New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) Steering Committee
8300 Earhart Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70118
Meeting Minutes for October 21st, 2020

Committee Members in Attendance: Keith Liederman, Jen Roberts, Joyce Ridgeway, Kate Mehok, Kristi Givens, Thomas Lambert, Emily Wolff, Carole Elliot, Thelma French

Committee Members Absent: Maria Blanco, Rhonda Taylor, Joy Mitchell

Community Members in Attendance: Aimee Grainer, Anna Williamson, Lindsay Weixler, Natalie Reich, Angelique Thomas

I. **CALL TO ORDER**
   a. At 11:35am Keith Liederman called the meeting to order.

II. **COORDINATED FUNDING**
   a. LA4 and NSECD
      i. Aimee Grainer from NOEEN provided an update on LA4 and NSECD, as well as NOEEN's CFR goals.
         1. LA4 and NSECD application elements include contact information, citywide needs, school quality, and parent demand.
            a. Scoring and evaluation of applications has not changed from last year: quality is 50%, parent demand is 50%, meeting families' needs is additional points
            b. It is unlikely that new applications will be accepted, and it is not expected that funding will be increased.
         2. LA4 and NSCED allocations and program update.
            a. Additional requests have been filed to return additional seats since the October Steering Committee meeting.
            b. The plan remains to give 50% of returned seats back to the LDE.
            c. Citywide there is 5-27% seat vacancy for LA4 and NSECD seats.
            d. The state does not expect LA4 funding to decrease for the 2021-2022 school year.
         3. The CFR application is to be released October 23rd, applications are due November 9th, NOEEN will publicly post a draft of CFR allocation recommendations on November 16th, and Agenda For Children will submit NOEEN-approved CFR allocation recommendations to the LDE on November 20th.
   b. City Seats

i. Aimee Grainer provided an update on the current enrollment status of the City Seats program, considering low enrollment and attendance.
    1. Approximately 80% of city funded seats were filled as of October 2020.
    2. New programs and infant seats of all funding types are struggling due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
    3. City Seats waitlists are generally much lower than the number of seats available.
        a. Kristi Givens from Kids of Excellence noted that her site has a high demand for seats, including infant. Their recruitment methods rely mainly on currently attending families and staff.
        b. Thomas Lambert and Dr. Angelique Thomas from NOLA-PS continue to reach out to families on waitlists.
    4. Providers have requested to convert allocated seats to other age groups where there is a higher immediate demand and greater likelihood of filling.
    5. NOEEN proposal to allow sites to reallocate seats where there is need.
    6. The Committee moved to allow sites to reallocate seats where there is need as a positive short-term solution, and also discussed concerns about next waves of the COVID-19 pandemic and longer-term solutions.

III. COORDINATED ENROLLMENT AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

a. Thomas Lambert from NOLA-PS provided updates on coordinated enrollment and the coordinated information campaign.
    i. The first round of One App opened November 2020, and is scheduled to close on January 29, 2021.
        1. A timeline for early childhood to release results will be presented next month.
    ii. Head Start verification during the application process will be a hybrid approach, placing families to centers.
        1. Thelma French suggested basing the verification process around the reopening phases of the pandemic.
    iii. NOLA-PS is beginning outreach to local businesses to share information about enrolling for next year.
        1. The NOLA-PS information campaign includes social media collateral available for centers to use, radio advertising and potential TV news spots, and targeted bus advertising.

2. NOLA-PS is working on other resources, like promotional postcards with a list of necessary documents.

IV. COORDINATED OBSERVATIONS & SUPPORT

a. Aimee Grainer shared an update on CLASS protocol, NOEEN advocacy, and Performance Profiles.

i. 2020-2021 CLASS Protocol Update

1. NOEEN submitted protocol to the LDE in September, which included new health, safety, and flexibility measures, a virtual observation option, and COVID-19 testing guidelines for contracted observers.

ii. NOEEN Advocacy

1. NOEEN is advocating to the LDE that this year is not the right year for conducting CLASS observations.
2. CLASS open letter will be sent to the state immediately after the Steering Committee October 21 meeting.

iii. 2019-2020 Performance Profiles have been sent out to all sites.

1. LDE implemented a "hold harmless" approach which means if a site received an overall higher score based on 2019-2020 performance, they were opted into updated profiles.
    a. 2018-2019 results will remain as a site's current Performance Profile for an additional year for all other sites.
2. NOEEN will not receive an updated network Performance Profile this year.

V. READY START NETWORK UPDATE

a. Jen Roberts from Agenda For Children and NOEEN shared an update on the ECHO Community Recovery Grant and the Pritzer grant.

i. NOEEN provided direct assistance to everyone who applied to the ECHO Grant and was eligible.

1. $625,000 awarded in total, representing 80% of eligible sites.

ii. The Pritzer grant is underway with Kenny Francis from AFC serving as the Fellow, focusing on quality, policy, wraparound supports, and parent engagement efforts.

b. Emily Wolff shared an update on the ballot initiative.

i. On December 5, New Orleans will vote on a millage that would dedicate funding to quality ECE for infants and toddlers for the next 20 years.

ii. Combined with the annual $1.5M promised by Mayor Cantrell, the passing of the millage would create a $3M annual base for supporting ECE.

c. Anna Williamson from Agenda For Children gave an update on CCR&R Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.

i. Agenda For Children successfully transitioned all the coaching in early childhood centers to virtual, using the platform Coaching Companion.

ii. Regional trainings and targeted individualized trainings continue to be held virtually.

1. A trauma-informed care training will soon be available.

iii. Directors Collaborative meetings continue to be virtual, and Quarterly Convenings will be utilizing a new virtual approach.

iv. CORE and Agenda For Children continue to partner to provide COVID-19 testing for childcare providers, as well as expanding wraparound services within testing, including Uber vouchers, and community supports such as PPE and EIDL.

d. Upcoming News & Next Steps

i. Aimee Grainer shared some ideas and proposals for the future of NOEEN's work.

1. Proposals to shift the work of NOEEN towards advocacy, as well as family and program engagement. Currently, NOEEN spends most of its time with granular CFR decision-making and high-level enrollment and quality.

ii. The Committee discussed proposals for future work.

1. Thelma French suggested incorporating lessons learned relative to providing ECE in unprecedented times, and how to build processes that incorporate/strengthen family learning models. Thomas Lambert, Emily Wolff, and Kate Mehok agreed.
2. Kate Mehok and Keith Liederman suggested having meetings to discuss future work with childcare providers, open forums with the community, and increasing transparency.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 1:14pm.

<u>Action Items</u>

- **Action Item No. 1**: On the motion of Kate Mehok, seconded by Kristi Givens, the Committee approved to adopt the Steering Committee Agenda for October 21, 2020.
- **Action Item No. 2:** On the motion Kristi Givens, seconded by Joyce Ridgeway, the Committee approved the minutes from September 21.