

## **Program Performance Report**

**Semcac Head Start  
Grant No. 05CH4231  
May – October 2011**

### **1. Describe accomplishments and positive developments that had a significant impact on the Head Start Program during the reporting period.**

The following performance report is framed by our Strategic Action Plan. Our Strategic Goal is: To provide high quality early childhood education services for children and effective, supporting comprehensive services to their families

*Objective 1: Engage each parent in a network of opportunities that leads toward personal growth and family success*

Last year our program struggled with parent attendance at parent meetings. Data indicates that roughly 50% of parents attended parent meetings in the 2010-11 program year. Through our program's self assessment parents said that conflicts with work schedules, homework for older children, and transportation were main reasons they couldn't attend regularly.

After discussions with Policy Council the decision was made to change from monthly parent meetings to four parent meetings this program year. In addition, each center holds parent socialization events in September and another in May at the end of the program year. Our hope is that families will make parent meeting attendance more of a priority because there are fewer meetings to attend. Meetings now are scheduled for two hours instead of the previous one and a half hours. This gives parents more opportunity to socialize, share in a nutritious meal with their family, participate in a parent-child activity and build their leaderships skills in the parent committee.

The agenda for each site's parent meeting continues to be generated by local parents and their elected leaders. The parents' interests are complemented by program-driven educational topics referred to as "Tips in Ten" for the 10 minutes required to present the topic. We were fortunate to receive a second year of support from the Land O'Lakes Foundation for \$5000 to provide nutritious meals at our parent gatherings.

Family goal setting is a focus for the year. Our goal is to increase not only the number of families setting goals - 67% or 261 families set goals in program 2010-11 – but to increase the number of families reaching their goals. Last year, 24% or 95 families reached goals.

We began our study of the new OHS guidance on Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework. We will take this into account for the work of our committees on Family/Community Partnership Committee and Dual-Language Learners.

*Objective 2: Maintain and develop community involvement and partnerships to increase access to a variety of community-based services and program options*

Head Start, in collaboration with two higher education institutions, sponsored a second Road to Readiness workshop for our early childhood community held in May. Over 77 people attended and they were led by keynote speakers Angele Passe and June Reineke in how to better engage families in school readiness. This meeting's focus was on parent engagement during transition and community teams crafted action plans. This effort reinvigorated communication between Head Start staff and their school district early childhood counterparts. Transition planning meetings are taking place on an on-going basis.

A draft Partnership manual was developed to guide the coordination of services with our existing partnerships. The manual outlines goals, objectives, and requirements for core Head Start components. This "work in progress" will clarify roles and responsibilities, which in turn will strengthen our on-going monitoring of partnership sites.

Our programming for Early Head Start (EHS) with State funds is underway in Winona with the hiring of the new Home Visitor/Manager staff on 27th October. This is an exciting new chapter for the program, something we have discussed and planned since 1999. We have outlined preliminary plans with our partners, Winona Area Public Schools (WAPS), County Public Health, and Winona State University-Children's Center. There is much work ahead to set a foundation for our EHS program, while establishing with our partners a birth to 8 community-wide system.

*Objective 3: Provide educational services that are individualized and inclusive to support each child's developmental progress*

A Dual Language Learner (DLL) Plan was drafted with goals and objectives to support children who are learning two languages and their families. Strategies have been put into place to ensure that DLL children will progress on each of the domain elements of the Head Start Child Development Early Learning Framework, Indicators of Progress, and Creative Curriculum Domains. The recommendations from DLL consultant, Angele Passe were implemented. This includes increased emphasis on vocabulary, thematic planning that provides substance, and intentional planning for small groups. A Cultural Competency Handbook has been made to support classroom staff in gaining a deeper understanding of the cultures represented in their classroom. Elements of the handbook will be reviewed at local team meetings.

Our Leadership Team of Coordinators and HSD met with our TTA EC Ed specialist Brenda Hall in June to understand and develop our school readiness plans. We used the OHS "GPS Planner" to determine our current status and guide our plans. A workgroup was formed and it crafted our Program Plan to Build School Readiness Knowledge and Skills. We took into account the results of our input into the OHS Learning from Assessment Questionnaire which we completed in the spring. The workgroup began implementation of our plan in September. We will meet in December to gauge our progress and adjust plans were, if needed.

