



Hidalgo County Head Start Program

Policy Council Regular Agenda

DATE: March 20, 2013

SUBJECT: Discussion/Approval of Hidalgo County Head Start Program Self-Assessment Report

RATIONALE/NEED: The purpose of the Self-Assessment is to improve program effectiveness. The Self-Assessment was conducted during the weeks of January 28, 2013-February 1, 2013 and February 4-8, 2013.

RECOMMENDATION: Administration recommends approval.

COST: N/A

RELATED INFORMATION INCLUDES: Self-Assessment Report

INITIATED BY: Nora S. Munoz, Assistant Program Director *NSM*

REVIEWED BY: Teresa Flores, Executive Director

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL: *Teresa Flores*



Hidalgo County Head Start Program Annual Self-Assessment Program Year 2012 - 2013

Continuous quality improvement is a central belief of the Hidalgo County Head Start program, with the goal of meeting Performance Standards and moving toward program excellence for serving children and families throughout the county. As part of this process, the annual Self-Assessment provides the program with the means to regularly assess the management systems and program operations in order to continually strengthen the program and the services delivered to children and families.

The Head Start Performance Standards clearly state that at least once each program year, with the consultation and participation of the Policy Council, the Grantee Board and, as appropriate, other community members, grantee agencies must conduct a Self-Assessment of their effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals and objectives and in implementing Federal Regulations.

By using the Self-Assessment process, the Hidalgo County Head Start Program can assess annually how specific aspects of the program's operations impact services delivered to children and families. The Self-Assessment is an integral part of the Program's planning cycle.

The Self-Assessment process involves the collection of information from a variety of sources to determine if systems and services have been implemented and are working effectively. This information is used to identify program strengths, determine areas for further development and plan appropriate strategies to effectively address the identified weaknesses of the program.

In order to ensure that the Hidalgo County Head Start Program is meeting program goals and objectives and is implementing Federal Regulations, the Program utilized the 2013 Office of Head Start Monitoring Protocol as the primary instrument to record and document the results of the annual Self-Assessment.

The Self-Assessment results are presented in a summary format based on the seven (7) areas of the Protocol.

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

Structure and Participation

Roles, Responsibilities and Training

Reporting to Governing Body and Policy Council

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

- The Policy Council and the Grantee Board's (County Commissioners' Court) working relationship demonstrates the epitome of utilizing the "shared governance" process to effectively and efficiently respond to Program roles and responsibilities respectively. It is evident that both entities are working together in the best interest of the families and children served. The results of the last three federal reviews capture the benefits which can be achieved given the fact that no deficiencies were reported for the past nine years.

NEED IMPROVEMENT

None

POTENTIAL AREA OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Program Planning
Ongoing Monitoring
Human Resources
Communication
Record Keeping and Reporting

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

- **Communication and Monitoring**

Face-to-face monitoring occurs consistently and frequently. The Executive Team, including department directors, coordinators, other administrators and specialists, makes weekly contact with the center staff, an onsite visit is conducted, and the next week contact is made either by phone or email. Each member of the Team is assigned one or two centers to monitor throughout the year. The team completes the Training, Technical Assistance and Support Checklist (TTSS) during a center visit. The Checklist serves to identify and address findings in the content areas. At the center level, the center manager is required to conduct documented observations of classroom instruction and provide the assistance and support needed by staff.

Feedback is secured and provided to improve on the quality of services and to celebrate successes. All feedback forms allow for the documentation of needs, issues, concerns, recommendations, commendations and successes. An appropriate feedback form is completed by the center manager and given to the teachers each week. Executive Team members provide the center manager with a similar form.

Weekly Plans are required of classroom teachers as well as center managers, support services facilitators and Executive Team members. Desk Audits are used to review data, children's performance, and to insure compliance with our Head Start Standards. Since the inception of more comprehensive data management systems, Desk Audits are now an integral part of the daily operations of the different departments.

The Program Compliance Monitoring Instrument, based on the Head Start Monitoring Protocol administered twice a year, provides additional opportunities to address issues and concerns for meeting Standards.

The Self-Assessment implemented according to Standards is conducted for all centers and children and family information is sampled from every classroom. Corrective Action Plans are developed for each individual center based on findings.

Staff meetings allow us to share information by communicating on a timely basis and providing opportunities for interaction among management staff. A monthly meeting with the Center Managers and the Executive Team after each Policy Council meeting provides an opportunity to present and discuss item from the Policy Council Agenda and to secure written feedback on issues and concerns which need attention at the centers.

- **Fiscal Integrity**

The Annual Audit conducted externally provides evidence that the Program is in a safe and secure status as it relates to finances and Program assets. The checks and balances instituted safeguard that expenditures are conducted according to regulation and that recordkeeping and reporting projects are transparent and conducted with a high degree of fiscal integrity.

- **Child Health and Safety**

The online surveillance system installed at the centers and in each classroom provides the opportunity to closely monitor the safety of children in the classroom and the playground. It provides a recording for review when actions taken are in question. The designated secured single entrance which requires staff to open the door for parents and others keeps building secure.

The fully automated record keeping and reporting system for maintaining all health and dental records insures that staff will be able to readily access children's information to comply with Head Start Standards and to provide for needs in a timely manner.

