

**CCDP Head Start
Policy Council Minutes
Date: Tuesday, March 21st, 2023**

Location: Grace Lutheran Church, Berwick

Voting Members Present:

Rachel Dawson (P) Twilla Dowell (CR) Elizabeth Hazzard (CR) Jackie Smith (P) Danielle Howie (P) Kerri Shaylor (CR)

Others Present:

Lisa Brelsford Sarah Meyer Morgana Miller Faith Rierson Audrey Rogucki Rose Stolz Cassie Weaver
Rebecca White Heather Wolfe

Absent:

*Ashley Cornelius (P) *Kaitlyn Floyd Amber Frymoyer (P) Margaret Landon (P)

CR = Community Representative
P = Parent
* = Excused Absence

Welcome:

The monthly meeting of the CCDP Head Start Policy Council was held on March 21st, at Grace Lutheran Church in Berwick. Rachel Dawson, Chairperson, welcomed members and the meeting was called to order at 10:20 am, a quorum was present.

Minutes:

The Minutes from the February meeting were included in the packet. Chairperson Rachel Dawson asked members to review the minutes and asked if there were any changes to be made. Members did not have any changes. Rachel asked members if there were any questions about the minutes, there were none. Rachel asked voting members to make a motion to accept the minutes as they were presented. A motion was made by Kerri Shaylor, and it was seconded by Jackie Smith. The February minutes were voted on and approved.

Reports from Policy Council Officers

Treasurer's Reports:

Financial Reports with In-Kind

The Financial report for the month of February was included in the packet. As part of the financial report, In-Kind balances were also included. The reports show that all in kind funds have been collected for the 22-23 fiscal year. Members were given a chance to review the report and asked if there were any questions, there were none. Rachel asked voting members to make a motion to accept the financial report with the in-kind numbers as it was presented. A motion was made by Kerri Shaylor and it was seconded by Jackie Smith. The Financial report with the in-kind numbers was voted on and approved.

Charge Card/Credit Card

The Charge Card/ Credit Card report for the month of February was included in the packet. Cassie Weaver, Executive Director, noted that the Walmart/Sam's Club card will not be in this month's report due to the card account being closed. Rachel gave members a chance to review the report and asked if anyone had any questions about them, there were none. Rachel asked voting members to make a motion to accept the Charge Card/ Credit Card report as it was presented. A motion was made by Twilla Dowell, and it was seconded by Kerri Shaylor. The Charge Card/Credit Card report was voted on and approved.

Parent Fund

The parent fund report was included in the packet. Members were given a chance to review the parent fund. Lisa Brelsford, Family Engagement Manager, explained to members that there were no meetings in the past month and that is why there were no transactions recorded on the Parent Fund. There were no questions about the report. Rachel Dawson asked voting members to make a motion to approve the Parent Fund as it was presented. A motion was made by Jackie Smith and was seconded by Elizabeth Hazzard. The Parent Fund was voted on and approved.

Committee Reports:

Personnel Update

Kailyn Floyd submitted the Personnel Update report. She was absent for this meeting, but her report was included in the packet. There were 4 promotions, 4 staff who moved to regular status, 1 staff who did not start, 4 new hires 3 of which are pending clearances. Members were asked if they had any questions about the Personnel Update, there were none. Rachel asked voting members to make a motion to approve the Personnel Update as it was presented. A motion was made by Jackie Smith, and it was seconded by Kerri Saylor. The Personnel Update was voted on and approved.

CCDP Board Report

Twillia Dowell shared that Policies changes were approved by the Board as well as the Personnel Update. The Child Care budget was passed and the COVID Mitigation Policy was also passed by the Board.

New Business

Policy Revision

3.4- Probationary Period

This policy was included in the packet. Cassie Weaver explained the revision that was made to this policy. Staff who are hired before a COLA was issued, and are still within their probationary period, will now be given that COLA the same as any other staff who have completed their probationary period with us. These staff will no longer have to wait six months before receiving salary scale increases. Members were asked if they had any questions about this policy revision, there were none. Rachel asked voting members to make a motion to approve this policy revision as it was presented. A motion was made by Elizabeth Hazzard and seconded by Twilla Dowell. The policy revision was voted on and approved.

