

## **Polk County Board of Education Head Start #04CH013150**

### **Self Assessment Summary and Improvement Plan Jan/Feb 2026**

#### 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
- PIR Data
- Central Office Discussions/Meetings
- PreK Staff Meetings
- ECERS Spot Checks
- Mock CLASS observations
- School Readiness Plan
- School Health Advisory Committee/HSAC

Service Area	Self Assessment Findings	Action Steps/Improvement Plan
<p><b>Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance</b></p>	<p>100% of families are now accessing the online application.</p> <p>Recruitment is an ongoing process. We accept applications throughout the year to add to the waiting list. When there are available spots we fill them.</p> <p>The program continues to seek broad opportunities to reach our target population: Large signs are posted at each school and high profile areas in our community; flyers are posted in community centers, libraries, laundromats, and grocery stores. We participate in community and school resource fairs.</p> <p>Each school shares enrollment information through their individual websites, Facebook, and all calls through our county wide communication system.</p> <p>The Eligibility Score Card is successful in eligibility determination to continue to meet our funded Head Start Enrollment of 80 children.</p> <p>Enrollment consistently exceeds 85% of expected attendance.</p> <p>100% of Head Start Central Office staff will receive additional Go Engage training as needed.</p>	<p>The online website has been improved, with links provided for the application process. QR codes readily available on flyers, newsletters, handouts, and at community events. The Prek website will be updated by County Office staff, on an on-going basis, to keep it current and relevant.</p> <p>Recruitment will continue to take place throughout the year. Online applications and paper applications are available at every elementary school and Stearns. Online applications are available on our website throughout the year.</p> <p>The preschool will be represented at a local Child Resources fair “Spring Fling” April 18, 2026.</p> <p>We will continue individual enrollment appointments which 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 selection criteria on our Eligibility scorecard will be reviewed and updated at the March Head Start Policy Council meeting. We review our Selection Criteria yearly and adjust it according to results of our community assessment. The criteria are reviewed, discussed, and voted on by the Policy Council.</p> <p>Classroom and Office Staff will continue using daily absences, additional follow-up and attendance procedures.</p> <p>Additional training will be planned as needed.</p>

