

**CCDP Head Start
Policy Council Minutes
Date: Tuesday, October 15th, 2024,
Location: Grace Lutheran Church, Berwick**

Voting Members Present:

Twilla Dowell (CR) Elizabeth Hons (P) Alexis Pantoja (P) Lisa Shultz (P) Michelle Talanca (P) Angela Ulrich (P)
Mercedes Welliver (P) Kristy Wright (P)

Others Present:

Lisa Brelsford Sandra Elliott Sarah Meyer Morgana Slodysko Faith Rierson Audrey Rogucki Rose Stolz Heather Wolfe

Absent:

*Kaitlyn Floyd (P) Elizabeth Hazzard (CR) *Amanda Henrie (P) * Kerri Shaylor (CR) *Cassie Weaver *Rebecca White

CR = Community Representative
P = Parent
* = Excused Absence

Welcome:

The monthly meeting of the CCDP Head Start Policy Council was held on October 15th, 2024, at the Grace Lutheran Church in Berwick, Elizabeth Hons, Chairperson, welcomed members and the meeting was called to order at 9:43 am.

Minutes:

The Minutes from the September 17th meeting were included in the packet. Elizabeth asked members if they had any questions about the minutes, there were none. Elizabeth asked voting members to make a motion to accept the minutes as they were presented. Twilla Dowell made the motion to approve the minutes. Lisa Shultz seconded it. The September minutes were voted on and approved.

Reports from Policy Council Officers

Treasurer's Reports:

Financial Reports with In-Kind

The Financial reports for September were included in the packet. The Financial reports are a snapshot of our yearly budget. One column shows our actual yearly budget, one shows our actual expenses, year-to-date actual expenses, and balances.

The in-kind dollars amount was included in the report along with the breakdown of the grants that we receive. There is \$255,670 still to collect for in-kind for the 24-25 fiscal year. Members were asked if they had any questions, there were none.

Charge Card/Credit Card

The September Charge Card/ Credit Card reports were included in the packet. The report is split between Child Care, HSSAP, and Head Start. There was a question from a parent asking if their clearances that were paid by CCDP were included in this report. The clearance was done in October and this report was reflecting charges made in September. There were no more questions.

Parent Fund

The parent fund report was included in the packet. Berwick is requesting a total of \$140 to purchase craft items and food for the meeting on October 17th. There were no other requests included. Elizabeth asked for a motion to approve the parent fund. Kristy Wright made the motion to approve the parent fund. Michelle Talanca seconded it. The parent fund was voted on and approved.

Committee Reports:

Personnel Update

Sandra Elliott, Human Resources Coordinator, informed members that there have been no changes to the Personnel update since last month. There were no questions, no vote was needed.

Family & Community Partnership Committee

The Committee had a meeting on October 9th. The minutes were included in the packet and Faith mentioned that items discussed at the meeting are on the agenda. There were no questions.

CCDP Board Report

Twilla noted that the Board passed policies 3.17, 5.11, and 10.0.

New Business

Eligibility Requirements Training

Faith Rierson presented her required training on eligibility to members. The mission of Head Start has always been to support low-income families and early learning. This training provides the details on how our program reinforces that overall mission.

In-person or telephone interviews must be conducted to determine eligibility. CCDP Head Start enrolls children based on their eligibility points. These points are given to children/families based on certain criteria. Age, income, homelessness or foster care, and public assistance are criteria used to verify eligibility.

For age eligibility, children must be between 3-5 years old before September 1st of the program term. At this time, we do not require a birth certificate, but it is preferred that one be presented.

Families whose income level falls below or at the federal poverty line are income eligible.

CCDP is required to verify all eligibility criteria through written documentation. A third party may be contacted to verify information such as no income. A family receiving public assistance such as SNAP or TANF, experiencing homelessness, or in foster care is considered categorically eligible.

After all eligible children are served, our program enrolls families in the 101%-130% of the poverty line.

