

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY EDUCATION

**NORTH CAROLINA CHILD CARE COMMISSION
2013-14 FOURTH QUARTER MEETING MINUTES**

May 12, 2014
5605 Six Forks Road, Cardinal Room
Raleigh, NC

Commission Members Present

Elliott Blades	Kay Lowrance
Jonathan Brownlee, Sr., MD	Rev. Charles F. McDowell, III
Sue Creech	Laurie Morin
Kevin Campbell	Janice Price
Zac Everhart	Linda Vandevender
Blake Fricks	Elizabeth Gilleland
Melanie Gayle	William Walton, III
Robin Kegerise	Glenda Weinert

Commission Members with an Excused Absence

April Duvall

Division of Child Development & Early Education Staff Present

Robert Kindsvatter, Director	Alexi Gruber, Attorney General
Tammy Barnes, Regulatory Services Section Chief	Jennifer Johnson, Education & Quality
Melissa Stevenson, Regulatory Compliance	Lorie Pugh, Regulatory Services
Sarah Buckner, Education & Quality	Lisa Lyons, Licensing Compliance
Dedra Alston, Administration/Policy	Cindy Wheeler, Early Education
Laura Hewitt, Regulatory Services	Heather Laffler, Administration/Policy

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Glenda Weinert called the meeting to order and reviewed housekeeping items, including future meeting locations. The August 11 meeting of the Child Care Commission will be held at the Division of Public Health, Six Forks Road, as will a specially scheduled October 13 meeting. The November 17 meeting will be held downtown at the Archives and History/State Library Building Auditorium, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, NC.

Chairperson Weinert welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda. She noted that Commission members had expressed no stated conflicts of interest for today's meeting and agenda. Dedra Alston swore new member Ms. Blake Fricks in to membership of the Commission and called the roll. An introduction of Commission members took place. Chairperson Weinert shared the NC State Board of Ethics statement for Ms. Fricks, including that no conflicts of interests were found.

Audience members were reminded of the Public Comment period beginning at 1 pm and asked not to interject comments except during that time.

Approval of February Commission Meeting Minutes –

Comments were noted regarding changes requested in the February Commission meeting minutes. Specifically it was asked that the minutes be changed to reflect that NC Rep. Justin Burr did not actually attend/participate in the meeting, but that comments he made in a separate meeting were reported by William Walton and Kevin Campbell.

Commission Action: Ms. Sue Creech moved that the Commission delay approving the minutes of the February 24, 2014 meeting until the next Commission meeting to allow staff to edit the current edition and unnecessary verbiage. This motion was seconded by Ms. Laurie Morin and the motion carried unanimously.

Division of Child Development and Early Education Report – Rob Kindsvatter, Division Director

Mr. Rob Kindsvatter, Division Director, introduced himself to the Commission and welcomed the new member. He then provided an overview of information regarding activities of the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE).

Mr. Kindsvatter provided information regarding:

- NC Pre-K Update
- Subsidized Child Care
- Regulatory Update
- SEEK Update
- Legislative Session

Pre-K Update:

Prior to expansion, DCDEE allocated \$122.4 M to contractors to serve 24,436 children. Once the budget passed, the Division surveyed Pre-K contractors to assess their capacity to serve additional children with the \$12.4 M in expansion funds that were provided. Contractors requested about \$37 M in the survey, so they received a prorated share of the \$12.4 M available. In this way, an additional 2,181 children will be served for a total of 26,617. SFY 14-15 NC Pre-K allocations have now been sent to contractors, based on their allocations this year (including expansion funds). We know that contractors are already planning for next year's program. The technical corrections bill to the budget bill (HB 112) allowed DCDEE to exempt public school sites participating in the NC Pre-K program from licensure requirements this year. However, all public school sites will be required to be licensed by 7/1/2014 if they wish to participate in NC Pre-K.

DCDEE is continuing to implement a classroom payment pilot study for the NC Pre-K program. This pilot includes 7 NC Pre-K contractors comparing cost for providing payment for services on a classroom basis rather than a per child/attendance basis. A preliminary report on this pilot has been submitted to the General Assembly and an additional required report will be submitted upon collection of further data.

2012 and 2013 Legislation also required DCDEE to establish a standardized decision-making process for awarding slots and student selection - S.L. 2013-360 Section 12B1(d) to NC Pre-K sites. Heretofore there has been no standardized process for awarding slots to providers for Pre-K services at the local level. This legislation charged the Division with putting into place a NC Pre-K Advisory Committee Governance Work Group, which was formed to assist in the creation of a standardized Site Application process for providers to apply to host NC Pre-K classrooms. A pilot of this process is currently being implemented for 2012-13 and will be a statewide requirement for 2014-15. The requirement to utilize the standard process will apply to all new and existing sites that seek to host NC Pre-K classrooms.