- **Family and Community Engagement**

The recently launched "Once Upon a Time" read aloud program initiative to develop and expand parents' engagement in School Readiness provides a very simple but highly engaging process to improve children's literacy skills and language skills in preparation for public school.

- **Child Development and Education**

The classroom schedule reflects a time period for teaching staff and others to participate in the new Program Initiative-"Once Upon a Time." The main focus is to read aloud to children every day utilizing a structured approach to maximize children's opportunities to develop literacy and language skills.

The Program continues to fund and provide release time for staff to continue their college education in their area of assignment, particularly teaching staff. Support and guidance are offered to also insure that the Program responds to the mandates regarding teacher credentials.

NEED IMPROVEMENT

None

POTENTIAL AREA OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

FISCAL INTEGRITY

Financial Management Systems
Reporting
Procurement
Compensation
Cost Principles
Facilities and Property

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

- There is verification of employment taxes utilizing the accounting payroll module.
- There is monthly monitoring and submission of financial reporting to the Policy Council members, administration and department heads.
- The Program accesses the Internal Revenue Service E-Services to verify W-9's.
- The Program utilizes Electronic Requisitioning.
- Reconciliation forms are implemented for the use of reconciling weekly cash draw-downs; inter fund accounts, and bank accounts.
- The Program implements the new Fixed Assets Tracking System utilizing a bar code scanner/reader.

NEED IMPROVEMENT

None

POTENTIAL AREA OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

ERSEA

Recruitment and Selection (including Special Services)

Eligibility

Enrollment

Attendance and Participation

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

- The Program's ADA is at 87%.
- The Program maintains an active waitlist with over 1615 applications.
- The Program met the required 10% enrollment opportunities to children with disabilities (398).

NEED IMPROVEMENT

None

POTENTIAL AREA OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

CHILD HEALTH & SAFETY

Access to Health and Dental Care
Screening and Referrals (Health & Special Services)
Safe Physical Environments (Health & Special Services)
Healthy Practices and Routines (Health & Nutrition)
Appropriate Group Sizes
Transportation and Supervision (Transportation)

PROGRAM STRENGTHS:

- Staff is very knowledgeable in Performance Standards.
- Children are involved and engaged in the classroom activities.
- Playgrounds are clean and allow children to play, including children with disabilities.
- Centers have internet access allowing for PROMIS accessibility and tracking.
- Centers have access to statewide immunization agency (IMMTRAC).
- Parent volunteers are present and involved.
- Bus monitor extends the learning process by engaging the children in activities that include shape identification, colors, and numeracy. The children also sing along to songs learned in the classroom.
- Buses are clean and well maintained.
- Parents and staff participate in the Nutrition Contest during National Nutrition Month.
- Community Partners provide nutrition education for parents at the center level.
- Training is provided by qualified staff during Pre Service and throughout the year.
- Food service operation manuals are provided to each center to assure the maintenance of food safety and sanitation standards.

- All meals components are served in a family style setting that provides opportunities for the development of positive attitudes toward healthy eating habits.
- The Program is working collaboratively and has an MOU with one (1) LEA Special Education Department. The MOU allows the Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) to enroll children in Head Start and participate in an inclusive educational environment. The LEA provides the Program a certified Special Education Teacher and two (2) paraprofessionals to work with all children in an inclusive setting.
- The Program assigns a Disability Classroom Assistant to classrooms that have children with severe disabilities to help them develop to their fullest potential alongside other children in an inclusive setting.
- Children in need of special services receive intervention through private rehabilitation agencies while waiting for LEA's ninety (90) day referral process timeline to determine eligibility.

NEED IMPROVEMENT

- Improve follow up process and documentation (abnormal findings)
- Provide staff development on policy and procedure updates (fire extinguishers, emergency procedures, tooth brushing)
- Provide additional training and technical assistance relating to required documentation in children's records (accuracy of information, completion of forms, and consistency).
- Continue collaboration with LEA's on Special Education Referral Packet (training to address changes).
- Continue to provide training on the referral packet to Support Services staff, Center Managers, and Area Directors.

POTENTIAL AREAS OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Partnerships with Families (including Special Services)
Parent-Child Relationships
Parents as Their Child's Educators
Parents in Transitions
Community Partnerships

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

- All families, including recently enrolled children, have completed FPA's with follow up.
- All centers have registered volunteers and appropriate documentation as required.
- The Program maintains the required Health Advisory Committee, as well as a Family & Community Engagement Advisory Committee, an Education Advisory Committee and Transportation Advisory Committee.

NEED IMPROVEMENT

None

POTENTIAL AREA OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

School Readiness
Curriculum Selection and Implementation
Individualization
Quality Teaching and Learning

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

- It is evident that classroom staff is gaining a better understanding on the implementation of the CLASS domains/indicators and the Early Learning Framework and are incorporating them into their planning, daily routine and instruction.
- An emphasis is placed on developing literacy skills in children by all program staff. Children are read to more often and higher level thinking questions are asked. Parents are becoming more aware of the importance of reading to their children. The Program is implementing a project called the “Once Upon a Time”, including a training is offered to parents on ready to children. A Lending Library allows parents the opportunity to check out books on a weekly basis.

NEED IMPROVEMENT

- Provide additional training and technical assistance on the Dual Language Program and how to implement it.
- Re-evaluate the time allotment for outdoor gross motor development (additional time for guided gross motor development).

POTENTIAL AREA OF NON COMPLIANCE (PANC)

None