At this time, CCDP will ask families in this percentile to provide housing cost statements such as rent and utility bills, to determine if their housing costs exceed more than 30% of their gross income.

Once a child is determined to be eligible and is enrolled, they will be eligible for 2 years unless there is a significant change in the family's income.

A child who has met the eligibility criteria and has completed the process for enrollment is considered to be accepted.

A child who has attended classes or received a service is considered to be enrolled. A child who has received a service or services and ceases to attend classes or a child who has moved outside the service area is considered to be dropped.

Faith asked members if they had any questions about this training, there were none. There was no vote on this training, and it was included in the packet.

Recruitment Plan

Faith Rierson submitted the Recruitment plan for the 2025-2026 program year. Recruiting for the next program year takes place at the beginning of the calendar year, but CCDP is always willing to take a pre-application at any time during the year.

CCDP purchases Lawn signs, brochures, and flyers. All of these are available each year. Recruiting on our Facebook page will direct parents to our website to complete a pre-application. We plan to set up a QR Code that will be included in a flyer that can be put up at grocery stores, post offices, and other local businesses. A QR code will make it easier for parents to fill out a pre-app. We plan on providing information at public events that may involve children and families. CCDP will continue to network with local social service agencies to help with our recruitment effort. We will develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with local partner agencies and establish a direct referral process from those agencies. Faith asked members if they had any questions or comments about the Recruitment Plan for the 2025-2026 program year, there were none. Elizabeth asked voting members to make a motion to approve the Recruitment Plan, Lisa Shultz made the motion to approve, and Kristy Wright seconded it. The Recruitment Plan was voted on and approved. The plan was included in the packet.

Selection & Enrollment Plan

Faith Rierson submitted the Selection & Enrollment Plans for the 2025-2026 program year.

Most of the information here was explained during the Eligibility requirements training. This plan goes into more detail in the selection process. The selection process will start with a pre-application, a Family Service Worker (FSW) will schedule an interview with the applying family to go over program options and begin the eligibility process.

Families will be asked to provide proof of income. As part of being categorically eligible, TANF letters and/or SNAP benefits letters may be obtained by having the family sign a release of information to have us get the necessary documents from the assistance office.

If a family is claiming no income for a period, the program may accept the family's signed declaration to that effect. In the case of verifying homelessness, the program may accept a written statement from the homeless shelter or provider, school personnel, or any information on the application that would establish that a child is homeless.

In the case of a foster child, a court order must be presented to verify.

Once applications are completed and the outreach within the community has been done, the selection process can begin.

Each one of the eligibility criteria holds a certain weight when processing applications and wherever the family falls, determines where they are on the scale. The higher-weighted families are the families that will be selected first. Some categories for this weight system are, returning families, age, social services, health, disabilities, and family dynamic. The weight system will go from greatest to least. The higher-weighted families will be selected first and then we will go down the list according to the weight.

Our program is allowed to offer slots to families who are at the 101%-130% income level, but those slots will only be offered if all the income-eligible families have been offered the slots and denied them for some reason. If there is a waiting list during a program term, this weight system will also be used to ensure that income-eligible families are being offered the slots first.

Once a family accepts an open slot, the enrollment process can begin. Family Service Workers and Teachers will meet with the family to complete orientation and initial home visit paperwork. The Director of Health & the Health Assistant will call the family to review the child's health record. Once home visits are completed and health records have been reviewed, the family can be given a start date.

Faith asked members if they had any questions or comments about the Selection & Enrollment Plan. There were none. Elizabeth asked for voting members to make a motion to approve the Selection & Enrollment Plans. A motion to approve the Selection & Enrollment Plans was made by Kerri Shaylor and seconded by Elizabeth Hazzard, it was voted on and approved. Lisa Shultz made the motion to accept. Kristy Wright seconded it. The Selection & Enrollment Plan was voted on and approved.

