

## **Polk County Board of Education Head Start #04CH011490**

### **Self Assessment Summary and Improvement Plan Jan/Feb 2023**

#### Self Assessment Data Sources

- Community Assessment Review
- Compliance Visits
  - NC DCDEE
  - NC DHHS Sanitation Visits
  - NC PreK
  - External Annual Fiscal Audit
- Teaching Strategies GOLD
- Parent Surveys
- Staff Conversations
- ChildPlus Data
- Central Office Discussions/Meetings
- PreK Staff Meetings
- ECERS Spot Checks

Area	Self Assessment Findings	Action Steps/Improvement Plan
<b>Service Area</b>		
<b>Recruitment and Selection</b>	<p>Recruitment and Selection are an ongoing process. We continue to accept applications throughout the year while keeping a waiting list. When there are available spots we fill them.</p> <p>Large signs are posted at each school and strategic areas in our community. Flyers are posted in community centers, libraries, laundromats, and grocery stores. Participation in the Child Resources fair last April gave additional exposure.</p> <p>Each school shares enrollment information through their individual websites, Facebook, and all calls through our county wide communication system.</p> <p>Our Polk County Schools website uses the announcement page to share information on the main page. The Prek Department webpage, which is tied to the school system website, has PreK information and the direct link and a QRCode to the online application.</p> <p>Our Prek website needs to be updated and improved.</p> <p>We review our Selection Criteria yearly and adjust it according to what our community needs assessment shows us, what our Policy Council members vote on.</p>	<p>Recruitment will continue to take place throughout the year. Online applications and paper applications at every elementary school and Stearns will continue to be available. The online applications available on our website throughout the year.</p> <p>The preschool will be represented at a local Child Resources fair in April.</p> <p>We will continue the individual enrollment appointments. They will take place at Stearns and individual schools (if necessary). Telephone and Zoom appointments will be available for those who need them. We strive to have in person appointments so we can begin to build relationships with families.</p> <p>The Prek website will be updated by Polk county Schools operations manager.</p> <p>The selection criteria on our Eligibility scorecard will be updated at the March Head Start Policy Council meeting</p>

<b>Transportation</b>		
<b>Educational Services</b>	<p>Program has 2 new teachers this year and 4 new TAs, as well as a new floating teacher aide. This year the 2 floaters have been able to work in their positions rather than being substitutes and have been an asset to classrooms and teaching staff. New staff orientation was a group training during the afternoon of the first week of school which was half-days for PreK students. This was in addition to our full-day pre-service meeting for all staff, but we were only able to cover the required training topics and briefly touch on a few highlights. Orientation for substitute staff is still a challenge. The 2 new teachers are required to complete the 30+ hour LETRS literacy training provided by the state; they also must complete a self-paced online course for Teaching Strategies training. Having the floaters is helpful for these teachers as they are able to give them time to work on these tasks. We have not had monthly staff meetings this year for a variety of reasons; can't say that this has had a major impact either positive or negative on the program or staff. ECERS "spot checks" were completed by Ed Mgr and Support Coach in November &amp; January. Two areas were reviewed - Space &amp; Furnishings and Activities (looking at various centers and materials). Feedback summaries were shared individually by email in Feb and general overall info shared at teacher meetings in February. Program-wide strengths include general room arrangement &amp; furnishings, outdoor learning areas &amp; materials, and overall availability of variety of materials for centers. Some of the areas of concern are general display and organization of materials and lack of child-related display (artwork, posters, etc.). Fall assessment period child data</p>	<p>Continuing to employ 2 floaters to share between schools/classrooms is beneficial to both teachers and students. Would be great to have additional time for new staff orientation; being able to work with each new staff member in the classroom at the BOY would be beneficial as well. Reinstating monthly staff meetings might be helpful for new staff to gain useful info, learn procedures, etc. Need to complete an ECERS spot check earlier in the school year so able to address &amp; correct concerns earlier. Need to continue to monitor child data throughout year with teachers and discuss ways to ensure accurate data collection and scoring for assessment; also ensure individualization for all students based on their strengths and needs. Need to move back to a fall &amp; spring schedule for CLASS observations and incorporate feedback into professional development and coaching sessions. Need to implement Practice Based Coaching with fidelity.</p>

