Early Childhood Workforce: Current Landscape

Presented by

Rachael Sawyer Nygaard, Strategic Partnerships Director

Early Childhood Education and Development Committee

October 3, 2023

ECE Workforce Development Series

Session 1: **Setting the Stage**   August 1, 2023
Session 2: Current Landscape   September 5, 2023
Session 3: Promising Practices   October 3, 2023
Session 4: Recommendations   November 7, 2023

Recap - Session 1: Setting the Stage

Presenter:

- Jenny Vial, Director of Child Care Resources, Buncombe Partnership for Children

Panelists:

- Aimee Spooner, Children's Services Director, Irene Wortham Early Learning Center

- Amy Sosebee, Acting Director, Regent Park Early Childhood Development Center

- Tameka King, Executive Director, Children's Center at Gracelyn

- Melissa Wilson, Early Childhood Specialist, Buncombe Partnership for Children

Recap - Session 2: Current Landscape

Presenter:

- Rachael Sawyer Nygaard, Strategic Partnerships Director, Buncombe County

Panelists:

- Betsie Stockslager, Preschool Director, Buncombe County Schools
- Tamara Reynolds, Chair of the Education Department, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
- Marcia Whitney, President and CEO, Verner Center for Early Learning
- Deanna Lamotte, NC Pre-K Expansion Director, Buncombe Partnership for Children
- Tasha Lewis, Director of Workforce Development Program, Buncombe Partnership for Children

Recap - Session 3: Promising Practices

Presenter/Facilitator:

- Rachael Sawyer Nygaard, Strategic Partnerships Director, Buncombe County

Topics:

- Updates on workforce Impacts on Early Childhood Grantees (vacancy rates for early learning teachers/assistants & correlating low enrollments at child care centers)

- Reflection on what stood out as key issues and promising practices during the workforce development series

Follow-ups From Last Meeting

- **Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential**
  - National credential being implemented in North Carolina, based on a core set of competency standards that guide early childhood professionals toward becoming qualified educators of young children (see meeting packet)

- **Dogwood Health Trust**
  - **"Care and Learning (CandL) Data on Early Care and Education" Report** statewide listening tour into 13 WNC counties and hear first-hand the concerns and needs of parents, caregivers and child care providers in those counties (see link: https://dogwoodhealthtrust.org/strategic-priority/education/)
  - **List of Grants to address early childhood educator workforce recruitment, retention, and attrition** (see meeting packet)

Looking Ahead to FY2025

- "Building Capacity in Buncombe County to Expand NC Pre-K Availability and Accessibility"
  - Administered by Buncombe Partnership for Children
  - Funded by County Commissioners at the recommendation of this committee
  - Paid for with federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) COVID Recovery Funds
  - $3,201,546 for a 2-year pilot beginning July 2022
  - Year 1 report published July 2023: www.buncombecounty.org/prekreport
  - Funding current expires September 30, 2024 (during FY2025)
  - Currently projecting to have $186,000 remaining that could be used extend the federal award timeframe
  - Estimating $1,069,000 additional needed in FY2025 to continue the program

Staff Recommendation

- Invite Buncombe Partnership for Children to submit a proposal through the FY2025 grant application process

- If funded:

Total available for FY2025	$4,104,330*
-Estimated NC Pre-K expansion request	$1,069,000
Amount remaining for other grants	$3,035,330

*including new & carryforward funds

Discussion: Thoughts on considering this application as part of annual process once pilot has ended

Prioritizing Workforce Development in the Early Childhood Grants

- "Develop/Diversify Early Childhood Workforce" is currently 1 of 5 overall strategies for projects to apply under

- One option is to prioritize this strategy for FY2025, requiring all projects to have a workforce component

Discussion: Benefits & risks of this approach

Other ways to Promote ECE Workforce

Discussion: Other ideas