Type of meeting PC Monthly Meeting

Chairperson Clent Dunn

Note taker Emily Kelley

Called to order 10:05 a.m.

Attendees

Vice Chairperson: Angel Gibson

Secretary: Amanda Dotson

Treasurer: Chasity Gibson

Total Members Present: 16

Quorum Met: Yes

AGENDA TOPICS

1. Welcome/Call to Order | Presenters: *Clent Dunn, Chairperson*

Presentation: Clent called the meeting to order and announced that the meeting had a quorum.

2. Mindful Moments | Presenter: *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

Presentation: Kristie completed a recap of the mindful moments from previous meetings. She suggested that taking the time to schedule mindful moments might be a way to fit these moments in a busy schedule. Kristie read from the list a few ideas such as; turn off the radio when you are driving, when you are taking a lunch break; turn off the lights and relax, and keep a gratitude journal.

3. Literacy Reading | Presenter: *Tessie Crawford, Curriculum & Assessment Manager*

Presentation: Tessie read the book *The Crayons' Book of Numbers*, by Drew Daywalt. This book was picked to help emphasize math because of the notable trend in math scores being lower in recent years. After Tessie read the book, Kristie told everyone that the bracelet and bookmark on their table was to remind them to read, visit the library, and to celebrate literacy month.

4. New Policy Council Members | Presenter: *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

Presentation: The members had a handout with a list of the new policy council members. A member from Blount County had to step down. Kaneisha O'Neil is the new member for Blount County. Clent called for a motion to approve Kaneisha O'Neil to join the Policy Council.

Motion to Approve by: Angel Gibson, Sevier Co.
No Discussion.

Seconded by: Krista Warner, Sevier Co.
All in favor, motion carried

5. Approval of Minutes | Presenter: *Clent Dunn, Chairperson*

Presentation: Clent asked for approval of the Policy Council Meeting Minutes from December 7, 2023.

Motion to Approve by: Angel Gibson, Sevier Co.
No Discussion.

Seconded by: Cindy Dockery, Monroe Co.
All in favor, motion carried

6. Personnel Report | Presenter: *Ginny Ritchea, HR Manager*

Presentation: Ginny gave the members copies of the Personnel Report. The Personnel Committee met on

January 3, 2024 and did not have a quorum. Clent called for a motion to approve and ratify all hiring decisions.

Motion by to Approve by: Angel Gibson, Sevier Co. **Seconded by:** Katie Caro, Cocke Co.
No Discussion. **All in favor, motion carried.**

7. Budget Report | Presenter: *Chasity Gibson, Finance Chairperson*

Presentation: Chasity announced that the Finance Committee met and approved the budget report.

Seconded by: Krista Warner, Sevier Co.
No Discussion. **All in favor, motion carried.**

8. Old Business

- **Head Start Outcomes Report/School Readiness Update | Presenter:** *Tessie Crawford, Curriculum & Assessment Manager*

Presentation: Tessie had spoken at last month's meeting about the Head Start Outcomes Report. She had additional information to share about the report. Tessie presented information to the members using power point. She reported that the Head Start Outcomes Report for Fall 2023 assessing 3-5 year olds had been finalized. Our program uses the Brigance and Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) as assessments. The TSG assessment requires educators to collect documentation for each child throughout the school year. This documentation is scored three times a year. This year's Fall 2023 Outcomes Report is consistent with last year. Math and Literacy continue to have lower scores. Currently, our program has 9.2% Spanish-speaking students. There has been an increase in children with special needs. Some children entered into the program with IEPs and IFSPs. Some children are in the process of being assessed for special services eligibility. Our program had approximately 369 children to return to Head Start this year. Tessie went over the School Readiness Goals.

Discussion: A Policy Council member made a suggestion to increase the number of bilingual books in the classroom. The use of these books has helped her own child. Tessie agreed and suggested that our program will look at doing more of these books.

