

## 2021 Plattsmouth Community School District Head Start Self-Assessment Report

### Purpose of Self-Assessment

Head Start Performance Standard §1302.102(b)(2)(i) indicates that a program must effectively oversee progress towards program goals on an ongoing basis and annually must conduct a self-assessment that uses program data, and professional development and parent and family engagement data as appropriate, to evaluate the program's progress towards meeting program goals, compliance with program performance standards throughout the program year and the effectiveness of the professional development and family engagement systems in promoting school readiness.

Head Start Performance Standard §1302.102(c)(2)(iv) indicates that a program must use information from ongoing monitoring and the annual self-assessment, and program data on teaching practice, staffing and professional development, child-level assessments, family needs assessments, and comprehensive services, to identify program needs, and develop and implement plans for program improvement.

Some questions that helped guide the process were:

- Is our program meeting all Head Start Performance Standards?
- Are our services responding effectively to the changing needs of children and families?
- Are we doing what we need to do, or are we just doing it the way we have always done it?
- Can we refine our program design and management systems to further improve outcomes for children and families?

Cass County Head Start/Early Head Start used a process for the self-assessment that involved teams broken up into five assigned areas:

- Family/Community Engagement & ERSEA
- Child Health/Safety, Nutrition, & Transportation
- Child Development/Education & Disabilities
- Social/Emotional Support & Coaching
- Records/Reporting, Human Resources, Fiscal, & Program Governance

The self-assessment teams met on Friday, May 21st from 8:15 am to 10:15 am. Each group consisted of 5 to 6 team members. Policy Council and Board of Education members were invited to attend the self-assessment and although none were able to be in attendance, members provided feedback during their regularly scheduled meetings and this information was shared with the self-assessment teams. The teams were led by a team leader with expertise and data from the assigned area. Each team leader developed questions for their assigned area to start the team discussion and team members could also add additional questions. Once these questions were discussed, the team gave the area an overall rating of meets standards, strength area, or opportunity area. The team also identified strengths and areas for improvement within each area.

The Self-Assessment process involved the collection of information from a variety of sources to determine if systems and services have been implemented and are working effectively. Some sources that were utilized for this Self-Assessment included, but was not limited to:

- Child Outcome Data (from October, 2020 and February, 2021 and May, 2021)
- Community Assessment Report
- PCSD Board of Education (BOE) Agendas and Minutes
- Information Entered into Child Plus
- Policy Council Agendas and Minutes
- Classroom Assessment Data (CLASS & ECERS-3)
- GOLD data/School Readiness data(from October, 2020 and February, 2021 and May, 2021)
- Parent & Staff Survey Information
- Budget Information
- Family Needs Assessments
- Program Data on Teaching Practices (checklists, etc.)
- Professional Development Data and Feedback

### **Update on Goals Identified Through the 2020-2021 Self-Assessment Process**

#### **Goals for 2020-2021 Program Year and Updates:**

1. The recruitment action plan will continue to be updated as needed in order for our program to achieve full enrollment and an active waitlist for the 2021-2022 program year. The 2020-2021 program year will have less enrolled children due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.
  - The recruitment action plan was updated and approved by Policy Council and the Board of Education in the spring of 2021. Our program maintained sufficient enrollment for our classrooms based upon COVID-19 Protocols.
2. Staff will focus on methods to improve/increase parent communication/engagement.
  - The following are examples of methods utilized to improve/increase parent communication and engagement:
    - Seesaw was utilized to communicate with parents
    - Parent Gatherings were held via Zoom; parents could attend “live” while the Zoom was happening and each session was recorded so parents could attend the session later when was convenient for them
    - Parent/teacher conferences were held four times throughout the school year via Zoom
    - School readiness and health advisory committees continued to meet via Zoom
    - Teachers sent home bi-weekly newsletter and center newsletter once a month to parents to communicate on current classroom and center happenings
    - Parents and Children Together (PACT) activities were held once a month via Seesaw
3. Create a fillable application for on-line access by parents.
  - A fillable application was not developed during the 2020-2021 program year however, the FSAs continued to explore methods for creating one in the future
  - A QR code was placed on flyers for recruitment
  - Applications can be downloaded and printed (from school web page)
4. The family support advocates will monitor the plan to encourage father/father figure involvement during the 2020-2021 program year.
  - The FSAs did create a father/father figure involvement plan during the 2019-2020 program year -- Big Buddy Time -- that was held monthly. This plan will continue to be implemented once we are able to host events in our center.