	<p>revealed a range of ~60-80% of children meeting or above expectations for each domain. This is consistent with the same data from the 2021-2022 school year. Data for this period for sub-groups shows some groups with a much higher percentage below expectations in various domains; three year olds, Hispanic students, African American students and students of more than 1 race were more likely to be below expectations in most domains. Fall CLASS observations were not completed. There is a need to educate all new staff re: CLASS before completing a spring observation. Coaching sessions with staff have been only on as-needed basis.</p>	
<p><b>Social/Emotional Support Services</b></p>	<p>This is the second year of this position in preschool. At the end of the 2021-22 school year we had a professional development with Joe Appleton, Early Childhood Educational Consultant. Mr. Appleton addressed the topic of social/emotional learning in the preschool setting and the tools needed to support this area in the classroom. During the summer materials were ordered to enhance the classroom environment and promote the children's understanding of their feelings and ways to handle feelings. At the beginning of the 2022-23 school year the staff met again with Mr. Appleton to review what their goals were going to be for the year as far as social/emotional learning in their classroom was concerned. During the school year the teachers can request help for social/emotional situations with a student or themselves from the support coach. The staff is also given the Second Step social/emotional resource that has short daily lessons to enhance the goal of helping the children to have strong social/emotional confidence in the classroom and social settings. Conscious Discipline is also used in the classroom and is supported by the support coach. The support coach will use these same techniques and strategies to reinforce ways that the child can express feelings, problem solve, and make appropriate decisions.</p>	<p>The program will continue to work with Mr. Appleton, so that we can maximize his knowledge and expertise of the social/emotional piece of our program. The staff will continue to use the Second Step program to support the students with an appropriate social/emotional program that will continue with them in their elementary years. The teachers will be encouraged to send home weekly letters provided by Second Step to help families support their child's growth of social/emotional knowledge. The support coach will go out to every school once a week or bi-weekly to lead a lesson. Support coach will assist staff with Conscious Discipline and its implementation in the classroom. Support coach will build relationships with staff to help provide social/emotional support for individual and classroom support.</p>

<b>Transition</b>	<p>Transition into and out of the program is a strength overall. The program benefits from being a part of the public schools and is perceived to be another year of school by the community. Each teacher creates a Transition Plan with activities throughout the year that benefit students and families regarding transition into and out of the program. The program also has an overarching Transition Plan guiding transition planning and activities for students and families moving into and out of the program. Our program has a staff member on Policy Council for the Early Head Start grantee for our county, and a member of their staff is on our Policy Council; this enables sharing of information for their EHS students &amp; families that will transfer to our PreK program. Preschool staff work closely with Polk Schools Student Services staff to plan for incoming students with disabilities. Director of Curriculum &amp; Instruction and Principals are working to coordinate Kindergarten teachers attending PreK end-of-year conferences to begin relationship building process with families and hear about students strengths and needs from PreK teacher. PreK teachers will also provide other transition activities and information to students and families throughout the spring.</p>	<p>Ed Mgr will support teachers as they provide transition activities to children and families. Continue to have a PreK staff member on EHS Policy Council and have one of EHS staff members on our Policy Council. Evaluate benefit of K teachers attending EOY PreK parent-teacher conference; get feedback from both K teachers and PreK teachers at each school.</p>
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<p><b>Health</b></p>	<p>100% of our children have had a well-child check within the last year. Reminders are sent out when upcoming well-child checks are in the near future and follow-up is done to make sure an appointment has been made whether the child is returning next school year or moving up to Kindergarten. Currently 95% are up-to-date with their yearly well-child checks. There was a surprisingly large percentage of children upon enrollment that were behind on immunizations and a lot of time and effort was put into getting these children up to date, all of these children are now considered up-to-date. Lead level reporting still continues to be a large problem, there are still 17.5% of Head Start children I do not have a lead level on. I spent a large amount of time faxing, calling and trying to get lead levels from these providers. Health care providers in and around our area are much better than years prior during COVID on availability to accept new patients and serve our families. There were several students that moved to this area this school year and did not have providers and it was easy for them to select a provider from the list of Pediatricians in our area. Blue Ridge Dental Bus remains a large partnership for dental care for many of our students. They are returning on a 6 month basis to keep children up-to-date on dental services if they do not have their own dentist. Blue Ridge Health and Rutherford Health Department have both been helpful in getting children up-to-date with immunizations because they have more access to appointments for getting in and out with immunizations. There were 12 children that referred on the vision screening and 6 received glasses, there are still several that have upcoming appointments. All but one child passed the hearing screening x2 and they did follow-up with their pediatrician and passed in the office. Tooth brushing has started again in the classrooms and has gone really well.</p>	<p>Continue to be the point of contact for families for resources on providers for preventative dental and medical services. Providing resources for vision providers in our area when having to follow-up for failed vision screenings. I will continue to follow-up with families and send out reminders for upcoming well-child checks and educate on the importance of preventative medical care. I will continue to foster the relationship with Blue Ridge Dental Bus to provide a dental home and dental services in our preschool program. This year between 2 visits from the Blue Ridge Dental Bus 75 of our head start children had an exam on the dental bus. I will continue to send information home to families about our partnership with Blue Ridge Dental Bus and make all attempts to have children seen that are in need of a dental home and dental services.</p> <p>The program director, Kathy Harding and myself are planning to meet with our local health department to discuss options for lead screening in our county for children that do not have a reported lead level by their current provider. I will also continue to provide the health assessment with the requirement of the lead level on the form that is filled out by the provider.</p> <p>I will continue to promote healthy practices, the importance of preventative care to families and help them find those resources when in need.</p>
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<p><b>Disabilities</b></p>	<p>There are currently 19 Head Start children with IEPs which is 23.8%. Our teachers and the enrollment process help identify children with possible needs through the Dial screening and parent questionnaire. When concerns are brought up by the classroom teacher, we initiate an MTSS team with the parent, teacher, EC teacher, school psychologist, PT, OT, ST, disabilities coordinator, school principal and EC facilitator. This team works in collaboration together to help identify further evaluations that may be needed if it is necessary. We work on a strict timeline to make sure evaluations and eligibility get done in a timely manner. When children present to our program with an existing IEP we work to make sure evaluations are up to date and meet promptly to make sure no new information is needed and update the IEP if needed. Everyone on the child's team is given a copy of the IEP to make sure there is continuity of care and everyone knows what services and goals the child is working on. We continue to keep children in the least restrictive environment and do not have self-contained classrooms. We do have 4 developmental day classrooms where the class size is smaller so teachers have time to individualize and help children that have specific needs. We meet yearly on all children with an IEP and update goals and make changes to the IEP based on growth and ongoing monitoring of the child in their areas they are being served. Behavioral needs this year are decreased from last school year and with Family Preservation services opening back in Polk County and another outside agency serving a couple children in our program.</p>	<p>Our program is still doing a wonderful job of identifying children with needs and developing IEPs to help children reach yearly goals. I continue to be invited and participate in all IEP meetings and MTSS meetings.</p> <p>We had a joint meeting this fall with all the pre-k teachers and the EC department to help teachers better understand the IEP process and that cognitive and academic goals in the IEP are to be implemented and worked on by them with the student.</p> <p>I will continue to encourage teachers to come to myself and the education manager with concerns or questions about children with IEPs and those with initial concerns. At the beginning of the year meeting, I will make sure to reeducate teachers on the process and especially if we have new hires to make sure early identification occurs.</p>
<p><b>Family Services</b></p>	<p>We continue to help families with needs and those in crisis throughout the year.</p> <p>Clothing has been needed by families this year. Information about food banks has been shared.</p> <p>Affordable housing continues to be an issue in our community. Housing groups information was shared at enrollment appointments for parents who were interested.</p>	<p>A separate resource packet for families will be available during enrollment appointments and whenever parents request help. This will highlight our local resources with their flyers instead of just phone numbers that we have in our handbook. Also, a new community organization called Innovative Approaches, led by Marjorie Vestal, has created a resources notebook for families of children</p>