Subsidized Child Care:

DCDEE has continued the transition of limiting subsidy payment to higher quality programs (3-5 star facilities). As of December 2013 there was a total of 122 one & two star centers and 697 one & two star homes for a total of 819 one & two star facilities. The Division is working with 32 facilities (of the 819) on a transition plan to obtain a 3 to 5 star license. DCDEE will be looking at other policies for the upcoming short legislative session that will support increased access to quality care. DCDEE anticipates that federal child care funds will increase, which will support these efforts. Mr. Kindsvatter shared several slides with data indicating that enrollment in 4-5 Star facilities is continuing to increase for both children receiving child care subsidy services and children in licensed care overall.

SEEK:

DCDEE is conducting a pilot evaluation in Harnett, Alamance, Alexander, and Johnston counties to learn what is needed to move forward with implementing payment through swiping data statewide. DCDEE's ultimate goal is for providers and counties to enter payment records into the Subsidized Child Care Reimbursement System (SCCRS) utilizing the swipe card data returned from Xerox to the SCCRS.

The following issues have been identified as primary causes of differences between SCCRS and swipe data:

- Parents do not have cards or are not swiping
- Cards have been issued incorrectly
- Delays in receiving or reprogramming POS machines
- Data transmission errors between SCCRS and SEEK
- One Case issues (Guilford and Alamance)

Division staff are tracking these issues and working toward resolution with SCCRS and Xerox. Parents and providers in pilot counties received a letter regarding the importance of swiping and how to obtain technical assistance. A training PowerPoint was created for parents and placed on the Division's website. DCDEE also provided a quick reference card in English and Spanish for the providers to print out and place in proximity of the POS machine to help parents with swiping.

DCDEE staff is completing another comparison of the swipe data to the paper attendance forms submitted by the providers for the April service month to determine if the letter and materials provided have increased the consistency of swiping. DCDEE is involved in weekly coordination meetings with NC FAST to clarify requirements. The most recent information suggests that NC FAST will incorporate child care in late 2015.

Legislative Preview:

- Governor McCrory's budget had not been released. However, a press conference was held last week (Wed 5/7) where it was announced that the Governor's budget proposal would include \$3.6 M for NC Pre-K. Details of this proposal are not currently available.
- The General Assembly convenes for the "short session" to make adjustments to the state's biennial budget this week. The legislature responds to the Governor's budget and a House and Senate budget will be proposed before a final budget for SFY 14-15 is passed.

During the week of April 7-11, DHHS officials visited with programs and schools across the state to read to an NC Pre-K class. Approximately 600 NC Pre-K children, attending 32 programs received a visit from one of 28 readers participating in this week long observance of young children.

The Week of the Young Child™, established in 1971, is an annual celebration designated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest early childhood education

association. The purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

This weeklong celebration recognizes that the early childhood years provide the foundation for children's success in school and throughout life. The Week of the Young Child™ is a time to discuss how the DHHS Division of Child Development and Early Education, our state and local partners and local communities ensure that the needs of all young children and their families are addressed.

A few highlights from the follow-up survey we conducted following the reading activity:

One director described the experience as "delightful, engaging, and powerful." Another responded that "This was an effective community outreach, a celebration of young children, and an engagement in literacy!"

Typical responses from readers included "It was a wonderful experience. The children and staff were receptive to me and seem to truly appreciate my efforts. The children were attentive and involved in the dialogue between us" and "WONDERFUL! The children were very well behaved and engaged."

Most respondents to both surveys described this observance as an excellent experience and are eager to participate in any future events.

There were no questions regarding Mr. Kindsvatter's presentation.

Criminal History Record Check Process – Alexi Gruber

Alexi Gruber presented information to the Commission about the process of pre-certification of child care staff regarding criminal records. All employees in a child care facility are required to have a Criminal Record Check (CRC) reviewed and approved by the Division prior to employment.

The CRC process begins with applicants submitting finger prints and completing the required submission payment online. DCDEE has no control over delays for: mailing, hard copy fingerprints which may be rejected as unusable by the SBI (some counties are capable of submitting electronic Live Scan finger prints), credit card payments being rejected, and inaccurate/incomplete bubble sheets. All bubble sheet information must be filled out correctly and completely. If this is not the case the applicant must be contacted by phone, and potentially may have to resubmit the bubble sheet portion of their application.

Once complete information has been received by DCDEE, information is crosschecked against the confidential statewide Responsible Individuals List (RIL). If an applicant is found on the RIL then they will be disqualified. Applicants are also checked against the sex offender registry and disqualified if they are included on this list. Applicant information for those who have passed this far is sent to the SBI for review process which takes 2 to 3 days to complete.

