

**RMDC, Inc. Head Start  
Policy Council Meeting  
January 14, 2010**

The Policy Council and Class Reps met together for dinner and announcements prior to going to their separate meetings. Policy Council and Class Representatives present were: Amber Smith, Molly Burgess, Steven & Jessica Hull, Sue Prout, Lexi Dobbs, Mickie Siminon, Candace Gilfeather, Stephanie Brown, April Dirkson, Sara Craven, Jen Burckhard, Brandy Dullum, Andrea Edgar, Camille Murphy, Roselyn Staley, Hailey Sanders, Connie Robinson, and Mary Dykstra.

**Program Updates:** Andrea announced that PC will table the Treasurer's Report until next meeting because Paul is unable to attend due to a family emergency. Patty announced that Classroom Reps don't need to attend the next meeting because we will be going over the Continuation Grant, but they are welcome to. Let Patty, Laura or Kim know if you are interested in being on the Self-Assessment or Staff Appreciation Committees. They are short term committees and are a lot of fun. Kim announced RIOT kickoff is January 28<sup>th</sup>. Dads are going to be cooking; there will be two guest speakers from the National Head Start Family Literacy Office. Our goal is to read 35,000 minutes, if reached we get \$500.00 from Mountain West Bank. The \$500.00 goes to buy RIF books that are passed out in all the classrooms throughout the year. Laura announced that the next School to Home Project has a parent project included. She would like our feedback on it. Patty asked that we remind parents at the next Classroom Meeting that Parent /Teacher Conferences are coming up in February. If you haven't got your child's medical or dental checkups done and you need financial help contact Wanda, the Health Coordinator, or your Family Advocate. Head Start will be closed next Monday for Martin Luther King Day.

The Policy Council members and Classroom Reps then split into their separate meetings at 6:00 p.m.

**Policy Council Members Present:** Amber Smith, Molly Burgess, Mickie Simonson, Candace Gilfeather, April Dirkson, Sara Craven, Jen Burckhard, Andrea Edgar, Hailey Sanders, Connie Robinson, and Mary Dykstra.

**Policy Council Members Excused:** Paul Smith, Matt Kuntz, and Dr. Kevin Rencher.

**Policy Council Members Unexcused:** Amanda Castona and Sandy Hugus.

**Guests:** Patty Dahl, Lynn Guay, Janet Coughlin and Lisa Williams-Mathews

**Review of Ground Rules:** Sara Craven. **Facilitator:** Andrea Edgar. **Time Keeper:** Candace Gilfeather. **Scribe:** April Dirkson.

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm. and our guests were introduced. Amber took roll call and it was established that we have a quorum.

**Agenda Review:** Andrea asked if there were any changes to the agenda, there were none except tabling the Treasurer's Report.

**Approval of December 10th, 2009 Minutes:** Molly asked for an approval of the December minutes. Amber said Candace's name was misspelled. There was a motion by Hailey to approve the minutes with the changes. It was seconded by Jen. The motion was unanimously approved.

Patty introduced our guests, and explained that they are here to talk about the grant goals and objectives from their committee. She first explained to the PC that the grant goals and objectives come from the three advisory teams – Program Design and Management, Early Childhood, and Family and Community Partnerships which are groups made up of PC, Board, staff, and community members. Advisory Teams are one way to promote shared decision making. She then introduced Andrea as being on the Program Design and Management Team, Amber Smith on Family and Community Partners, and Molly Murphy on Early Childhood and asked them to offer any information they had on their team's goals and objectives. Patty also told how the grant goals are designed by information gathered from a comprehensive community assessment which is done every three years. Next summer will be time to do the next comprehensive community assessment.