TTA specialists Brenda Hall and Chris DeGroote provided to teachers, classroom paras and FSWs a full day's overview on the new Office of Head Start Early Learning Framework and alignment of our teaching cycle of on-going assessment, planning & curriculum goals, and implementation.

We invested in the latest version of the Second Step curriculum to provide further support to teachers to meet each child at her/his stage of development.

We continued to build the knowledge and skills of our transportation staff in order to extend classroom activities during the bus routes. Bus Monitors and Drivers work with their Teacher(s) to provide additional activities during the bus ride.

Coordinators organized and conducted a “Head Start 101” for Teachers and FSWs to kick off their pre-services. Training was a refresher on the basics of Head Start to include looking at the whole child, stressing the health aspect, as well as the impact of the family’s well-being. The OHS “Leading the Way” dvd was included in the training to provide a reminder of our legacy.

### *Representative Accomplishments from Component Program Plans in addition to above*

#### Early childhood education and child development

- Provided staff training to refresh in basics of Head Start as well as Lesson Planning, School Readiness and TS GOLD (on-going assessment system)
- Refined Classroom monitoring systems to better reflect CLASS, DLL, School Readiness, and best practice.
- Outcomes committee consisting of teachers, FSWs and coordinators met to review outcome data and make recommendations for program improvement. Individual classroom data, program data and state data was presented to teachers.
- Staff joined public school staff in a coordinated effort to complete developmental screenings on children in Austin, Kasson, Owatonna and Preston. Other sites will be holding similar sessions in early September.
- Our sites at Hayfield and St. Charles were prepared for the new six-hour day of services. DHS licensure requires 30 minutes for nap/rest. We purchased cots and developed a Nap and Rest policy fort Policy Council input and approval. The policy must be on file with DHS.
- Our new partnership with the Caledonia Public Schools began with an open house held on 25<sup>th</sup> August. Our former teacher who has her CDA is now a classroom para, under direction of the school’s lead teacher, who has her EC Ed degree and license. There was a significant change for all staff and for Head Start families. We have a strong, open partnership with the school which provides for effective problem solving as challenges have arrived.

#### Disabilities

- Implemented use of referral packet to provide comprehensive information on evaluation process to be distributed when a child is referred for evaluation.
- Twenty-six children have signed IEPs to date in 2011-12 year. They are being dually served in ECSE and Head Start. Twelve referrals have been made and are in process to be evaluated by school districts.

#### Mental Health

- Mental Health Professional provided all staff training in the “Challenges and Strategies: Parents with depression and/or substance use” at pre service in August.
- All required classroom observations are up-to-date as of October 31.

## Health

- Renewed contracts with licensed MH Professional and Registered Dietician.
- Continued collaboration with Bundles of Love to support families with newborns in providing material items and education information and resources on current issues to include Shaken Baby Syndrome, oral health and brain development.
- Used guidance from Weaving Connections to present to Health Advisory Board (HAB) on its role. Determined composition of HAB to include special services. Recruitment efforts were made with eight parents and two professionals added to the membership list of the HAB.
- Completed the Emergency Preparedness Plan which was distributed for posting at all sites. Teachers and FSWs were provided training as part of pre-service.
- Completed and submitted annual immunization report to Minnesota Department of Health.
- As of October 31, 2011, health requirements were completed:
  - 99% immunizations,
  - 98% current well child exams, and
  - 94 % of screenings (hearing & vision, ASQSE and developmental).