DCDEE staff has the capacity to process approximately 125 applications per day. For those applicants without any "hits" on the RIL, Sex Offender Registry, or criminal history, the Division mails qualification. For applicants where there is a criminal history of concern, their application and any supporting evidence they have provided (upon receipt of request from DCDEE) is presented to an internal review panel made up of staff from different sections of DCDEE. This review committee meets once a week.

Providers are reminded that current employees can submit CRC 3-year re-checks as early as 6 months before expiration.

Regulatory Reform Report – Alexi Gruber and Dedra Alston

In April a list of all child care related rules was sent to each member of the Commission. In review of Chapter 9 all rules have been listed noting rule section, rule citation, rule name, agency action on the rule, agency determination, implements or conforms to federal regulation, federal regulation citation, public comment received, and agency determination following public comment. As noted, there are some rules that have been deemed 'unnecessary'. The requirement from here for the Commission is to approve the category for each rule.

The Commission decided to study the categories in greater detail and come back in August prepared to approve the categories for publication.

The Commission took a break for lunch at 11:30 p.m.

Public Comment Period:

- Tori Scuderi – Primrose School – West Cary; shared some thoughts regarding how the curriculum subcommittee would be formed and would operate.
- Anna Carter, President, Child Care Services Association; shared how CCSA provides supports to child care programs at the local level (training, technical assistance) and state level (T.E.A.C.H., WAGE\$, Infant/Toddler specialists, research). Ms. Carter mentioned a new federal grant opportunity for child care/Early Head Start collaboration in infant/toddler care.
- Linda Piper, Executive Director, NC Licensed Child Care Association; spoke about parents' concerns about stigma of using SEEK cards; issues regarding pre-service criminal records check process; pending environment rating scale revision; and mentioned an upcoming October Association meeting.
- Kateri Carver-Akers, Executive Director, Montessori Association of NC; noted there are 193 Montessori schools in NC; collaboration between MANC and DHHS regarding how the QRIS works in Montessori settings; met with DCDEE regarding the Montessori teacher credential; planning to present a rule change about an equivalency to the credential.
- Dr. Jonathon Kotch commented on the Commission's Regulatory Review tasks; stated that health and safety regulations have made a difference in reducing medically attended injuries in child care; recommended the Commission consider joining other states in requiring child care facilities to have a regular on-going relationship to a health care professional, such as child care health consultants.
- Mary Bozeman, Alamance County, spoke on behalf of child care providers in Alamance County about several issues with the SEEK card swipe process and how the SEEK machines use up energy and paper. Spoke about the different early childhood programs and how it was important to prepare children for kindergarten. Concerned about pre-service criminal background check requirement, and how the emergency preparedness plan would be implemented.

There was a brief discussion among the Commission members about the impact of requiring increased education for infant/toddler teachers, followed by a brief discussion about what a mobile use app (application) for SEEK might look, like rather than using swipe cards.

Public Hearing:

A Public Hearing was held on the Emergency Preparedness and Response Rule text published April 1 in the NC Register. Chairperson Weinert summarized the proposed changes to the rules and explained the purpose for the public hearing. Speakers were as follows:

- Dr. Jonathon Kotch, UNC-CH School of Public Health, congratulated the Commission on the proposal of the emergency preparedness and response rules. Noted the Health/Safety Center supported the proposed rules.
- Rhonda Rambert, child care health consultant and nurse, spoke in support of the emergency preparedness rules; supported the change to the rule regarding taking a child's temperature.
- Nancy Haddock suggested including in the rules that texting while driving was prohibited in addition to talking on cell phones.
- Angelo Harris, Primrose Schools, had a question about language in the rule that referenced an emergency response form provided by the Division. Ms. Laura Hewitt explained that DCDEE is working with the NC Office of Emergency Management to develop an on-line template/form that would standardize the emergency response information captured.

Subcommittee for Curriculum Review/Approval Process:

Chairperson Weinert stated she would like to form a subcommittee to review the curriculum approval process and the issues that have been brought up to the Commission. She recommended including people who initially worked on the curriculum review committee along with some Commission members, to look at the assessment tool; the curricula that were approved and not approved; and whether the review process can be improved.

Chairperson Weinert noted that the Commission needed to approve today whether previously reviewed curricula could be grandfathered in for use by non Pre-K classrooms while the subcommittee works on this process. However, NC Pre-K programs must only use curricula that have been approved (not grandfathered in).

Commission Action: Chairperson Weinert made a motion that the current approved curriculum and exceptions will continue to be grandfathered in until the curriculum assessment process is completed. Ms. Gayle seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Chairperson Weinert asked Laura Hewitt about individuals who were on the committee, who had agreed to serve again. Ms. Hewitt stated that she would be staff to the subcommittee, and that four other individuals who previously served had agreed to serve again: Dr. Catherine Scott Little, Laney Brown, Florianna Thompson, and Carla Garrett. It was noted the subcommittee would be a public body that would make recommendations to the full Committee.