**Early Childhood Development & Health Services Grant Goals and Objectives:** Lynn is the chair on this committee, she explained to us their goals and the progress they have made. Goal 1: Provide more comprehensive mental health services for Head Start children. AWARE was chosen to be the provider for mental health services. There are about 42 children receiving support services through AWARE. Last year our mental health professional Angelo Spado was only part time, now he is full time. In addition to that we also have another part time therapist who helped with screenings. The EC Advisory Team feels the goal has been completed. Goal 2: In conjunction with Family and Community Partnerships, provide more comprehensive mental health services for Head Start families. If mental health concerns are identified in a Head Start family that does not directly involve the Head Start child, family advocates as well as teachers can help facilitate referrals. The team feels this goal has been completed. Goal 3: Practice full implantation of Creative Curriculum in all of our classrooms. In November 2008 a five year plan for Creative Curriculum was developed. Last year toys, games, sand, water, and art were updated. This year they are updating discovery, library, and music. Every classroom has all of the equipment and staff has skills. Goal 4: Increase Nutrition Coordinators time at Head Start. Lin Pasch, our Nutritionist's, hours were increased from 10 to 20 hours per week due to AARA COLA monies that will be available through June 30, 2010. Goal 5: Explore additional support for Head Start children with special needs in the outlying Head Start sites. This goal has not been met due to funding. Other information that came from discussing this goal was that the program will try to work in a more collaborative fashion with Townsend and its Special Needs program. They currently serve children in our building in the afternoon and Head Start children can attend if they are on an IEP. Goal 6: Develop a five year strategic plan that includes a capital improvement plan outlining continuous classroom improvements. This was a new goal last year. They are planning to develop a plan that allows the program to update and replace equipment in the areas of health, special services, nutrition, and classrooms as needed. Jen made a motion to approve the Early Childhood Development and Health Services three year goals. Sara seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. Lynn asked the Policy Council to provide \$150 out of the Parent Fund for meals for staff working Parent/Teacher Conferences. Molly motioned to approve \$150 for meals for staff at Parent/Teacher Conferences. Amber seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Program Design & Management Grant Goals and Objectives:** Patty went over Program Design and Management's three year goals. Goal 1: Bring Head Start services to un-served communities in our service area. They have applied for expansion grant in Boulder, but did not get it. They will continue to apply for services there. They are no longer focusing on Lincoln because there isn't that many low income families living there anymore. This is an on-going goal. Goal 2: Secure a permanent Head Start classroom site on the Rossiter Elementary School campus in the north Helena Valley. They, along with other community partners, want to build a community center that has two Head Start classrooms as well as services provided for adult education, health dept, school district, etc. There is \$50,000 set aside from the Pennies for Progress Campaign and they hope to develop business plan soon. This goal will be on-going and probably carried out into next years goals. Goal 3: Bring Early Head Start to Helena and East Helena. Early Head Start is for children 0-3 years and pregnant mothers.

The Agency (RMDC) has tried for many years and did so again last summer but have been unsuccessful in getting an Early Head Start grant. This goal will also carry over. Goal 4: Reduce tobacco use in Head Start families and staff. They provide education and classes to Head Start families and staff. The efforts of this committee have caused the Agency to change its policies and procedures about smoking. This goal has been completed. Goal 5: Reduce obesity in Head Start children and families and Head Start staff; Lin Pasch is the head of the committee. They are in the process of developing a comprehensive plan to deal with obesity in our program; this plan should be ready to implement fall of 2010. Patty said that parents have been contacted to be on this committee and at least one parent has committed so far. Goal 6: Increase salaries of all Head Start staff by \$2.00 an hour over the next three years. Patty explained the progress that has been made on this goal but it is unlikely they will complete this goal by next year due to lack of funding and the poor economy. Goal 7: Bring Head Start program components to a level that supports full and consistent implementation of Creative Curriculum. They are in the third year of their five year plan. They continue to work on supplying the classrooms with material and training staff by applying for grants and being supported by Friends of Head Start and the Head Start parent fundraising. April made a motion to approve the Program Design and Management grant goals, and objectives. Connie seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Family and Community Partnerships Grant, Goals, and Objectives:** Janet explained the FCP's goals and objectives. Goal 1: Increase knowledge and awareness regarding abuse issues. They have worked hard on educating and aiding people to quit tobacco. Their efforts have helped in developing the RMDC tobacco free campus policy. Goal 2: Support families who have an incarcerated parent. Head Start family services developed a partnership with the Helena jail so that a Head Start child can visit a parent in jail. Goal 3: Increase awareness of the importance of the presence of a positive, stable male role model in a child's life. They have seen more attendance with dads in the program activities. They are sending RIOT invites specifically to dads/dad types. Connie motioned to approve the Family and Community Partnership grant goals, and objectives. Motion seconded by Hailey. The motion was unanimously approved.