<b>Transportation</b>	Routine transportation has not been provided for several years due to the cost versus the ridership benefit.	The program continues to assess the true need for transportation at enrollment and as special circumstances arise.
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<p><b>Educational Services</b></p>	<p>100% of new full- and part-time employees received comprehensive orientation training.</p> <p>Two floaters will be employed at larger sites to meet the NCDCEE Regulations, ratios, and standards.</p> <p>100% of classroom staff are working toward implementing <i>The Creative Curriculum</i> (7th Edition) with fidelity.</p> <p>100% of classroom teachers received their LETRS certification within a year of employment.</p> <p>100% of Preschool Substitutes receive required orientation—including CPR/First Aid &amp; background checks. 100% of classrooms will participate in the QRIS process, and obtain a score of 5 or greater which meets the licensing criteria to maintain our Five Star license.</p>	<p>We have improved our orientation platform so that all new employees receive mandatory training prior to their first day in the classroom <i>whenever possible</i>. Observations of other classrooms are also included in this process. Additionally, new employees also receive coverage to observe daily operations in classrooms within the first six weeks of employment as well as a tour of their new school home and facilities.</p> <p>Continuing to employ 2 floaters to share between schools/classrooms is beneficial to both teachers and students.</p> <p><b>All classrooms completed a Curriculum Fidelity Self Assessment Checklist at the beginning of the 2025 school year to ensure consistent implementation of Creative Curriculum.</b></p> <p>All classroom staff received significant training on our curriculum—as our program shifted from using <i>High Scope</i> to <i>Creative Curriculum for Preschool (7th Edition)</i> at the beginning of the 2023-2024 School Year. *Additional training on <i>Creative Curriculum</i> implementation will continue as our program achieves curriculum fidelity.</p> <p><b><i>Inspiring Interactions TSG Training, Interrater Reliability Certification and FINCH Literacy Training through TSG</i></b></p> <p>All teachers have completed LETRS certification, or are in the process of completing and are implementing Heggerty early literacy practices in every classroom. New teachers will complete LETRS certification in alignment with local guidelines.</p> <p>All preschool substitutes will receive orientation. We will enhance our preschool-specific orientation platform and available guides and materials. All classrooms will complete an ECERS Self-Assessment at the start of each school year. An additional “mock” ECERS will be completed by the Preschool Education Specialist and Preschool Support Coach in every classroom as additional follow-up. Strengths and areas for growth will be shared.</p>
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	<p>100% of teachers will achieve their Interrater Reliability certification through the Teaching Strategies Gold platform.</p> <p>100% of Classrooms will receive a Fall and Spring CLASS assessment and coaching. All classrooms received CLASS observations/coaching in Fall, and will receive the same in Spring.</p> <p>We enhanced our program's School Readiness Plan and disseminated our TSG data to all families (English and Spanish) and classroom staff.</p> <p>TSG Fall 2025 data reviewed and analyzed by our School Readiness Committee demonstrate:  64% of all children meet or exceed Social-Emotional expectations;  81% of all children meet or exceed Physical expectations;  75% of all children meet or exceed Language expectations;  70% of all children meet or exceed Cognitive expectations;  68% of all children meet or exceed Literacy expectations;  59% of all children meet or exceed Mathematics expectations.</p> <p>Results from previous Kindergarten M-Class data indicated our youngest learners needed targeted early literacy instruction (specifically, phonemic awareness). Therefore, 100% of classrooms are now implementing Heggerty early literacy practices.</p>	<p>We will enhance our child assessment data and analysis methods throughout the year to ensure accurate data collection and scoring for assessment. As teacher comfort level increases with using TSG, each will also work on their Interrater Reliability certification which is available through the Quorum Learning Hub. 90% of Teachers and Assistants have achieved Interrater Reliability.</p> <p>Preschool Education Specialist will maintain CLASS certification. CLASS strength and growth areas will be identified within and across all classrooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Data collection</li> <li>*Heggerty</li> <li>*School Readiness Committee</li> <li>*School Readiness Plan</li> <li>*Highlighting Strengths and Needs</li> <li>*Dissemination of our data</li> <li>*Research to practice</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Social/Emotional Support Services</b></p>	<p>100% of classrooms received weekly support from the Preschool Leadership Team.</p> <p>TSG and Dial screening data indicate more children need social-emotional support than in prior years.</p> <p>Ready Rosie usage is at 80%</p> <p>Second Step is being implemented within and across all classrooms.</p> <p>Our program will implement the use of The Pyramid Model to support social-emotional skills.</p>	<p>100% of classrooms will continue to receive site visits and weekly support from the Preschool Leadership Team.</p> <p>Our program will continue to provide professional development on social-emotional skills, including <i>Second Step</i>, <i>Conscious Discipline</i> and <i>The Pyramid Model</i>. Quorum and ProSolutions platforms are additional options for Social-Emotional training. Our Support Coach will continue to provide onsite observations, coaching, targeted instruction, resources, and enhanced best practices to build social-emotional skills. We will support students with social-emotional needs through our Pre-K MTSS process.</p> <p>We continue to enroll children through the Ready Rosie platform, stress the importance of Ready Rosie videos during enrollment and at parent/family events, and link Ready Rosie to our Preschool website.</p> <p>We will continue to implement <i>Second Step</i> curriculum.</p> <p>All classroom staff received training on The Pyramid Model through Southwestern Child Development in March 25 and through Autism Society of North Carolina in September 25. All classrooms received materials to support The Pyramid Model in each classroom.</p>
<p><b>Transition</b></p>	<p>Transition into and out of the program is a strength overall, but we continue to enhance the preschool-Kindergarten connection for children and families. A transition plan for 100% rising Kindergarteners will be created (per NC Pre-Kindergarten guidelines).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* The program has a comprehensive Transition Plan guiding transition planning and activities for students and families moving into and out of the program.</li> <li>*Each classroom creates a school-specific Transition Plan with activities throughout the year that benefit students and families regarding transition into and out of the program.</li> <li>*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 and families that will transfer to our PreK program.</li> <li>*Preschool staff work closely with Polk Schools Student Services</li> </ul>

