

**RMDC, Inc. Head Start
Policy Council Meeting
February 12, 2009**

The Policy Council and Class Reps met together for dinner and announcements prior to going to their separate meetings. Policy Council members and Class Representatives present were Monica Corrigan, Sara Cook, Sue Prout, Molly Murphy, Andrea Edgar, Paul Smith, Jessica Donnelly, Christina Gwinn, Amy Thiel, Twila Harrington, Sandy Hugus, Crystie Burnette, Mary Dykestra, Roselynn Staley, and Tonia Ford.

Introductions were made. We have two new Class representatives - Mary Dykestra from Head Start 4 and Jessica Donnelly from HS 15. Guests were Janet Coughlin, Patty Dahl and Caitlyn Silbaugh.

Patty began the meeting by talking about the Self-Assessment. Training for Self-Assessment will begin next week. It is a federal mandate for programs to do a yearly self-assessment. Patty went on to say that the federal review will be up and coming and that we will receive a 30 day notice. Both the self-assessment team and the federal review team will be contacting parents to ask questions and seek information about the program. She also said that the federal review team will be here for a full week when they come.

Patty reported that there were two members of Policy Council that did testify for House Bill 369. This is a bill that would provide all Head Start programs in the state with an additional \$300 for each child. Both Andrea Edgar and Magalie Belanger testified. Patty reported that their testimony was wonderful. The stimulus package that Congress is working on includes money for Head Start and also expansion of Early Head Start. RMDC in Helena does not currently have an Early Head Start.

Caitlyn gave a report on RIOT. She has created a "Minute Thermometer." She passed out one for each site to the Class Reps and/or Policy Council person. These thermometers will be filled in according to minutes that are read and returned to Caitlyn. The idea is that the goal will be met by March 5, 2009. The Neighborhood center will have a giant thermometer. She encouraged everyone to read and reiterated how important it is to relate it to our families to read so we can meet our goal. Mountain West Bank will be giving the program \$500.00, if we reach our goal.

The meeting then broke into Policy Council and Class Reps.

Policy Council Members Present: Crystie Burnette, Christina Gwinn, Amy Thiel, Monica Corrigan, Sara Cook, Sandy Hugus, Twila Harrington, and Roselyn Staley. Jessica Donnelly and Sue Prout joined later as a Class Rep for their PC members. It was established that we have a quorum.

Policy Council Members Excused: Autumn Jones and Magalie Belanger

Policy Council Members Unexcused: Kim Michels, Sara Shurtliff, Sara Miller, Tom Dwyer, and Gina Marker

Policy Council Members Available by Phone: Magalie Belanger

Guests: Patty Dahl and Janet Coughlin

Review of Ground Rules: Sara Cook

Agenda Review: Janet would like to bring forth the 2009 Recruitment Plan for discussion. This was not mailed in the packet.

Facilitator: Monica passed this job to Christina Gwinn. **Time Keeper:** Sara Cook. **Scribe:** Andrea Edgar

Approval of January 22, 2009 minutes: A motion was made by Twila to reflect that there was a quorum at the January 22, 2009 Policy Council meeting and that the entire Year 2 Continuation Grant was unanimously approved by the Policy Council at the January 22, 2009 meeting. All approved unanimously of the minutes with the added changes.

Enrollment Criteria Policy and Classroom Placement Policy: Janet Coughlin discussed the proposed changes in the enrollment criteria. To be eligible for enrollment, parents must complete the application packet, including providing verification of income, verification of birth and immunization record.

Changes included: 1) A family must be receiving public assistance (TANF, SSI), be homeless as defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001, or be at or below the Family Income Guidelines. 2) Up to 35% of enrollment may be families whose income falls between 101% to 130% of the poverty guidelines given all other criteria has been exhausted as outlined in "Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007." 3) An addition to number 5 called 5a states: Mid-year vacancies may be filled on an exceptional basis with a child who is three years of age but was younger than three on September 10 of the current school year. A multi-disciplinary team makes these exceptional decisions in accordance with written policies and procedures and taking into account factors such as a) commitment to service child for 2½ years; b) other children on the wait list who may have less points but are older; c) appropriate placement of a child who will probably be the youngest in the classroom; and d) assurance that the curriculum being used is appropriate for a younger child. There was much discussion and clarification around the proposed changes in regards to qualifications for enrollment. Twila caught a spelling error for correction. A motion was made by Sandy to approve the Enrollment Criteria Policy with the proposed changes. All approved unanimously.