Policy Edits

5.4, 5.6, 5.7, 5.10, & 5.11

These Policies were not included in the packet but, there were copies available for all attendees to view. Cassie Weaver explained the edits that were being proposed. In February, Policy 6.2 was approved making it appropriate for staff to request unpaid time off when it is needed. Currently, policies 5.4, 5.6, 5.7, 5.10, & 5.11 contain phrasing that does not reflect the change in policy 6.2. While each policy was not presented at the meeting, the request was made that Policy Council approve the edit to those policies to remove phrasing similar to, "All paid time off must be used before using leave without pay." Cassie asked attendees if they had any questions or comments about the proposed edits, there were none. Rachel asked voting members to make a motion to approve the edits to the policies. A motion was made by Danielle Howie and was seconded by Kerri Saylor. They were voted on and approved.

COLA & Quality Improvement & Salary Scales

Cassie Weaver reminded members of their duty to keep all information discussed at our Policy Council meetings confidential. Cassie explained the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) to members. The Office of Head Start (OHS) is issuing a 5.6% COLA and this year is also giving the additional Quality Improvement (QI) funds that will count for our base grant funds. This means that the 5.6% plus the QI funds will remain in our budget application for the next coming program term. The Quality Improvement funds will be used to raise staff salary scales. At this time, she is proposing the salary scales are be increased by 7% but salaries for current staff be raised by 8.5%. It will also add in one extra week of work for our Family Service Workers and the Education Supervisor. Cassie announced to members that our Change in Scope application has been approved. This a great news for our program and for our staff. This Change in Scope will allow us to reduce the number of enrolled children in each federally funded center-based classroom to 13 per room. For this program term, we will slowly be reducing our enrollment numbers as children drop from the program. The purpose of reducing the number of children per classroom is to help reduce the amount of stress in classrooms. Staff have been burned out with difficult behaviors in the classrooms, illness, and staff shortages. Cassie asked members if they had any questions about the COLA, Quality Improvement, and the Salary Scales. There were questions from members about how much Head Start teachers make in other programs and why the rates are so different. Rachel Dawson asked voting members to make a motion to approve the COLA, Quality Improvement, and Salary scales as they were presented. A motion was made by Danielle Howie, and it was seconded by Twilla Dowell. It was voted on and approved.

Self-Assessment

At our February meeting, Morgana Miller gave the training on the Self-Assessment. Information was collected throughout the month of February from each component area. The purpose of the Self-Assessment is for us as an agency to find out what we are doing well and what areas we need to improve in. The final report was included in the packet for members to view, as well as the summary report.

Cassie highlighted some areas in which our program could use improvement. A lot of the feedback our program received this year was regarding the classroom closures due to staff and child illness. We are hoping that our Change in Scope will help keep classrooms open for the next program terms. Our program is doing well in the area of communication with staff and parents which is a plus when it comes to all component areas. Staff are feeling supported in their positions which also helps when it comes to Mental Health and Wellness. Families are also feeling supported with children that have mental health concerns. Community Partnerships are strong, especially with AGAPE and the backpack program that is optional to families, the partnership we have with AGAPE helps keep food in homes on a weekly basis. The complete Self-Assessment and the summary were included in the packet. Cassie asked members if they had any questions about results of the Self-Assessment, there were none. Rachel asked voting members to make a motion to approve the Self-Assessment as it was presented. A motion was made by Twilla Dowell and seconded by Danielle Howie. It was voted on and approved.

Admin & Staff Reports:

Executive Director Report:

Cassie Weaver, CCDP Executive Director, submitted her report for February. Cassie's Spotlight on Success came from Sarah Meyer, Health & Nutrition Manager. Sarah expressed how grateful she is to have Dawn Trescott work with her when it comes to the food reporting every month. Sarah says that Dawn is very good with numbers, and she is always patient when asking for information she needs to process payments for meals. Her patience is appreciated, and she is kind when reaching out for missing information.

Cassie reports that two staff have completed their CDA and two more are in the process of completing it as well. Cassie's report included a Program Instruction from the OHS that was released on February 21st, 2023. The PI was about the COLA being 5.6% and Quality Improvement funding which have been discussed in the approval of the COLA, Quality Improvement and Salary Scales. Cassie asked members if they had any questions about her report or any other information that was discussed so far, there were none. Cassie's reports along with the PI was included in the packet.

