

**CCDP Head Start
Policy Council Minutes
Date: Tuesday, March 19th, 2024,
Location: Grace Lutheran Church, Berwick**

Voting Members Present:

Twilla Dowell (CR) Elizabeth Hazzard (CR) Elizabeth Hons (P) Kerri Shaylor (CR)

Others Present:

Lisa Brelsford Rachel Dawson (P) Kaitlyn Floyd Sarah Meyer Morgana Miller Faith Rierson Audrey Rogucki
Cassie Weaver Heather Wolfe

Absent:

*Kiaya McFadden (P) *Rose Stolz *Rebecca White

CR = Community Representative
P = Parent
* = Excused Absence

Welcome:

The monthly meeting of the CCDP Head Start Policy Council was held on March 19th, 2024, at the Grace Lutheran Church in Berwick, Rachel Dawson, Chairperson, welcomed members and the meeting was called to order at 10:40 am.

Minutes:

The Minutes from the February 20th meeting were included in the packet. Chairperson Rachel Dawson asked members to review the minutes and asked if there were any changes to be made, there were none. Rachel asked voting members to make a motion to approve the February minutes as they were presented. A motion to approve the February minutes was made by Elizabeth Hons and seconded by Kerri Shaylor. The February minutes were voted on and approved.

Reports from Policy Council Officers

Treasurer's Reports:

Financial Reports with In-Kind

The Financial report for the month of February was included in the packet. A detailed version of this financial report is always available upon request. Cassie Weaver noted that all in-kind funds have been collected for the 23-24 fiscal year, but we are still collecting and recording. Cassie asked if members had any questions about the report, there were none.

Charge Card/Credit Card

The Charge Card/ Credit Card report for February was included in the packet. The report is split between Child Care, HSSAP, and Head Start. A detailed version of this report is available upon request. Cassie asked members if they had any questions about this report, there were none.

Parent Fund

The parent fund report was included in the packet. There was a request from Bloomsburg to use parent funds to have a field trip to the Children's Museum and to buy T-shirts for the children. Once approved, Bloomsburg will have used all of their parent funds for the fiscal year. Benton requested the use of their funds for DIY household cleaning supplies, and purchase food for the last parent group meeting. Once that is approved, Benton will have used all of their parent funds for the fiscal year. Rachel asked voting members to make a motion to approve the parent fund balances and requests as they were presented. A motion to approve the balances and requests was made by Elizabeth Hazzard and seconded by Twilla Dowell. The Parent Fund balances and requests were voted on and approved.

Committee Reports:

Personnel Update

Kaitlyn Floyd submitted her Personnel Update report. There were 7 status changes to regular. There was one resignation, 1 promotion, 1 new hire, and 2 starting pending clearances. Kaitlyn asked if anyone had any questions about the Personnel Update, there were none. Rachel asked voting members to make a motion to approve the Personnel Update as it was presented. A motion to approve the Personnel Update as it was presented was made by Kerri Shaylor and it was seconded by Elizabeth Hazzard. The Personnel Update was voted on and approved.

CCDP Board Report

Twilla Dowell noted that board members will meet with reviewers on March 21st at 2pm. Work is being done with the child care budget, and the by-laws are being revised.

New Business

Self-Assessment

At our January meeting, Cassie Weaver, Executive Director, gave the training on the Self-Assessment. Information was collected throughout the month of February in the form of file reviews, observations, surveys, etc. The areas where information was collected included, Education/Disability, ERSEA, Family Engagement, Fiscal, Governance/Administration, Health/ Mental Health, and Recordkeeping. The assessment includes strengths, areas of improvement, goals, and progress made for each area. Morgana Miller, Assistant Director, submitted the 2023-2024 Self-Assessment for members to review.

Like many other programs and businesses, staff shortages and retention has been a challenge. Finding qualified staff has made it difficult to keep classrooms open through the year. Management has done their best finding qualified staff, but staff illness and lack of substitutes have made this difficult. Classroom closures have made a negative impact on families who rely on Head Start in order to retain employment and provide for their families. Our program continues to advocate for early childhood education.

