

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

Policy Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 21, 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 10:03 a.m.

Attendees

Vice Chairperson: Angel Gibson

Secretary: Taylor Courtney

Treasurer: Chasity Gibson

Total Members Present: 13

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. Each member received a Focus Area 2 Review guide and Dr. Seuss magnets. Kristie asked for approval to move next month's Policy Council meeting from April 11 to May 2.

Clent called for a motion to approve this change.

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

Seconded by: Crystal Flatford, Union Co.
All in favor, motion carried.

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

Presentation: Tessie read the book, "Calm with the Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle.

3. DCEA Program Spotlight | Presenter: *Mary Hazelwood, Assistant Housing Director*

Presentation: Mary handed out brochures about DCEA's Affordable Housing Program. She shared with Policy Council that the program has 54 properties in 24 counties. Blount, Cocke, and Union Counties are not included in their service area. There are income guidelines and, in most cases, must be 62 years or older to qualify.

Discussion: Someone asked a question about the application process. It is a great idea to have all your papers ready and in order when you meet with someone to apply for the housing program to avoid a delay in being placed on the waiting list.

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

Presentation: Kristie announced that we do not have any new members. She did mention that we are actively looking for a community representative for Jefferson County.

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

Presentation: Clent asked for approval of the Policy Council Meeting Minutes from February 1, 2024.

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

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

6. Old Business: Grant Approval

- **Budget 2024-2025 | Presenter:** *Melody Cantrell, Finance Manager*

Presentation: Melody explained that the completed budget for next program year is uploaded on the website. This report included 45 Head Start classrooms and 9 Early Head Start classrooms. Melody stressed the need to meet the 20% match for In-kind next year.

- **Community Assessment | Presenter:** *Curt Amos, Director*

Presentation: Curt brought a copy of the Community Assessment to the meeting. He explained that our Agency completes a Community Assessment every three years. Our program makes updates annually. Our Community Assessment is available to anyone who wants to view it.

- **Written Plans/Program Goals | Presenter:** *Emily Kelley, Assistant Director*

Presentation: The Written Plans are how our program plans to meet the performance standards. The Written Plans are being revised by each manager. Once the plans are complete, we will upload them to the website for viewing. Everyone received a copy of the year five goals and objectives. There are now two goals instead of three. We did end the pandemic goal. The program goals are uploaded to the website.

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

Presentation: The Selection Criteria is available on the website. No changes were made. Jennifer explained that the Selection Criteria is our criteria for how we select the children for our program.

- **Program Options/Slot Allocation | Presenter:** *Curt Amos, Director*

Presentation: Curt explained that our program has 3 program options: Full Day/Full Year, Full Day/Part Year, and Part Day/Part Year. We have asked for a 51-slot reduction. The slot allocation revision is on the website.

- **Parent/Community Grievance Procedure | Presenter:** *Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement Manager*

Presentation: Kristie explained that this information had been presented at the last meeting. She reminded everyone that complaints should begin at the classroom level and move up to different levels, as needed, until resolved.

- **Training Plan | Presenter:** *Aranda Pruitt, T/TA & Monitoring Manager*

Presentation: The current Training Plan is uploaded on the website. We carried over six goals, completed one goal, and created a new goal for a total of seven goals. There was an adjustment to the timeline and budget.

- **Self-Assessment/Program Improvement Plan:** *Aranda Pruitt, T/TA & Monitoring Manager*

Presentation: The completed Self-Assessment was provided to the Policy Council for view at the meeting. There were a few concerns but none of the concerns was major. Big thank you to all those who helped in gathering the information for this assessment.

Discussion: There was a discussion about In-kind Pro.

Clent called for a motion to approve the information to submit in the grant.

Motion to Approve by: Angel Gibson, Sevier Co. **Seconded by:** Taylor Courtney, Hamblen Co.
All in favor, motion carried.

7. New Business

- **Agency Audit | Presenter:** *Curt Amos, Director*

Presentation: The Agency and Head Start program had an audit with independent auditors and there were no findings.

- **Community Spotlight | Presenter:** *Jessica Burnett, Volunteer Behavioral Health*

Presentation: Jessica handed out brochures and explained about the Volunteer Behavioral Health program. This Program serves Monroe County in our area and helps pay for the healthcare costs for children who need behavior or mental health services. This does not cover prescription costs.

Discussion: A brief discussion about the service area took place.

- **Personnel Report | Presenter:** *Taylor Courtney, Personnel*

Presentation: The Personnel Committee met on March 20, 2024, approved, and ratified all hiring decisions.

Seconded by: Chasity Gibson, Hamblen Co.