## Family/Community Engagement & ERSEA

### Team Members (team leader in bold):

- **Melinda Zimmerer, Family Support Specialist**
- Meredith Hubbard, Speech/Language Pathologist
- Rachel Metzler, Preschool Teacher
- Teresa Rozier, Para-educator
- Kristina Rivas, Preschool Teacher
- Becky Ptacek, Para-educator
- Dara Hogueison, Para-educator

### Overall Systems Ratings:

- ERSEA: Opportunity Area
- Family/Community Engagement: Opportunity Area

### Group Discussion Questions:

- Because of COVID, we were not able to involve parents in-person. How did we move past that barrier and ensure that we are engaging families in our program and do we give them sufficient opportunities to be involved in their child's education?
- How do we ensure that we are involving our community?
- How do we ensure that we are fully enrolled and maintain a viable waitlist?
- How do we ensure we are serving the neediest children?
- How do we ensure children attend school regularly?

### Identified Strengths:

- We offered a lot of things for parents to be involved in (PACT, Homework calendars, virtual gatherings, socializations etc..)
- We implemented a lot of strategies and are flexible in setting a foundation for offering things we can do in the future
- Registration was effective
- Trust of families because of the COVID protocols implemented
- Masks were implemented effectively and children were still able to learn social cues and emotional cues
- Curriculum encourages parent involvement with weekly family activities, family letters, and having children bring in items
- Cass County Community Guide and fliers about community events are given to families
- Zoom Conferences and Birth-3 home visits with families
- We have many Partnership agreements
- Interagency Networking Group
- Health Advisory Committee
- We had virtual guests in the classroom and utilized Nebraska Extension services for butterflies
- Field trip-walks down Main Street
- Curriculum encourages community involvement
- Community Resource Guide given to families
- We have a recruitment plans for each site and EHS
- Enrollment Action Plan is in place
- ERSEA procedures are in place

- Application asks questions that help pick out need, guides need, asks about family services they receive
- The Intake interview gives the FSA an opportunity to find and supports the family needs
- Point system is in place along with a guidance for priority score sheet for consistent scores no matter who is scoring
- Attendance policy is in place
- A system for well-child checks is in place
- Attendance is reviewed at conferences/home visit
- Infinite Campus

**Areas for Improvement:**

- Work around family's schedules for Socializations and Parent Gatherings
- Offer in person events, if permitted
- Missing family interaction with staff and peers on a regular basis
- Parents need more education on how to use SeeSaw
- We need look for ways to engage and recruit future parents
- Rebuilding trust after COVID-19
- Online application would be helpful

**Records/Reporting, Human Resources, Fiscal, & Program Governance**

**Team Members (team leader in bold):**

- **Pam Dobrovlny, Head Start/Early Childhood Director**
- Aimee Petereit, Administrative Assistant
- Nikki Woods, Para-educator
- Anya Robert, Para-educator
- Megan Coy, Preschool Teacher
- Linda Sederburg, Birth to Five Home Visitor
- Dorla Kliegl, Family Support Advocate

**Overall Systems Ratings:**

- Records/Reporting: Strength Area
- Human Resources: Meets Standards
- Fiscal: Strength Area
- Program Governance: Meets Standards

**Group Discussion Questions:**

- Are safe guards in place to keep information on families and children confidential?
- Are file checks completed on a regular basis?
- Are there procedures for conducting staff performance appraisals and are these being conducted at least once a year?
- Are new staff members properly trained? Para training protocol?
- Is staff development offered on an on-going basis and does it meet the needs of most employees?
- Do we provide adequate supplies and materials? Outdated equipment?
- Is a system in place to effectively inventory equipment assets?
- Are costs appropriately allocated to various programs?

- Are all parents encouraged and given an opportunity to participate and serve as Policy Council members?
- Do governing body members receive training specific to their oversight responsibilities in financial and legal matters?
- How to promote policy council involvement in the program?

