

New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) Steering Committee
8300 Earhart Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70118
Meeting Minutes for June 3rd, 2020

Committee Members in Attendance: Keith Liederman, Kristi Givens, Joy Mitchell, Thomas Lambert, Kate Mehok, Jen Roberts, Maria Blanco, Emily Wolff, Carole Elliot, Thelma French, Joyce Ridgeway

Committee Members Absent: Rhonda Taylor

Community Members in Attendance: Aimee Grainer, Kenneth Francis, Anna Williamson, Teresa Falgoust, Jillian Delos Reyes, Lindsay Weixler, Melanie Richardson

I. CALL TO ORDER

- a. At 11:35 am Jen Roberts called the meeting to order.

II. READY START NETWORK UPDATE

- a. Aimee Grainer and Teresa Falgoust provided an overview of the Strong Start Grant Planning and Proposals.

i. State of the Sector

1. 46% of licensed non-Head Start centers were open as of June 1.
2. 23 centers reopening June, bringing total to 64% of pre-COVID-19.
3. Many centers struggling with reduced revenue and increased cost.
4. Committee discussed financial and other supports centers have received during the pandemic, and needs/priorities for reopening.

ii. Strong Start 2020 Overview

1. Strong Start 2020 is LDOE's campaign including priorities and guidelines for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Campaign includes a community plan that addresses sector-wide needs and incorporates network feedback, plus community grants designed to provide direct and indirect support.

iii. Network Needs Assessment

1. "Core Provider Concerns" includes: increased cost; reduced revenues; inability to acquire PPE; limited ability to incentivize staff to return; and fear of illness among staff and children.

iv. Community Grant Proposals

1. NOEEN is introducing easy-to-access, low barrier sub-grants to put the most money possible directly into the hands of providers.
2. Community grants must identify Top 3 Community Needs:
 - a. Workforce supports and incentives: bonuses, hazard pay, increased benefits, etc.
 - b. Family Supports and Incentives: local scholarships, tuition assistance, creating seats, marketing/recruitment.
 - c. General Administrative Support: costs that have become prohibitive, such as facility, essential supplies, etc.
3. NOEEN is requesting the maximum \$400,000 award for phase 1; has proposed to build an emergency reserve with any remaining funds.

b. Other Discussion

- i. Kristi Givens shared information about testing employees before they come in for training for reopening.
- ii. Emily Wolff shared information about an opportunity to distribute 25,000 smart thermometers, 9,000 of which would go to Early Childhood Centers.
- iii. Masks are available for centers from LDOE but there are not currently enough to cover long-term or if a center includes masks for children over 2 years old.

c. Upcoming News & Next Steps

- i. Jen Roberts provided an update on Agenda for Children’s recommendation to serve as New Orleans Public Schools’ lead agency.
- ii. Aimee Grainer provided an update about the City Seats program.
- iii. Thomas Lambert provided a brief overview on early childhood enrollment and an update on when results should be released.

III. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 1:10pm.

Action Items

- **Action Item No. 1:** On the motion of Kate Mehok, seconded by Maria Blanco, the Committee approved the minutes from May 13th.
- **Action Item No. 2:** On the motion Maria Blanco, seconded by Kate Mehok, the Committee approved the adoption of the agenda for June 3rd Meeting.