Last program year, the number of referrals out to the intermediate unit were high. This year, more collaboration with the agency has been arranged and those numbers are down significantly.

There are a number of valuable collaborations mentioned in the component area reports and in surveys sent to families and staff.

We continue to reduce the language barrier for families and children. We are offering bilingual staff a differential in pay. We have recently contracted with a language consultant to provide additional support to families. Education staff are always looking for and finding new ways to incorporate diversity in the classroom.

CCDP Head Start has a positive impact on the community. Our program is helping to improve school readiness and break the cycle of poverty. Although our program has faced its share of challenges, our staff are working every day to continue to provide quality education to young children and provide support services to families. Overall, our program excels in communication, collaboration, and compassion Families were feeling involved during the year in all classroom activities and events.

Each Service Area Manager will summarize their portions of the self-assessments while they give their monthly report. Morgana asked members if they had any questions about the 2023-2024 Self-Assessment, there were no questions. The complete Self-assessment was also included in the packet.

Rachel asked voting members for a motion to approve the 2023-2024 Self-Assessment as it was presented. A motion to approve the 2023-2024 Self- Assessment was made by Elizabeth Hons, it was seconded by Twilla Dowell. The 2023-2024 Self-Assessment was voted on and approved.

Admin & Staff Reports:

Executive Director Report:

Cassie Weaver, CCDP Executive Director, submitted her report for February. Cassie's Spotlight on Success was from Sarah Meyer, Health & Nutrition Manager. Sarah expressed how difficult it may seem at times to see the work that goes on behind closed doors. While our program has been faced with some challenges, we have a hardworking staff who are always working to continue providing the best service we can to our families. Sarah noted that Cassie is a true cheerleader at our agency as we are grateful to have her.

CCDP will have the Focus Area 2 Review from March 18-22nd. Policy Council members will meet with the reviewers on March 19th, before the meeting. The board will meet with the reviewers on March 21st at 2pm virtually. The Under-enrollment Plan was submitted to the Head Start Regional Office before this meeting. The Change in Scope that is being planned is included. Cassie noted that the grant application for the Community Giving Foundation: Berwick was submitted on February 26th.

The program is requesting \$45,169 to provide Positive Solutions for Families and support all or part of the three Behavior Support Staff in Benton and Berwick. Cassie asked members if they had any questions, there were none. Cassie's report was included in the packet.

Mental Health Report:

Heather Wolfe, CCDP Head Start Mental Health Manager, submitted her report for February. There is a full-year Behavior Support Staff position open at the 5th street center. PBIS Module 2 was provided to staff on February 7th. Heather's report included *Program Behavioral Updates* which cover the number of children who are currently receiving support for challenging/unsafe behaviors in the seven classrooms that were open in February. For the month of February, there were 7 children receiving support for challenging/unsafe behaviors in the classrooms. For the month of February 22 BIR's were completed and recorded. There were 5 injuries due to behavioral incidents, these injury numbers included both children and staff. There are two children who are currently using a frequency chart instead of a BIR. These charts are used for children who display higher frequent behaviors which we have already collected data on through the use of the BIR's.

Heather reviewed some of the information included in the Self-Assessment for Mental Health. This information was included in with Health, Oral Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, and Health & Safety. She indicated that there were many strengths identified by families, staff, and community members. Parents had positive things to say about the support they received. Heather highlighted the following areas.

One strength was that 100% of families who indicated they had mental health or behavioral concerns for their child reported they had received resources, support and referrals to help meet their child's needs. In addition, 85% of families reported that they were offered Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), Positive Solutions for families (PSF), and assistance from the Family Support Staff (FSS).

Staff had lots of positive feedback with regard to the current Mental Health Observation/Consultation Procedure and gave specific feedback on our Mental Health Consultant, Ruth Brewer and how helpful and supportive she has been to them. Most staff (89%) indicated that they feel supported by the agency with regard to their mental health and overall well-being.

Heather discussed a couple areas of improvement including that efforts will continue to be made to increase parent participation on the Health Services Advisory Committee and to support staff's mental health and well-being.

Heather asked members if they had any questions about her report, or the information that was shared in the Health/Mental Health section of the Self-Assessment, there were none. Her report was included in the packet.