**Identified Strengths:**

- File cabinets in copy room where records are kept are locked
- Applications go through strict process to ensure confidentiality (kept secured, not on desks)
- Administration does file checks on personnel files
- The child file check system works well as a whole school -- very streamlined for most classrooms
- All fiscal procedures are done to protocol
- Paras do appraisals with teachers, certified staff with administration
- Formulas are used to determine Head Start vs. tuition/district costs (cost allocation)
- All classrooms now have updated furniture
- Policy Council -- FSAs take out brochures at the beginning of the year; try to have 2 from each classroom
- Policy Council reminders are discussed at home visits - B-3 programs are also included/encouraged
- For Policy Council Meetings, staff come to meetings to train on different areas (FSAs, Fiscal, B-3 Programs, SPED, etc.)
- The Board of Education gets written training (reports, building updates, etc.)

**Areas for Improvement:**

- More training in the behavior management areas for the classrooms -- how can we make teachers feel more comfortable to share and ask for help?
- New teacher training improved to meet the specific needs for preschool
- Inventory process needs improved

<b>Social/Emotional Support &amp; Coaching</b>
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**Team Members (team leader in bold):**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Bri Renninger, School Social Worker</b></li> <li>● <b>Michelle Christensen, Instructional Coach</b></li> <li>● Carolyn Winters, Preschool Teacher</li> <li>● Lea Gunter, Family Support Advocate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brenda Koch, Para-educator</li> <li>● Fawn Horner, Sixpence Home Visitor</li> <li>● Kendra Knapp, Para-educator</li> <li>● Emily Morlan, Para-educator</li> </ul> |
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**Overall Systems Ratings:**

- Social/Emotional Support: Strength Area
- Coaching: Meets Standards

**Group Discussion Questions:**

- How do we identify and determine if students need additional mental health/social emotional support?

- How do we ensure all students receive the mental health support that they need?
- How do we ensure students have enough support in the classroom when there are mental health and/or challenging behavior concerns?
- How do we involve parents with their child's mental and behavioral health?
- How do we support parents in need of mental health support? Is what we are doing working? Is it enough?
- How do we provide information to staff regarding mental health topics?
- How do we identify strengths, areas of needed support, and which staff would most benefit from coaching?
- How does working with a coach and using the PBC coaching model improve teaching practices?
- How can we improve coaching to support teachers with their work either as a home visitor or in the classroom?

### **Identified Strengths:**

- Coaching agreement makes coaching standard when working with various staff
- Flexibility when setting up coaching meetings
- Judgement free zone during coaching
- Identifying when students and parents need additional mental health/social emotional support
- Supporting parents with mental health needs
- Supporting students and teachers in the classroom with challenging behaviors
- Gives teachers confidence to implement classroom practices
- School social worker will talk with parents/make referrals
- Documentation through BIR's, PTR-YC
- Social/Emotional in GOLD
- Birth to 3- parent collaboration
- Observations
- Resource guides
- Social worker meets individually with parents - more difficult this year due to COVID-19 protocols
- Use various needs assessment to identify weaks and strengths
- Action plans if more intense coaching is needed
- Parent survey rated high in feeling supported in getting resources, communicating with home visitors and teachers about their needs
- Coach works with the teachers to help coach the paras
- Putting social worker contact information in newsletters for parents to access
- Home visiting teachers collaborate with parents- make referrals with other agencies looking

### **Areas for Improvement:**

- Communication
- Make sure the team meetings are more beneficial and there is time to meet; making team meeting important and prioritizing
- Communicate information throughout the year during team meetings
- Having confidential conversations when children are not around
- Conestoga- does not feel well supported:
  - Not always extra hands when behavior is happening
  - Does not have other people to come into the classroom
  - Needs support for students on IEPs that may have challenging behaviors

- Create a communication plan so that PBIS leadership team can better support the service providers at Conestoga
- Would help to have paras a part of the meeting when talking about behaviors so everyone hears the strategies and understanding the WHY behind it.
- More training on strategies for handling challenging behaviors -- not just teachers, but with paras too
- If there are changes with the school procedures as a whole, then we need to all be informed as a school
- Clearly understand and clarify the coaching process
- Sit down and discuss para goals with coach/receive support
- Communication and team building between teachers and paras
- Teachers where provided more support, but not as much support given to paras
- How can we build classroom teams?
- How do we build a team as new staff come on?