Annual Report

Cassie Weaver, Executive Director, submitted the 23-24 Annual Report. This report covers all information for the 23-24 program year and includes information on both Head Start and Child Care. Morgana Slodysko highlighted our funding grant source breakdown. Grant applications are submitted with the purpose of supporting our program needs. With grant funding, our program is able to hire Behavior Support Staff to provide supports to children in the classrooms. This funding also allows for training sessions throughout the year for staff. Some of these grants support HSSAP classrooms. The funding breakdown was included in the Annual report.

In the 2023-2024 program year, CCDP dealt with staffing shortages program-wide, some classrooms were closed or operating remotely. Policy Council and staff meetings met in person.

In June of 2024, CCDP Head Start requested a Change in Scope to reduce federal enrollment from 128 children to 89. Also, changing the design option at our Benton location from Locally Designed to Center-Based. Program-wide, this is a decrease of 89 children. With this reduction, our program is hoping to raise staff pay rates. Being fully staffed will help in keeping classrooms open and improve morale.

Information for each of the service areas was included in the Annual Report. A total of 164 children were served during the 23-24 program year for Head Start. Attendance numbers were down for the year, this was due to illness for staff and children enrolled. For classrooms that were operating remotely, packets were sent home for families to complete to count for attendance.

A total of 16 Parent Groups took place throughout the year, and this allowed families to engage with other parents with enrolled children in the program. Each center participated in different ways. Some Parent Group highlights included Family Fun Night at the Bloomsburg Children's Museum. T-shirts made for each child at the Berwick center, and scavenger hunts, bingo games, and other family fun activities in Benton.

CCDP Head Start had a total of 159 volunteers for the 23-24 program year, including 112 who were current or past parents in our program.

Within the annual report, included outcomes graphs show how the children are doing in school. Since the annual report covers the entire agency, it also includes a section about the Child Care program. By the end of the program year, families had set 166 goals, and 93 of those were successfully completed, with many focusing on basic needs.

Members were asked if they had any questions about the Annual Report, there were none. Elizabeth asked voting members to make a motion to approve the 2023-2024 Annual Report as it was presented. Kristy Wright made the motion to approve. Angela Ulrich seconded it. The 2023-2024 Annual Report was voted on and approved.

Admin & Staff Reports:

Executive Director Report:

Cassie Weaver, CCDP Executive Director, submitted her reports for September. Morgana Slodysko reported the spotlight on success which came from Debbie about Partnership Classroom at 5th Street. Miranda Couch is the Group Supervisor in that room. She is a caring, hardworking individual who is willing to adjust to changing circumstances quickly.

Head Start received a Healthy Workplace Grant from the Community Giving Foundation for \$1000. Staff have decided on a painting party. Planning for the event will be happening soon.

Program Goals & School Readiness Goals were highlighted, and members were asked for their feedback. This year, we must modify our goals and objectives. Each service area will talk about their goals and progress.

Sarah, Director of Health & Staff Development, highlighted a program goal to partner with families to ensure that children's basic needs are being met so they can succeed in school and life. The measurable objective of this goal was that 80% of enrolled children experiencing a dental need would receive treatment before the end of the program year. This goal was not met and at the end of the program year, only 14.8% of children received the treatment they needed. This goal was made before the COVID pandemic and previously seemed obtainable but is no longer because of the pandemic challenges and issues families face with dental appointments.

CCDP continues to collaborate with Geisinger to provide dental screenings to children during the year.

When this goal was created, we planned to take many steps to reach it. Our Health Services Advisory Committee invited dental practitioners to sit on the committee, we were successfully able to have two at this time. February is National Children's Dental Health Month, during this month, Sarah visits each center's Parent Group to communicate the importance of oral health. A plan to provide monthly oral health education materials was put in place, we are using the Cavity Free Curriculum.

Members were asked if they had any questions about Cassie's report or the goals that were discussed. There were none. Her report was included in the packet.

Mental Health Report:

Heather Wolfe, CCDP Head Start Mental Health Manager, submitted her report for September.

