



PITT COUNTY NC PRE- K COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Co-Chair: Dr. Steve Lassiter, Jr.

Date: 8/14/2024

Co-Chair: Sharon Cooper

Time: 9:07 am – 10:00 am

Location: Sadie Saulter Meeting Room 214

Attending: Catina Lakhram (Director & NCPK Contract Administrator, PCS), Alva Jones-Hopkins (Child Care Subsidy Supervisor, Pitt DSS), Latonjia Columbus (Contract Manager, NCPK Specialist, PCS), Ricardo Herrera (Bilingual Specialist, PCS), Sharon Cooper (Martin/ Pitt Partnership for Children), Kamara Roach (Interim Assistant Superintendent PCS), Dawn Hester (Exceptional Children's Director, PCS), Dr. Shannon Cecil (Title 1 Director, PCS), Andrea Whitfield (Licensed Childcare Center Director Koinonia Kaleidoscope), Teneisha McGhee (East Carolina Kiddie College), Lisa Lewis (Administrator for Possessing the Keys), Toni Walton, Blake Walton (Children's World Learning Center), April Denney (EC Pre-K Coordinator, PCS)

Member Absentees: Dr. Steve Lassiter, Jr. (Assistant Superintendent), Lateisha Whitney-Byrd (ECIC Pitt County Head Start), Shaunika Holmes-Faison (Pitt County Schools/ ECU Health Nurse), Tracey Chamberlain (Director of Childlinks Child Care Resource and Referral Agency), Shonda Bowden (Parent Representative)

Welcome and Introductions

Catina Lakhram opened the meeting at 9:07 am. She introduced herself and asked the committee members and other attendees to introduce themselves. Mrs. Lakhram gave brief explanation of the purpose of the meeting. A folder with copies of the PowerPoint, agenda, and handout items were located at the sign in table. She read the purpose of the program and the role of the committee.

Program Updates

- Screenings for the 24-25 placements. There have currently been 797 applications received. There are 495 students who qualify based on income, 35 who do not but would be placed on the waiting list for the 20% that can exceed income. Eighty-three applicants need to be screened and there are 32 incomplete applications. The incomplete applications are showing larger number due to the online platform that families are using to submit applications. Mass screenings took place June 5th-7th. Teachers were contracted during the summer for additional screening on July 8-10, 29, and August 12-13. Billy Walton asked why applications had doubled. Ricardo Herrera shared that with online applications there are many invalid applications due to child being too young or too old.
- Long-term substitutes. Mrs. Columbus shared the document Memo NC Pre K Degrees. The process for long-term substitutes was reviewed. Toni Walton asked about the new and old requirements to qualify for hire. Mrs. Columbus reviewed the pool of degrees that qualify or enrollment in school.
- Voting. The written plan for Crisis Prevention and Management Plan. The Plan was read and explained by Mrs. Columbus, noting all the changes made over the summer. Billy Walton asked "Do you look for behavioral issues when

doing assessments? Are you screening them out?” Mrs. Columbus explained the screening process and that we note any concerns but screening does not indicate that the child will have challenges in Pre K. Billy Walton asked about the response time when children have challenges and that the Martin/ Pitt Partnership may have a waiting list. Sharon Cooper of the Partnership shared there is not a list and that they would be able to handle the need of support for Pre K classrooms. Billy Walton shared concerns with having children from the exceptional children’s program in the private site classrooms.

- Billy Walton shared the desire to move their allocated slots from 18 to 20 in all 5 classrooms. Mrs. Lakhram stated that they would first need the space approved for a larger class size. Blake Walton stated that all classrooms were already approved to hold more children. Mrs. Columbus and Mrs. Lakhram explained how allocated slots work and the difference when moving children between public and private sites. Billy Walton shared that there is no rate increase, the costs of running NC Pre K classrooms have increased, and that the state is running the program into the ground. Teneisha McGhee shared while she would like to have 20 children, she understands how allocations work. Lisa Lewis shared she understands that spots are difficult because of allocations. Mrs. Lakhram shared that the committee makes decisions on allocations and the state determine the rates.
- Next meeting is February

Action Items

Approval of Crisis Prevention and Management Plan

A motion was made by Andrea Whitfield to approve the Crisis Prevention and Management Plan. The motion was seconded by Dawn Hester. All members voted to approve the motion.

Comments/ Questions

No further comments or questions. The meeting adjourned.