### Health/Safety, Nutrition, & Transportation

#### Team Members (team leader in bold):

- **Lisa Rains, Health/Nutrition Specialist**
- Mary Simmerman, Custodian
- Jessica Foley, Para-educator
- Kaitlyn Montgomery, Para-educator
- Brittany Linhart, Para-educator
- Raegan Jagow, Para-educator

#### Overall Systems Ratings:

- Health/Safety: Meets Standards
- Nutrition: Meets Standards
- Transportation: Meets Standards

#### Group Discussion Questions:

- How can we be more successful in assisting families with meeting health/dental requirements and following up with referrals, treatments, etc. (Example: physicals, dental exams, labwork, etc.)?
- How can we better communicate to parents and families patterns or trends concerning late or missing child health information?
- How can we help parents and families be better advocates for their child's health?
- How can we better communicate health screen results in a respectful and timely manner? (From parent survey results, 2/106 responses voiced concerns)
- How can we better ensure a clean and safe environment for children? Do you feel that we cleaned enough to feel safe in light of Covid-19?
- Do you feel in the event of an emergency, you are prepared to respond appropriately?
- How is the communication between classroom staff and transportation staff?
- Do we feel our students receive safe and reliable transportation?
- Does classroom staff possess the tools necessary to utilize mealtimes as an extension of the classroom?
- How can we better incorporate nutrition into the curriculum for our students, including education to families?

**Identified Strengths:**

- CACFP training in the fall
- CACFP documentation on iPad
- Open communication with Opa! on-site staff
- Sanitize twice a day with disinfectant sprayer
- Zonos machine
- Paras doing extensive cleaning
- When custodian is gone, everyone pitches in to help with trash, etc
- Fall training for safety, CPR training for staff
- Rapid response team
- Health/Safety/Drills checklist and response forms
- No issues with communication with transportation staff
- Feel prepared to deal with emergency
- Provide safe and reliable transportation
- Registration paperwork and the nurse meeting with each family
- Nurse having face to face time with families at pick up
- Health requirement letters
- Involving teachers for assistance with communication and at conferences

**Areas for Improvement:**

- Bring back family style meals and staff eating with children (depending on Covid-19 protocols for start of school year)
- Eating lunch in the cafeteria would help with focusing on nutrition/eating at mealtime
- Provide parent education on sugary substances - how it affects, behavior
- Nutrition education in the classroom by dietician
- Bring back nutrition bins
- Bring back cooking with the kids
- Doors not to be propped open without a monitor (ie. deliveries, etc.)
- Indoor playground cleaning between uses-add to staff rotation-monthly job
- Fence around playground does not reach the ground, children get feet stuck under the fence-at least once a day
- Child safety with pick up in the parking lot
- Rapid response team drill
- Hearing/Vision screenings - notify when it's happening, any concerns from family and more timely notification of results
- Increase assertiveness with families getting in health requirements
- Bring back dental van and toothbrushing
- At registration, discuss best way to communicate with families, phone, email or even text in order to get best response

<b>Child Development/Education &amp; Disabilities</b>
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**Team Members (team leader in bold):**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Diana Furcini, Education Coordinator</b></li> <li>● Desiree Petrich, Preschool Teacher</li> <li>● Amy Gordon, Preschool Teacher</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shawna Dillon, Para-educator</li> <li>● Ashley Nowicki, Para-educator</li> </ul> |
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- Sian Parsons, Para-educator

- Melissa Hoffart, EHS Home Visitor

### **Overall Systems Ratings:**

- Child Development/Education: Strength Area
- Disabilities: Meets Standards

### **Group Discussion Questions:**

- How do we promote high quality learning environments and keep a strong learning environment at school? What do we do to help create a strong learning environment for homes? Is it enough?
- How do we maintain a certain level of knowledge and experience for staff?
- Because of COVID, we were not able to let parents involve parents in-person. How did we move past that barrier and involve them in their child's learning and development? Was it effective? What could we do differently?
- What is our disabilities service plan?
- How do we involve and educate parents about Individualized Education
- How do we collaborate as a team to share relevant information across service areas for a child with disabilities?
- How do we individualize for students?
- What does transitioning from Part C to Part B to Kindergarten look like?
- Are classroom staff sufficiently supported to provide for children with special needs in their classrooms?