**2010-11 Training Plan Goals and Objectives:** Lisa Williams-Mathews talked to us about the 2010 Training Plan goals and objectives. Sandy Hugus is the PC rep on the Staff Development Committee which developed the Training Plan. Lisa explained the format of the plan which shows rationale, approach, target audience, timetable, budget, contact person, and measurement. Goal 1: Parents will be provided education regarding Head Start and their role as their child's first and primary educator. Their objectives are to provide all Head Start families with a review of the program information prior to child's first day, facilitate long term change in family practices around learning and literacy, provide development to Policy Council, Parent Committee Chairs and Grantee Board of Directors, and provide parents of Head Start with opportunities to attend CPR and First Aid which Lisa reminded us came from our group. She also said that the program will get an additional \$782 in training money and that is enough to cover the parent's CPR/First Aid. Goal 2: Staff will be appropriately credentialed, meet program standards and licensure requirements, and have opportunities for improving personal health. Their objectives are to bring classroom staff into alignment with appropriate education credentials, provide annual staff development in required areas, keep transportation staff with transportation standards, provide and maintain CPR and First Aid certification for staff, provide environmental supports promoting healthy lifestyle choices, provide staff with development in "I am Moving, I am Learning". Goal 3: Development will be provided to staff based on identified areas of program focus which include healthy life styles, mental health, and family literacy. Their objectives are to enhance staff's performance and increase knowledge of family literacy and healthy lifestyles, to enhance staff's performance in individualizing services for families with non traditional arrangements, and provide staff with development related to working with children with disabilities and mental health needs. Goal 4: Staff will show improved ability to partner with, support and engage parents in their role as

their child's first and primary educator. Their objectives are to increase staff understanding of challenges families face related to abuse, to increase their ability to use active listening skills, and to increase staff awareness of their values and style of working. Goal 5: Staff ability to utilize early childhood best practices will increase in the areas of social/emotional development, literacy and pre-academic skills, identifying special needs of children, improving classroom practices, and engaging parents. Their objectives are to improve staff ability to teach literacy and pre-academic skills, increase staff knowledge of classroom strategies included in Creative Curriculum, increase staff ability to implement all interest and content areas of Creative Curriculum, and to increase classroom staff ability to promote social/emotional development of children. Hailey motioned to approve the 2010-11 Training Plan grant goals, objectives, and budget. Jen seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

**2008-09 Self Assessment & Action Plan Final Report:** The Program Design and Management Team has been monitoring the 2008-09 Self-Assessment. The team concluded that 2008-09 Self-Assessment Action Plans have been successfully completed. Last years Self-Assessment is closed.

**Announcements:** We are going to be interviewing for program floater next week, Jen and Andrea (or Amber) are going to help with the interviews. We discussed Tour of Lights and whether to have it on a Thursday or Friday. Patty said that the last two years it has been on Friday and the attendance has really gone down. PC felt the event should go back to a Thursday evening. Patty said there will be discussion about revising the Tour of Lights because the area where we go to look at all the lights is not decorated like it used to be. Some of us may be called upon to help brainstorm.

**Brief Interview for Second Head Start Representative to sit on RMDC Board:** Sara Craven is currently on Policy Council and has a child in Head Start. She thinks she can make the meetings if they get out in time for her to get home to meet her son's bus. She will also have to bring her infant baby with her if that is possible.

Tammi Hamper is currently at Carroll College studying to be a RN and a diabetic educator. She is raising four kids, but feels she can be available for meetings. She feels having kids and obligations will not hamper her attendance. She wants to be involved in her children's education and has no problems speaking up. She has never served on a board before and is not familiar with the RMDC board.

**Meeting Evaluation: Pluses:** chocolate, quorum, good information from speakers, good flow, group starting to come together.

**Wishes:** more members in attendance.

**Next Meeting: January 21, 2010** at 5:15pm, meeting will start at 5:45 pm. Dinner will be pot luck.

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**Andrea Edgar, Chairperson**

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**Molly Burgess, Secretary**