Heather's report includes the number of children who receive Behavioral Support Services. At this time, there are no children in our program receiving this support.

Heather's report included *Program Behavioral Updates* which cover the number of children who are currently receiving support for challenging /unsafe behaviors. There were 4 reported for September. 25 BIRs were completed and recorded. There were 10 injuries due to behavioral incidents, these injury numbers included both children and staff.

Heather noted that all staff PBIS meetings are being held during Professional Development days. Ongoing PBIS coaching is provided in all Head Start classrooms. Coaches are using the TPOT (*Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool*). This will help to identify needs in the classroom.

Heather reported that the next HSAC (*Health Services Advisory Committee*) meeting will take place on November 15th, 2024, at 10 am at the Berwick Center. There is a full-year Behavior Support Staff position available for the 5th Street Center classroom.

Angela Ulrich, a Parent, had a question about the BIRs and injury reports. She wanted to know what type of behavior can lead to an injury for another child. An example of a child throwing blocks in the classroom after being asked not to was given to her, if that block hit another child in the head, that behavior would warrant a BIR and an injury report for the child who got hit in the head.

Policy Council members discussed the Mental Health objective from the current five-year goals and how program changes have negated this objective due to all of our classrooms/staff receiving PBIS coaching now. Through discussion with the PC members, all agreed not to have a MH objective under any of the three goals for our next five-year goal plan. All agreed that it was difficult to see how a measurable MH objective would fit under the three goal areas.

Heather asked members if they had any more questions or discussions about her report or the Goals. There were none. Her report was included in the packet.

Education Report:

Rose Stolz, CCDP Head Start Education Manager, submitted her report for September. Home visits and ASQ numbers were included in her report. GOLD is due in October. Teachers will begin scheduling parent/teacher conferences that will take place in November. STARS renewal paperwork has been submitted for Berwick and Town Park Village. NAEYC Accreditation is changing its procedure which means that our credential has been extended until June 2026. New NAEYC

requirements will be posted in March 2025. Celebrations of Learning will take place on October 17th, 18th, and 25th for Danielle, Tina, and Carolina.

Rose Stolz, Education Manager, highlighted a School Readiness Goal which was a writing goal for children.

Children are encouraged to write for a variety of purposes and use sophisticated marks. Children are encouraged to write in a journal and are asked to dictate the stories. During dramatic play, many children are encouraged to make up price tags for items which encourages writing and some symbols.

In-kind activities are sent home each week with children. Each sheet is filled with a variety of activities and skills to work on at home. Parents submit this paper back to the teacher, and the time spent on these activities is then counted as in-kind.

Rose asked members for feedback on a goal which would be for children to comprehend fiction and non-fiction literature. The second action plan goal was to maintain the CLASS objective but increase the score threshold to reflect the requirements of the new performance standards. Members discussed and agreed that these should be set as updated goals. There were no questions about Rose's report. It was included in the packet.

Family Engagement Report:

Lisa Brelsford, CCDP Head Start Family Engagement Manager, submitted her report for September. Parent groups have met for the first time this program term. Benton will meet in October since they couldn't meet in September. The 1st Positive Solutions for Families session was completed, it focused on making connections and using encouragement with children. There is one referral out for the Family Support Program for Bloomsburg, and 2 participating in the program in Berwick and Bloomsburg. Wesley United Methodist Church donated backpacks for our enrolled Bloomsburg children. Holiday assistance flyers for Berwick and Bloomsburg Salvation Army have been sent out to families. There were no questions about Lisa's reports, it was included in the packet.

Lisa presented the previous goal of having 80% of Family Partnership Agreements align with a need identified by the family. During the final year of this goal, we reached 71% of families having the goals aligned with a need identified by the family. When this goal started, we were at 27% so we made tremendous growth over the past five years.

Lisa recommends not continuing with this goal because we did make such progress with it and there will always be circumstances as to why a family may not have their goal aligned with a self-identified need. After some discussion, members were in favor of not continuing this goal.

