



Policy Council Meeting
February 21, 2024 (English and Spanish)
5:30 p.m.
Minutes

I. Call to Order

Mr. Randy Grice presided over the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

II. Roll Call

The following participated in the meeting:

Members	Representing Centers
Monica Symonette	B&G Preschool
Diosmary Valdes	Kids Small World Learning Center
Melissa Spencer	Kinderkids Academy III
Kerenza Scheeper	Lincoln Marti - 905
Apryl Thomas	Lord's Learning Center, Inc.
Jennifer Li Moya	New Aladdin
Jennifer Ortega	Rainbow Intergenerational
Claudette Obsaint	Shores School
Lien Corona	Springview Academy
Randy Grice	Community Representative
Polo Coronado	Community Representative
Iris Strachan	Board Member
EHS Staff	Position
Alexander Sanchez	Controller
Belkis Torres	Vice President for EHS
Bob De La Fonte	Legal Counsel
Elicenia Del Rio	Interim Finance Manager
Kimii Robinson	Director of Family and Community Engagement
Jacqueline Dominguez	Human Resources Director
Jessica Dittmar	Administrative Coordinator
Lisney Badillo	Director of Contracts and Procurement
Maggie Casanova	Sr. Accountant
Otilia Gonzalez-Varese	Disability Manager
Pamela Hollingsworth	Sr. VP for Strategic Initiatives and Program Development
Roseleen Hurtado-Rodriguez	Health Manager
Salvatore Martorano	EHS Compliance Manager
Sarahi Rivera	Director of Child Development and Education Support Services
Sheyla Perez	Contract Manager
Yissel Morales	Contract Manager

III. Action Item

A. November 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Randy Grice asked for a motion to approve the November 15, 2023 meeting minutes.

- Motion made by Apryl Thomas
- Motion seconded by Monica Symonette
- No discussion
- Motion passed 12 in favor and 0 opposed

B. Resolutions

i. **Resolution 02212024-01: 2023-2024 Self-Assessment Report and Plan**

Ms. Torres shared that the self-assessment is an annual process that is required by performance standards. During the self-assessment, Early Head Start considers opportunities for improvement or enhancement. This year's self-assessment was conducted on December 8. Every year different stakeholders are invited to obtain different ideas and perspectives. The participants this year included childcare partners, a parent, community partners, and staff. The participants participated in different focus groups to analyze data for the different areas and provide suggestions. The action plan focuses on the following:

1. Increasing the non-federal share by 10% annually from the year before.
2. Meeting the ASQ 45-day screening deadline by refining the new online process.
3. Initiating the onboard training through the new Learning Management System.
4. Modifying and updating the community resources to target the needs of families more efficiently and effectively.
5. Focusing on increasing well-baby submissions by analyzing the barriers, revising the process for obtaining the information, and educating parents on the importance of well-baby checks.

Mr. Randy Grice asked for a motion to approve Resolution 02212024-01: 2023-2024 Self-Assessment report and program improvement plan.

- Motion made by Kerenza Scheeper
- Motion seconded by Polo Coronado
- No discussion
- Motion passed 12 in favor and 0 opposed.

ii. **Resolution 02212024-02: 2024-2025 Recruitment and Selection Plan**

This year the recruitment and selection plan had a couple of changes. There is more focus on providing services to parents who are working and going to school to support their self-sufficiency. The program also increased the points of victims of domestic violence. Parents who had prior miscarriages or documented parent disability are now being given points for eligibility into the program.

Mr. Randy Grice asked for a motion to approve Resolution 02212024-02: 2024-2025 Recruitment and Selection Plan.

- Motion made by Kerenza Scheeper
- Motion seconded by Claudette Obssaint
- No discussion
- Motion passed in 12 favor and 0 opposed.

iii. **Resolution 02212024-03: 2022-2023 Non-Federal Share Waiver**

Ms. Elicenia Del Rio, Interim Finance Manager, shared that the program is seeking approval to submit a Non-Federal Share Waiver for the 2022-2023 school year.

Obtaining the Non-Federal Share is a requirement of the Head Start Act, Section 640(b). To receive a waiver or a reduction in the required non-Federal share, the program must submit a waiver request to the Office of Head Start. In 2022-2023 the program met \$1,207,595 of the required \$2,848,542. The program is requesting a waiver for the unmet amount of \$1,640,947.

The Non – Federal Share or In-Kind must be met through donations from the community, such as vendors through services rendered or from parents, former parents, or family members who make donations of allowable items (ex. formula, diapers, classroom/office supplies) or volunteer their time (ex. reading, cleaning, assisting during mealtime).

Mr. Randy Grice asked for a motion to approve Resolution 02212024-03: 2022-2023 Non-Federal Share Waiver.

- Motion made by Kerenza Scheeper
- Motion seconded by Lien Coro
- No discussion
- Motion passed in 12 favor and 0 opposed.

IV. Reports

A. Expenditure Report and Credit Card Reports (October, November, and December 2023)

October 2023

The total year-to-date expenses in October 2023 were \$2,981,965.56. Of these, \$1,857,536.73 went to childcare partners for direct services. The program used 24.8% out of the 25% goal.

October 2023 Credit Card Report

There were no credit card expenses for the month of October 2023.

