

APPROVED NOVEMBER 26, 2019

Montgomery County Community Action Board Meeting
October 22, 2019
1401 Rockville Pike, Room 3603

MINUTES

CAB Members Present: Isaac Osei Asare, Meredith Bowers, Valerie Chatfield-Smith, Lisa Conlon, Lisette Engel, Laura E. Irwin, Jeffery Johnson, Will Kenlaw, Danette Lawrence, Mike Subin, and Zelda Wafer-Alonge

CAB Members Absent: Ron Jennings, Tiffany Jones, Agnes Leshner, Pamela Lockett, and Myriam Paul

Staff: Sharon Strauss, Charlene Muhammad, Aizat Oladapo, Verna Washington, and Leah Goldfine

Guests: Beverly Coleman and Candace Groudine

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm.

Early Learning Assessment

Verna Washington, MCPS Pre-K/Head Start Supervisor, shared a presentation with the Board about the Early Learning Assessment. The assessment includes 72 measures of skills, knowledge, and behaviors. Montgomery County selected 16 to use that aligned with the Head Start program. There are three assessment windows throughout the year in the fall, winter, and spring. Verna reported that all areas increased throughout the year for both three and four-year-olds. Positive contributing factors included the addition of more summer classes, the fact that Head Start classes are fully enrolled by September, and, most importantly, the availability of more full-day classes. Verna explained that in order to receive Maryland Excels accreditation, every early learning program must use a data collection program and the Early Learning Assessment was selected for the County.

A question was raised about who the students are compared with since there may be certain areas or schools that need additional support. More specifically, are Head Start children compared with children who did not go through the program? There is a way to gather this data, but it needs to be broken out of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment data. In response to a question about national comparisons, Verna explained that Montgomery County children are on par or above average compared with other areas, but it is hard to compare when areas use different measurement tools. Another question was raised about a comparison of boys and girls. This comparison has not been completed, but staff could look into this. Board members asked about looking at children who have been through the three-year-old Head Start classes to see if these children made more gains. This would be important information since there is a great need for more three-year-old spots. One piece of data indicated that four-year-olds are not excelling at "letter sounds". Verna explained that this has to do with the large number of English language

learners in Head Start. The program is looking at ways to provide more resources and training to teachers.

Verna reported that the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new UpCounty Early Childhood Center was scheduled for October 30. The new center would include four full-day Pre-K classes and a Family Involvement Center.

Consent Agenda

Mike moved to accept the consent agenda and Lisette seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The consent agenda included the following documents: minutes from the September 2019 CAB meeting, meeting evaluations summary from the September 2019 CAB meeting (email only), Executive Director's report, Head Start report, P card statements (email only), Contracts report, Staff Liaison's report (email only), and the CAI pre-program survey results (email only).

Head Start Updates

Zelda reported that Charlene led a parent training for members of the Head Start Parents Policy Council. The goal this year is to increase parent participation. The training was streamlined this year, taking place on a Friday evening and all-day Saturday with activities available for children. There was a very good turnout. Returning members of the Policy Council shared insight on their experience and there were a lot of good questions raised. The format of the meeting worked out well with lots of interactive activities and simultaneous translation. With regard to how parents' concerns are catalogued, it was explained that minutes are taken at all meetings. These concerns may be connected to why parents stop participating in the Policy Council. It was noted that Policy Council leaders may need to reach out to parents sooner to prevent drop-off.

Board members received a written Head Start report and the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR). Charlene noted that she will review the PIR data for the Board members later. She reported that the program is being audited, a standard practice for all Head Start programs. Charlene has begun work on the five-year grant application. Board members are invited to a kick-off planning meeting on November 7. The application system will not be open until January 1, but planning is underway.

CAB Updates

Laura reported that she testified at the County Council HHS Committee Worksession for Boards, Committees, and Commissions. The Councilmembers had a lot of positive feedback for the CAB regarding the CAI. The Board's testimony focused on the agency's 2-Gen initiative and the need for support from the Council, including for the new TESS facility.

The Board discussed the Housing Impact Fairness Act, which would require the payment of an impact tax for homeowners who demolish their homes and build a new home on the same property ("teardowns"). Funds raised by this tax would go towards affordable housing programs and school construction. The Board discussed who this tax would affect and benefit. Staff will follow up with Councilmember Glass, the lead sponsor of the bill, to request additional information.

Lisette shared an update on the Community Needs Assessment. The CNA Committee (Lisette, Lisa, Myriam, and Meredith) had a conference call to select the format of the executive summary and to select which sections of the full CNA to include in the summary. The committee wants to make the summary easy to read with lots of graphics. Each committee member selected four or five community issues and then submitted three statistics from the full report that exemplified the issues. A survey was conducted for the full Board to select the statistics that would be included in the summary and used to create infographics. Lisette reported that she would share example CNAs from Fairfax County and Goodhue County in Minnesota, which the committee liked and wanted to use as models, with the full Board.

Staff shared an update on the Community Advocacy Institute. The orientation session was held on October 16. There are 21 participants in the program this year. All CAB members are invited the first CAI workshop on November 2, which would feature elected officials and Linda McMillan.

Executive Director's Updates

In addition to her written report, Sharon shared that she attended a meeting for Maryland CAAs regarding the proposed changes to the CSBG budget formula. Sharon explained that CSBG funding shifted a few years ago with rural CAAs losing funding and other CAAs (including Montgomery County) gaining funds. The formula is now being updated and there will be a public hearing on November 18 to discuss this matter. Sharon noted that there will likely be more changes to come following the 2020 Census.

Sharon reported that the agency is updating its performance measures to align with the County Executive's priorities. There is a new budget process in the County this year that includes cross-departmental teams reviewing different priorities and ranking program budgets.

A revised FY20 CSBG budget was presented to the Board. The adjustment allowed for restored funding for EITC outreach, brokers at TESS, training, printing fliers, and addressing IT needs. Mike moved to approve the revised CSBG budget and Jefferey seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Sharon noted that she has been engaged in 2-Gen planning with our partners. She reported that the dataset for an updated Self-Sufficiency Standard is already available, but funding is needed to create a new Maryland report. A meeting was held with Dr. Pierce and DHHS colleagues to discuss developing a Self-Sufficiency Standard calculator to embed in the new Maryland Think database. The calculator would help case managers work with clients to determine what income is needed to reach self-sufficiency. Dennis Linders is looking into updating the Interactive SSS.

Contracts

In addition to the written contracts report, Aizat noted that all weekend backpack contracts have been approved and moved forward. She and Melissa are still working with the letter contracts. The Food Council is working on several initiatives, including ending school lunch shaming and senior hunger outreach. They are recruiting participants to be trained as senior hunger outreach volunteers. Aizat noted that she is participating in an equity training program through Leadership Montgomery.

Announcements

Lisa reminded the Board members that they are invited to the annual stakeholders' recruitment and planning meeting on November 22. She noted that the biggest hurdle for recruitment is families who have recently arrived in the country.

Lisa also reminded the Board members that a coat drive for Head Start/Pre-K students is taking place right now. Children's coats may be donated at Rocking Horse Road Center.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.