



## STEP Head Start Policy Council Minutes

ZOOM Meeting	9:30 AM	May 12, 2021
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**I. Call to Order:** Carolyn Hawk called the meeting to order at 9:32 am.

### II. Attendance and Introductions:

Parent Representatives (Voting Members):		Site	Attendance
Maritza Pena		Cherry (RH)	R
Malena Dunn		Past Parent	P
Erica Blair		Muncy PreK	E
Tracy Shade		LH #1 (CCCC)	E
Alicia Leathers		LH #4 (CCCC)	E
Canda Boatman		Past Parent	T
Community Representatives (Voting Members):			
Patti Wylie		WASD	P
Angie Sees		BLaST IU #17	P
Ruth Love-Schooley		CareerLink	E
Aron Carter		JSSB	P
Staff (Non-Voting):			
Carolyn Hawk		Boyd Street	P
Shannon Cohick		Boyd Street	P
Denise Baney		Boyd Street	P
Melissa Edmonds		Boyd Street	P
Staff and Parent Guests (Non-Voting)			
Buffy Neese		Health	P
Jim Plankenhorn		STEP	P
STEP Board Representatives			
Aron Carter		See above	
Canda Boatman		See above	
Key:	P= Present	E= Excused absence	U= Unexcused absence
			T= Notice of Termination
			R= Resigned

**Agenda Review:** No new items were added.

**III. Approval of Minutes:** Aron made a motion to approve April minutes. Patti seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### IV. Reports



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**A. Treasurer's Report-** Head Start and Early Head Start Grant, COLA and CARES grants were approved by the board. There was an audit recently completed; the findings were reviewed at last month's board meeting. We are still under budget and continue to make purchases to catch up to the allotted budget for the program year.

**B. STEP Board Report-** The STEP Board is still in need of a parent representative to replace Canda Boatman. The Emergency Rental Assistance Program is still accepting applications for Lycoming County residents. Clinton County residents can apply through the Housing Coalition.

**C. Director's Report-** Enrollment is increasing as we continue to add children to our PreK and HSSAP programs. We are continuing to recruit children for the upcoming school year. Selection begins in June for preschool and has already begun for Early Head Start. A recent CARES Act grant will allow us to tear up the carpet at Round Hills and replace it with tile, making it much easier to keep clean. Classes at Hope's Children's Campus are virtual for the week; the boiler went down and with the temperature being so low in the morning, we felt it was best to keep children home until it warmed it.

**D. Family and Community Engagement Report** – We are beginning to plan for the new school year. Melissa will be on maternity leave at the beginning of the year, so she is trying to get everything in place to begin parent meetings in September, recruit parents for Policy Council for October and The Mitten Tree letter to be sent out so items can start being collected in October. Recently had a playgroup/family day for Early Head Start and Head Start- had over 20 parents in attendance. The meeting was a collaboration between the JV Brown Library and CareerLink.

**Approval for the reports as read. Aron made a motion to approve the reports. Patti seconded. Motion carried.**

## V. Old Business

### A. Operating Under COVID

- **Building Closures-** No COVID related building closures at this time. The Department of Health has been helpful in navigating what to do when staff/children have positive test results or have been exposed to COVID. We have had to close individual classrooms, but are trying to keep buildings open if possible.
- **Virtual Programming-** Preschool continues with 2 days a week in person instruction and 3 days a week virtual. Some children maintain a 5 day a week virtual option, this is determined by parent choice. Early Head Start



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Center Based operates on a 5 day a week schedule with shorter days to allow for cleaning and sanitizing. Early Head Start Home Base has recently resumed in-person visits if they can be done outside at the home or a nearby park; virtual visits are held otherwise. We will most likely begin the year using the same models. The governor recently released plans regarding COVID regulations; the decision for Head Start to follow will be determined based on our grantor's guidelines.

- **Food Service-** Continue to send meals home with children who attend in person instruction and utilize the bus to drop meals off to children who are 100% virtual. May 26<sup>th</sup> is scheduled to be the last day for this, however parents are being surveyed at Health Screenings to see if there is interest in continuing meals over the summer.
- **Transportation-** Transportation is currently only used for food service. Will resume in the fall. We have purchased another large bus with CARES Act grants, this will allow for children to remain socially distanced while riding. It is currently getting it's finishing touches and getting ready for the new school year.
- **Enrollments-** We will not experience any negative consequence for our enrollment being below the funded allotment this year. Federal programs are still allowing flexibility, though we anticipate the possibility of this changing due to new COVID guidelines recently released. PreK and HSSAP guidelines are not as flexible and have been encouraging programs to try and enroll 100% of spots.