		<p>staff to plan for incoming students with disabilities.</p> <p>*The Director of Curriculum and 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 teachers.</p> <p>*PreK teachers will provide other transition activities and information to students and families throughout the spring.</p> <p>*Continue having Kindergarten teachers participate in EOY Spring TSG conferences with Preschool teachers and individual families whenever possible.</p>
<p><b>Health</b></p>	<p>100%, of the 85 children that have been enrolled this year, have had their well-child check up within the last year.</p> <p>100% of children were up to date with Immunizations at enrollment this year.</p> <p>Lead level reporting continues to be an ongoing issue; however, data indicates that only 7% of children did not have a lead level this year. This has shown continued improvement for the last two years.</p>	<p>Parents/Guardians will continue to be notified upon enrollment of the need for a well-child exam, if they have not had one within the last Year.</p> <p>Pediatric/Physician resources in and around the surrounding area will continue to be available for parents/guardians if needed.</p> <p>Parent/Guardian reminders will also continue to be sent out when upcoming well-child checkups are due in the near future.</p> <p>Follow up to make sure an appointment has been made will continue whether the child is returning next school year or moving up to Kindergarten.</p> <p>Immunization status upon enrollment will continue to be evaluated and parents/guardians will be educated accordingly.</p> <p>Continued highlighting of Pre-School Requirements which includes the most recent lead level on NC Health Assessment Form.</p> <p>Requests from physicians' offices to provide lead level results will continue if results are not supplied on the Health Assessment Form.</p>

	<p>Toothbrushing in the classrooms continues this year to help promote good oral health. This year 83 children, out of 85/(98%) of our Pre-K children now have a dental home. We had 39 children/(46%) come into Pre-K with a Dental Home this year. Out of the remaining 46 children, 2 children (2%) parents/guardians did not wish to have assistance establishing with a dental provider and 44 children (52%) of them were assisted in finding a dental home, the majority of these children were seen on the Mobile Dental Bus and established care with the dental office that provides the Mobile Dental Bus services. Finding dentists who are accepting Medicaid and New Patients in the surrounding areas has proved difficult, but we continue researching possible options to help these children meet their oral health needs.</p> <p>98% of children passed their hearing screen on the first attempt, and the other 2% passed on their second attempt, giving a total of 100% passage rate. No referrals were needed this year regarding hearing.</p> <p>99% of all children screened passed their vision screen; however, 1% needed a referral for further evaluation. Parents/Guardian were notified of the need for a referral for further evaluation and a list of resources to complete this was provided to help with the process. Child has already had an appointment and received their glasses.</p> <p>Each classroom had hand washing classes completed with the children to help stress the importance of good handwashing hygiene and to help with the spread of illnesses. 100% of staff</p>	<p>Parents/Guardians will continue to be provided with a list of dental providers to help to secure care, if they are not already established with a dental provider. Any child who does not have a dental provider the parents/guardians will be educated on the Mobile Dental Bus Program that comes to the Preschools and consents will be provided should the parents/guardians be interested in establishing care with this provider. Our dental provider list is continuously updated as we learn of more dental providers who are accepting new patients and/or Medicaid. Each child who was seen on the Mobile Dental Bus had a letter sent home to their parent/guardian informing them of any follow up care needed. The ongoing research of possible options to help these children with no dental provider or current resources to provide needed services will continue to help meet their oral health needs.</p> <p>Children will continue to be screened within the first 45 days of school or after their enrollment if it is after the beginning of school. Referrals to the child's pediatrician will continue for any child who does not pass the hearing screen after the second attempt for further evaluation.</p> <p>Children will continue to be screened within the first 45 days of school. Referrals will be made as indicated. Follow up on referrals will continue to assist families and make sure that child's vision health needs are met.</p> <p>Handwashing classes will continue to help illustrate good hand washing techniques.</p>
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	<p>were educated at the beginning of the year of the importance of prevention and control of infectious diseases. New hires are educated upon starting with the program.</p>	<p>Staff will continue to be educated, as a good reminder, at the beginning of the year and periodically if needed on importance prevention and control of infectious diseases. Reminders such as frequent hand washing, proper cleaning solutions for the proper surfaces, and wearing gloves are a few examples.</p>
<p><b>Disabilities</b></p>	<p>Our program is doing a wonderful job of identifying children with needs and developing IEPs to help children reach yearly goals.</p> <p>There are currently 24 Head Start children with an IEP which is 28%. Five of these children(6%) were identified this school year, and currently 2 more children are going through the IEP process.</p>	<p>Preschool Education Specialist and Health and Disabilities Coordinator are continuing to make great strides to spend time weekly in each classroom which can help identify needs or concerns and help keep an open line of communication between teachers and central office staff.</p> <p>Education will continue to be provided for teachers, especially new hires, about the referral/IEP process to make sure we continue identifying children in need of extra services. Health and Disabilities Coordinator and Education Specialist will continue to perform reeducation on the referral/IEP process and answer questions as they arise.</p> <p>Health and Disabilities Coordinator and Education Specialist will continue to perform reeducation on the referral/IEP process and answer questions as they arise.</p> <p>Our teachers and the enrollment process continue to help identify children with possible needs through the Dial screening and parent questionnaire. When concerns are brought up by the classroom teacher, they are brought to the attention of the Preschool Education Specialist and Health &amp; Disabilities Coordinator to determine if a referral is necessary at this time or if the child should be monitored through interventions in the classroom. If a referral is indicated the Preschool Education Specialist presents the referral to the EC facilitator in order to move forward with the evaluation process. At this point, the EC facilitator arranges the initial referral meeting with parents, teacher, Preschool Education Specialist, Health &amp; Disabilities Coordinator and any other special service providers that need to be included. The team continues to work on a strict timeline to make sure evaluations and eligibility get done in a timely manner.</p>