Lisa also presented the idea of a new goal of working towards increasing parent participation in at-home activities and family engagement events. Members liked the idea and a discussion was had about how to measure that growth.

Members preferred to increase it by a percentage each year based on the previous year instead of working towards an end goal percentage. During the discussion, members mentioned having after-school activities where they can bring siblings, weekend events and sending weekly reminders and then reminders the day before/day of. Members made mention of some type of incentive and gift cards were suggested but it was explained why Head Start couldn't do gift cards.

With a new goal, parent participation in at-home activities and at family engagement events will increase by 15% each year.

Lisa asked members if they had any questions about her report or her goals. There were none. Her report was included in the packet.

Family Services Report:

Faith Rierson, CCDP Head Start Family Service Manager, submitted her report for September.

The average daily attendance for the month was 88.72% and our cumulative enrollment is 120. We are currently serving 118 income-eligible families and 2 in the 101-130%.

Family Service Workers have been scheduling applications for the 2024-2025 program year using our updated selection criteria. We are also working with our community partners to receive referrals.

Faith discussed goals with members and asked for feedback. Attendance in the past year has been low due to staff and child illness. During times of unexpected closures, teachers were sending home packets for families to complete and when they returned, that completed packet would be counted for attendance.

There was a question about weather-related closures and how that counts for attendance. There was some discussion about this.

The new goal is that CCDP Head Start will maintain an average daily attendance of 85% in years 1 & 2 and 88% in years 3 to 5.

There were no more questions about Faith's report or the goals, her report was included in the packet.

Health Report:

Sarah Meyer, Director of Health & Staff Development, submitted her report for September. There were 1239 breakfasts, and 1306 lunches served. The injury report summary was included. Sarah noted that her report included some changes to the July & meal counts. Sarah's report also included health screening information for all centers. Currently, we track all physicals, dentals, hearing, and vision.

CCDP Open house took place in September, and Health & Nutrition staff were present. The Nutrition assistant set up a snack cart for families who visited, and this was well received. There was another clothing order that took place and Lisa B helped with that. Vision screens and Growth screens will be taking place in October at each center.

Sarah spoke with members about the previous dental goal indicating the prior goal, 80% of children experiencing a dental need will receive successful treatment was not obtainable. This goal was made prior to covid. The pandemic created many unforeseen struggles hindering the success of reaching the 80% goal. Sarah also spoke about the language in this goal, explaining to PC that the words *receive successful treatment*, also created barriers since not all treatment is completed before a child ages out of our program.

The PC members agreed and talked about how they are experiencing their own struggles with making and keeping dental appointments for their children. Sarah proposed a new goal focusing on children successfully completing their 6-month preventative dental exam. The committee advised this was the most reasonable goal change and was in favor of this goal given the current struggles.

Sarah asked members if they had any questions about her report or the goals. 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 September. Rebecca was absent from this meeting. The education portion of her report showed the number of home visits done.

In the disabilities portion of the report for September, Rebecca reports that 10 children entered the program year with an IEP. There are 11 referrals out to the IU and 3 of those were from the last program year.

Rebecca's program goals for education were already discussed in Rose's report. There is no goal from Disabilities at this time. There were no more questions about Rebecca's report, and it was included in the packet.

Parent Group Report

Bloomsburg met with 2 in attendance. The group discussed behavior concerns and Policy Council. The group did a healthy eating activity with Sarah as the presenter. The group discussed ideas for the next meeting. There were no questions about the parent group, the report was included in the packet.

Closing:

Elizabeth Hons thanked members for participating today. Elizabeth reminded members about the next meeting which will take place on Tuesday, November 19th @9:30am at the Grace Lutheran Church in Berwick.

Elizabeth asked for a motion to end the meeting. The motion was made by Angela Ulrich, and it was seconded by Lisa Shultz. The meeting was adjourned at noon.

Chairperson Signature & Date


Elizabeth Hons (Oct 24, 2024 08:52 EDT)