Janet then went on to the Classroom Placement Policy. The proposed changes were as follows: 1) Preference for placement at Main Street Head Start was taken out due to the site not being located there any longer. 2) The intake worker will inform the parent that a development screening is required prior to placement. If upon screening, the child shows a potential disability, the selection committee will make placement determination with the parents that best meets the needs of the child. The selection committee will make placement determination with the parents to best meet the child's needs when transferring from one classroom to another. Head Start maintains the right to place of transfer children to a site within their school district in order to ensure the child receives special services. A motion was made by Andrea to approve the proposed changes to the Classroom Placement Policy. All approved unanimously.

Janet then went on to explain the 2009 recruitment plan. The recruitment plan is geared towards the community to get more need appropriate children within our community. There is a point system for acceptance of children into the program and on the waiting list. The closer the child is to the age of 5, the more points they have. The children on the waiting list must re-apply for the program. There was a discussion about whether or not a child already in the program has to re-apply. This is done through the family advocates. There was a month-by-month draft plan that was presented. PC members looked over the plan and there was a discussion about other ideas for recruitment and also that the acronyms on the plan should be defined so that PC could understand them. Janet went through the entire plan and explained the acronyms. The plan is for all of 2009 but focuses on February 2009 to September 2009. A motion was made by Sandy to accept the plan. All approved unanimously.

Janet then presented the Head Start Mission Statement for discussion. She said the Mission Statement had been created a very long time ago. The Head Start Leadership Team evaluated our current Mission Statement (#1 on our draft page) and made a recommendation (#2 on our draft page) for updating it. The Family Advocates went to training and information they learned led them to make a recommendation for updating the Mission Statement (#3 on our draft page). Each statement had a different reading and comprehension level. There was discussion about the mission statement. The PC decided to table the vote for next month, in order for PC to give more thought to the Mission Statement and to be able to present new ideas for the Mission Statements on our draft.

New Hires: Patty presented new hires for PC to vote on. The first new hire is Kay Ingalls as a substitute for Townsend. Kay worked for Head Start a couple of years ago. Her references have been checked, immunizations are up-to-date, and childcare licensing background has been done and is okay. Andrea moved to approve hiring Kay. All approved unanimously.

The second is Courtney Marney. Courtney was brought in as a volunteer last September from the Carroll College work study program and at that time had gone through a reference check, licensing background check, immunization check. It was recently brought to Patty's attention that she is being paid to do childcare for PC meetings. Patty presented Courtney to the executive committee and they approved her. A motion was put before PC to ratify the executive committee's approval. All approved unanimously.

United Way Grant: Patty reported that it is time for Head Start to apply for a grant through the United Way. She would like to write the grant for \$23,605.00 and asked for PC approval to do so. She said it is very unlikely that we would get that much but it is okay to ask. Some of the money is to increase our nutritionist hours to 15 hours a week for Head Start so she can work more with families whose children are under or overweight, \$3,000 would be for the Social/Emotional screening for next year, \$10,000 for one Creative Curriculum content area for each classroom, and \$5,000 for Head Start's music program (this would add to the \$10,000 grant from the Washington Foundation we received for a music program). PC needs to approve the writing of the grant. A motion was made by Andrea to approve the writing of the grant. All approved unanimously.

Staff Appreciation Committee: Sandy reported the committee had decided on a theme for the Staff Appreciation Dinner to be held April 30, 2009. A discussion was held and ideas were given. PC requested a number of staff. Patty informed us that there are between 50 and 70 people. There will be another committee meeting to have details and then they will come back to PC for money.

Treasurer's Report: Andrea presented the treasurer's report. For the month of January, the current total for all accounts is \$25,628.23. The parent fund has \$11,748.86 in it. There is \$2,615.78 committed out of that fund and \$9,133.08 that we can actually spend. For the month of January 2009, there was \$1,159.21 spent from the parent fund, Eggstravaganza and MBI. For the month of January 2009, there was a total of \$1,083.08 deposited. These deposits were made into the Parent Fund, the Hardship Fund, Whitehall's account, and MT School Readiness Grant. The Parent Fund spent \$70.80 to replace candles/reed diffusers that were not received, \$48.83 for fundraiser copies and \$150.00 to Tri-County School Readiness bags reimbursement. The Parent Fund's outstanding commitments are: \$2000 for social/emotional screening, supplies and whatever the program needs, \$385.78 for Good Talking Words books, up to \$150 for P/T conference food, and up to \$80 for the Biggest Loser. The Parent fund CD was \$2,349.60 as of 11/6/08 and was renewed for 7 months at 2.48%.

