

Polk County Schools
Head Start Policy Council Minutes
Wednesday, January 15, 2025 12 pm
Stearns Education Center

Meeting Call to Order

The Head Start Policy Council Meeting was called to order at 12:06 pm by Margit Nelson with a quorum present and maintained throughout the meeting.

Members present: Margit Nelson, Cindy Allen, virtually: Donna Wood, Dena Pfister, Calan Halford

Staff present: Renee Souther, Jan Crump, Kathy Harding, Lisa Brown, Laura Jane Howald, and Amy Scott

Guest: Dan Edwards, WNC Source

Welcome and Introductions

There were no new members present.

Code of Conduct

All members present have signed the document.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the meeting held on December 11, 2024 were reviewed. Cindy Allen moved to approve them. Dena Pfister seconded. There was no discussion. The motion carried.

Reports and Information

Kathy Harding - Program Management - Attendance was a little down in December due to various reasons: sickness and surgeries, fewer school days, holiday travel. All the sites have had the Sanitation and Licensing visits this year and they have gone well. The staff working on the 5 year Head Start Grant. The self-assessment will be presented today. The Grant narrative and budget will be presented at the February meeting. All the Head Start slots are full, 80 children.

Amy Scott - Family Services - December was busy with a Winter wonderland field trip to Stearns for all of the children,

Lisa Brown - Support Coach - Spent December visiting classrooms and helping with children who need extra behavior support. Also spent many hours decorating for the field trips to Stearns.

Renee Souther - Health and Safety - Finishing the follow ups with vision, hearing, and dental referrals. Sending out letters for children who need annual health assessments and updated immunizations. IEP meetings are on-going for new referrals, as well as annual meetings. MAHEC is opening up again for pediatric dentistry appointments.

Laura Jane Howald - Educational Services - 100% of families have participated in a family conference to discuss data from the Fall checkpoint. The School Readiness Team met and are adding new sections to the plan: Multicultural Practices and Trauma Informed Practices which

will be presented today. The program staff will participate in an ECERS-3 training in August. This is the new review tool used by the State.

Financial Reports

Credit Card Reports

Kathy Harding reported for Debbie Lovelace - reviewed and explained the reports, highlighting that some line items in the budget will be rearranged beginning in April. The recent financial audit had a 100% clean report.

New Business

School Readiness Plan - Laura Jane Howald explained the procedure and information surrounding the committee meeting and plan. The data guides the staff Professional Development and goals of our program. She presented a brief synopsis of the recent changes made. Cindy Allen moved to accept the School Readiness Plan and Calan Halford seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Self-Assessment - Kathy Harding spoke to the on-going self assessment process within the program. She explained how staff uses information from compliance visits, parent surveys, teacher in-pup and guidelines from performance standards to continually assess and evaluate the program and create goals.

Old Business

Head Start No Cost Extension Request - The program received notification in October 2024 that the playground grant in the amount of \$460,348 had been awarded. The budget period ends June 30, 2025 so an extension is requested in order to complete the project with a new project ending date of 6/30/2026. Acceptance of this request was moved by Cindy Allen and seconded by Calan Halford. The motion carried.

Updates from Community Partners

Health Department - Dena Pfister had no new updates

The Hope Chest - Donna Wood talked about working on the house, moving the remainder of the hurricane relief donations out and recent donations to children of warm clothes to play in the snow.

DSS - Calan Halford addressed the recent State budget cuts and the lack of daycare voucher funding for foster children. There is now a waiting list in our area for these vouchers.

WNC Source - Margit Nelson shared that they are expecting to have the license for the new Columbus center any day and have told families the start date will be January 27th. There will be a Community Open House on February 20th from 2:30 - 6pm at the Center.

Next meeting date and time

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 12 noon

Cindy Allen moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:52pm and it carried.