

New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) Steering Committee
8300 Earhart Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70118
Meeting Minutes for January 22nd, 2021

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

Committee Members Absent: Rhonda Taylor

Community Members in Attendance: Aimee Grainer, Gabby Izzo, Angelique Thomas, Caitlin Boley, Natalie Reich, Anna Williamson, Melanie Richardson, Chantrell Causey, Michael Bock

I. CALL TO ORDER

- a. At 8:35 AM Jen Roberts called the meeting to order.

II. COORDINATED FUNDING

- a. Dr. Angelique Thomas from NOLA-PS presented updates on NOEEN's 2021-2022 Coordinated Funding application process and recommendations.
 - i. CFR allocations have now been publicly posted and can be expected to be approved by BESE around April.
 - ii. CFR Application Elements: Contact Information, Citywide Needs, School Quality, and Parent Demand.
 - iii. Scoring and evaluations
 - 1. All applications will be scored based on the rubric, which includes quality and parent demand, plus meeting families' needs for bonus points.
 - iv. COVID Considerations
 - 1. Parents and guardians may still elect to not fill a seat due to COVID if virtual learning is not what they prefer.
 - 2. The coordinated campaign, waitlist outreach, social media marketing, bus terminal ads and targeted email outreach continue.
 - 3. Schools have inquired about returning seats if they are not able to fill the amount requested, although seat numbers have remained fairly consistent.
 - v. From 20-21 to 21-22, there was a total change of 157 seats.
 - vi. LA 4 and Tuition recommendations
 - 1. Priority given to sites that are meeting parents' needs, in high demand, and are quality operators.
 - 2. 11 sites requested new seats.

3. Paul Habans @ Clara's, James Singleton, and Harriet Tubman @ Clara's did not request LA4 seats for the 21-22 school year.
 - a. Clara's chose not to reapply for LA4, because Ms. Sonjia had trouble filling those seats last year.
 - b. Singleton had a change in leadership, and LA4 is not a part of the new leadership's plan.
- vii. CFR recommendations
 1. All current NSECD providers will remain the same.
 2. The Committee discussed the difficulty for smaller childcare centers to fill NSECD seats, largely due to the delay in funding built into the model. Joyce Ridgewat, Kriti Givens, and Thelma French shared personal experiences with the challenges of NSECD and suggestions for advocating the Department for a change in the model.
 - a. Jen Roberts recommended submitting a memo to the state requesting to have a conversation with them about CFR.
- viii. Overall outcome of recommendations for LA4 and NSECD seats: no brand new providers, all existing providers requesting to keep the same number of seats, or to modestly increase their number of seats, or to not fund some seats.
- ix. The Committee discussed the discrepancy of quality between schools and early childhood programs at the schools, as well as the significant effects of COVID-19 on the quality and accountability of early childhood programs and how that impacts children.
- b. Aimee Grainer from NOEEN shared a City Seats allocation update.
 - i. As of January, 98% of City Seats are full, which includes City and PDG seats. This is an 18% increase from November.
 - ii. The percentage of filled seats will likely continue to fluctuate, but at this time enrollment is strong enough that having to make a decrease in seats is not expected.
 - iii. 94% of Early Head Start seats are filled, and 98% of NOEEN City Seats are filled.
 - iv. LA4/NSECD Update
 1. As of January 19, 82% seats in school-based PK4 programs were filled citywide. At this time last year, 95% of seats were filled.
 - a. Although enrollment is down, the State will not be penalizing programs for low enrollment during this year.

2. After voting to send 50% back to the LDE to reallocate in October, NOEEN now recommends that the remaining 50% of returned seats be sent back to the LDE.
- v. Citywide Update
 1. 86% of publicly-funded seats, on average, were filled as of January 19, 2021.
 2. The rollout of the vaccine will hopefully lend itself to a healthier system outlook come summer 2021.
 - vi. Super App strategies for 2021-2022
 1. Birth to 3 year strategies: Increase B-3 seats at child care centers and independently fundraise for ECE.
 2. 4 year strategies: increase 4 year seats beyond LA4 and place LA4/NSECD in high needs zip codes.
 - a. The Committee discussed adding strategies specifically focused on improving access and quality of care and education for children, rather than numbers of seats and dollars spent.

III. COORDINATED ENROLLMENT AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

- a. Thomas Lambert from NOLA-PS shared coordinated enrollment updates
 - i. The main round of enrollment closes next Friday, and results can be expected in late March or early April.
 - ii. NOLA-PS has promotions currently going on TV, JambalayaNews and radio (targeting Spanish-speaking families), and social media.
 - iii. There has been significant progress in application completion rates and we are exceeding day-to-day increases in all grades.
 1. Especially for early childhood, NOLA-PS will have to continue to recruit families through the beginning of the school year.
 - iv. Open enrollment recruitment updates:
 1. NOLA-PS is mining data they have on families who may have younger children, or have begun an application in prior years
 2. They are continuing to market throughout the Spring.
 3. In February, they will host trainings for centers on helping families get signed up, add themselves to waitlists, and the verification process.
 4. NOLA-PS is also exploring with Agenda ECHO Funds for the purpose of recruitment, and how to further support centers in their marketing strategies.
 - v. Thelma French and Kristi Givens shared concerns about engaging many families, specifically low-income families, and access challenges around the coordinated enrollment process, especially during COVID-19.

1. The Committee discussed strategies to engage parents in enrollment processes and how to provide them with enrollment information in a more accessible and supportive way.

IV. COORDINATED OBSERVATIONS & SUPPORT

- a. Michael Bock from the LDE joined the Committee to provide an overview of CLASS Observations.
 - i. Despite the many challenges presented in the Fall, the trend of incremental growth in CLASS scores and development continued.
 - ii. Statewide, more than 80% of classes received an observation.
 - iii. Spring 2021: The LDE is updating the local observation protocol guidance based on feedback from the Fall, including guidance for resuming in-person observations by external observers.
 - iv. BESE approved a one-time emergency rule in December that allows any classroom that received a Fall score of 4.50 or higher to be exempted from a Spring local observation.
 - v. The LDE is exploring options for calculating 2020-2021 Performance.
 - vi. The LDE is in partnership with Tulane Mental Health to provide mental health consultations and resources directly to sites.
- b. Thelma French shared concerns with Picard's observation process and their communication regarding participation in observations.
- c. Michael Bock shared the goal of having a decision around the accountability of performance scores by the March BESE meeting.

V. OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The next Steering Committee meeting will be held on March 17, 2021.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 10:37 AM.

Action Items

- **Action Item No. 1:** On the motion of Kate Mehok, seconded by Maria Blanco, the Committee approved the Agenda for the January meeting.
- **Action Item No. 2:** On the motion Kristi Givens, seconded by Joyce Ridgeway, the Committee approved the minutes from the November meeting.
- **Action Item No. 3:** On the motion of Thelma French, seconded by Maria Blanco, the Committee approved the recommendations for LA4 seats for the 2021-2022 school year. Kate Mehok abstained.
- **Action Item No. 4:** On the motion of Carole Elliot, seconded by Thelma French, the Committee approved the recommendations for NSECD seats for the 2021-2022 school year.