Early Childhood Education & Development Committee
August 5, 2025, 1:00 – 2:30 pm
200 College St, Room 310

MINUTES

Attendees: Adrian Sandler, Al Whitesides, Carol Steen, Heather Zanzig (virtual), Jennifer Horton (virtual), Maia Sloan, Pat Tuttle, Sara Lappe (virtual)

Absent: Emily Nicholson, Martin Moore

Staff in attendance: Rachael Sawyer, Amy Broughton, Angelica Tyler, Sara Joss (virtual), Angelyn Johnson

Welcome

Minutes

- Approval of minutes from June 10, 2025
    - Motion to approve by Carol Steen. Seconded by Al Whitesides. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Old Business

- There was no old business.

New Business

- Committee membership
    - Four new members have been recommended to the Board of Commissioners by the nominating group. Al, Adrian, and Pat served on the nominating group and met to review the applications and make recommendations. The Board of Commissioners will consider these recommendations at their meeting at 5pm. The recommendations include:
        - Jo Jamison – Funder/Community Investment role
        - Stacy Anderson – Retiree role
        - Sarah Kabourek – Community/At Large role
        - Melanie "Beth" Sherman – Community/At Large role
    - Staff have notified these applicants that they are being recommended and invited them to attend today's meeting to observe. Stacy and Beth are in attendance in person, Sarah is in attendance virtually, and Jo was unable to attend.
    - Diana Anthony and Pam Holcombe decided not to apply for reappointment, so their term ended June 30. Mark Taft and Linda McDaniel were recognized at the June meeting as they ended their terms.
- End of year provider survey
    - Staff reviewed the document that was included in the meeting packet, which has end of year vs beginning of year comparison for slots, enrollment, wait list and staffing. Also included in the end of year survey are other data points such as suspensions/expulsions, attendance rates, teacher retention, and school readiness.

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- FY2025 grant reports
  - Links to end of year reports were provided to committee members and are available at buncombenc.gov/grants. These reports include: narrative update, performance metrics, and budgetary info.
- Available funding/carryforward
  - Current fund balance is $236,797. Staff reviewed the document that was provided in the meeting packet which explains the sources.
- FY26 roadmap planning
  - Staff reviewed session one and session two of funding strategy series that began last fall but was interrupted by Tropical Storm Helene.
  - The goal is to define a funding strategy for Buncombe County's Early Childhood Committee
    - In alignment with resolution
    - With consideration of results to date
    - That maximizes our local government opportunity to influence positive outcomes within the system of early care and education
  - Session one was an overview that included a look at early care and education in Buncombe County including licensure, quality, data and context.
  - Session two was about funding and how early care and education is paid for and the impacts of Buncombe's Early Childhood Fund.
  - In September, the committee will begin developing the funding strategy by:
    - Revisiting the Authorizing Resolution from 2018
    - Reviewing Results to Date (program-level and system-level)
    - Consider various investment approaches and the impacts associated with each
    - Discuss how local government can be most impactful as an investor
  - The committee requested the following information:
    - Why is there a difference in "licensed slots" from beginning of year to end of year on the provider survey?
    - Why are Buncombe County's quality ratings lower than the state average?
    - How do other counties who invest in Early Childhood supplement and what does their data show?
    - Could the Buncombe PreK single portal be expanded to capture more consistent data such as an unduplicated wait list?
    - Workforce data such as turnover information
    - Does the number of years a child attends early education impact their kindergarten readiness?
    - What supports are there for middle-income families that do not qualify for subsidy, NC Prek, etc. but still can't afford childcare costs?
    - How do we assess the true need for childcare?
    - Is there a way to gather information from parents instead of all center-based data?
  - There was also an inquiry received through Public Input:
    - "On the end of year provider survey, it is stated that BunCo Schools' Learning Labs achieved 50% school readiness. However, quarter end report states that the program achieves much higher rates. How do we reconcile the two reports?"

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Announcements

- The Board of Commissioners will have a Strategic Planning Work Session at 2:30 pm today in the Ground Floor Conference Room.

Public Comment

- There were no public comments.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be September 2, 2025, 1:00-2:30 pm, 200 College St, Ground Floor Conference Room.