

First Start Partnerships for Children and Families
Policy Council Meeting
Minutes
Monday, August 24, 2020
6:30 – 7:30 pm

Members in Attendance: Holly Dockery, Ora McPherson

- I. **Welcome:** Holly Dockery called the meeting to order at 6:36 PM
- II. **Old Business**
 - A. May and June minutes: The minutes for May and June were reviewed and approved unanimously.
 - B. June and July Financial Report and Credit Card Expenditures: The financial report and credit card expenditures for June and July were reviewed and approved unanimously.
- III. **New Business**
 - A. COVID Carryover Funds for 2020-2021 Year: Jessica Kreigline explained that approximately \$154,000 in Covid-19 supplemental funds remain, and the Program Directors would like to carryover that amount into the 2020-2021 fiscal year to fund additional staff and PPE supplies for when the classrooms re-open in person. The request to carryover these funds was approved.
 - B. PIR Data: Diane Hummel shared child outcomes data for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, and explained that despite the program going virtual at the end of last school-year, the children demonstrated similar levels of growth in comparison to the previous year. She also shared comparisons surrounding children in the program with disabilities and health data for the two program-years. Nicole Nicholson shared data about how HS and EHS families were doing throughout the 2018-19 and 2019-20 program years, and noted that more families were in crisis at the end 19-20 year. She also noted that the data shows that father engagement was lower during this last school-year than during the 18-19 year, but the program going virtual due to Covid-19 may have something to do with those decreases. Holly Docker expressed that she thought the numbers seemed good even with the closing.
 - C. Strategic Planning Goals 2020-2021: Nicole shared the thematic goals for the next quarter, and explained that the Leadership Team developed these goals for August through November of this year. She noted that the work on the three goals will help the organization to continue working towards meeting the Strategic Plan objectives and invited the Policy Council members to join one of the committees that have been formed to focus on each of the three goals.
 - D. First Start @ Home Update: Diane shared an update on the programming that will be offered to families for the virtual beginning of the school year. She explained that teachers will be offering live 15-minute lessons daily that will be recorded for flexibility, and that non-virtual options and extension activities will be offered daily as well. Diane noted that all activities will be based on the Creative Curriculum online version (Cloud). She also shared that teachers are finishing up virtual home visits and all classrooms have virtual orientations scheduled as well that will include teaching staff, Family Advocates and Education Coordinators. Diane explained that families are being surveyed to find out device and internet needs, and during porch drops each child will

be provided with at-home learning kits which include items such as markers, paper, scissors, dice and unifix cubes. She noted that teachers will have monthly conferences with families to share observations, follow up on screenings and discuss any concerns or resources needed. Lastly, Diane shared that plans are being finalized with school districts and Keystone Family Restaurant to provide meals to enrolled children weekly. Holly shared that Comcast is offering internet services at a reasonable rate, and that she can send out the link if anyone is interested. She then asked if the program is paying rent during this time when classrooms are not being used. Jessica explained that with the exception of one landlord who said rent was not expected, the program has continued to pay mostly because most locations do rely on the income.

- E. Family Center and Early Learning Center: Nicole shared that in the next week, the renovation work on part of the Chambersburg Early Learning Center on Stanley Ave. will be complete, and it will house 6 Pre-K Counts classrooms to start. She also explained that the building will also eventually house the Chambersburg Family Center, but while the construction is continuing, the virtual family center will be launched. Nicole noted that the virtual family center will use social media and the organization's website to build community connections and share resources in addition to building the capacity for resource and referral services to families with prenatal to third grade as the focus age group. She explained that school district partnerships will be helpful in getting information out, and that the plan is to have the virtual family center ready by November 30th with the two brick and mortar centers in Chambersburg and Waynesboro to follow with opening in the Spring.
- F. Parent Committee Engagement: Holly expressed that it is hard to get families involved in Parent Committees, especially now that the program is virtual. Nicole shared that this year, the Family Advocates will be taking lead on carrying out Parent Committees and encouraging family engagement in the meetings and events. Holly expressed that sending information out to families about Parent Committees and Policy Council along with parent interest surveys is a good start. Ora McPherson expressed that when she talked to families in the past, they had no idea what Parent Committees or Policy Council were, and many seemed interested, but never showed up for meetings. The committee also discussed the Parent Café that was offered in Greencastle last Spring, and Ora shared that it was a great experience. Nicole wondered if incorporating some pieces of the Parent Café into virtual meetings, may be helpful, and everyone agreed.
- G. Policy Council Preparation: Holly and Ora expressed that they are willing to stay in their roles as President and Vice-President of Policy Council. Holly also volunteered to attend classroom Zoom meetings to introduce herself and explain what Policy Council is. She recommended reaching out to every Head Start and Early Head Start parent, and inviting them to the next meeting. Ora and Holly decided to work together to plan a short video explaining their stories and why they feel that it is important to be involved. Diane also recommended a "catch-phrase" to be more appealing.

- **Director's Report –Sent via email for review**
- **Adjourn: Holly Dockery adjourned this meeting at 7:22 PM**
- **Next Meeting: Monday, September 21, 2020**