No Discussion.

All in favor, motion carried.

- **Budget Report | Presenter:** *Chasity Gibson, Finance Chairperson*

Presentation: Chasity announced that the Finance Committee met on March 20, 2024, and approved the budget report.

Seconded by: Angel Gibson, Sevier Co.

No Discussion.

All in favor, motion carried.

- **Child Assessment Outcomes/School Readiness Plan | Presenter:** *Tessie Crawford, Curriculum & Assessment Manager*

Presentation: Tessie went over the Early Head Start and Head Start outcomes for winter. Early Head Start has 2 sets of twins, 37 boys, 29 girls, 17 dual language learners, 11 children with disabilities, and 2 expectant families. The assessment results showed that language, literacy, and math have the highest percent falling below expectations while physical and cognitive areas have the highest percent exceeding expectations. The Head Start program has 394 boys, 389 girls, 77 dual language learners, and 94 children with a disability. The assessment results showed that literacy and math have the highest percent falling below expectations while the physical and cognitive areas have the highest percent exceeding expectations.

Clent called for a motion to approve this report.

Motion to Approve by: Angel Gibson, Sevier Co.

No Discussion.

Seconded by: Tamra Williamson, Cocke, Co.

All in favor, motion carried.

The School Readiness Plan is uploaded on our website. We are asking Policy Council for approval to have our School Readiness Committee be the Policy Council members. In the past, this committee was composed of teachers and parents.

Clent called for a motion to approve this School Readiness Committee change.

Motion to Approve by: Angel Gibson, Sevier Co.

No Discussion.

Seconded by: Katie Caro, Cocke, Co.

All In favor, motion carried.

- **FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) & Parent Rights | Presenter:** *Billie Epps, Disabilities and Mental Health Manager*

Presentation: Billie reviewed the IDEA law. She went over the parent/legal guardians' rights with FAPE. She reminded everyone that parent/legal guardians could request an evaluation of their child at any time and any time an evaluation is completed they must consent.

Clent called for a motion to approve this report.

Motion to Approve by: Jolean Lewis, Sevier Co.

No Discussion.

Seconded by: Cindy Dockery, Monroe Co.

All in favor, motion carried.

- **Director's Report | Presenter:** *Curt Amos, Director*

Presentation: This report is posted on the website. In this report, Curt is asking for Policy Council to approve the Director's Report, to submit the Continuation Grant and all related documentation, to submit the Change in Scope to reduce 51 slots, and to apply for the Cost of Living Adjustment if awarded.

- We completed a budget revision to move funds from the supply to equipment line to complete the purchase of the new Blount County facility playground. We are still waiting for approval.
- We received the Focus Area 2 review official notice for April 8-12. More information about the Parent Group Discussion will be given out soon.
- The Blount County facility is set to be completed by the end of May.
- The Grant is due by April 1.
- Our program had to close Wearwood classroom because of staffing issues and plan to make this closure permanent.
- There is a possibility of a 2.3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).
- Curt has asked the Board of Directors for approval to cut 51 slots, which is 3 classrooms. The plan is to close Wearwood, Mentor, and Seymour.
- Curt addressed the possibility that the new Head Start Performance Standards revisions may require us to further modify our program.

Discussion: A brief discussion about how parents can advocate for Head Start funding took place. Clent called for a motion to approve the Director's Report, to submit the Continuation Grant and all related documentation, to submit the Change in Scope to reduce 51 slots, and to apply for the Cost of Living Adjustment if awarded.

Motion to Approve by: Angel Gibson, Sevier Co. **Seconded by:** Katie Caro, Cocke Co.
All in favor, motion carried.

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

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

Blount: Fairview	Cocke: Parrottsville	Grainger: Bean Station
Hamblen: Judson S. Hill/EHS 2	Jefferson: Shady Grove	Monroe: Madisonville
Sevier: Harrisburg	Union: Cross Creek	

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

Presentation: There was a drawing for two door prizes. Clent called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion to Approve by: Crystal Flatford, Union Co. **Seconded by:** Cindy Dockery, Monroe Co.
All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:51 PM

Information Provided Online Prior to Meeting

- March Meeting Agenda
- February Policy Council Meeting Minutes
- Policy Council Officers and Committee Members
- Policy Council Members
- Personnel Activity Report
- Budget Report
- Vendor Activity Report
- In-Kind Report
- Parent Involvement Fund Report

- 2024-2025 Proposed Budget
- Board & Policy Council Report
- 2023-2024 Self-Assessment Compliance Report
- Data Plan Year 5
- School Readiness Plan

Secretary

Date