New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) Steering Committee
8300 Earhart Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70118
Meeting Minutes for May 19th, 2021

Committee Members in Attendance: Keith Liederman, Emily Wolff, Jen Roberts, Kate Mehok, Kristi Givens, Rochelle Wilcox (sitting in for Joy Mitchell), Thelma French, Thomas Lambert, Maria Blanco

Committee Members Absent: Carole Elliot, Rhonda Taylor

Community Members in Attendance: Aimee Grainer, Gabby Izzo, Kenneth Francis, Angelique Thomas, Lindsay Weixler, Caitlin Boley

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

II. **READY START NETWORK UPDATE**
   a. Jen Roberts from Agenda for Children provided a Ready Start Network initiative update.
      i. Aimee Grainer has been promoted to the Managing Director at NOEEN!
      ii. Joyce Ridgeway, who represented Early Steps in the Steering Committee, has retired. There is now a vacant position on the Steering Committee and the process of selecting a new committee member will begin soon.
   b. Kenny Francis from Agenda for Children provided an update on advocacy related to early childhood.
      i. The initiatives Agenda for Children is focusing on at this time are raising CCAP benefits and opening up eligibility to more people.
      ii. The LDOE is still working on their plan for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF); This is how they will adjudicate ECE funds for the next three years.
      iii. In the legislature, early childhood advocates are still pushing for as much money as possible from sports betting.
      iv. A bill has been introduced to remove sales tax exemptions for medical marijuana, and it was proposed that 20% of these funds be directed to early childhood.
      v. The state may have $600 million more in revenue and income taxes than they expected; This is what they need to fill the unemployment trust fund, but if it is used for other purposes, Agenda would push for early childhood education to be one.
      vi. Early Education Day at the capital was canceled due to inclement weather and will be potentially rescheduled.
   c. Jen Roberts and Aimee Grainer from Agenda for Children and NOEEN provided an overview of funding and sector recovery opportunities.

i. Agenda for Children has received a grant to help support systems-level family engagement. It would include focus groups and facilitated conversations to determine how to capture caregiver voice.
    1. The grant is launching this summer.
ii. The CLSD Quality and Literacy Supports grant includes B-PK4 PD, coaching, curriculum investment, and other quality and literacy supports.
    1. The first year of this grant is currently underway, and the second year is beginning around June. It is a three-year grant from the LDOE.
    2. The grant money can be used toward coaching, workforce development, PD, etc.
    3. The grant will address a range of providers. Anyone can register for pre-service now, but coaching and curriculum support will mostly be focused on sites that are struggling. Agenda for Children and NOEEN are working on expanding the coaching contract to more sites.
    4. Kristi Givens raised concerns about the accessibility of certain grants, like the recent innovation grant, for centers who need to prioritize maintaining quality first and foremost.
iii. The Supply Building and Capacity Grant is intended for investment in building long-term supply and capacity, as well as community needs assessments.
    1. Grant applications are due next week, and notifications will go out the first week of June.
    2. The first grant year is intended for planning support, and the second year is for implementation.
    3. Funding can be used to invest in various approaches in building capacity, but there are some limitations based on the terms of the grant (e.i. cannot purchase land or buildings).
    4. Thelma French emphasized the importance of building an early childhood pipeline in building long-term capacity.
iv. The Community Recovery Grant is broadly defined and meant to support childcare providers and families in their recovery from the pandemic.
    1. Grant applications will be submitted to the LDOE next week, and notifications will go out the first week of June.
    2. NOEEN's grant proposal focuses on investing in improving enrollment, the verification process and access. It includes:
        a. Expanding verification sites;
        b. Broadscale verification updates;
        c. Application support for sites and families;

d. An information campaign and coordinated outreach.

d. Aimee Grainer from NOEEN provided an update on working groups and parent engagement.
    i. The Advocacy Working group's top priorities are to make the most of ARPA funding, expand capacity and quality, and to support the workforce pipeline.
        1. The group's next meeting date is TBD.
    ii. The Enrollment Sub-Committee's second meeting was postponed until June 23rd. The group will review identified problems and look at the family experience at their upcoming meeting.
    iii. The materials for the SSL Pilot Program have been distributed and community leaders are currently being trained.
        1. NOEEN will check-in with community leaders throughout the pilot.