9. New Business

- **Community Spotlight | Presenter:** *Garnet Sutherland, MPH | Claiborne, Grainger and Union County Health Department Director*

Presentation: Garnet passed out handouts about the Tennessee Department of Health. She explained that every county in Tennessee has a health department. Garnet emphasized the CHANT and WIC programs. She also shared that you do not have to go to the health department in your county to obtain a vital record. You can go to any health department in the state to obtain a vital record, as long as you were born in the state. They can offer support to get a vital record if you were born out of state. The health department also has family planning or women's health services. There are physicians in some counties that work at the health department. If you do not have insurance, they can help you with medical needs. In counties where a physician is not on site, they will help connect you to a local physician in their network. The health department also has a breast cancer and cervical screening program. In addition, any local health department can test for Hepatitis C and provide HIV prevention medication.

Grant Preparation

- **Overall Grant Process & Program Goals/Budget | Presenters:** *Curt Amos, Director/ Melody Cantrell, Finance Manager*

Presentation: Curt gave an overall review of the grant process and Program Goals. Our program is currently in year four of the five-year grant cycle. Our program will be writing a continuation grant for year five. The grant is composed of two sections. Section one is Program Governance. In this section, there are three subsections. The subsections are Goals, Service Delivery, and Governance, Organizational, and Management Structures. Section two is the Budget. Each section requires specific information. The grant should not exceed 60 pages.

Presentation: Melody gave an overview of the program budget. Currently we have 57% of the budget remaining. The program has received the funding amount for the upcoming budget year. Part of the budget is for Training & Technical Assistance (T&TA). The T&TA funds are used to pay for trainings and travel cost to trainings that require travel. There must be a plan in place for the allocation of T&TA funds. This plan is submitted with the grant. A budget worksheet was sent out to the managers to show what was spent in each line and to allow managers the opportunity to request funds for their area.

- **Selection Criteria/Enrollment | Presenter:** *Jennifer Coopman, ERSEA Manager*

Presentation: Jennifer provided handouts for the selection criteria. Jennifer is the ERSEA Manager. ERSEA stands for Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance. Children are selected for the program based on priority points. February and March will begin recruitment for the next school year.

Community Assessment/Self-Assessment/T&TA Plan | Presenters: *Brittany Turner, Family/Community Partnership Manager, Aranda Pruitt, T/TA & Monitoring Manager*

Presentation: Brittany explained that the Community Assessment is completed every three years and updated every year. The assessment looks at the demographic area, what population we serve, poverty level, and number of children in poverty. Some of the things looked at in the assessment are growth and decline in the community. The Community Assessment is used to help develop the Selection Criteria and shows where the most need is in the area. In February, Brittany will start updating and pulling information together.

Presentation: Aranda went over the Self-Assessment and T/TA Plan. Each year the Self-Assessment is completed to make sure we are providing adequate services to children in our program. The assessment is completed with the help of family advocates and Policy Council Members. Through on-going monitoring, we look for areas of improvement. The T/TA Plan allocates specific funds for staff development and trainings. Our program must decide each year how we are going to use these funds, and this plan goes into the grant.

- **Written Plans/Complaint Procedure | Presenter:** *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

Presentation: Kristie explained that the Written Plans are an outline of how we meet the performance standards. These plans are available on our website. She also explained that the Complaint Procedure follows a chain of command. However, it can start at any point on the chain. Typically, the complaints start at the classroom level with a teacher, followed by the area coordinator, then manager, director, and Policy Council.

- **Questions/Comments**

Question: Can you outline the grant process? Curt: The program will keep a grant as long as there are no issues that would prompt a program to go into re-competition. We apply for our grant; no one else can apply for our grant as long as we do not go into re-competition. Every five years a new grant will be written. During the five-year cycle, the program will make updates to a grant and submit the grant.

Question: Are we going to push for speech services from the school system? Curt: We do not have control over the school system. We do what we can, but we are at the mercy of the school system.

