

**Policy Council**

April 23, 2024

10:00 am

Policy Council Members Present: Heidi Calhoun, Janice Gillespie, Anne Neibert, Kimberly Moore, Kessa Wagaman, Kelsey

FSP Staff Present: Jennifer Mercer, Carolyn Clouser, Jessica Hatch, Jessica Kreigline, Diane Hummel, Carolyn Clouser, Shannon Rudy

Board Members Present: Lura Hanks, Ann Spottswood, Gladys Leon, Kathy Estep, Mike Ross

Community Member Present: Reverend Alison Grove

1. **Welcome:** Heidi welcomed everyone to our Policy Council Meeting at 10:02 am. We then had introductions due to several new participants.
2. **Old Business:**
3. Ratify March Meeting Minutes: Heidi explained that the March Meeting Minutes were approved by email vote on 3/28/2024 so we just need to ratify that vote. Heidi and Janice both were in attendance for the March meeting and agreed to the ratification.
4. March Financial Reports & Credit Card Expenditures: Jessica Kreigline stated the all grants are on target. The federal grants should be at 66% and we are currently at 68.5%. The state grants should be at 75% and we are at 74.6%. There are some variances on line items and a re-budget for them have been sent to the CEO and COO for review. Janice Gillespie made a motion to approve the March Financial Reports and Credit Card Statements for March. Kessa Wagaman seconded the motion. Motion passed.
5. Non-Compliance Update: Jessica Hatch gave the update to the non-compliance:
* We were given a finding of a deficiency after the second incident that happened in October. We created a corrective action plan and were give 30 day to put it fully in place. We did request an extension but have not heard back if that has been granted. Today is the 30th day. Part of the plan is to allow program coordinators not to be in the classrooms as often to support our staff at their locations. We have also asked staff who have submitted PTO time to give those day back and they can carry over an additional 10 days this year. In our extended day classrooms, we have put into place a consistent AM Lead Teacher and Assistant teacher and a consistent PM Lead Teacher and Assistant
1. Head Start/Early Head Start/HSSAP/Pre-K Grants: Annette shared a power point presentation surrounding our upcoming grant applications.
* Our first incident happened at the Chambersburg ELC and the second incident happened in October at our Faith location. This has put us under a deficiency specifically around monitoring.
* We have been looking at the reasons and decisions today surround having highly qualified staff with support to keep our children safe
* If we do not rectify the problems that led to the deficiency we will lose our funding and our program goes away.
* Our journey from good to great started in 2018 with the goal of becoming NAEYC accredited. We hit an iceberg this year on this journey. While we are noncompliant with the Office of Head Start we had to halt our work on NAEYC and focus on staffing and our children’s safety. We will be monitored on this and they can call on anyone to ask what we are doing to ensure no child is left behind again. This is what we need to do to ensure we have high quality staff that are nurturing. We will be serving less children and will back in additional funding if available.
* Why are we doing this? We are using the resources we have
* 2017- Waynesboro Area School District began offering Pre-K Counts. We have also consolidated classrooms every single year in one way or another. Annette shared that when she started we created a facilities model so that no teacher, assistant teacher or family advocate were left with no supports
* 2018- We started Good to Great. Our transportation services were eliminated due to Policy Council stating they would rather have quality education over transportation. We also consolidated classes at this point
* 2019- The Board of Directors and Policy Council approved our facilities plan which included having an Admin Assistant and an onsite Program Coordinator to provide support and emergency support to the teaching staff. We started to move away from stand-alone facilities
* 2020- Identified the Chambersburg Early Learning Center and moved in in 2021. This location also included a Family Center and we continued to see how to incorporate our facilities plan.
* The Waynesboro Area School District continued to grow their Pre-K program. The Waynesboro Early Learning Center has 2 Pre-K classrooms and they are interested in growing. First Start was the second partner and we went from no classrooms to having 5. This funding source will continue to grow.
* As the school districts options grew, unfortunately it affected our enrollment in Waynesboro which caused us to have a non-compliance for not being fully enrolled
* When it came time to accept and acknowledge we were spreading ourselves to thing with $11,000/child vs the $17,000/child, so we made the difficult decision to focus on Early Head Start in Chambersburg
* The current Strategic Plan is a direct result of COCID and finding from last year. Health Children, Families, Schools and Communities are our five-year focus. We are on target for our annual objectives except for NAEYC
* Enrollment Reduction for Head Start and Early Head Start Only
* Change in service and recruitment area (from Chambersburg and Waynesboro to Chambersburg only. 279 to 182 head start children and 72 to 64 early head start children
