

**Head Start Policy Council**  
**September 21, 2022 Noon**  
**Virtual/Stearns Education Center**

**Attending:** Courtney Holder (Polk DSS), Kelci Hampton (parent, Saluda Elementary), Philicia Pace (parent, Sunny View Elementary), Kailee Epley (parent, Tryon Elementary), Donna Wood (community member, The Hope Chest), Amy Smith (WNC Source), Avery Reel (Polk County Health Department)

*\*\*Since a quorum of elected members was not present the meeting information was shared electronically after the meeting and members voted electronically on items per by-laws..*

**Others Present:** Kathy Harding, Amanda VanDuyne, Debbie Lovelace, Jan Crump, Xan Morse, Lisa Brown, Courtney Edney

**Call Meeting to Order:** Mrs. Holder called the meeting to order at 12:08pm.

**Welcome and Introductions:** Ms. VanDuyne welcomed everyone. All members introduced themselves and shared what school or organization they represented.

**Election of new Policy Council members:** Ms. VanDuyne introduced new members to the group - Kelci Hampton, Philicia Pace, Kailee Epley, Amy Smith, Avery Reel. Also, another parent from Polk Central Elementary will be joining the group but was not present at the meeting; Alicia Avellaneda. A motion and a second was made to elect these members and an email will be sent to other members not present for approval.

**Code of Conduct:** Mrs. Harding reviewed the Code of Conduct for Policy Council members. She expressed meetings are a safe space to have discussions and confidentiality and respect for all are expectations of members. She explained that anyone can file a grievance per Polk County Schools policy. She told members they must refrain from accepting or soliciting favors that would constitute a conflict of interest. Ms. VanDuyne told members they could keep the copy in their packet and she had a second copy for each to sign.

**What is Head Start Policy Council?:** Ms. VanDuyne referred members to the handout in their packets. She reviewed the Head Start requirements for the Policy Council. She explained members could attend virtually or in person.

**Approval of May 18, 2022 Minutes:** The minutes from the May 18, 2022 Policy Council meeting were included in member packets. Mrs. Wood made a motion to approve and Mrs. Holder seconded. Approval from other members will be obtained electronically.

**Reports/Information:** Mrs. Lovelace reviewed the financial report in member packets. She explained the document shows the budget, expenditures, encumbrances and remaining balance. She told members Head Start has provided \$20,000 additional funds this year to

cover the increase in personnel costs. She also explained there is \$1.5 million being held for the new building at Tryon Elementary School. She also reviewed the credit card report, telling members information is shared about any credit card charges made by the PreK program.

Ms. VanDuyne reviewed the monthly enrollment summary. The program has nine classrooms with a total enrollment of 103 for August, including 64 Head Start students. Enrollment has increased since August for all funding streams. There were only three attendance days for August so the attendance percentage is excellent.

Ms. VanDuyne also shared the Family Services summary. She stated she had been busy enrolling more students, as well as visiting and helping in classrooms. She is planning for in-person family engagement events this year, and hopes to start Parent Cafe meetings at each school soon.

Ms. Brown told members she had worked during the summer, preparing child files for both the office and the classroom as children were enrolled. She has been busy ordering supplies and materials for the beginning of the school year. She assisted Mrs. Harding in updating the compliance notebooks for classrooms. She said she had worked at Forbes Preschool during the first few weeks of school to help them get off to a good start.

Mrs. Edney shared that she had been reviewing student information to make sure all students have all the required health information. She has assisted families in finding primary care providers. She completed CPR and first aid training for PreK staff. She explained she has started doing hearing and vision screenings and will be sending reports to families about these screenings. In her role as PreK Disabilities Coordinator she is attending Care Team meetings as necessary. She is also working with the Blue Ridge Health Dental Bus to coordinate visits to each site for the required Head Start dental screenings. She explained this process, telling members about the Tooth Bus. Blue Ridge Health is able to serve uninsured families if treatment is needed and will come back to the schools to provide the needed services. She feels this partnership is very important because dental health is important to overall health. She also told members that all classrooms are again brushing teeth once a day. Mrs. Harding remarked that parents receive information about the screening process prior to the event and must sign a permission form. Ms. Epley said this service had been very helpful to her and was a benefit to her older son.

Mrs. Morse told members she and teachers had been busy with all the usual beginning of the year activities, setting up classrooms and meeting children and families prior to school starting. She said the program has six new staff members and she had provided new employee orientation activities for them. She also explained that she had worked in a classroom the first two weeks of school when a teacher was unexpectedly out on maternity leave a month early.

Mrs. Harding shared with the group that she was surrounded by good people to work with and she offered her thanks to the four PreK Program staff. She shared the architectural rendering of the new annex at Tryon Elementary that would be built to house the PreK program. She said

the program had received \$1.5 million in funding from Head Start for this building project and would use other resources to obtain the necessary funding to complete the project. She said the school system and the PreK program would always be indebted to the Forbes Foundation for the current building and all the years it has been used to serve children.

**New Business:** Ms. VanDuyne asked members about meeting days and times and what worked best for each person's schedule. After a brief discussion it was decided that the third Tuesday of each month at 12 noon would be when the group would meet. She told members that officers would be elected at the next meeting. She encouraged them to consider serving in some capacity.

Mrs. Morse shared that the program had six new teaching staff members this year, two teachers and four teaching assistants, with at least one new staff member at each school except for Sunny View. Mrs. Harding added that it has been challenging to find new teacher assistants due to the requirements around education and qualifications, but she feels the program has great staff in place to serve families and children and the program has had a great start to the school year.

**Old Business:** None

**Comments or Questions:** Ms. VanDuyne asked if any community members had new information to share about their agencies. Mrs. Reel said the Health Department is working with Polk County Schools personnel office on staff wellness initiatives for the school year. Mrs. Wood shared that The Hope Chest had given out 95 pairs of new shoes to children through their Fancy Feet program. Ms. Epley shared that she works with Family Preservation and they are providing mental health resources and working on starting substance abuse services.

Mrs. Holder said DSS is now allowing clients back in the office and they have a new program to offer assistance with water bills. She said there continues to be a need for child care in the area. Ms. Van Duyne asked about child care vouchers. Mrs. Holder explained that the parent has to be working or going to school to receive vouchers and would have to pay 10% of their gross monthly income as their fee. She stated a grandparent raising a child could receive vouchers without having to pay a parent fee. Ms. VanDuyne thanked Mrs. Holder for her five years of service with the Policy Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50pm.

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Policy Council secretary

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Date