Education Report:

Rose Stolz, CCDP Head Start Education Manager, submitted her report for February. Rose was absent for this meeting, but her report was included in the packet. Transition to kindergarten meetings have been scheduled and some have taken place already. Town Park Village received their STARS 4 certificate.

The education self-assessment section was completed by the assistant teachers, teachers, education managers, and parents between program options. The areas of improvement were reported as, recruiting qualified staff to provide consistent and routine education to children, keeping classrooms open and, increase communication with non-English speakers.

Families whose children were enrolled into a center-based classroom reported that the agency should hire more staff and requested that closure information be given to them earlier. Many families stated that their child needs consistency and routine in order to thrive.

Teachers were interviewed by members of the Curriculum and Resources Committee. They reported that the Creative Curriculum was flexible, covered all developmental areas, and was easily adjusted or adapted to meet individual needs. An additional curriculum, titled Second Step, helps develop Social Emotional Skills.

An initial home visit happens with each family that is being enrolled into our program, this visit introduces the family to the child's teacher and to the program. An Open House allows families to meet the other classroom staff and families, to see the classroom, and to learn more about the curriculum and volunteering in the program. The teaching team meet weekly to discuss the children and their developmental progress. This information is then placed into the lesson plan and children are given specific activities that give additional help. Management and teaching staff meet monthly to develop ways to support the children and families.

A Parent/Teacher conference is held two times a program term. Parents are informed about their child's progress. Parents help create goals; teachers share activities from the GOLD assessment. Weekly In-Kind forms also list activities parents and children can do to develop their skills. At the end of each Creative Curriculum study, parents are invited into the classroom to what is called a "Celebration of Learning." These events allow the family members to see what the children have learned and to share hands-on activities together. There were no questions about Rose's report or her section or the education portion of the Self-Assessment. Her report was included in the packet.

Family Engagement Report:

Lisa Brelsford, CCDP Head Start Family Engagement Manager, submitted her report for February. Parent groups were visited by Sarah Meyer, CCDP Health & Nutrition Manager for Oral Health Month. Oral Health information was sent home to all parents along with the Parent Group flyer. Three classrooms had Celebrations of Learning in February.

Lisa reviewed some of the information included in her portion of the Self-Assessment. Families received a message explaining the purpose of the Self-Assessment and a link to the survey. A paper flyer with a QR code linked to the survey was also sent out to all families in case they didn't receive the text message. There were 27 responses.

Spanish surveys were given to the families who speak Spanish, but none were completed. Parents communicated that they enjoyed the special events throughout the year, they felt their child was ready for kindergarten, and they had positive comments about the learning and growth of their child.

An area of improvement was considering alternate times for some parent events and activities like Positive Solutions for Families. A goal for Family Engagement was that by 2024, 80% of all Family Partnership Agreements (FPA) goals would align with the services needed. The mid-year data was at 67.81% for that goal. Family Service Workers continue to encourage families to work on these and progress in the area is being made.

The 2023-2024 school year has many challenges regarding parent participation in many of the events and meetings. To try to gain more participation for the next program year, the Family Engagement Manager looked to current parents for feedback on what could improve participation in the future.

Only two parents completed the Positive Solutions sessions this program year. To try to reach more parents and guardians, the program is considering changing the format of the sessions for next program year. Four parents indicated that they wanted to continue with the weekly sessions. Fifteen said they would prefer the monthly sessions. Next year, we are going to try and do one session each month and parents can decide if they would like to attend the session based

on the topic being presented. Parent Group participation has been low this program year. Parents were asked whether they would prefer to keep the monthly meetings or only have meetings every 2-3 months. 14 of the respondents said they want to keep the monthly meetings and 8 said they would prefer the quarterly meetings.

Parent Groups will continue next year, and parents surveyed seemed to be interested in behavior topics and at home educational tools.