Question: Does the T&TA budget include training for teachers when they are hired? Curt/Tessie: Normal onboard training is not included in this cost. Training that goes beyond the onboarding is included. Examples are Creative Curriculum training and Teaching Strategies Gold training. Curt reminded them that the ECLKC website is a great resource for information and training.

Question: How does the waiting list work for enrolling children? Jennifer/Curt: The list changes all the time. If a new application is completed and the classroom is full, the child is placed on a list for the classroom(s) based on the number of priority points.

Comment: The Census is so important to the community. A member told about how someone came to her door to explain to her why the Census is so important and why she should fill one out. She had not completed the Census, but after that visit decided to complete it.

10. EHS Outcomes | Presenter: This topic has been tabled until next meeting.

Presentation: N/A

11. Earned Income Tax Credit | Presenter: *Brittany Turner, Family/ Community Partnership Manager*

Presentation: Brittany passed out a handout. Most families with children will qualify for Earned Income Tax Credit. You can visit the IRS website for a list of places that you can go to file taxes at no cost. You can reach out to a family advocate for resources.

Discussion: How does information like this get back to the parents? Brittany: through flyers we send out, the family advocates, Policy Council members, and information in the Communication Notebook. This notebook is in every classroom.

12. Director's Report | Presenter: *Curt Amos, Director*

Presentation: The Director's Report is uploaded to the website. Curt started by announcing that the Angel Tree Grant funds have been spent entirely. The Angel Tree Grant was for Coker, Grainger, Hamblen, and Union Counties. The money from the grant purchased Christmas gifts from the children's wish list.

The Blount County facility is moving along well. There is now brick on the outside and they are working on the drywall inside.

Discussion: How many classrooms will be in the facility? Curt: The facility was designed for five classrooms. We plan on moving four classrooms into the facility next school year and possibly creating a gross motor room in the extra classroom.

Our program has not been notified of the Focus Area 2 review. The Focus Area 2 review can be unannounced. We will inform Policy Council as soon as we get a notice or they show up.

The Office of Head Start has sent out a notice of proposed rulemaking for the Head Start Performance Standards. There will be a 60-day comment period that ends January 19th. The Office of Head Start proposed to add new requirements to include wages, benefits, breaks for staff, and enhanced health and wellness, etc. If approved, there does not appear to be any additional funding and reduction maybe necessary. The timeframe for the change in wages is 7 years. The proposed changes include pay increases for teachers to be comparable to wages of teachers in the school system and living wages to increase for other staff.

Discussion: A member clarified that this is just a proposal and that to her understanding there is no additional money do to it. Curt: confirmed her comment and reassured her that we will not make any decisions without Policy Council. There are no increases yet.

Client called for a motion to approve the Director's Report.

Motion to Approve by: Krista Warner, Sevier Co. **Seconded by:** Tamra Williamson, Coker Co.

All in favor, motion carried

13. In-Kind/MVP Award/Parent Report | Presenter: *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

- **Parent Report**

Presentation: Kristie went over the parent reports from Blount, Coker, Grainger, and Hamblen County. Many classrooms had Male Involvement Activities and festivals.

- **InKind/MVP Award**

Presentation: Kristie announced the classrooms with the most In-Kind hours for the month of November.

Blount: Fairview

Coker: Parrottsville

Grainger: Bean Station

Hamblen: North Hamblen 2/EHS 1

Jefferson: Cherokee

Monroe: Mt. Vernon 2

Sevier: Harrisburg

Union: Maynardville

14. Adjournment | Presenter: *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

Presentation: There was a drawing for a math kit and a donated homemade coffee cup tree. Client announced that the next Finance and Personnel Committees will meet January 31.

Unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 1:10 PM

Information Provided Online Prior to Meeting

- December Policy Council Meeting Minutes
- January Policy Council Meeting Agenda
- Personnel Activity Report
- Budget Report
- Vendor Activity Report
- In-Kind Report
- Parent Involvement Fund Report
- Director's Report
- Selection Criteria
- Head Start Outcomes Report

Secretary

Date