



**New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) Steering Committee**  
**8300 Earhart Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70118**  
**Meeting Minutes for January 12th, 2022**

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**Committee Members in Attendance:** Rebecca Latham, Emily Wolff, Kate Mehok, Kristi Givens, Maria Blanco, Joy Mitchell, Derrick Toups, Thelma French

**Committee Members Absent:** Rhonda Taylor, Keith Liederman (Chair)

**Community Members in Attendance:** Jen Roberts (Chair Proxy), Anna Williamson, Jestin Moorehead, Teresa Falgoust, Natalie Reich, Caitlin Boley, Lindsay Weixler, Melanie Richardson

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

- a. At 11:37 AM Jen Roberts (Chair Proxy) called the meeting to order.
  - i. The Steering Committee currently has two openings: the Early Steps/LDH and NSECD/Archdiocese representatives and are awaiting notification from the organizations on who will replace the committee members.

**II. COORDINATED FUNDING**

- a. Rebecca Latham from NOLAPS provided an overview on the Coordinated Funding Request (CFR) process and NOEEN's recommendations.
  - i. Every year, each community network submits a CFR for LA4 and NSECD funding.
  - ii. The funds are expected to be finalized in April 2022 by BESE for distribution for the 2022-2023 school year.
  - iii. The New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN)'s initial CFR recommendations seek to strike the right balance by continuing to offer diverse options, upholding continuing operations and planning for an increase in 0-3 children continuing on to PK4 programs.
  - iv. The recommendations for both LA4 and NSECD can be separated into three priorities:
    1. Priority 1 is for existing providers to maintain their current seats.
    2. Priority 2 is for existing providers to increase their seats.
    3. Priority 3 is for new providers to receive seats.
  - v. Based on requests submitted from providers, NOEEN's priorities for LA4 are as follows:
    1. Requesting the same number of seats as there were this year: 1,523 seats.
    2. Requesting 71 additional seats to expand existing providers.

3. Requesting 40 seats for Esperanza to be included in this year's request as they plan to launch a new two-way language immersion program in the 2023-2024 school year.
- vi. Based on requests submitted from providers, NOEEN's priorities for NSECD are as follows:
  1. Requesting 351 seats, 48 seats less than this year.
    - a. The decrease of 48 seats comes from St. Rita's closing, where there were 38 seats, and Clara's Preschool Academy not requesting any seats, where they have 10 this year.
  2. Requesting 48 additional seats for existing providers.
  3. Requesting 150 seats for new providers who do not currently have seats
- vii. NOEEN recommends priorities 1, 2 and 3 for its LA4 CFR request, and priorities 1 and 2 for its NSECD CFR request.
  1. Additionally, NOEEN recommends activating the funding sub-committee to assess demand data to accommodate demographic trends and rising students from B-3 programs to inform future CFR assessments.
- b. Jen Roberts from Agenda for Children outlined some CFR considerations
  - i. Next school year is the first time a current cohort of children from City Seats and PDG are rising into 4 year old seats.
  - ii. Enrollment is depressed across programs right now, but access to the vaccine for 0-5 year olds could increase enrollment in the future.
  - iii. There is uncertainty around what will happen with Build Back Better, but at this point additional State-funded seats are not anticipated.
- c. The Committee discussed and voted on NOEEN's CFR recommendations.
  - i. Kate Mehok suggested that Priority 2 for both LA4 and NSECD should be included in the recommendation.
  - ii. Kristi Givens encouraged Priority 3 for LA4 to put Esperanza's program in a better position to get seats when it opens.
  - iii. Jen Roberts informed that at this time, the State does not plan to increase the NSECD program.
  - iv. Jen Roberts asked for a motion to vote on the CFR recommendations.
- d. Rebecca Latham provided updates on the current allocation of seats by funding source.
  - i. Citywide, 81% of publicly-funded seats, on average, were filled as of January 12 2022.
    1. The City Seats program's Allocation current target is 400 seats, there are 6 seats available, and 494 students on the waitlist.