## Nutrition

- Completed meal evaluations at all sites and completed follow up on those that needed further action. All corrections made.
- Completed our response to the MN Department of Education on-site review of our Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) on 27 – 29 April, 2011. The purpose of the review was to validate the claims made to USDA/CACFP to support our meal services. In the exit interview, the Program Specialist reported on findings, all of which are minor. She said we were “8.5 out of 10” and she has no worries with our program. We are one of the better Head Start programs. One of the follow-up actions completed was to provide caterers with guidance on food choices and training opportunities provided by CACFP.
- Completed annual CACFP application and contracted for meal service with 8 caterers

## Community Partnerships

- Through a process of surveying parents as to ways they'd like to be involved in the program, eight parents said they'd like to serve on the Health Advisory Board.
- Many of our classrooms and parent meetings are partnering with the University of Minnesota Extension Nutrition Educators to support children and families in making healthy food choices that fit a low-income food budget.
- Two AmeriCorps members are serving in our program this year, focused on social-emotional development. The members serve under a partnership with Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, or SMIF.
- A grant from Land O'Lakes provided financial resources so that a nutritious meal can be enjoyed by families as part of parent committee meetings.
- Our service area is in dire need of dental services to MA patients. One of our key collaborators on the west end of our service area announced that it would closed their offices at the end of the year. The reason is due to changes in payments to cover their costs. Over 27,000 patients will lose a vital community service.
- The HSD assisted in developing a grant application submitted by the Winona Area Public Schools to SMIF. Winona Area Public Schools works in partnership with Head Start and Winona State University Children's Center to increase early learning and school readiness of children in Winona County, especially those from low income and diverse families who are traditionally

underserved by providing on-going professional development activities for early childhood providers. The partnership would provide training and mentoring to the 120 plus licensed child care providers and the Family, Friend and Neighbor (FNN) providers in Winona County. Current staff share their expertise through a systematic network of enrichment opportunities for providers, which aligns with Minnesota's professional development indicators set forth by the "Core Competencies for Early Childhood Educators" and the program quality indicators identified by "Parent Aware," the Minnesota quality rating system. Unfortunately the grant was denied, however, we continue to pursue the objectives, while seeking additional funds.

### Family Partnerships

- After May parent-teacher conferences, parents were asked to complete a confidential survey about their Head Start experience. Some of the highlights were:
  - 97% of parents indicated that Head Start helped them to understand how they can prepare their child for kindergarten;
  - 96% said that their child's Head Start teacher had asked them for ideas that she could use in the classroom based on their child's needs;
  - 89% said they better understand their child's development;
  - 99% of families indicated that they had a very good relationship with their child's teacher.
- The last of our Family Service Workers earned her Family Service Credential this fall. Building their skills has helped give FSWs the confidence to mentor teachers in building stronger, trusting relationships with families.
- A summer phone call to families was implemented to help strengthen relationships with families, in light of tightened resources to provide a face-to-face contact. Families received a verbal welcome to the program. In addition information such as address changes and daycare drop-off and pick-up were collected to make transition smoother into the program.
- Family and Child Orientation and Open House took place at all sites on September 6<sup>th</sup>. This event supported children and families' transition into the program by giving them activities to experience in the classroom together and then a separate meeting of staff and parents. The Parent Handbook, Health Handbook and transportation safety practices were reviewed.

### Facilities, Equipment, and Materials

- To assure facilities met health and safety standards, systems were updated to include enhanced tracking of incoming data and follow up established.

### Transportation

- Providing transportation at seven locations despite rising gas and maintenance costs.
- Hired and oriented new driver at one location.
- Drafted our annual Transportation Analysis which will be used in 2012-13 planning.

### ERSEA

- Met all requirements for full enrollment.
- 2010-11 Program Year
  - Processed 651 Applications
  - Wait Listed 169
  - Abandoned/Terminated 131
- 2011-12 Program Year
  - Processed 581 Applications

Wait Listed 176

Abandoned/Terminated 57

Incomplete Applications 41

- Completed a phone connection with families during the summer months to assure they were still interested/available for the program to eliminate turnover when Teachers start making home visits before the program year begins. Parents were also encouraged to meet the health/dental requirements, and additional information/support was provided if needed.