* Waynesboro’s increased funding for other high-quality early childhood programs has exceeded previous Head Start Options. This has affected our ability to maintain full enrollment for several years.
* Waynesboro’s positioning for additional funding for state and federal Early Head Start/Child Care Partnerships grants for infants and toddlers
* Recent Chambersburg facilities have safer environments
* Use additional funding for:
* Increases teachers’ salaries to those of public-school teachers with similar credentials
* Adapt to inflationary costs in all budgetary items
* Support our teachers and managers in adapting to ever changing needs of children and families.
* Next Steps: Continue our mission- First Start partners with families, schools and communities to ensure each child arrives ready for kindergarten.
* Questions and Comments:
	+ - 1. Do believe that an Admin Assistant at each door is a good idea.
			2. What happens if the entire grant is not approved? The only way it would not be approved is if we don’t fix this deficiency. We are not expecting that the grant will not be approved.
			3. Cost of Living- the base grant was written in 1965. When a cost of living is granted we usually get it but it is usually on 1 or 2%. We are required to use this for staffing and it does not make up for all the changes that happened over the years. It also does not make up for the 32% to have teacher’s salary meet schools. What we receive per child does not cover our costs. The only way we have been able to do this is by bringing in other funding. This is our attempt to not have other funding to supplement.
			4. Children and families in Waynesboro will have longer wait lists and not recieve early childhood services? No, we do not have a healthy waitlist which has caused us to be under enrolled. All returning children have a slot. We have a small waitlist right now. Every time we lose a child, we have 30 days to replace. If we don’t we will go under an enrollment plan.
			5. Early Head Start- we have 9 children in Early Head Start that are not turning 3 by September 1st. Out of the 25 current EHS children, 16 will be and are accepted into our 3-year-old program. Out of the 9 remaining, 1 family has moved to Chambersburg and this child will be at the Chambersburg Early Learning Center. Out of the remaining families, half are not currently working full time and the option for home visiting is a possibility. 4 or 5 have been relying on us for childcare needs and we are working with community partners to determine how to best serve these children. We are working so that when we are in May, these 5 people will have a longer-term placement for their children. No one is expected to come to Chambersburg and we are also looking at additional funding to partner with high quality programs in Waynesboro. By 7/31, when we close our doors at Faith the plan is that you have already started supports to have what you need in this transition.
			6. Why are the classrooms closing in the first place? This is part of our journey and we know that it feels personal. It is not because of any one reason, it is about all of the reasons. We want to continue on our journey for high quality. The funding decisions are based on decreasing the number of children served. We did not give the Waynesboro area the facility they need and we are not saying we won’t be able to do that in the future. We remain in Waynesboro in Pre-K Counts and we will continue to grow. Children that are the age of 3 will go to Mowery and the High School. We are looking at another classroom within another school building. We will communicate with you on an individual level. Melisa Ostrowski is over seeing this and you will be notified in May and can discuss your decisions on how to make the transitions.
			7. If we decide to go to Waynesboro Early Learning Center, will the parents have to pay? NO
			8. If Franklin County is 5th lowest in Early Learning how is it possible to reduce? With partners you will see quality increase. It takes a village, you cannot do childcare based on what parents can afford alone. We will continue to work with childcares to continue to make them high quality.
			9. What is the home visiting option? The home visitors use the Parents As Teacher Curriculum during a 90 minute home visit once per week. They work with you on child development and establishing goals not only for your child but the family. Two times per month they hold socialization for all families enrolled. They also partner with other organizations that are serving infants and toddlers. Home visits are offered in both English and Spanish. The home visitors work around your schedule.
* Heidi Calhoun made a motion to accept the Head Start/Early Head Start/HSSAP/Pre-K Counts as presented. Janice Gillepsie seconded the motion. Due to Kessa leaving early and no other voting members in attendance, the minutes will be sent out for an email vote.
1. **New Business:**
2. **Director’s Report:** Jessica shared that she just received notification that our request for the extension has been approved. This will give us an additional 60 days (through the end of June). We requested the extra time so that we can be intentional and have and impact and if there needs to be course direction then we have time for that.
3. **Member Discussion/Questions/Suggestions:** See above under for members questions.
4. **Adjourn:** Meeting was adjourned at 11:28 am

**Next Meeting: May 28, 2024 from 10:00-11:30 am at 871 Stanley Ave. Chambersburg (Chambersburg Early Learning Center)**