

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

May 10, 2022

SUBJECT:

Transfer of Head Start Enrollment Slots from Barnwell Early Learning Center to Wagener Early Learning Center

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The school district was approved for a five-year Head Start/Early Head Start grant in May of 2020, and the 5-year project period began on July 1, 2020, and extends through June 30, 2025. Governing bodies have a legal and fiscal responsibility to administer and oversee the agency's Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The governing body is responsible for activities specified in section 642(c)(1)(E) of the Head Start Act. Based on community needs, the grant program may need to be modified, and board approval will be sought for these changes.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION

Enrollment projections for Barnwell in the initial grant application were for a total of 51 HS children (3 classrooms of 17 children). However, the program has not been fully enrolled since the implementation of the grant, which likely can be attributed to an increase in the number of the child care center(s) in Barnwell, the expansion of child care scholarships provided by Barnwell County First Steps in the past two years, and difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers at the Barnwell ELC (current vacancies-1 Teacher and 3 Assistant Teacher/Bus Driver vacancies and all positions have been vacant for more than 6 months).

Wagener ELC, located on the annexed wing at Wagener-Salley High School, has been provided with an additional classroom. This classroom was formerly used as a 4K laboratory classroom for early childhood education students, and it is partially furnished and has been approved by the SC Fire Marshall and the Department of Social Services (DSS) to accommodate 17 HS children. The addition of this classroom would allow the program to establish a transition classroom for younger 3-year-olds who are transitioning from Early Head Start to Head Start. There are 5 children transitioning from EHS to HS and 11 children are returning (leaving 5 slots open). There are 6 children transitioning from HS to 5K and 11 children returning (leaving 6 slots open). Currently, there are 33 children on the 2022-2023 waiting list, which does not include returning students. There are no 3K classrooms at Busbee Elementary, and there is only 1 other regulated family child care home in Wagener that can only accommodate 6 children.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the transfer of 17 HS enrollment slots from Barnwell Early Learning Center to Wagener Early Learning Center

PREPARED BY:

Jeanie Glover
Shadie Hall