Mental Health Report:

Heather Wolfe, CCDP Head Start Mental Health Manager, submitted her report. Heather reported that there are three Behavior Support Staff (BSS) position open; one in Berwick, TPV, and 5th street. PBIS training for new staff has been scheduled for March 17th and March 27th. Heather reviewed some of the information included in the Self-Assessment for Mental Health. She indicated that there were many strengths identified in the self-assessment. Parents had very positive things to say about the support they received. Heather also reported that many staff provided positive feedback as well. The program has worked very hard to support our staff's mental health and well-being this year. Staff expressed their appreciation and indicated that they felt very supported.

Heather also indicated a couple areas for improvement. Most families (77%) reported that they were offered PBIS resources, Positive Solutions for Families or Family Support Staff services. Heather indicated she would really like this number to be 100% so we will try to improve our outreach to families about these resources. Heather did share that 67% of families reported that the results of the ASQ-Social Emotional screens were provided to them. This is a decline from last year and Heather says she wants to make sure that this number goes up in the next year. Jackie Smith, a Benton parent, said that she wasn't clear on when things like the ASQ-Social Emotional screens were happening. She noted that she received lots of information but wasn't 100% clear on what screens were happening at what point in the year. Heather explained to Jackie that during the school year, this screen is completed twice by both the parent and the teacher. It is completed once at the beginning of the year and then again in January/February. On these screens, the parent would fill it out based on what they see in the home and the teacher fills it out based on what they see at school. This information is used to track a child's progress and also so our program can help the family connect with any services or resources they might need in the home. Heather asked if there were any more questions, there were none. Her report was included in the packet.

Education Report:

Rose Stolz, CCDP Head Start Education Manager, submitted her report. The second round of parent teacher conferences were due at the end of February. Numbers were lower due to staff and child illnesses, but they are being completed. We were informed that our NAEYC accreditation was maintained. Erin Del Regno-Evans, a Program Quality Assessor, from the PA Keys was in three classrooms at the Berwick center to observe. Her feedback will be used to set goals to improve our scores as part of the self-assessment. Jenny Pena, Erica Harvey, Brianna Keefe and Missy Kishbaugh have received their CDA credentials. One more candidate will be scheduling their validation visit in April. Three staff are still completing trainings. Most of the transition meetings have been scheduled, we are waiting until Nescopeck gets their new principal and we will be able to schedule those. Rose's report included fall and winter outcomes reports. The fall outcomes were completed within 45 days of enrollment and the winter outcomes at the end of January. In both reports, literacy and mathematics show the slowest amount of growth. All other areas show substantial growth. Rose asked members if they had any questions, there were none. Rose's report was included in the packet.

Family Engagement Report:

Lisa Brelsford, CCDP Head Start Family Engagement Manager, submitted her report. Lisa reported that the Parent Groups did not meet in March, they decided to meet in April. The Active April Challenge will be taking place for the 3rd year. It will be open to CCDP Head Start and Child Care children (preschool aged) and staff. Packets will be going out to staff and families the week of March 27th and the challenge will run from April 3rd to April 30th. Positive Solutions sessions for March have been cancelled. Only one parent has been able to attend the sessions. That parent is now completing the sessions one on one with the Family Support Staff. Lisa reported that 36 families completed the parent Self-Assessment survey. Parent involvement activities such as conferences, parent group meetings, and Celebrations of Learning were noted as a strength. Most parents said they enjoyed receiving the PBIS wellness flyers that included various wellness tips. Family Strengths and Outcomes assessment and the Family Partnership Agreement process was helpful to parents in identifying their strengths and needs as well as setting a goal to work towards. Lisa asked members if they had any questions about her report, there were none. Her report was included in the packet.

Family Services Report:

Faith Rierson, CCDP Head Start Family Service Manager, submitted her report. Current enrollment is at 192, there are two starting this week, and the cumulative total was 216. 170 were categorically eligible, 15 out of 71 slots for 101%-130% have been used and 7 out of 20 over Income slots. Attendance was at 73.6% for the month. This is lower than we'd like but it is due to staff shortages and illness between staff and children. We are hoping that the Change in Scope that will allow us to reduce our classroom sizes will help bring those attendance numbers back up. Our goal is to keep attendance at and/or above 85%, this is also a goal on the self-assessment for the upcoming program term.

For the self-assessment, Faith reports that an area to strengthen for the upcoming year would be to be fully enrolled for the entire school year and to ensure that open spots in the program be filled within 30 days. We are actively taking in applications for the 23-24 program year.

