

**Carteret County NC Pre-K Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes**

February 15, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

Carteret Preschool Center

The Carteret County's NC Pre-K Committee Meeting was called to order at 10:00am by Dr. Anna Brooks, NC Pre-K Committee Co-Chair.

Members Present: Anna Brooks, Misty Vargas, Amber Johnson, Lisa Culpepper, Kay Huffman, Jeanne Huntley, Stephanie Stevenson, Jeanne Barnes, and Gail Calhoun.

Members absent: Maria Ward, Juliet Rogers, Megan Hughes, Amy Parker, and Virginia Hill.

Staff/Guests attending: Kimberly Hughes, Leigh Rahman and Gina Bruce

Welcome and Introductions:

Anna Brooks welcomed everyone to the meeting, Committee members introduced themselves and provided information for their title/agency. Leigh Rahman was introduced as the new NC Pre-K Contact, replacing Kristi Farrell (not a committee member). Jeanne Huntley made a motion that Lisa Culpepper, new Director Child Care Resource and Referral from the Partnership for Children, replacing Cynthia Jackson and Gail Calhoun, RN CMARC/CMHRP new Health Department Supervisor, replacing

Justina Grady-Coker, be voted in as new committee members. Kay Huffman seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor.

Review PLAN:

Kimberly stated that all Committee member positions have been filled. Kimberly reviewed the number of slots per NC Pre-K site. There are 9 sites. There are 19 classrooms in the PLAN but currently only 17 active classrooms. All 17 classrooms have been filled with a teacher and a TA except Childcare Network 73. They have a teacher but not an assistant. Carteret County holds 271 total slots. (54 can be above income). Currently there are 163 slots with Carteret County Public Schools. (WOES -32, BSES-16, MCPS- 16, BES- 16, SES- 16, AES- 14, and 53 at CPC). Excel currently has 81 slots and Childcare Network has 18. These numbers only add up to 262 because Excel could only accept 4 1/2 classes worth instead of 5 as originally offered because of staffing and cost of opening a 5th classroom. We are not full at Excel or Childcare Network. Kimberly asked if there were any questions. There was no discussion.

Selection of Contracting Agency:

Anna Brooks explained the need for a vote for the contracting agency. Anna Brooks asked for any input from the committee and if anyone was interested in holding the contract. Jeanne Huntley made a motion to have Carteret County Schools continue to serve as the Contractor for the 2024-2025 school. Year. Misty Vargas

seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor.

Financial Update:

Kimberly Hughes explained that salaries/wages, direct services and subcontractors have been paid and budgeted through the end of May. We have underspent in areas totaling \$406,714.81. Carteret County Schools has underspent in Salaries/Wages by \$8162.81, Direct Services by \$68,175.00 and Subcontractors by \$330,377.00. The underspending is due to open slots and positions not being filled. Currently Excel is only allowed to open 4 1/2 classes worth (81 students) instead of 5 as originally offered due to staffing and Childcare Network is holding at 10 to stay in ratio with the opening of a TA. We discussed ways to improve this moving forward.

Kimberly Hughes discussed the Governor's Emergency Education Relief fund (GEERS). On September 13th, 2023 Governor Cooper announced plans to direct \$8 million dollars in GEERS funds to provide a one-time special allocation to all NC Pre-K classrooms. Each classroom was given \$3500 to spend on upgrading materials, toys, supplies, playground equipment, supplemental curriculum materials, ongoing facility maintenance needs, mental health support for children and staff, professional development for staff, and other needs. Private sites were given a check and public sites are required to go through the NC Pre-K Contact abiding by all Carteret County Public Schools Finance guidelines, including their timeline. Private sites have until the end of June to spend the money. Public school sites have until the end of March. CCPS sites have been asked to have theirs in by March 15. There is currently \$28,571.68 left to spend.

Contract Compliance Update:

At this time, CCPS has 152 students enrolled in NC Pre-K. Excel has 47 students enrolled and Childcare Network has 10 students enrolled. This is a total of 209 students currently. Carteret County has 271 slots so 62 slots are unfilled right now.

Next year's plan is to have 18 slots available in 6 of the public school sites with exceptions being AES and CPC. This will put CCPS sites with 168 slots available. Private sites have the opportunity to have 20 slots instead of 18. All based on approval from the Health Dept. and Child Care Consultants. This will be discussed further in the August meeting.

Kindergarten Transition:

Anna Brooks stated that this year's Kindergarten Registration and open house held on February 7th, 2024, was the most successful one according to numbers. Advertising, social media, photos and video footage will continue to be shared to reach those families moving in over the summer or those families that were not able to attend on the Kindergarten registration night. Parents are encouraged to reach out to the school their child will be attending to set up tours.

Kimberly Hughes explained that teachers complete a kindergarten transition report that is through Teaching Strategies (TS Gold) for all preschool students. It generates all the data the teachers input throughout the year. The report is sent to PowerSchool and will follow the child to the next school year.

There will be transition meetings held for all Pre-K students with IEPs going to kindergarten. Articulation Meetings and

Worksheets for EC Students transitioning to kindergarten will be held.

NC Pre-K teachers prepare lessons on transitioning to kindergarten and *The Night Before Kindergarten* and other books are given to graduating preschool students to help them prepare. No questions were asked.

NC Pre-K Site Monitoring Result:

Kimberly Hughes stated that all 9 sites have been monitored and have been found to be in compliance. Kimberly Hughes explained that both private and public sites are having difficulty finding qualified staff and the increase in educational requirements is exacerbating the problem.

NC Pre-K Updates:

Carteret County has 9 sites with the addition of Childcare Network this year. This is one more than last year. Cherelle Sharpe has recently been hired as the new director for Childcare Network. They have an open TA position.

Many staff members have reported challenges with their NCID accounts which is causing problems getting their training completed.

Training and professional development this year include DCDEE Child Care Rule .3015, Changes to Health Department/Sanitation Rules, Child First resources, EPR, Stop The Bleed and Staff and Training. Upcoming training includes ECERS and Childhood Trauma.

The NC Pre-K Committee has all positions filled.

Kimberly Hughes stated that Brigance will be used as an assessment and family interviews will take place at all NC Pre-K Round-ups. There are 10 different scheduled Round-Ups. There were not any updates/changes to the NC Pre_K Program requirements.

Regional/State meetings information:

Kimberly Hughes informed the committee that Session Law 2023-134 became law on October 3, 2023 which allows individual NC Pre-K classrooms to increase the ratio to 1:10 with a maximum class size of 2:20. This is based on whether the facility can accommodate those numbers and the Health Department must approve.

There are new on-boarding training opportunities for new contract agency staff. NC Pre-K APP Database, NC Pre-K PLAN Database, Early Educator Support (EES), and NC Pre-K Kids Database training are all being offered.

DCDEE does not currently have information regarding payment for Teaching Strategies resources and/or membership for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year. Unaware of how this would affect mandates such as TS Gold and Ready Rosie.

Other:

NC Pre-K Round-Ups for the 2024-2025 fliers are being posted and yard signs are being put out around the county. Juliette said the partnership will be able to provide books. The Health Department will provide brochures again as well. Excel said they would check to see if they had anything they could include in the goodie bags.

Kimberly Hughes shared the importance of spreading the word about our 10 Pre-K Round-Up opportunities. Kimberly hopes to have the success that Kindergarten registration had.

Kimberly introduced two proposed dates for advisory meetings next school year to be voted on at the next advisory meeting in August. Those proposed dates are February 20, 2025 and August 15, 2025.

Jeanne Huntley made a motion to adjourn the meeting with there being no further committee business. Kay Huffman seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned 10:58 am.