

First Start Partnerships for Children and Families
Policy Council Meeting
Minutes
Monday, September 21, 2020
6:30 – 7:30 pm

Members in Attendance: Holly Dockery, Brooke Garrett, Maria G, Evelyn Kambo, Ora McPherson

- I. **Welcome:** Holly Dockery called the meeting to order at 6:38 PM
- II. **Old Business**
 - A. August minutes: The minutes for August were reviewed and approved.
 - B. August Financial Report and Credit Card Expenditures: The financial report and credit card expenditures for August were reviewed and approved.
- III. **New Business**
 - A. Introductions: Holly asked meeting participants to introduce themselves, share their child's classroom and how the year is going so far.
 - B. What is Policy Council and Why Should I Join: Holly explained that Policy Council is a group of Head Start and Early Head Start parents, who have the responsibility to make program decisions, assist in the hiring process, review the program's monthly financials, and delegate what money is used for. She also noted that as Policy Council, they have a fund that is shared with classrooms to use. Ora McPherson explained that Policy Council makes your voice heard, and if there is any questions or assistance, they will answer you and help you. She also noted that Policy Council is a good way to see where funds go, and see opportunities for volunteering in the classroom. Holly continued to explain that Policy Council is one of the governing bodies along with the Board of Directors and President & CEO-if you want changes, PC is the place to be.
 - First Start Family Stories: Ora shared her story about how her family has benefitted from the Early Head Start and Head Start program. She explained that it helped her children with EHS transition to HS program, and that it has been a wonderful program to help with interactions and transition to kindergarten. Holly shared her story about the growth her children demonstrated after attending Head Start and how she feels that education is the focus, and strive for kindergarten readiness.
 - We Need You: Nicole Nicholson explained that the National Office of Head Start recognizes the importance of family input into Head Start programs, which is why having a Policy Council made up of families is a requirement. Nicole also shared that Policy Council signs off on new grants, and Policy Council approves any new policies of First Start Partnerships as well. She noted that a lot of power is given to families as recognition that parents are children's first and forever teachers. Next, Nicole explained Parent Committees, and how Policy Council is the next step in becoming more involved in decision-making. Nicole then shared a video from the Office of Head Start about Policy Council that demonstrated the importance of family involvement. She noted that attending the Policy Council meeting is a great first step in becoming an advocate for their children.
 - How Can We Support You: Nicole asked how can the program support families so they are able to participate in Policy Council? She noted that there are monthly

meetings as well as some small committee meetings as necessary, and gave selection criteria as an example. Nicole shared that typically when meeting face-to-face, meals are provided as well as childcare. She noted that trainings are offered for Policy Council members to provide support. Nicole also explained that PC members have the opportunity to run for an executive position such as president, Vice President, Treasurer, etc. Ora noted that it is not just about moms and dads-family members in any capacity are welcome to participate.

C. First Start Partnerships Updates

- **Early Head Start Expansion:** Nicole explained that part of Policy Council is approving grants, and shared that the Office of Head Start put out an Early Head Start expansion grant opportunity recently. She shared that FSP was going to apply to open additional Early Head Start classrooms, but decided to partner instead with the state of Pennsylvania to apply for spots through them. Nicole explained that Policy Council will not need to approve an EHS expansion grant at this point, due to applying through the state, but she will update them when more information is available. Nicole explained that the new Chambersburg Early Learning Center will house the new EHS classrooms, and shared that a new project called “The Family Center” will be housed there as well. She shared that there will be a location in Chambersburg and Waynesboro, and are currently fundraising to be able to fund the program and meet the community’s needs.

- IV. Director’s Report:** Nicole presented monthly data and noted that currently Head Start is not fully enrolled (208 out of 279 as of 8/31). She shared that EHS is fully enrolled with 72 children. Nicole explained that for parent involvement-2 families participated in Policy Council, and HS orientations were well attended. She also noted that EHS home-based is beginning this month to offer 2 virtual family days a month. Nicole then shared the Health data for HS-69% physicals are up to date and dentals 87% up to date. She noted that we are working on releases being signed for doctor’s offices to get forms faxed to us, and that EHS health data not accurate at this time due to some glitches. Nicole explained that within first 45 days, ASQ screenings and Hearing and Vision screenings are to be completed, but office of HS is waiving requirement at this time. For Special Ed services, Nicole explained that 10% enrollment must have IEPs or IFSPs and that HS is at 9.5%, with EHS is at 11%. Finally, Nicole shared employment openings noting that HS is hiring a bilingual Family Advocate and EHS is hiring a Family Advocate for center-based site in Waynesboro.
- V. Member Discussion/Questions/Suggestions:** Brooke Garrett shared that she thought everyone gave a lot of great information and asked who to contact if she has questions. Nicole and Holly both said that she can contact them, and Nicole explained that Policy Council contact information would be shared after the meeting.
- VI. Adjourn: Holly Dockery adjourned this meeting at 7:26 PM**
- VII. Next Meeting: Monday, October 19, 2020**