### Human Resources

- Staff returned for the 2011-12 program over the course of two weeks, starting with Teachers and FSWs on the 15<sup>th</sup> August. All staff were back to work on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. In addition to pre-services, staff connected with families; completed home visits; inspected, inventoried, cleaned, and generally prepared every classroom; and made plans for a successful new year. Despite “last minute” resignations of staff at Austin and Owatonna sites, the local teams pulled together to keep things moving forward despite being short-staffed while new staff were recruited and substitutes filled in.
- Several pre-services were held on the 15<sup>th</sup> for FSWs, on the 16<sup>th</sup> for Teachers and FSWs, on 18-19<sup>th</sup> for Teachers, on 22<sup>nd</sup> for Teachers, Para/Classrooms, and FSWs; 26<sup>th</sup> for all staff needing recertified in 1<sup>st</sup> Aid/CPR; 29<sup>th</sup> for all staff; 31<sup>st</sup> for all staff; and 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept for Teachers. Topics ranged from defensive driving to working with parents with depression to a review of our core principles that make Head Start the unique program it is of service to families and children. In addition, staff completed other mandatory training at their local sites in areas such as emergency planning, CACFP civil rights training, and pedestrian safety.

### Management Systems

- Our self-assessment teams compiled their preliminary findings and reported to Policy Council on 26<sup>th</sup> April. Key findings were addressed in our program plans for 2011-2012.
- Compiling our data on results and accomplishments for the 2010-11 program year was wrapped up. Our annual federal Program Information Report (PIR) was submitted in August. As well, our Education/Special Services Coordinator completed the Development and Learning Outcomes Summary. Both reports, shared with PC and Board, provided concrete analysis on our performance in meeting stated goals/objectives. We will be using the reports in the months ahead to adjust planning for the current year, and determine plans for 2012-2013.
- Admin staff wrapped up their preparations for staff return. Final versions of all our handbooks, kits (diapering, hearing & vision, first aid, etc.), signs that need posting, various parent hand-outs, etc. were readied and distributed at pre-services. As well, the buses were inspected and ready for another year on the road. Presentations for pre-service were also organized.
- Our On-going monitoring system was updated over the summer. Coordinators have been working through on-going monitoring requirements and site observations to confirm quality services in all component areas. As well, they have been reviewing the various screening results for every child. Leadership Team holds weekly conference calls to review analysis of our data collected by staff and of observation findings. Follow-up is identified, when needed, and confirmed at subsequent calls.
- Our annual Risk Management Meeting with the federal Region V office was held on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> October. We were pleased not to have any action items.
- Our program hosted a five person Federal Triennial Review the week of 31 October. The team was thorough and respectful.

Program Governance

- Initiated new Policy Council for the 2011-2012 year with first meeting on 29 October. Seven of 11 sites are represented so far. Based on parent input on how we could encourage member participation, we moved our meetings to Saturday mornings instead of weekday evenings. With our large service area, some parents have a 60-90 minute drive one way to a central meeting location. Saturday mornings allow for drive in the daylight and when parents are not so tired after a day of working.

**2. List significant goals and objectives established for the reporting period which were not met and state: a) the reason(s) for the delay and/or problem in meeting goal and objective; b) plans to achieve or modify the goal or objective; and, c) any assistance requested from the Regional Office**

We had difficulty filling a teaching position in Austin and a classroom paraprofessional position in Owatonna from August to October. We advertised extensively, and few qualified applicants applied. Interviews did not surface a professional to meet our needs. A second round of advertising for both positions was initiated. We were able to fill both positions and were fully staffed by the end of October.

**3. List funded and actual enrollment on the last day of the reporting period by program option (or the last day of classes if the program is not in session). If the Head Start program is under-enrolled, describe any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that prevented the agency from achieving and maintaining full enrollments, as well as plans to address this issue.**

**2010-2011**

Program Option	Funded Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
Center-based	370	349 (60 Day Rule – not filling vacancies 60 days or less from last day of services)
TOTAL:	370	349 (60 Day Rule)

**2011-2012**

Program Option	Funded Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
Center-based	350	350
TOTAL:	350	350

**4. Describe any unexpected cost overruns or savings during this reporting period and their implications for program operations.**

One of our buses has needed higher than usual repairs and maintenance. The proceeds from the sale of two of our older buses helped to off-set the costs.