	<p>There are 4 developmental day classrooms where the class size is smaller so teachers have time to individualize and help children that have specific needs. We are seeing a trend upwards of children within our program being identified as Developmentally Delayed where this used to be heavier with disabilities mostly with speech needs.</p>	<p>When children present to our program with an existing IEP we will continue to 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 indicated.</p> <p>Copies of the child's IEP will continue to be provided to everyone on the child's team to make sure there is continuity of care and everyone knows what services and goals the child is working on.</p> <p>Yearly meetings will continue 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.</p> <p>We continue to keep children in the least restrictive environment and do not have self-contained classroom. We have improved our tracking of children with concerns and those we are monitoring, this is shared between the Health and Disabilities Specialist and Education Specialist.</p> <p>Needs continue to be identified well and teachers continue doing a great job communicating with the Education Specialist or Health and Disabilities Coordinator if there are concerns within the classroom or by a parent.</p>
<p><b>Family Services</b></p>	<p>We are helping connect families in crisis with needed resources and support. Needs include clothing, diapers, food, and holidays gifts. We also offer parenting and behavioral intervention class referrals.</p>	<p>We will continue to share information with families such as Medicaid expansion, prenatal vitamins, clothing/diaper assistance, food assistance (Thermal Belt), and the Hope Chest. Continuing to participate in Polk Community Resource Collaborative.</p>

	<p>Affordable housing continues to be an issue in our community.</p> <p>It is a challenge to have a parent representative from each school serve on Policy Council meetings. However, we maintain the Head Start parent representation needed.</p> <p>Parent Cafe participation has improved at every school site.</p> <p>Family Engagement activities are very well-attended and held in individual classrooms, school wide, and program wide.</p>	<p>Housing groups information is shared at enrollment appointments for parents who are interested, and as requested.</p> <p>The Policy Council recruitment will begin at enrollment. Policy Council information will continue to be shared with classroom staff and parents.</p> <p>We will emphasize Parent Cafes at enrollment. Survey parents at enrollment about available times and possible subjects.</p> <p>Each classroom creates a school-specific Family Engagement Plan with activities throughout the year that enrich students and families and keep them connected to the classroom.</p> <p>Family engagement activities will continue to be held in all forms in classrooms and at the schools. Information for community events will also be shared with families.</p>
<b>Program Management</b>	<p>PreK Central Office staff has changed in Fall 2025: new director was hired and approved by Office of Head Start on December 1, 2025 Procedures in the areas of Education, Family Services, and Health and Disabilities are in review</p> <p>Training needs for new staff are being assessed</p>	<p>Training opportunities from sources such as Office of Head Start, NC DCDEE, Feldsman, ProSolutions, etc.</p>
<b>Fiscal</b>	<p>Due to more stringent child ratio guidance from NC DCDEE it is important to continue to budget for 2 part time float subs.</p>	<p>The 2026-2027 budget proposal will include the 2 part time floats for PC and TES</p>