
New Orleans Early Education Network (NOEEN) Steering Committee Meeting

Agenda for Children
8300 Earhart Blvd. Ste. 201
New Orleans, LA 70118
September 26, 2017
11:30 am

Committee Members in Attendance: Dr. Anthony Recasner, Joyce Ridgeway, Maria Blanco, Mary Garton, Carole Elliot, and Kate Mehok

Committee Members in Absence: Dr. Keith Liederman, Thelma French, and Kunjan Narechania

At 11:47 am, the meeting was called to order by Dr. Recasner.

I. **NOEEN Strategic Plan Update**

- a. **Hiring of NOEEN Executive Director:** The NOEEN Founding Board, whose members are Dr. Recasner, Sonjia Joseph, Pamela Steeg, and Patrick Dobard, interviewed four potential Executive Director candidates. Three out of four of these interviews were in person, and one interview was over the phone. After the interviews took place, the NOEEN Founding Board narrowed it down to two candidates. The two candidates met with Kathy Namba, Teresa Falgoust, and Kristen Craig to learn more about the Network. Shortly after this meeting, one of the two candidates took a job elsewhere. The hiring committee preferred not to present the Steering Committee with only one candidate, so the search will be re-opened, with a new focus on recruiting candidates from other states. While the initial search process focused primarily on candidates with local experience, it did not generate a very large pool of candidates.
- b. **Reopening the Executive Director Search:** The NOEEN Founding Board voted to hire a consultant, Pam Stevens, to conduct the next phase of the search.
- c. **Resigning Steering Committee Members:** Dr. Recasner and Sonjia Joseph have resigned from the Steering Committee so they can serve on the NOEEN Founding Board. This is Dr. Recasner's last meeting as the chair of the NOEEN Steering Committee. Dr. Liederman will serve as the new chair of the Steering Committee.
- d. **Newly Appointed Steering Committee Members:** Joy Mitchell, representing Children's Palace Learning Academy, and Rhonda Taylor, representing Catholic Charities, have agreed to serve as NOEEN Steering Committee members.
- e. **Clarifying Questions and Comments from Steering Committee Members:**
 - i. **How are we ensuring that the remaining Executive Director candidate will stay on through the reopened search and hiring process?** Pam Stevens will encourage her to stay on throughout the process.

II. **Coordinated Enrollment Update**

- a. **Seat Availability:** As of September 25th, there are 190 early childhood seats available in

Orleans Parish, of which 164 of them are preschool seats for four year olds.

- b. Proposed Policy Changes:** During EnrollNOLA’s policy review sessions, participants proposed moving the August 1st waitlist policy date and Early Childhood Transfer Process start date to the first Thursday after Labor Day. Meeting participants also recommended that EnrollNOLA develop an intra-agency transfer process for Head Start grantees. Please note that transfers between Early Head Start and Head Start would not happen, as they are considered different programs. Also for the transfer to occur, grantee staff would have to revise the verification to boost the child’s EPC score to put them at the top of the waitlist.

i. Reasoning for Moving August 1st Waitlist Policy Date:

- When students are removed from waitlists on August 1st, parents have a disincentive to choose their second or third choice program.
- Some early childhood programs have not started by August 1st and parents are still actively checking their children’s waitlists in hopes of receiving an offer.
- In the 2017 school year, many families reported that they were not aware of the waitlist policy, and would not have accepted their main round choice if they had been aware.

ii. Reasoning for Allowing Intra-Agency Transfers for Head Start

- There are several instances in which a child may need to transfer from one Head Start site to another, including:
 - a. Hardships:** Transportation crises, custody battle, and homelessness can all make it difficult or impossible for a child to continue to attend the program to which they are assigned.
 - b. Family unification:** Many families prefer to have siblings at the same location, so if a seat opens up at a sibling’s Head Start, families should have the option of easily transferring the their child to that seat.
 - c. Policies regarding the children of Head Start staff:** Some grantees give priority to children of staff at a center, while others require that children related to staff are transferred to another center.

