

## Minutes

**Committee Members in attendance:** Leslie Anderson, Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Philip Belcher, Christy Cheek, Kit Cramer, Jane Hatley, Rich Johnston, Himanshu Karvir, Chavaun Letman, Susan Mims, Mistie Reising-Cogbill, Robert Pressley, Glenda Weinert, Al Whitesides

**County support staff in attendance:** Kimberly Fullerton, Rachael Nygaard, Max Taintor, Patricia Wallin, Rasheeda McDaniels, Burnett Walz

**Welcome** and agenda review by Commissioner Beach-Ferrara. Introductions by Committee members, staff and guests.

### Minutes

- Motion was made by Kit Cramer and seconded by Leslie Anderson to approve minutes from September 3, 2019. Vote of approval was unanimous.

### Old Business

- **Update on Site Visits** – Rasheeda McDaniels presented site visits information. Staff have conducted 8 so far. The next phase is site visits by committee members. Rasheeda distributed a list of committee visits scheduled for the month of November, and committee members signed up to attend. The December list will be shared at the November committee meeting.
- **Update on Subsidy Issues** – Patricia Wallin presented an update about Child Care Subsidy. The State of North Carolina annual budget has not been approved, and the program is still on a freeze status. 715 children currently on waitlist, 464 of which are age 0-5. Waitlist was frozen at the end of March

### New Business

- **Update on County Strategic Planning process** – Rachael Nygaard provided an update on the Buncombe County strategic planning process. Committee members have been invited to attend public input sessions. The sessions will connect County leadership and staff with members of community to find out what success looks like in the County's focus areas, one of which is an Educated and Capable Community. There will be 8 Community Input sessions. Each focus area will have 2 sessions, one during the day and one during the evening. Details about the sessions were included in a letter from County Manager Avril Pinder to members of the committee and are posted online at [www.BuncombeCounty.org](http://www.BuncombeCounty.org).
- **State of Early Childhood Education in Buncombe County Presentation** – presentation about early care and education by Buncombe County Partnership for Children (BCPFC). Presenters included Amy Barry, Caroline Rodier and Deanna LaMotte. Topics included: Snapshot of latest data and trends; Workforce and funding overview; Challenges, opportunities and progress to date.
- The full presentation is included as an attachment to these minutes.
- Questions/Comments/Reflections about presentation:

**Q:** What is the impact of family childcare home closures on total children served by licensed care?

**A:** There is a disproportionate loss of overall slots for infants and toddlers.

**Q:** Is the total child population available countywide for the timeframe 2005 to 2009 to mirror the data about children in licensed care in this period?

**A:** That data can be researched and shared as a follow-up.

**Q:** What is meant by high quality care?

**A:** A 4 or 5 star rated licensed child care center

**Q:** Of the children not in care, do we know how many want/need care?

**A:** Centers continue to track demand that outpaces supply. Centers maintain wait lists of 100-200 children. Working on a shared waitlist structure.

**Q:** Is there a record of unlicensed family childcare homes?

**A:** Mountain Child Care Connections used to track this, but it is difficult to track. Unlicensed care can be legal when outside the constraints of licensing requirements, and some operate completely outside the system.

**Q:** Is there a way to connect with unlicensed homes, such as an informal network?

**A:** BCPFC conducts outreach efforts to engage and encourage licensure, taking vouchers, etc. Outreach is informal such as social media and word of mouth.

**Q:** Would access to benefits for teachers/staff depend on the employer?

**A:** The workforce report showed retirement, paid leave, etc. for the local early childhood workforce, and benefits varied by employer.

**Q:** What is meant by “lead teachers”?

**A:** Not assistant teachers

**Q:** Is there any data about the education level of family childcare home teachers?

**A:** A pending report from BCPFC will include education levels for home-based providers. It varies, with anecdotal information about some family care home teachers who are highly educated.

**Q:** Are centers and homes divided by age ranges of children being served?

**A:** Providers can serve children from age 6 weeks through school age. The data in this presentation focuses on 0-5 year old preschoolers.

**Q:** For the Buncombe workforce report, how many responded?

**A:** 56 directors and 244 teachers or assistants responded.

**Q:** How do we keep teachers in the field so that children can benefit from the results of ongoing positive relationships with their caregivers?

**A:** High quality is defined by star rating, but studies show that other attributes are also tied to quality, e.g. children learn best in the context of a nurturing, consistent caretaker.

Q: What is the PBIS minimum standard for teacher turnover?

A: NC Partnership for Children establishes a minimum standard of 25%. WAGES recipient turnover is lower.

Q: What are the WAGES program participation requirements?

A: 6 months in position, meet minimum on WAGES education scale. Objective is to incentivize teachers to stay in the field by providing monetary benefits. There are 144 participants in Buncombe County. The cost is \$200,000 per year, funded by BCPFC. The program maintains a waiting list.

Q: Are we currently maxing out salary supplement programs such as WAGES?

A: Yes in terms of utilizing all available funding, but with more funding available, we could serve more teachers.

Q: What is the effect on “retention of teacher” mentor programs?

A: NC Pre-K requires a mentor and evaluator structure, but the process is very rigorous and does not necessarily correlate to retention.

Q: What is meant by “more respect” on the survey responses?

A: There is a strong feeling in the workforce that teachers do not feel respected as professionals.

Q: What is the requirement for BCPFC to spend Smart Start Funds on subsidy and quality?

A: There are legislative requirements, including contributing \$1,064,000 out of \$2.5m total into the voucher program, so not all funds can be used toward quality improvement.

Q: What is the Pritzker Infant Toddler Award?

A: This is a national opportunity. 75 organizations were invited to apply for a 3-year grant to increase capacity in slots for ages 0-2. BCPFC has applied and is waiting to hear if they make it to the next round. It will require a 30% funding match. Total is \$350,000.

Q: Reduction in home centers is really affecting infant/toddler slots. Is there still a training about establishing family child care homes?

A: The Family Child Care Home program at BCPFC includes a business basics cohort and other support (funded by County early childhood funds).

Q: How are we outreaching to potential home providers?

A: Advertising, referrals from the Division of Child Development and Early Education and other methods such as connecting with faith groups.

Q: Is there any data related to inequities (racial, ethnicity) in terms of access, wait lists, etc.?

A: We do not have much data. Some is in the workforce report, and NC Pre-K has some race data. There is a need for more programs to develop the teacher workforce, including teacher recruitment and programs such as the initiative for Spanish-speaking teacher support through the County-funded PODER Emma workforce program.



**Early Childhood Education & Development Committee**

October 1, 2019, 1:00 – 2:30

200 College Street, Ground Floor Conference Room

**Next Steps** – November agenda will include a funding process focus, to include:

- Equity in the application and decision making process
- Discussion about content of application and application process
- Multi-year funding
- Renewal requests

**Public Comment** – No public comment.

**Next meeting** – November 5, 2019, 1:00 – 2:30 pm at 200 College Street, Ground Floor Conference Room

**Adjourn** – Commissioner Jasmine Beech Ferrara made a motion to adjourn, motion seconded, and the vote was unanimous.