Policy Council parent participation has been low this year. Several parents started out the year with Policy Council but then due to various circumstances, they had to resign. Parents were asked how we could increase parent involvement in Policy Council, a few suggestions from parents included roles being explained better as well as having multiple meeting times. Due to the nature of Policy Council, there cannot be multiple meeting times for each meeting. The Family Engagement Manager will investigate how to better explain Policy Council and the role of members to parents. Virtual options are available, and parents were asked if this option would help them stay involved. The results were mixed. In order to accommodate those that would like a virtual option, the program will start offering certain meetings and events in a hybrid model to allow for more participation.

Parents had positive comments about the learning and growth that they've seen within their child while in the program. They appreciate the progress reports from the teachers. Parents feel that their children are ready for kindergarten. Several parents also commented that they enjoyed the special events that allow them to come in and see how their children are doing. There was a suggestion of a possible "Bring your Parent to School Day."

Lisa asked members if they had any questions about her report or her portion of the Self-Assessment, there were none.

Family Services Report:

Faith Rierson, CCDP Head Start Family Service Manager, submitted her report for February. Our current enrollment is at 145, our cumulative enrollment is at 160. These numbers do not include the two classrooms that are currently closed in Berwick. Attendance for the month is at 72.87%. Two classrooms were remote for the month of February which brought the average daily attendance percentage down. Family Service Workers have been scheduling applications for the 2024-2025 program year with our updated selection criteria.

The ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance) self-assessment team included four parents, four staff members and one community person. One parent is a Policy Council member. This team was presented with questions and a list of people to interview to assess if the program was abiding by the federal requirements and procedures for determining eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and attendance.

All Family Service Workers are trained on the eligibility requirements when they are initially hired and, a follow-up training is conducted on an annual basis at the start of each program term year.

Policy Council & Board members are trained on the eligibility requirements at the November meeting by the Family Services Manager. The Recruitment, Selection and Enrollment plans were presented to the Family and Community Partnership committee for review and approval. The plans were submitted and approved.

A Selection Criteria is reviewed and updated every year by the Family and Community Partnership Committee and is included with the Selection and Enrollment Plan. Suggestions to change the selection criteria for the upcoming 2024-2025 program to address the needs of the children we serve have been brought to the attention of the Family Services Manager and Family Engagement Manager; The selection criteria has been adjusted accordingly. A Memoranda of Understanding is created with partners in the community to refer children to Head Start. The Columbia County Family Center, Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, CMSU birth to three early intervention, Columbia County Children and Youth, the Women's Center, and Beyond Violence are some examples of the referral agencies.

Our program is hoping to recruit more non-English speaking children into the program and explore more ways to assist with the language barrier. We plan to continue sending resources home in the family's home language.

For the upcoming program year, we are going to work hard at making sure we stay at full enrollment and that all open slots are filled within the 30-day period.

We currently have an attendance procedure in place and that is shared with families at the initial home visit. With the Use of the ChildPlus system, we are able to track attendance and Family Service Workers can add notes to that system to indicate why a child is absent. Teachers and Family Service Workers meet weekly and monthly teamings and

scheduled. At the teamings, teachers, FSWs and managers attend; absenteeism is discussed at these meetings. Behavioral Support Staff will also attend these meetings if discussing a child that they directly work with. All attendance is shared with Policy Council and the Board, our goal is to keep attendance numbers above 85%.

Homelessness is a concern in Columbia County. The rent prices have gone up and families are finding it difficult to maintain stable housing. Some have moved in with family members because of the crisis but, have not been able to move into their own housing. At the start of the program term, 22 families were experiencing homelessness, 3 were able to move to stable housing. Community resources such as Agape, the United Way, the Gate House and the Salvation Army help with security deposits and first month's rents.

Several referrals were made to Agape to obtain furniture and appliances. Our goal for the next year is for 75% of families experiencing homelessness will obtain adequate housing before the end of the program term. Faith asked members if they had any question about her report or the self-assessment portion, there were none. Her report was included in the packet.

Health & Nutrition Report:

Sarah Meyer, CCDP Health & Nutrition Manager, submitted her report for February. There were 1,006 breakfasts, and 1,176 lunches served in the month of February. An Injury report summary was included in her report. Sarah's report also included health screening information for all centers. Currently we track all physicals, dentals, hearing, and vision. We currently have 69% of dental exams on file. We continue to work with families in order to bring that number up. Dental treatments needed are at a total of 8 and dental treatments completed are at 2. Parents are working to get all treatments scheduled and completed. We have 76% of physical exams on file, 77% of hearing and, 85% of vision exams on file.