Homelessness is an area of concern in Columbia County. At the beginning of our program term, 17 families were experiencing homelessness. 10 of the 17 are now living with family until they can afford housing. The Family Services Manager and Family Service Workers made connections to landlords who had rental properties and connected families to resources in the community to help obtain first month rent and security deposit. Several referrals were made to Agape to obtain furniture and appliances. A goal for the next program year will be to attend Self Determination Housing of PA Webinars and track reasons for homelessness and put support systems in place to assist families with securing stable housing. Faith asked members if they had any questions, there were none. Her report was included in the packet.

Health & Nutrition Report:

Sarah Meyer, CCDP Health & Nutrition Manager, submitted her report. Sarah's reports also included screening numbers, immunizations numbers, and insurance information numbers, meal counts and injury report summaries.

Sarah noted that the COVID Mitigation Policy was passed and in place within OHS timeframe. The Self-Assessment was completed. Oral Health Posters were collected, and we had participants from 6 classrooms. New immunization tracking information sent to all parents. A goal from our last self-assessment was to have a pediatrician sit on our Health Advisory Committee which has been a challenge for us. After many attempts including sending letters to local pediatricians, sending emails to local medical provider offices, and speaking to a local ER Nurse trying to find a connection to a medical provider, but to date has been unsuccessful. As part of a goal on last year's self-assessment,

CCDP has spent a great deal of time and resources into increasing staff safety and preparedness for unplanned emergencies. One of those resources has been ongoing training and building threat assessments with a local State Trooper and he has now visited every site and classroom. Danielle Howie suggested about a pediatrician, she suggested that we search for a retired pediatrician at a nursing home as they may have more time on their hands. Elizabeth Hazzard commented on how times have changed in the way we have to train staff on potential emergency situations dealing with possible injury. The group agreed and Sarah commented by explaining that we would rather utilize everything in our classrooms and centers to keep us safe than to possibly lose a child due to an intruder or any other emergency. Sarah asked members if they had any other questions or comments about her reports, or the self-assessment. Elizabeth and Danielle both asked follow-up questions regarding safety based on information in the Health Assessment. Sarah was able to answer their questions and provide further details regarding classroom safety, emergency plans, and the trooper recommendations. Her report with screening numbers was included in the packet.

Education & Disabilities Report:

Rebecca White, CCDP Head Start Education & Disabilities Manager, submitted her report. In the disabilities portion, Rebecca's report includes the number and percentages of children in the program with IEP's.

10% or 15 of our center-based children, 19% or 5 of our combination option children and 29% or 7 of our home-based children have an IEP. There are currently 39 referrals out to the IU, and our Family Support Staff (FSS) has of total of 15 referrals program wide. In the Education portion of her report, Rebecca noted that parent teacher conferences at 5th street have been completed. In Benton, the parent teacher conferences are being completed at the home visits. Berwick and Bloomsburg Socialization days are going well at the local libraries.

Rebecca reported that the Early Childhood Conference will be taking place on Friday, May 19th, 2023, at the St Luke's Church in Bloomsburg.

In the Education portion of the self-assessment, it was communicated that Benton parents would like to have more in center days if it as possible. For Home based, families who returned the survey noted that each home visit included math activities, language activities, literacy activities, fine and gross motor activities. Parents report seeing growth in their child's development and academic skills.

In the Disabilities portion of the self-assessment, parents communicated that they felt they were provided information at their IEP meetings, their questions were answered, the services were explained. Our program is seeing a larger number of children coming into the program this year who have significant delays (Down's Syndrome, Autism, etc.). Some of these children are coming in at the age of three without having any early intervention and no evaluation up to this point. The local IU program has most of the children who have been referred on a waiting list to be evaluated due to staffing shortages within their agency. The Disabilities Manager meets periodically with the CSIU administrators to increase the communication and be a support to each other during the referral and IEP process.

Rebecca asked if members had any questions about her report, there were none. Rebecca's report was included in the packet.

Open Discussion & Answer Period:


None

Parent Group Report: N/A

Closing:

Rachel Dawson thanked members for their participation and gave a reminder about the next meeting that would be taking place which is, Tuesday, April 18th, 2023 @ Benton Methodist Church in Benton at 10:15am.

Chairperson Signature & Date


Rachel Dawson (Mar 28, 2023 13:35 EDT)