Early Childhood Education & Development Committee
April 14, 2026, 1:00 – 2:30 pm
Virtual Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Adrian Sandler, Al Whitesides, Carol Steen, Emily Nicholson, Heather Zanzig, Jennifer Horton, Jo Jamison, Maia Sloan, Pat Tuttle, Sara Lappe, Sarah Kabourek, Stacy Anderson

Staff in attendance: Rachael Sawyer, Samantha Kirk, Amy Broughton, Tim Love, Angelyn Johnson

Minutes

- Approval of minutes from April 7, 2026
    - Jennifer Horton made a motion to approve the minutes. Emily Nicholson seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business

- There was no old business.

New Business

- **Data Error**
    - A material error was discovered in the scoring data that has an impact on funding scenarios. Some committee members did not score all the applications, and the intent was to remove all instances of no scores from the source data, but some were missed. 11 committee members scored all 28 applications, 1 committee member scored 26 applications, 1 committee member scored 22 applications, and 1 committee member scored 9 applications. The rows that should have been removed are data lines 234, 315, 328, 357, and 370. The inadvertent inclusion of these 5 data lines created 0% scores that significantly lowered overall average scores for these projects:
        - Montessori Learning Community – corrected score changed from 65.23 to 70.67%
        - The Christine Avery Learning Center – corrected score changed from 83.14% to 89.54%
        - Verner Center for Early Learning – corrected score changed from 80.92% to 87.67%
        - YWCA – Empowerment Child Care – corrected score changed from 78.46% to 85.00%
        - YWCA – Early Learning – corrected score changed from 69.54% to 75.33%
    - Correcting these errors does impact the funding scenarios. We have updated the attached spreadsheet to include a "Corrected Summary" worksheet with the updated scored highlighted and updated funding scenarios. You'll also note we've filled in the follow-up answer from YWCA confirming their request amount is $100,000. When applying the corrected scores, this is the impact on each funding scenario:
        - Scenario 1: The corrections add Verner & YWCA Empowerment Childcare and remove The Children's Center of WNC. This would result in $508,496 being available to award the next project on the list, which would be a partial award for Community Action Opportunities.
        - Scenario 2: The corrections add Verner and YWCA Empowerment and remove Irene Wortham.
        - Scenario 3: The corrections add YWCA Empowerment and remove Asheville City Schools.
        - Scenario 4: The corrections result in $83,630 being available to award the next project, which would be a partial award for Asheville City Schools.
    - **FY2027 Funding Recommendations**
        - Funding scenarios carried forward from last meeting include:
            - Scenario 1: Fully fund all projects until funds run out

  - Scenario 2: Fully fund projects where at least 50% of committee members voted for full funding, and fund the remainder at 75% of request, until funds run out
  - Scenario 3: Fully fund projects where at least 75% of committee members voted for full funding, and fund the remainder at 75% of request, until funds run out
  - Scenario 4: Start with Scenario 3, then deduct 20% for any projects where 20% or more of committee members voted for no funding, until funds run out
  - Each scenario had leftover amounts which would need to be assigned in order to present a recommendation that uses all potential budget.
- Heather Zanzig made a motion to create funding Scenario 5 based on existing funding scenario 4 and use the remaining $83,630 to partially fund the organizations that received 0% of committee members selecting not to fund the project. This resulted in YWCA Early Learning Program being recommended for $83,630. Stacy Anderson seconded the motion. After committee discussion, the motion carried 11-1 with Al Whitesides voting no.
- Committee discussed a possible funding Scenario 6 to fully fund all projects that received 0% of committee members selecting not to fund the project. After discussion, the committee did not proceed with consideration of this funding scenario.
- The committee did a roll call vote to identify each member's preferred funding scenario from scenarios 1-5. Responses included:
  - Adrian – scenario 5
  - Al – scenario 4
  - Carol – scenario 5
  - Emily – scenario 5
  - Heather – scenario 5
  - Jennifer – scenario 2
  - Jo – scenario 4 or 5
  - Maia – scenario 5
  - Pat – scenario 2
  - Saral L – scenario 3
  - Sarak K – scenario 5
  - Stacy – scenario 4
- Carol Steen made a motion to accept funding Scenario 5 as the committee's recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. Al Whitesides seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.
- This funding scenario results in 20 projects being recommended for funding: 4 at 100%; 1 at 80%; 11 at 75%; 3 at 60%; and 1 at 58%. Recommendations total $4,054,185.

Organization	Project	Requested Amount	Recommended Amount
AB Technical Community College	Blazing Trails: Early Childhood Collegiate Support Program	$120,052	$72,031
Asheville Jewish Community Center	Enhancing Early Childhood and Family Support	$74,800	$44,880
Buncombe County Schools Learning Labs	Buncombe Couty Schools Learning Labs	$331,420	$248,565
Buncombe Partnership for Children	Sustaining Success in Building NC PreK Capacity	$1,056,539	$792,404
Buncombe Partnership for Children	Buncombe Partnership for Children Early Childhood Workforce Development Program	$163,092	$163,092

Buncombe Partnership for Children	Child Care Resources: Professional and Systems Development	$153,000	$153,000
Colaborativa La Milpa	El Telar	$100,000	$100,000
Community Action Opportunities	Boost Buncombe Children and Families with Head Start	$658,000	$493,500
Eliada Homes, Inc	Eliada Child Development Apprentice Program	$94,180	$70,635
Evolve Early Learning	Completing the Continuum of Care: Infant Toddler Expansion & Teacher Apprenticeship Program	$200,000	$120,000
FIRSTwnc	SUNSHINE Extension	$178,600	$133,950
Irene Wortham Center	Strengthening Specialized Early Education Infrastructure	$489,972	$367,479
OnTrack Financial Education & Counseling	Secure Early Childhood Matched Savings	$37,510	$30,008
Read to Succeed	PreK Literacy & Kindergarten Readiness Expansion	$50,000	$37,500
Swannanoa Valley Child Care Council (Donald S Collins Early Learning Center)	Maintaining a High	$365,797	$274,348
The Children's Center of Western North Carolina	Relocation & Transition Year Support	$310,000	$232,500
The Christine Avery Learning Center	Strengthening Early Learning Access and Workforce Stability at CWA	$355,460	$266,595
Verner Center for Early Learning	Preserving Program Quality and Enhancing Support Services for Children and Teachers	$360,091	$270,068
YWCA of Asheville and Western North Carolina	Empowerment Childcare	$100,000	$100,000
YWCA of Asheville and Western North Carolina	Early Learning Program Expansion Initiative	$144,650	$83,630

Announcements

- The May 5th meeting will be an extended meeting from 12:00-2:30 pm to continue discussion of the focused investment plan. Lunch will be provided for committee members.

Public Comment

- Diana Sierra participated in public comment.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is May 5, 2026 from 12:00-2:30 at 200 College St, Room 310.