Self-Assessment surveys were sent out to staff, families, and Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC). The assessment was reported with Health, Oral Health, Nutrition, Mental Health, and Health & Safety. In 2023 it was suggested that CCDP find a local pediatrician to join the HSAC. We were able to have a certified Physician Assistant to join the committee. The Health Manager will continue to seek opportunities to add a pediatric medical professional to the committee.

Most families expressed that they felt they could advocate for their child's health and dental health needs while a small percentage indicated that they were unable to advocate. The Health Manager will work to empower families with resources and tools in the language that will make advocating easier for them.

Families reported that multiple training opportunities and resources were made available to them including topics on dental health, nutrition/wellness information, tobacco cessation, pedestrian safety, emergency first aid, and the effects of lead exposure.

CCDP has been working to increase overall building safety and provide resources and training for staff. Staff have found value in the safety trainings provided and would like to continue to see more trainings in this focus area. The Intruder training was the training that staff found helpful as well as, First Aid/ CPR, and Fire Safety. Some other responses provided were PBIS, Secondhand Trauma and Safe Crisis Management. Topics of Oral Health, Safety, and Nutrition were areas of most impact for our staff and families during home visits and in the classrooms.

In nutrition, CCDP has a positive working relationship with the Tapestry of Health/WIC to provide services and resources to children and families. We currently use a nutrition consultant who assists in reviewing nutrition assessments that come in, also, the consultant also assists in creating suggestions for food substitutes.

Staff reported that they have ongoing communication with parents regarding screenings, screenings results and their child's progress. They reported that they have received support to carry out care plans for children. Oral Health, Safety, and nutrition were the top impact area for our staff and families this program year.

Sarah asked if there were any questions about her report or her portion of the Self- Assessment, there were none. Her report was included in the packet.

Education & Disabilities Report:

Rebecca White, CCDP Head Start Education & Disabilities Manager, submitted her report for February. Rebecca was absent for this meeting, but her report was included in the packet. Her report included outcomes data for the winter. In the disabilities portion of the report, Rebecca notes that 19% or 15 of our center-based children, 11% or 3 of our combination option children and 12% or 3 of our home-based children have an IEP. There are currently 13 referrals out to the IU. The Family Support Staff program (FSS) has a total of 3 referrals and 1 pending for support in Bloomsburg. The Early Childhood Conference is scheduled to take place on May 17th, 2024 @ St. Luke's Church in Bloomsburg. More information on the Conference is coming soon.

The Self-Assessment in Education was combined with Disabilities. Parents who completed the survey reported growth in their child's development and academic skills. An area of improvement was continuing to recruit qualified staff and increase efforts in language communications with non-English speakers.

Families with children who had an IEP indicated on the survey that they felt they were provided information at their IEP meetings, their questions were answered, and the services were explained. There have been some improvements in the referral and evaluation process. Changes have been made in the screening process allowing the speech therapist to screen the speech only children.

The Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) has only one evaluator for Columbia County. The Disabilities Manager meets periodically with the CSIU administrators to increase the communication and be a support to each other during the referral and IEP process. There were no questions about Rebecca's report or her portion in the Self-Assessment. Her report was included in the packet.

Open Discussion & Answer Period:


Parent Group Report: [Berwick](#)

Berwick Parent Group did not meet, they will meet in April. They have decided to use the rest of their Parent Fund money to buy t-shirts for the children. Benton and Bloomsburg's parent group reports were included in the packet.

Closing:

Rachel Dawson thanked members for their participation and gave a reminder about the next meeting that would be taking place on Tuesday, April 16th, 2024, at the Grace Lutheran Church in Berwick at 9:30am. Rachel asked members to make a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Twilla Dowell and seconded by Kerri Shaylor. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am

Chairperson Signature & Date


[Rachel \(Mar 26, 2024 09:49 EDT\)](#)