New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) Steering Committee
8300 Earhart Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70118
Meeting Minutes for November 10th, 2021

Committee Members in Attendance: Keith Liederman, Maria Blanco, Thelma French, Jen Roberts, Joy Mitchell, Kate Mehok, Rebecca Latham, Jack Shaevitz (proxy for Emily Wolff), Kristi Givens

Committee Members Absent: Rhonda Taylor, Carole Elliot, Early Steps Representative

Community Members in Attendance: Caitlin Boley, Natalie Reich, Teresa Falgoust, Lindsay Weixler, Derrick Toups, Anna Williamson

I. CALL TO ORDER

a. At 11: 33 AM Kieth Liederman called the meeting to order.
b. A vote was taken to replace Jen Roberts with Derrick Toups as the new Child Care Resource and Referral Agency representative.

II. COORDINATED FUNDING

A. Information Item: 2023-2024 City Seats Millage – Keith Liederman
   a. The Campaign for Grade Level Reading has launched a millage campaign to provide long-term, sustainable funding to support and is estimated to serve at least 1500 students annually through high quality early childhood education. This will complement the work around supply building and access expansion and also expand City Seats.
   b. All city council members and the mayor are on board with the proposal.
   c. The millage would provide $20-$25 million a year for 20 years.
   d. The first two years of funding will be focused on building capacity and seats. After the first years, there will be around 3,000 additional kids a year added to the program with state match.
   e. We anticipate the results of the millage to impact the 2023- 2024 school year, i.e; our standard CFR and funding advocacy process will persist for the 2022-2023 school year.

B. 2022-2023 LA4 and NSECD Coordinated Funding Request - Rebcca Latham
   a. The CFR application closed on November 3, 2021.
   b. NOLA-PS has stated reaching out to providers who hold seats who did not apply. They have received applications from about 42 programs.
   c. Fifty percent of programs are requesting additional PK4 seats, including increased requests for both LA4 and NSECD seats.
   d. Should the CFR allocation recommendation to the LDOE be prioritized for the

Committee to consider at the January meeting or should the Committee submit recommendations to the LDOE that are fully aligned to all requests?

i. Kate Mehok is concerned about opening 50% more seats next year when enrollment has been consistently low. She recommends that seats should not be increased, because they will not be filled; programs should keep the seats they have.
ii. The Committee discussed low enrollment issues and enrollment patterns, including 0-5 populations decreasing in cities regardless of COVID-19.
iii. Kristi Givens explained that families are sending their children to quality programs that they chose, rather than places that have LA4 or NSECD seats.
iv. The number of applications has gone down since before the pandemic.

III. COORDINATED ENROLLMENT AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

A. Rebecca Latham from NOLA-PS provided enrollment system updates. i. Over 3,500 families have submitted a main round application since it launched.
   a. The first main round demand reports will be shared with enrollment staff, including a status update on transitional grade application completion.
   b. NOLA-PS is sending enrollment reminders to families.
   c. OneApp will continue to be the application tool, but it will now be referred to as NOLA-PA Common Application Process (NCAP).
   d. Rebecca walked the Committee through the new application website and resources included on it. She encouraged members to share the site with families and provide any feedback.
   e. Kate Mehok suggested that family resource center leaders and employees should be invited to join the enrollment subcommittee.
   f. Thelma French urged the Committee to create a public information campaign around the changes to the enrollment system to spread the word.
   g. NOLA-PS is analyzing application data to push out communications at the time when it will reach the most people.
   h. Joy Mitchell suggested a push around this holiday time so that the information may reach families who are coming back home from Hurricane Ida and staying in the city.

IV. COORDINATED OBSERVATIONS & SUPPORT

A. Jen Roberts provided an update on coordinated observations.
   a. Observations are underway; NOEEN continues to offer both virtual and in-person observations to programs in the network.
   b. NOEEN has been working with the LDOE on timelines, expectations, and what is realistically possible at this time given COVID and post-Ida complications with

child care provider workforce. Head Start providers will also help NOEEN complete the observations by the deadline.

c. The LDOE has not released their formal approach to how these scores will affect performance profiles. The ECAC will be voting next week on whether or not to extend the emergency rule from last year to this year.

V. READY START NETWORK UPDATE

A. Jen Roberts provided an update on the Ready Start Network.

a. Ready Start Transform Grant
   i. a. This grant will go into effect in January 2022, until January 2023.
   ii. Up to Three grants will be distributed state-wide. Each grant will be up to $1 million each year with match requirements.
   iii. There will be alignment and integration with other local funding opportunities.
   iv. NOEEN submitted an LOI and interviewed with the LDOE for Stage 1, and has been invited to proceed to Stage 2 of review.
   v. NOEEN's proposed deliverables include a new strategic plan for Orleans 0-4 seats, a family child care pilot, early childhood program incubator, strengthening the supply building pipeline, community engagement, and developmental screenings for publicly funded seats.

b. Lead Agency Application
   i. The request for applications for lead agencies for Orleans has been released by the LDOE. This is a 2-year contract. It is NOEEN's recommendation that Agenda for Children and NOLA-PA reapply jointly.
   ii. Agenda for Children acts as the fiscal manager, RSN lead, takes on CLASS Observations, PDG/B-3 seats, new programming and Steering Committee support. NOLA-PS acts as the enrollment lead, supports coordinated funding requests, and the Steering Committee.
   iii. Keith Liederman asked if there are any anticipated changes to the contract for the future. Jen Roberts mentioned that NOEEN and NOLA-PS may reimagine how the committee or subcommittees are structured but that Build Back Better and additional federal, state, and local funding and accountability should be an opportunity to reevaluate all early childhood governance.