	<p>Income literacy, savings were topics of interest in the outcomes assessments this year. Information was given throughout the year and at our Parent Cafes. Families were not interested in a class for this topic.</p> <p>Families are interested in getting together for Parent Cafes but their schedules do not always permit it.</p> <p>Ready Rosie continues to be our Parent Curriculum. The usage of the program needs to reach more families.</p>	<p>with special needs as well.</p> <p>The Hope Chest will continue to be utilized for clothing needs. Use Family Outcomes Assessment data to help determine possible classes for families.</p> <p>Bi-monthly Parent Cafes will continue to be held with alternating times of days offered. Get more parent input on what they would like to discuss at enrollment appointments. Survey parents at enrollment about times and possible subjects.</p> <p>Introduce Ready Rosie to parents at enrollment and sign them up.</p> <p>Encourage teachers to point families to Ready Rosie during parent teacher conferences and when individualizing lesson plans for children.</p>
<b>Program Management</b>	<p>Additional funds over the last 3 years for quality included money to hire 2 floater teacher assistants. These positions are valuable to give the teachers some planning time as in preschool due to ratios their planning time is very limited. Careful budget work is needed in order to continue these positions.</p> <p>December 2024 is the target date for the completion of the annex at Tryon for our preschool.</p> <p>Assessment of staff changes for next year is underway</p>	<p>There are some funding increases in the base Head Start and NC PreK budgets. We continue to ensure our budget will support these important positions.</p> <p>Much work is ongoing on this project. Teachers are working on suggestions for the outdoor space as well.</p>
<b>Fiscal</b>	<p>Budget concerns as the one time ARP monies are ending.</p>	<p>Supplies and materials were replaced, upgraded, and enhanced with ARP funding and other funding available. This will aid in decreasing the amount of money needed next fiscal year for supplies and materials.</p>



	<p>Sunny View, Saluda, and Polk Central playgrounds are in need of equipment/structure and surfacing replacements.</p>	<p>Quotes from playground companies will be obtained. A request for one time Head Start funding will be submitted in April 2023 to cover the costs. If this is not approved we will seek other opportunities</p>
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