November 2023

The total year-to-date expenses in November 2023 were \$3,940,906.95. Of these, \$2,321,465.13 went to childcare partners for direct services. The goal percentage for November is 33%. The program is right on target at 32.7%. The program is forecasting \$11,469,537.26 in expenses for the year.

November 2023 Credit Card Report

There was \$3,110.24 in credit card expenses for the month of November 2023. The charges were for travel and lodging expenses for 4 staff to attend an out-of-town conference.

December 2023

The total year-to-date expenses in December 2023 were \$4,741,217.35. Of these, \$2,729,303.67 went to childcare partners for direct services. Our goal percentage was 42% and the actual year-to-date percentage was 39.4%.

December 2023 Credit Card Report

There were no credit card expenses for the month of December 2023.

B. Meal Reports (November 2023, December 2023, and January 2024)

During the months of November and December 2023, the program had nine sites in which none of the three meals reached 100%. The monthly meal report of January 2024 showed three sites in which none of the meals reached 100%. An analysis was conducted to determine why the identified centers served less than 100% of all the meals. The contributing factor was children who arrived after the meal service time or left early. Although meals were not counted for the childcare food program, the children were still offered a meal.

C. November 2023, December 2023, January 2024 Enrollment Reports

In November 2023, the EHS program ended the month with 729 children enrolled and it also experienced 21 enrollment opportunities or vacancies. The selection and enrollment process occurred in less than 30 days.

In December 2023, the EHS program ended the month with 734 children enrolled and it also experienced 16 enrollment opportunities or vacancies. The selection and enrollment process occurred in less than 30 days for 9 of the vacant slots.

Little Ones Academy voluntarily terminated their EHS contract for 2023-24 and 7 (seven) of those vacancies were not replaced due to EHS not currently having a provider with the ability to accommodate the needs of the family.

In January 2024, the EHS program ended the month with 715 children enrolled and it also experienced 35 enrollment opportunities or vacancies. The selection and enrollment process occurred for 11 of the 35 are filled in less than 30 days.

The Early Head Start Leadership team has been active in their search to find a new provider with the ability to accommodate 24 slots in the service area since the notification from the owners at Little Ones Academy in November voluntarily leaving the EHS program.

D. November 2023, December 2023, January 2024 Attendance Report

In November 2023, the average monthly attendance was 85.79% which slightly decreased from 86.33% in October. The top two (2) reasons for absences are sicknesses and transportation issues.

In December 2023, the average monthly attendance was 84.24% which decreased from November's 86.33%. The top two (2) reasons for absences were children being out on vacation, and children being out sick.

In January 2024, the average monthly attendance was 85.02% which decreased from December's 84.24%. The top two (2) reasons for absences were children being out on vacation, and children being out sick.

V. General Updates

Members were informed of the efforts made to reassign the slots relinquished by Little Ones on their last day of service, January 8, 2024. Little Ones is located in the 33054 zip code. The program called and sent out invitations to childcare partners in the area to apply for the program. Only two programs in the zip code applied and were interviewed. One of the partners decided not to move forward with the partnership due to financial unsustainability. The other partner did not meet the minimum qualification to be a partner which was to be a part of the USDA Child Care Food Program. Due to low interest in the 33054 zip code, the program reached out to current partners to assess their interest in additional slots. Partners who requested additional slots were in areas that did not have as big of a need. The areas that were in high need were North Miami, Perrine, and Homestead. A current partner, Lincoln Marti had two sites in Perrine. After visiting and meeting the staff, the program offered 24 slots to one of the Lincoln Marti Perrine centers.

The Administration of Children and Families released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on November 20, 2024 for changes to the Head Start current performance standards. The Office of Head Start proposed:

- New requirements to support and stabilize the Head Start workforce, including requirements for wages and benefits, breaks for staff, and enhanced support for staff health and wellness.
- New requirements to promote consistent quality of services across Head Start programs.
- Enhanced requirements for mental health services to better integrate the services into every aspect of programs and support the well-being of children, families, and staff.
- Enhancement to family service, worker family assignments, identifying and meeting community needs, ensuring child safety, services for pregnant women and people, and alignment with State early childhood systems.
- Minor clarifications to existing standards to promote better transparency and clarity of understanding for grant recipients.

Last Friday, the program held a meeting to develop the goals for the next 5-year project. Aside from staff, two childcare partners and Mr. Coronado participated in the discussion. Two goals were identified and the objectives for each goal are being finalized and will be shared for approval at the April meeting.

The program is pleased to announce a partnership with Jessie Trice Community Health Systems. This is established to develop and implement a comprehensive quality system of care that works to improve the lives of children, adolescents, and their families through multidisciplinary interventions that connect families with community services to reduce medical and developmental risk factors and increase positive outcomes. This partnership will take place on their mobile unit, which will visit our Early Head Start Centers and provide a wide range of services which include but are not limited to immunizations, lead and hemoglobin screening, vision and hearing screenings, well-child examinations, dental, medical and behavioral health care for families.

VI. Reminders

The next Policy Council meeting will be on Wednesday, April 17, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

VII. Public Comments

No public comments.

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Randy Grice adjourned the meeting at 6:08 p.m.