Crystie opened discussion for a new treasurer. There was a lot of discussion as to who should take the position. The by-laws say that the executive positions should be filled by a current parent first. Andrea agreed to this position on a temporary basis. If Andrea thinks it is getting to be too much, she

will hand over the position to Sandy. Twila made the motion that Andrea take the position of Treasurer. All approved unanimously.

Fundraiser: Amy presented the PC with two decisions made by the executive committee regarding the fall fundraiser. Executive committee held a meeting on February 3, 2009. Attending that meeting were Christina Gwinn, Amy Thiel, Andrea Edgar, and Crystie Burnette. Patty Dahl was a guest. The executive committee needed to vote on two issues.

Issue #1 dealt with a candle order not being filled. A grandparent had placed an order through her grandchild which was never filled, nor could the order be found. PC requested that she produce a copy of a cancelled check to be reimbursed for the product. She did produce the cancelled check as requested. The executive committee all approved writing a refund check of \$56 to this grandparent. Monica made the motion to ratify the executive committee's approval. All approved unanimously. Issue #2 also dealt with a candle order not being filled. A Head Start parent turned in her order and none of it was filled. She said that each of her two Head Start children sold 5 candles each. The executive committee suggested that the parent get a cancelled check from any of the people that placed an order. If she can provide this, the executive committee will offer reimbursement. Twila made a motion to ratify the executive committee's approval. All approved unanimously.

Amy then presented two ideas for the Spring fundraiser. One idea was a pizza card from one of two pizza businesses in town. The second was a cookie bake fundraiser. Patty said that the cookie fundraiser does not fall within the guidelines for nutrition. Discussion was made about how the pizza fundraiser would work. More discussion was tabled for the March meeting.

Amy reported on the spending of the fundraiser money. Lynn Guay was contacted about what the PC could donate to Creative Curriculum. Patty asked if PC has thought about donating to the Foster Grandparent program. Twila asked for a list of what this money has been spent on in the past. That list will be passed out next month.

Director's Report: Patty reported on the attendance of the entire Head Start. Average attendance was at 87% and only three classes had 85% or less average daily attendance. For the month of January 2009, there were 2,062 breakfasts, 3,200 lunches, and 1,490 snacks served to the children and these meals are partially reimbursed. For the month of January 2009, there were 439 breakfasts, 652 lunches, and 229 snacks served to the program adults; these are not reimbursed. For the month of January, there was \$116.95 spent on the Head Start credit card for maintenance and meal supplies for Whitehall. Patty then passed out copies of the Continuation Grant that we approved at our last meeting. She also discussed the economic stimulus package and that there is money in it for Early Head Start. There is the possibility RMDC would apply for an Early Head Start program being implemented in the Helena area. The program is not currently looking at that in the Helena area. There was also information from the feds about the conversion of enrollment slots from Head Start children to Early Head start children. She then handed out information on the Federal Review Questions for PC out of the Program Design and Management section. She encouraged each PC member to read over these questions. This gives PC members a guidance for the questions that may be asked by the Federal Review team. The second sheet is the procedure that PC and the Board approved many years ago to provide parents with reimbursement. Discussion was had about the Federal Review team attending a PC meeting. It was suggested that the PC hold their regularly scheduled meeting in March and then if we receive notification of when the FRT is here, the meeting will be rescheduled. Patty then handed out copies of the budget. Total expenditures for the month of January were \$176,509.98. Some of our January expenditures have not been paid yet. It is still projected that the over-spending will be around \$40,000.00. Patty expressed that it is very important to contact our representatives and educate them about Head Start.

Patty asked for any PC members to serve on the Leadership Team as Sara Shurtliff has not been attending. She said it is very valuable to have a parent on the Leadership Team and there has been one every since the team was developed. This team meets every Wednesday morning from 9 to noon. Please contact Patty if you are interested. Suggestion was made that a letter be sent to Sara Shurtliff concerning her absence.

Meeting Evaluation: Pluses: Baby, excellent discussions, good food, class reps filling in for PC members, quorum, and chocolate. **Wishes:** People to show up, more people follow through with their commitment to PC, a more vocal time keeper

Next Meeting: March 12, 2009 at 5:15, meeting will start at 5:45 p.m. Dinner will be provided. Facilitator will be Twila, Time Keeper will be Monica, Scribe will be Sandy.

Crystie Burnette, Chairperson

Amy Thiel, Secretary