III. COORDINATED FUNDING

a. Aimee Grainer provided in-depth updates on coordinated funding.

b. 2021-2022 B-3 Allocation
    i. NOEEN has received funding to offer roughly 773 publicly-funded birth-to-three seats in 2021-2022.
    ii. Families served:
        1. 373 PDG Seats for working families at or below 200% of the FPL
        2. 400 CS for families at or below 100% of the FPL
    iii. The total allocation is $9 million from the city, state and private funding sources combined.
    iv. PDG eligibility is determined through the grant terms set by the state.
    v. The public rubric NOEEN is using to evaluate applications for B-3 funding looks at performance, citywide need, meeting parents' needs, administrative competency and network participation.
    vi. Proposed allocation protocol:
        1. The Steering Committee will vote on the protocol used to distribute seats, not individual seats.
        2. Seats will be allocated to the highest-scoring eligible applicants.
            a. The review will also prioritize covering current seats, current City Seats providers for city-funded seats, centers with demonstrated demand, and equity and stability across existing and new applicants.
        3. Allocation recommendations, per final protocol, will be publicly posted.

c. 2021-2022 LA4/NSECD Allocation
    i. NOEEN has received funding to cover roughly 1882 publicly-funded PreK4 seats

1. We received over 90% of our requested LA4 seats and 85% of our requested NSECD seats; roughly 20% of applicants did not receive their full request.

ii. As a general trend, funding is decreasing while applicants are increasing.

iii. Seat change requests will be processed on a first-come first-served basis.

d. 2021-2022 Public Funding Overview

i. NOEEN and NOLAPS will be administering or supporting the administration of about $17.6 million in public funding for early learning.

1. We will be serving over 2,600 economically disadvantaged New Orleans families.
2. We will be supporting seat and programmatic funding at over 70 child care sites and schools.

IV. COORDINATED ENROLLMENT AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

a. Thomas Lambert from NOLAPS provided a coordinated enrollment update.

i. Since May 2020, NOLAPS has processed roughly 5,000 document submissions.

ii. 1,543 new placements occurred this school year.

iii. 989 EC applications matched via Direct Certification.

iv. Main Round applicant overview:

1. Seeking new placements: 1696 verified applicants
2. Received a placement: 76.3%
3. Received a top 3 choice: 70.2%
4. Defaulted to previous school: 6.5%
5. Unassigned: 17.2%

v. Family centers are in the process of getting back up and running to support families with documentation submission, verification, etc.

vi. The Committee discussed in detail the serious enrollment problem in LA4 seats and the concerns about returning to in-person school and fluctuations in the workforce.

1. There should be a community-wide campaign that involves NOEEN, NOLAPS, and community members in planning and strategy.
2. Some immediate follow-up actions include gathering and sharing data on the extent of the enrollment problem, investigating how the state's additional unused LA4 funding is being used, direct targeted outreach to unverified applicants (e.i. hosting verification events over the summer), and a targeted information campaign spearheaded by NOEEN and NOLAPS.

3. The Enrollment Sub-Committee will discuss the current problems with enrollment, instead of future plans, at their meeting in June.

vii. The Committee will publicly post the protocol for seat allocation now that it has been approved.

viii. After the public comment section, Aimee will send out letters to notify childcare centers.

V. COORDINATED OBSERVATIONS & SUPPORT

a. Aimee Grainer shared a CLASS Observation recap from the 2020-2021 school year.

i. Fall 2020:

1. 427 early childhood classrooms were observed, roughly 60% of Fall 2019 classrooms.
2. 65 waivers granted, for reasons from COVID-10 to high turnover and low enrollment.
3. NOEEN successfully transitioned between hybrid and entirely virtual observation models.

ii. Spring 2021:

1. 185 early childhood classrooms observed.
2. 386 (76%) were eligible to waive Spring observations due to their 4.50+ Fall score.
3. 347 (90%) of eligible classrooms decided to waive Spring 2021 CLASS observations.
4. 62 mock observations will be completed.

iii. While the 2021-2022 observation approach remains to be seen, NOEEN is well-positioned to support a return to in-person, or a continuation of hybrid services.

b. Aimee shared an update on the LDOE's Accountability Approach for the 2021-2022 school year.

i. The LDOE has recommended an extended emergency revision to Bulletin 140 for the 2021-2022 school year in order to respond to the ways in which COVID-19 has impacted CLASS.

1. Any sites with a 2019-2020 performance score that is higher than their 2021-2021 score may keep the higher score.
2. ented 19-20 performance scores for sites where this score is higher than 20-21
3. Mandated SIP participation for sites that score below 3.75 in 2020-2021.
4. Classrooms will be weighted equally; uniquely consider classrooms without spring observations.

5. Community network performance scores or honor rolls will not be published.

VI. OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. This concludes the Steering Committee season for 2020-2021. Recess is from June - August and the Committee will reconvene in September 2021.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 1:34 PM.

Action Items

- **Action Item No. 1**: On the motion of Maria Blanco, seconded by Jen Roberts, the Committee Adopted the agenda for the May 19th, 2021 Steering Committee meeting.
- **Action Item No. 2:** On the motion Kristi Givens, seconded by Thelma French, the Committee approved the minutes from the March 2021 Steering Committee meeting.
- **Action Item No. 3:** On the motion of Thelma French, second by Rochelle Wilcox, the Committee approved of the proposed PDG B-3 allocation protocol.
- **Action Item No. 4:** On the motion of Kate Mehok, seconded by Thelma French, the Committee approved the proposed City Seats allocation protocol.
- **Action Item No. 5:** On the motion of Kristi Givens, seconded by Rochelle Wilcox, the Committee approved the proposed 2021-2022 meeting schedule.