

New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) Steering Committee
8300 Earhart Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70118
Meeting Minutes for September 10, 2020

Committee Members in Attendance: Keith Liederman, Kristi Givens, Joyce Ridgeway, Joy Mitchell, Thomas Lambert, Kate Mehok, Jen Roberts, Maria Blanco, Emily Wolff, Carole Elliot

Committee Members Absent: Thelma French, Rhonda Taylor

Community Members in Attendance: Aimee Grainer, Kenneth Francis, Anna Williamson, Emily Madeira, Gabrielle Izzo, Jessica Harris, Angelique Thomas, Natalie Reich

I. CALL TO ORDER

- a. At 12:06pm Keith Liederman called the meeting to order.

II. COORDINATED FUNDING

a. City Seats

- i. Aimee Grainer from NOEEN provided an update on the status of the City Seats program for the 2020-2021 school year and proposed allocations for the 100 additional City Seats funded by the City of New Orleans.
 - 1. City Seats will continue partnerships with Tulane, LSU and Training Grounds, and is seeking partnerships for business administration support for providers and social service support for families.
 - 2. Proposed distribution of the additional 100 seats is based on which providers have capacity and waitlists.
 - a. Kristi Givens provided an update on the number of available seats at Kids of Excellence.

b. LA4 and NSECD

- i. Aimee Grainer provided an update on the status of LA4 and NSECD seats.
 - 1. LA4 providers initiated the return of LA4 seats now that the enrollment has slowed, totaling a requested return of 121 LA4 seats.
 - 2. Phillis Wheatley is seeking 2 additional LA4 seats.
 - 3. The Committee discussed concern for returning seats too soon, resulting in a shortage of LA4 seats later this year due to an influx of enrollment later in the pandemic.
 - a. It is unlikely that these specific seats that are being offered for return will be completely filled in this academic year due to multiple reasons.

III. COORDINATED ENROLLMENT AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

- a. Thomas Lambert from NOLA-PS provided an update on coordinated enrollment.
 - i. Enrollment continues to be completed virtually through Enroll NOLA.

- ii. NOLA-PS is planning a coordinated information campaign to launch in a few weeks for families who haven't enrolled, potentially due to classes being virtual.
 - iii. NOLA-PS is also planning to reconvene the enrollment subcommittee, specifically to explore options for the virtual verification process.
 - iv. NOEEN and NOLA-PS have formally partnered to increase outreach to vulnerable student populations.
- b. Status on Early Childhood Enrollment
- i. There are currently 438 open LA4 seats, compared to around 180 open LA4 seats at this time last year.
 - ii. The Committee discussed the importance of communicating with and supporting families so they are aware of availability in childcare and able to access it.

IV. COORDINATED OBSERVATIONS & SUPPORT

- a. Aimee Grainer provided an update on coordinated observations.
- i. 2020-2021 CLASS Guidance
 1. Observations will be conducted during the 2020-2021 school year.
 2. Observers are designated "essential visitors" and virtual classrooms are not required to be observed.
 3. CLASS Protocol has been adjusted to account for shifts in interactions, and therefore performance measurements can be expected to shift as well.
 - a. The LDE's full protocol guidance is available [here](#).
 4. The Committee discussed concerns regarding observers entering early childcare sites during the pandemic and the desire for CLASS observers to be tested for COVID-19 regularly given their mobility across providers.

V. READY START NETWORK UPDATE

- a. Aimee Grainer provided a 2019-2020 session recap and an overview of the 2020-2021 session.
- i. NOEEN administered just over \$11 million in public funds in 2019-2020, as compared to the over \$12 million benchmarked for 2020-2021.
 - ii. LA4 and NESCD funding decreased overall from the 2019-2020 to the 2020-2021 sessions.
 1. The loss of funding tracks appropriately with enrollment trends.
 2. Due to COVID-19, we may expect overall enrollment and/or attendance to diminish for the 2020-2021 school year regardless of demand.
 - iii. Goals for the 2020-2021 Session
 1. Based on the survey completed by 75% of Steering Committee members, 78% of respondents agree or somewhat agree that NOEEN meets their vision of governance.
 2. 67% of respondents expressed desire for more time on forward-looking advocacy for change, and 89% indicated that they would like to spend more time on some aspect of NOEEN's work.

3. In 2020-2021, NOEEN will seek to leverage its co-lead agency status and focus on executing policy, process, and vision.
- b. Jen Roberts provided an update on RSN & CCR&R Initiatives.
 - i. With \$625,200 awarded by LDE, the ECHO Community Recovery Grant distributed funds directly to 59 sites in Orleans Parish—57% of all eligible sites impacted.
 1. A second round of grants will launch next week aimed to reach 100% of the eligible population.
 - ii. NOEEN received a prestigious Pritzker Grant to support improvements in access to early education over a 3 year period.
 - iii. AFC and NOEEN partnered with CORE to establish free weekly COVID testing for early childcare providers.
 1. A finalized monthly testing schedule for early childcare providers will be announced within the next week.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 1:41pm.

Action Items

- **Action Item No. 1:** On the motion of Joyce Ridgeway, seconded by Joy Mitchell, the Committee approved the minutes from June 22, 2020 and to virtually approve the minutes from the last Steering Committee post-meeting.
- **Action Item No. 2:** On the motion of Kate Mehok, seconded by Thomas Lambert, the Committee approved the distribution of 100 additional City Seats to centers with active waitlists, and to create a bank of returned seats to be later distributed. Jen Roberts and Joy Mitchell abstained.
- **Action Item No. 3:** On the motion of Kristi Givens, seconded by Joyce Ridgeway, the Committee approved the allocation of 2 seats to Phillis Wheatley and to return 59 of the LA4 seats, or three full classrooms. Kate Mehok abstained.
- **Action Item No. 4:** On the motion of Kate Mehok, seconded Kristi Givens, the Committee moved to approve the proposed meeting cadence and schedule for the 2020-2021 academic year.