

## Ready for Kindergarten Meeting

Tuesday, January 6, 2015

**Attendees:** Ami Aalgaard, Sandy Eberhart, Jolene Enerson, Stephanie Hubbard, Jen Kondos, Jason Luksik, Kathy Palm, Wendy Templin, Kathy VanWert, Vicki Wangberg, Pat Welte, Tami Wesely

### Minutes:

1. We started the meeting at 9:00 a.m. by discussing the handouts:
  - a. World's Best Workforce: All Students Ready for Kindergarten
  - b. Title I Schoolwide Plans: Transition of Preschool Children
  - c. Leech Lake Head Start Early Childhood Transition Agreement
  
2. Then we discussed what we are currently doing to prepare students for kindergarten:

How Does Early Childhood Prepare Students and Parents for Kindergarten?
<p><u>Current Programming:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The School Readiness program math and reading curriculums are aligned with the elementary, and their teachers have received training on the curriculum and the state standards.</li><li>• School Readiness serves 140 4-year-olds (80 at BSU &amp; 60 at Community Services Center 2-3 days per week.</li><li>• Special education inclusion is allowed 3 slots per class of 30, and those students attend for free.</li><li>• School Readiness serves 80 3-year-olds one half day per week.</li><li>• Over 50% of School Readiness students qualify for free lunch, and any parent can write a letter stating what they can afford.</li><li>• School Readiness piloted the Desired Results Development Profile (DRDP) assessment last year and will send this year's results to the schools where their students attend kindergarten.</li><li>• Last year they completed 386 preschool screenings in addition to the screenings completed by the early childhood special ed. program. They completed 423 screenings in 2013-2014.</li><li>• They are working to increase the number of students screened by posting information at Laundromats, thrift stores, grocery stores, Walmart, food shelf, etc. As an incentive, they provide the students who are screened with a T-shirt.</li><li>• They send the screening results to the schools where their students attend kindergarten.</li><li>• The early childhood staff are Parent Aware Certified and receive a \$76,000 grant that provides student scholarships.</li><li>• The transition to kindergarten is often scarier for parents than for their children, so ECFE provides parents with skills and activities such as: <b>February 26, 2015, Ready for School where they tell parents about the typical school day, a panel of kindergarten teachers and</b></li></ul>

### How Does Early Childhood Prepare Students and Parents for Kindergarten?

parents, food and busing; and May 7, 2015, bus ride for parents and students.

- Early childhood has been more successful by taking the program to the parents. They meet at Evergreen Housing.
- Because parents work and cannot get their child to the program for a half day. School Readiness also offers Wrap Around Child Care. This has increased participation.

#### History:

- Bemidji's early childhood program, Northwest MN Foundation, and Title I worked together to bring kindergarten, Title I and early childhood teachers; day care and preschool providers; and parents together to discuss Getting Ready for Kindergarten three nights during the 2008-2009 school year.
- During 2009-2010, the group addressed Social and Emotional Development.

#### Challenges:

- Transportation is the biggest barrier, and those who need the programming the most are often the ones who do not have access.
- No lunch program is available, and students must bring their own lunch to preschool.
- Parents work and a half day does not work for them. We need full-day programs.

### How do Elementary Schools Prepare Parents and Students for Kindergarten?

#### Current Programming:

- The district provides a K-1 program at Paul Bunyan Elementary for 5-year-old students who are not yet ready for kindergarten. This program is not funded by the state.
- We have a Leech Lake Head Start Transition Plans in place, and Stephanie Hubbard is working with BICAP to update theirs.
- Paul Bunyan Elementary works with Leech Lake Head Start and provide their students: classroom activities, school tour, playground activities. They invite district staff attend their fall and spring advisory meetings.

3. Are there other ways we can improve the transition to kindergarten?

4. Discussion: Should this group meet more often?

5. Other?