c. Hurricane Ida Updates
   i. The Committee discussed the process and bureaucracy of having to re-open after Hurricane Ida and how they can advocate for more streamlined processes for disaster recovery.

d. NOEEN Committees
   i. NOEEN bylaws include three standing working committees: Enrollment, Funding, and Quality.
   ii. COVID and then Hurricane Ida set back NOEEN's efforts to reestablish and improve committees. To get on track, NOLA-PS and Agenda proposed:
      1. The enrollment subcommittee is relaunching with a focus on improving the application and process overhauls, including the

early childhood verification process, based on historical and new feedback. NOEEN recommends that the enrollment committee be a monthly advisory group for NOLA-PS.

a. Thelma French suggested that NOEEN should be very intentional about recruiting diverse ethnic, racial, and language representatives for the committee.
b. Kristi Givens suggested including a survey or questions at the end of the application to get direct feedback about the usability of the website.
c. Rebecca Latham mentioned that NOLA PS will also need to engage with families on the front end.

2. The advocacy working group works with leaders in the field to determine the best place for this work to thrive given tha Agenda's policy person will not be replaced until January 2022.
    a. For Providers By Providers creates a network of communication between providers to express concerns, get support, and work together.
    b. This group has biweekly calls open to all providers, including anyone on the Steering Committee.
    c. NOEEN staff will send out a poll to Steering Committee members to reaffirm which subcommittees they will join and who on their staff will represent on each.

e. Fund Development Efforts
    i. NOEEN, NOLAPS, and Agenda are managing a number of grants to aid sector recovery. NOEEN provided the Community Recovery Grant provided subgrant to NOLA-PS to improve early childhood application process.
    ii. NOEEN's Supply Building and Capacity Grant is funding a partnership with the Data Center to explore where child care is needed across the region and what city planning efforts may affect these needs.
    iii. CLSD Quality and Literacy Supports is providing free early childhood curriculum to any provider who is eligible, including LA4 and Type III centers.
    iv. Systems-level Family Engagement will be a priority for the LDE in future grant applications. Agenda received a grant from the Pritzker Foundation to support early childhood governance and how parents can/should be involved. This work is ongoing with Keisha Smith and will be reported on at the January 2022 NOEEN meeting.

VI. OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

a. Teresa Falgoust from Agenda for Children provided an overview of the Build Back Better Provisions for Child Care.

i. The goal of Build Back Better is to make ECE affordable, accessible and high-quality for all families. It has two main components:

1. A dramatic expansion of subsidized child care: It will provide

some level of subsidy for all low to median income families. Families will pay no more than 7% of their income on high quality child care.

2. Universal preschool: Free high quality preschool to more than 60,000 additional 3 and 4 year olds.

iii. It raises income eligibility levels, broadens who is eligible far beyond current CCAP criteria, caps co-payments at 7% of a family's income, and sets reimbursement at cost of quality care. To be eligible, children must be younger than 6 and not yet in kindergarten.

1. Kate Mehok asked if states could opt out of Build Back Better, or does Louisiana have to commit to it? Teresa explained that if states opt out, the federal government can force an expansion of head start. It will phase in, starting with the lowest income groups and expanding to highest by 2025.

iii.. Anyone who is a licensed provider can participate as long as they participate in the state's tiered quality measurement systems.

vi. It will provide funding for additional supports, like startup grants and supply expansion grants, quality grants and facilities grants.

vii. Louisiana is ahead of the curve in having a continuous quality improvement system and conducting statewide needs assessments.

b. Jen Roberts opened the floor for a discussion on sector recovery and workforce development.

i. Kristi Givens suggested that the Committee needs to work with the LDOE to change the language around how to earn a CDA; you can volunteer at a childcare center to get one. You have to be working at a center to be eligible for CDA money. Teresa mentioned that when people are not prepared to teach they do not have the efficacy and sustainability to stay in the position. Kristi believes that the wraparound support from City Seats and Early Head Start have been incredibly helpful and beneficial to her center's success.

ii. Joy Mitchell suggested training high schoolers while they are in school, and creating avenues for incubators and to help younger people to be successful in the job. Kristi Givens agreed with Joy. She suggested that closing childcare centers during the summer or for a period of time can help with professional development training. If centers are getting more money, it needs to be connected to high quality and intentional training.

c. Upcoming News & Next Steps

i. There will be a NOEEN staff and branding update in the next couple of weeks.

ii. NOEEN will reconvene and determine chairs and members of committees post-subcommittee poll. The next formal meeting is January 12, 2022.

NOEEN
NEW ORLEANS EARLY EDUCATION NETWORK

VII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 1:32 PM.

Action Items

- **Action Item No. 1**: On the motion of Joy Mitchell, seconded by Kate Mehok, the Committee approved the Agenda for the November 2021 meeting.
- **Action Item No. 2:** On the motion Jen Roberts , seconded by Maria Blanco, the Committee approved the minutes from the October 2021 meeting.
- **Action Item No. 3:** On the motion of Thelma French, seconded by Kate Mehok, the Committee approved the adoption of Derrick Toups as the CCR&R Representative on the Committee.
- **Action Item No. 4:** On the motion of Kate Mehok, seconded by Kristi Givens, the Committee approved the RFA for Lead Agency with Agenda for Children and NOLA PS as lead agency applicants. Derrick Toups from Agenda For Children and Rebecca Latham from NOLA-PS abstained.