2. The B-3 program's current target is 370 seats, there are 125 seats available, and 106 students on the waitlist.
  - a. B-3 seats are being offered to families on the waitlist but turned down because children are already enrolled at another site.
3. Early Head Start is at 86% enrollment and Head Start is at 79% enrollment.
4. LA4 is at 86% enrollment and NSECD is at 75% enrollment.
- ii. Low enrollment will unlikely impact LDOE allocations as it is occurring statewide due to COVID-19 and workforce challenges.
- iii. The vaccine rollout for infants and toddlers could lead to a healthier system outlook by the summer.
- e. Rebecca Latham provided an overview of the 2022-2023 Super App.
  - i. Each year NOEEN is tasked with selecting network-wide strategies to improve access and quality, using the LDOE's Super App.
  - ii. NOEEN is already implementing the following strategies and will continue to pursue them in the next school year.
    1. Increasing B-3 seats at child care centers.
    2. Independently fundraising for ECE.
    3. Increasing 4 year seats beyond LA4.
    4. Placing LA4/NSECD in high needs zip codes.

**III. COORDINATED ENROLLMENT AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGN**

- a. Rebecca Latham provided an update on coordinated enrollment.
  - i. The communications team at NOLAPS launched an advertisement campaign in January, based largely on application data.
    1. The number of applications this year is more in line with pre-COVID application numbers.
  - ii. NOLAPS is increasing temporary staff to help with verifications, filling B-3 seats, and mining waitlists.
  - iii. The main round of enrollment closes on January 21, 2021.
  - iv. Thelma French suggested that the Committee should advocate for extending the main round deadline.
    1. Rebecca explained that the EC enrollment timeline needs to be aligned with K-12 enrollment because a lot of families have older children who are also in the school system.
      - a. Deadline flexibility would require coordination with NOLAPS leadership.
    2. Thelma French suggested restarting the enrollment sub-committee to brainstorm ways to improve access and make enrollment more effective.

3. The Committee discussed getting out the word to families now about the upcoming deadline and enrolling for next year.

**IV. COORDINATED OBSERVATIONS & SUPPORT**

- a. Natalie Reich from NOEEN provided an update on coordinated observations for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022.
  - i. 554 classrooms were eligible to be observed for the Fall 2021 semester.
    1. 432 classrooms were observed; 122 classrooms were waived.
    2. At least 8 classrooms closed during the semester due to staffing issues.
    3. About 76% of classrooms that were observed opted for in-person observations, while 24% of classrooms opted for virtual observations.
  - ii. BESE approved an emergency rule allowing classrooms that receive a Fall score of 4.50+ to be exempted from a local observation in the Spring.
  - iii. Based on NOEEN's preliminary calculations, roughly 85% of classrooms observed in the Fall may be eligible to waive their Spring observation.

**V. READY START NETWORK UPDATE**

- a. Jen Roberts provided an update on the Ready Start Network Initiatives.
  - i. The City Council passed a measure to place a new property-tax on the ballot in April that will expand publicly-funded access to early childhood education.
    1. If the mileage is passed, funds would start being available in January 2023. It could provide 1,000 additional seats in the first year of funding.
    2. The Committee would make recommendations on this funding, with NOLAPS and Agenda for Children as joint program administrators.
  - ii. NOEEN expects to provide suggested revisions to the Steering Committee bylaws in March 2022.
    1. This will include COVID-related updates, such as the inclusion of virtual meetings.
  - iii. NOEEN is now a finalist for the Ready Start Transform grant and should know the final funding determinations in the next couple of weeks.
    1. This grant would allow us NOEEN to update its strategic plan to expand to new operators and students.
  - iv. The results of the Supply Building Grant will hopefully be ready to share in March 2022.
  - v. NOLAPS and Agenda for Children are working on the LDOE's Believe! Grant application together as co-lead agencies.

1. The funding would work to improve access, quality, family support, and more.
  - vi. NOEEN will send out the Parent Engagement Presentation information and take a poll for the Committee to to decide the format of the meeting on this information.
- b. Upcoming News & Next Steps**
- i. The next Steering Committee meeting is March 9, 2022.
- VI. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 12:59 PM.

Action Items

- **Action Item No. 1:** On the motion of Maria Blanco, seconded by Joy Mitchell, the Committee approved the adoption of the Agenda for the January 2022 meeting.
- **Action Item No. 2:** On the motion Kristi Givens, seconded by Rebecca Latham, the Committee approved the minutes from November 2021.
- **Action Item No. 3:** On the motion of Kristi Givens, seconded by Joy Mitchell, the Committee approved the recommendation of Priorities 1, 2, and 3 for the 2022-2023 LA4 CFR. Kate Mehok abstained.
- **Action Item No. 4:** On the motion of Derrick Toups, seconded by Kate Mehok, the Committee approved the recommendation of Priorities 1 and 2 for the 2022-2023 NSECD CFR. Joy Mitchell abstained.