- c. Coordinated Self-Assessment:** Every year LDE asks Lead Agencies to complete a coordinated enrollment self-assessment survey which rates the level of coordination among early childhood providers. Agenda for Children surveyed attendants at the NOEEN provider meetings on August 18th and the Preschool Expansion Grant meeting the following week. Representatives from each funding source (LA4, NSECD, PEG, Head Start, and Early Learning Centers) were included in the response to the surveys. Key findings included:

- i.** Participants agreed that coordinated enrollment in Orleans parish informs families about available early childhood programs, eligibility criteria, and

waitlists.

- ii. Participants agreed that families were matched to programs based on their preferences.

d. Clarifying Questions and Comments from Steering Committee Members

- i. **Can you transfer children between Head Start grantees, or only transfer them within the grantees programs?** Children can only be transferred within the Head Start or Early Head Start grantee's programs.

III. Citywide Needs Update

- a. **Background:** At the November Steering Committee meeting, the committee will be asked to approve the Coordinated Funding Request recommendations, which will be sent to the LDE on December 1st. Because this is our second year of early childhood seats being included in coordinated enrollment, there is now even more data about parent demand that can help inform our early childhood seat requests.
- b. **Data from EnrollNOLA:** 96% of all early childhood seats will be filled as of October 1st. 94% of Pre-K 4 seats filled, and 168 seats are currently available. While the actual number of seats for four year-olds decreased between the 2016 and 2017 school years, the percentage of PK4 seats that are filled remained the same.
- c. **Clarifying Questions and Comments from the Steering Committee Members**
 - i. **How many "extra" seats (meaning seats that are not likely to be filled by October 1) should the network request?** In the K-12 school world, the general guideline is to have 3% to 6% more seats than will actually be needed in order to allow for movement between programs and accommodate new students who may move into the city mid-year.
 - ii. **Have we seen an influx of students from Texas due to the Hurricane?** Yes, there have been families coming to the Family Resource Centers looking for placement. We do not have an exact number yet because families are still coming into the city.

IV. 2017-18 Coordinated Observation Protocol

- a. **Update:** LDE has changed the CLASS observer protocol in efforts to improve the reliability and accuracy of local CLASS observations. The changes include:
 - i. **NOEEN must follow Picard (3rd party) protocol.** This means observers will not observe during "enrichment" classes or cafeteria-based meals. This will primarily affect preschool classrooms, because most toddler classrooms schedules do not include enrichment classes taught by someone other than their primary teacher, and meals are normally served in the toddler classroom.
 - ii. **The lead teacher must be present.** Previously, networks could conduct an observation if the lead teacher was absent, but the assistant teacher was present.
 - iii. **Programs will inform the Lead Agency of the start time of the "Instructional Day" and observation times will be adjusted accordingly.**
 - iv. **50 % of children enrolled must be present for an observation to take place**

- v. **Observers will ask for the daily schedule at the beginning of the observation**
- vi. **Networks can opt for “just in time” scheduling.** This would allow Lead Agency observations to be timed close to Picard observations.

Action Items

- **Action Item No. 1:** Action Item No. 1: On the motion of Kate Mehok and seconded by Maria Blanco, the Committee adopted the Agenda.
- **Action Item No. 2:** On the motion of Mary Garton and seconded by Kate Mehok, the Committee adopted the minutes from the June 13, 2017 Steering Committee Meeting.
- **Action Item No. 3:** On the motion of Kate Mehok and seconded by Maria Blanco, the Committee approved Dr. Keith Liederman as the NOEEN Steering Committee Chair.
- **Action Item No. 4:** On the motion of Mary Garton and seconded by Kate Mehok, the Committee approved the appointment of Joy Mitchell and Rhonda Taylor as new Steering Committee members.
- **Action Item No. 5:** On the motion of Kate Mehok and seconded by Maria Blanco, the Committee approved the Coordinated Funding Request Process and Timeline.

The Steering Committee meeting adjourned at 1:34 pm.