Commission Action: Chairperson Weinert moved that the Commission establish a curriculum subcommittee to review the curriculum assessment. The motion was seconded by Ms. Price. The motion carried.

Discussion followed on ensuring there was adequate representation from all stakeholders on the subcommittee. Chairperson Weinert noted another motion was needed to add to the membership of the subcommittee.

Commission Action: Chairperson Weinert made a motion to recommend that Mr. Campbell, Ms. Gilleland, Ms. Price, Ms. Lowrance, and Mr. Blades

join her in serving on the subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Ms. Price. The motion carried.

Chairperson Weinert reiterated the subcommittee members were: herself, Ms. Price, Mr. Campbell, Ms. Lowrance, Ms. Gilleland, and Mr. Blades; along with Laura Hewitt (staff) and the four individuals who previously served on the review team.

Presentation on Approving Curricula and Formative Assessments: Laura Hewitt, DCDEE Regulatory Services Section

Ms. Hewitt presented information to the Commission on the review process used by the previous committee to approve curricula and formative assessments. She has worked with the review committee since 2007 when DCDEE worked together with the More at Four program to complete the reviews. Ms. Hewitt explained the history of the review process. She noted that in 2001, the More at Four program in the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) provided a list of recommended curricula for their programs. In 2007-08, More at Four and DCDEE worked together on a review process to determine a list of approved curricula that would be required in More at Four and used by DCDEE for a quality point within the star rated license. In 2010-11, the review process was completed again by More at Four and DCDEE. The curricula were actually approved by the Board of Education since More at Four was housed in DPI. Legislation transferred More at Four from DPI to DCDEE in SFY 11-12, and added a requirement that 4-5 star child care centers must use an approved curriculum in their 4-year-old classrooms. Legislation also gave the Child Care Commission the authority to approve curricula and added that the curricula must have a reading component.

The Child Care Commission delegated responsibility to the curriculum review committee to develop criteria for complying with the legislative emphasis on reading, and to re-review all curricula that were a part of the 2010 review process. The committee used key areas of early literacy from the National Early Literacy Panel. Ms. Hewitt discussed membership of the previous curriculum review committee, which included representatives from higher education, NC Pre-K, family child care homes, the Child Care Commission, DPI, child care resource and referral agencies, Smart Start, special education and cultural/linguistic diversity. She noted the committee was guided in their review by *Infant Toddler Foundations*, *NC Guide for the Early Years*, and information from NAEYC on curriculum and assessment. Developmental domains that provided a common point of reference to be used when reviewing materials were Approaches to Learning; Emotional and Social Development; Health and Physical Development; Language Development; and Cognitive Development.

Ms. Hewitt noted some of the issues faced by the committee, for example, whether the curriculum covered different age ranges, were designed as stand-alone or supplemental material; were designed for part-day programs, etc. Ms. Hewitt explained the committee wanted to ensure the curriculum aligned with the requirements for Pre-K, early learning standards, and the rated license.

Ms. Hewitt reviewed the definition of a curriculum that was used, to define the basic components that were to be included. She referred Commissioners to the handout that was used by the committee to evaluate criteria for the curriculum. Some criteria were absolute and had to be met; others were allowed to be partially met.

- Evidence-based
- Planning process
- Areas of children's development
- Scheduling and routines
- Physical environment
- Social environment

- Materials and experiences
- Diversity
- Inclusion of diverse development/abilities
- Family involvement
- Implementation guides

Ms. Hewitt explained how curricula were submitted for the committee to review. A letter was sent to publishers inviting them to submit their curricula for review. Announcements of the review process were sent out by early childhood partners. She noted that the review process took approximately nine months, but if the definition of curriculum and criteria to be included needed to be revised, that more time would be needed. The committee formed review teams where 2-3 individuals reviewed each curriculum submitted; the individuals compared their results. Evidence of whether a curriculum met a particular criteria was the actual curriculum materials that a teacher would be able to access and easily implement. The reviews were taken back to the committee and curricula were either recommended, not recommended, or recommended with stipulations.

Ms. Hewitt noted some of the challenges faced by the committee, including scheduling meetings, time constraints, and how to circulate the materials being reviewed. In addition, the reviewers had varying levels of experience with differing backgrounds in considering whether the curricula would be understood by the majority of teachers.

In conclusion, Ms. Hewitt shared the numbers of curricula reviewed, approved, and disapproved since 2008. The total submitted was 80, with 21 approved and 59 disapproved. Chairperson Weinert noted that one-fourth of the curricula submitted were approved, which led to discussions about whether the best process was in place. She thanked Ms. Hewitt for the information which would be helpful to the subcommittee's work.

Chairperson Weinert thanked Commission members and DCDEE staff for their work.

Commission Action: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Elizabeth Gilleland and seconded by Sue Creech. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.