## VI. New Business

**A. Grant Submissions-** The grant for our new five-year grant cycle has been submitted. All managers and staff played key roles in completing all components of the grant.

**B. COLA Approval-** Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) application was also included in the recent grant submission.

**C. Community Needs Assessment Focus Groups-** STEP staff will be reaching out to agencies to conduct focus groups on the areas the Community Needs Assessment addressed.

**D. Policies for Approval-** The changes are specified in the chart that was attached to the meeting

**Approval for the policy changes and updates. Aron made a motion; Patti seconded this motion. Motion carried.**

**E. Board representative opening:** Head Start representative is still needed on the STEP Board. The board is responsible for hiring staff, the evaluation of the CEO, approving grants and learning about the services that STEP offers.



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**F. IM: Fiscal flexibilities:** Discusses what we can and cannot spend the most recent CARES Act grant for.

**G. IM: American Rescue Plan:** Outlines the 3<sup>rd</sup> COVID grant. This grant has an application that is in the process of being submitted. It is a two-year grant cycle, and the funding is based on the number of children; the amount is around \$498,000. We can use the funding for recruitment, renovating spaces, space modifications and employee/staff wellness and mental health needs. Grant is due 5/18/21.

**H. COVID Grant Planning:** Leadership team has meetings with the Fiscal Department to plan large projects funded by the ARP grant including fixing the parking lot at Round Hills, enhancing outside spaces, air purification systems, etc...

**I. Success Stories: Health Services:**

- Buffy Neese is Head Start's Health Service Coordinator focusing on Health. She also runs the STEP Head Start Health Advisory. Her role helps ensure that all children have quality healthcare to support kindergarten readiness.
- All children who enroll in the program have 30 days to obtain health insurance and find primary care providers. 98% of children already have health insurance when enrolling through Medical Assistance. 2% of children are covered by a private insurance. If a child does not have insurance, it is typically because they have just moved here from out of the area and the provider needs to be switched to one we have in our area. 45 days after enrollment hearing and vision screenings must be completed. Due to COVID, hearing and visions were not able to be completed in this time frame this year, but Family Advocates and Home Visitors are currently in the process of completing them. Even with completing screenings later than normally, there were 117 children referred for a full evaluation and we currently have 49 children wearing glasses now because of vision screenings. 90 days from the child's enrollment until the end of the year staff obtain consents and/or copies of Well Child Checks (physicals), dental exam, lead screening and iron levels. If these have not been completed, or they are outdated, then an appointment will be made to catch the child up. The goal is to have all services and appointments completed before they go to kindergarten.
- We recently had River Valley Mobile Dentist visit our Round Hills Campus. Over the course of two days, 46 children were seen to receive an exam, cleaning and fluoride treatment. Nine children were referred for restorative treatment of 58 cavities.
- Health Advisory meetings are held twice a year. Participants include: medical professionals, Managed Care Organizations representatives,



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Penn State Cooperative Extension, our nutritionist, Intermediate Units, Mental Health professionals and Children and Youth. We recently collaborated with ELRC to include childcare providers as well.

- The Health Advisory members guide Head Start in assuring we are meeting families' needs. They are consulted any time a health question arises.
- The Fitness Challenge was held this year over four weeks in the winter. It was virtual this year. The Fitness Challenge benefits families by encouraging them to be active and make healthy food choices. It also benefits the program as it increases our In-Kind contributions from parents.
- Currently in the process of certifying all staff in CPR and First-Aid.
- Admin of the Head Start Facebook page.

**J. Hiring/Termination:** None at this time.

**VII. Trainings:** Will resume in the Fall

**VIII. Good of the Order:**

- Kindergarten Registration numbers are still low at WASD. Head Start is getting Kindergarten Permission forms signed at final parent-teacher conference. We will be able to compare names of children we have transitioning to who has completed the registration process.
- Head Start is planning to have a Kindergarten Summer Camp. We are currently surveying parents to gauge parent interest before moving forward in planning.

**IX. Meeting Schedule: Next Meeting is June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 9:30 am.**

**X. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:32 am.

**Enclosures:**

1. Policy Council Budget- March 2021
2. Federal Head Start Budget – March 2021
3. Early Head Start Budget – March 2021
4. HSSAP Budget- March 2021
5. Pre-K Budget – March 2021
6. MIECHV Budget- March 2021
7. Early Learning Pathway Report – April 2021
8. STEP Head Start Program Information Summary: April 2021



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9. STEP Early Head Start Program Information Summary: April 2021
10. PreK Counts Program Information Summary- April 2021
11. Policy and Procedure Changes Outline
12. IM: Fiscal Flexibilities
13. IM: American Rescue Plan Funding Increase