### **Identified Strengths:**

- Staff qualifications
- Building relationships with staff and parents
- Checks and balances
- Do a good job of supporting different ability levels of students
- Coaching
- CDA - creates a better understanding of child development
- Staff will take the time to answer questions - very approachable
- Have transition plans
- Offer parental rights for special education
- Have individualization for all students
- Birth to three: helping the parents to advocate for themselves during IFSP's

### **Areas for Improvement:**

- Parent involvement - Covid-19 pandemic impacted involvement negatively but we always want to improve this
- Did not meet Head Start minimum thresholds for CLASS
- Para relationships with parents--lack of relationships due to COVID-19 protocols and not being able to have parents come in the building
- Paras did not have their own access to Seesaw so could not help support parents/students when they had questions
- Support during first IEP meetings - ask parents if there is anyone else they would like to attend the initial meeting to help support them emotionally
- It's a lot for teachers to be the SPED teacher and general education teacher - they are spread too thin - are students really getting what they should from one person doing both jobs?

## Goals for 2021-2022 Program Year

1. The recruitment action plan will continue to be updated as needed in order for our program to achieve full enrollment and an active waitlist for the 2021-2022 program year.
2. Staff will focus on methods to improve/increase parent communication/engagement. The following areas will be specifically targeted:
  - Father/Father Figure Engagement
  - Classroom staff connecting with parents
  - Policy Council attendance at meetings
  - Seesaw as a method for increasing parent communication
  - Health screenings and requirements -- improve communication
3. Create a fillable application for on-line access by parents.

## Head Start Self-Assessment Feedback May 21, 2021

- 1. Have you participated in a Head Start Self-Assessment before this year?**

17 -Yes

12 -No

- 2. Did participating in the self-assessment process have a positive impact on the work you do with children, families, and other staff members?**

29 -Yes

0 -No

- 3. Describe or explain one idea/thought/a-ha moment that you had during the self-assessment process?**

- Understanding how COVID-19 really did affect this year
- How to get enrollment up – didn't know it was so low
- I learned about Head Start a lot
- I learned a lot about the Head Start funding process and how it impacts enrollment
- Since I am new, it was still very insightful
- Making sure we all feel like a team
- Conestoga doesn't have nearly as much support at PECC – birth to 3 does so much more than initially thought
- Many areas of improvement needed are related to pandemic and how it has affected our ability to impact children and families
- A lot of IEP stuff
- How to help parents with Seesaw
- Being able to recognize all of the education we get in Head Start
- Helpful info
- To have more help for the kitchen staff
- Brushing teeth and good health habits
- It was nice to have confirmation that other classrooms are having similar concerns/issues as us
- Discussion about what the curriculum offers to parent and community engagement
- General understanding of how the program operates, funding, how students are selected

and recruited

- Our program has strong social-emotional supports and is fortunate to have lots of training to support all children and families in the program
- Continue with trainings for improvements
- I was informed about fiscal and governance processes I had not had a ton of prior knowledge
- I didn't realize how difficult it can be to properly use Head Start funding
- We are doing more than I realized
- Why are ALL teachers not certified?

**4. What suggestion(s) do you have for improving the self-assessment process?**

- Doing more, not just one topic
- Snacks!
- None – it was great
- Keep it short, keep the questions to answer
- No suggestions
- I think overall it was a good process and session
- Provide coffee ] Otherwise, no suggestions. Very efficient process
- I think it was good the way it was and very informative
- Goals – wow
- Working together for the goal of staff and making smooth transitions for student's success
- Having printout of surveys and game plan ahead of time
- Do it more than once a year
- Have staff participate in new groups they have not done before
- None at this time, Melinda was very knowledgeable and prepared
- Get more info ahead of time to review

**OPTIONAL: What group did you participate with on May 24th?**

- 1 – Did not indicate a group
- 6 -Records/Reporting, Human Resources, Fiscal & Program Governance
- 6 -Child Development, Education & Disabilities
- 4 -Social/Emotional Support & Coaching
- 5 -Child Health/Safety & Nutrition
- 7 -Family/Community Engagement & ERSEA