



Hidalgo County Head Start Program

Policy Council Regular Agenda

DATE: March 18, 2015

SUBJECT: Discussion/Approval of the 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 26-30, 2015 and February 2-6, 2015.

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 2014 - 2015

Regulation:

Sec 641A Standards; 45 CFR 1304.51 (i)

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program (HCHSP) conducts an Annual Self-Assessment in accordance with the 2007 Head Start Act. HCHSP uses the Annual Self-Assessment as an important monitoring tool in determining Program's strengths, accomplishments and challenges in accordance with the Head Start Performance Standards.

In consultation with the Policy Council and the Hidalgo County Commissioner's Court, HCHSP carries out the self-assessment with the assistance of a team composed of staff, parents and volunteers. This team engages in collecting data, conducting interviews and observations, to measure the effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals and objectives and in implementing Federal Regulations. This information is used to identify program strengths, determine areas for further development and plan appropriate strategies to effectively address areas for enhancement applicable to the HCHSP's school readiness objectives.

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 services delivered to children and families.

Self-Assessment Team Members:

Fiscal:

Elma Keller, Chief Financial Officer
Ambrosio Tovar, Procurement Director
Angelica Salinas, Procurement Assistant

Nutrition:

Gilbert Silva, Nutrition Director
Christian Barajas, Nutrition Coordinator

Child Health & Safety:

Lupita Valdez, Health Director
Lucy Hernandez, R.N.
Maria Martinez, L.V.N
Paulita Gonzales, L.V.N.
Maria L. Barrera, Mental Health Coordinator
Noemi Flores, Risk Mgmt. Specialist

Child Development:

Homero Carrera, Area Director
Susie Saenz, Area Director
Sandra Renteria, Area Director
Helen Meave, Compliance Director
Jesse Vela, Curriculum Director
Nadia De Leon, Education Coordinator

Transportation/Field Operations:

Oscar Palacios, Field Operations Director
Oliver Solis, Transportation Coordinator

Special Services:

Connie Horta, Special Services Director
Edna Snider, Special Services Coord.
Denise Chapa, Special Services Coord.

ERSEA/Family & Community

Irma Pena, Family Services Director
Ramiro Silva, Community Partnerships Director
Elvira Segura, Family Services Coordinator
Hermelinda Corona, Comm. Partnerships Coord.
Sylvia Garza, Staff Development Director

Program Governance/Mgmt. Systems:

Teresa Flores, Executive Director
Edmundo Garcia, Assistant Director
Nora S Munoz, Assistant Director
David Guel, Administrative Assistant
Karina Larios, Human Resources Director

Parent Participation

Ana Rojas	Citlaly Villanueva	Cynthia A. Jasso
Irma Cortez	Armandina Day	Maria Cirlos
Haydee Sandoval	Jessica Avalos	Imelda Ramos
Laura Alvarez	Denissee Lugo	Olga Antuno
Patricia Gonzalez	Erica Marquez	Miriam Salinas
Marlyn Montelongo	Gloria Ochoa	Patricia Sanchez
Jose Garcia	Consuelo Espiriqueta	Amparo Leal
Bianca Islas (Policy Council)	Nancy Aranda Martinez	Ana Laura Marquez
Josefa Trevino	Beatriz Gonzalez	Rosalinda Ayala
Edna Garza	Alyssa Ramos	Edith Rincon
Missy Torres	Maria Nereyda Frayre	San Juana Gonzalez
Raquel Uribe	Cassandra Casas	Maria Cortez
Anita Blume	Dalinda Palos	Clemencia Diaz
Carolina Zaragoza	Mariza Rivera	Edith Rincon
Laura Arely Becerra		

Self-Assessment Process/Data Sources:

- Training was conducted for all Self-Assessment Team Members
- All HCHSP Centers were visited
- Two (2) files (selected at random) from every classroom were reviewed and documented
- Two (2) classrooms from every center were observed and documented (a three-year old classroom and a four-year old classroom). One classroom was observed using the CLASS instrument, the second classroom was observed using the Preschool Early Language and Literacy Quick Check (*Education Department*)
- Teams were responsible to collect and analyze the data, and submit all relevant documentation to administration at the end of the self-assessment process
- Teams were responsible for completing and submitting the Team Member Summary Worksheets and the Rating Criteria for the Blue Ribbon Centers
- Data from CLASS observations, PIR, On-Going Monitoring , prior audits were collected and analyzed.
- A strength based process was utilized in identifying Program Improvement

Strengths:

- HCHSP collaborates with school districts to implement the Texas Early Education Model which provides qualified teachers, individualized professional development training designed by C.I.R.C.L.E (Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Excellence) and a research based curriculum to the Head Start classroom.
- HCHSP's collaboration efforts with the Pharr San Juan-Alamo (PSJA) school district have generated great results. They have made available to the Program nineteen classrooms in three elementary campuses as well as additional school district personnel for the Head Start classrooms. Currently four-hundred seventy-three (473) children are being served out of local school district campuses. A total of forty-five (45) Head Start classrooms in facilities are located in the district. Twenty (20) certified teachers serve Head Start children for half a day: a Principal, a Strategist and two (2) Mentors spend 100% of their time with Head Start and district teachers in Head Start Classrooms. Public school teachers and Head Start teachers are planning and sharing the same strategies in preparing Head Start children to transition into the school systems. The PSJA partnership has also made available to the Head Start Program three (3) school buses and drivers for our students. This partnership also makes it possible for the Program to claim a very substantial amount as non-federal match.
- HCHSP partnership with the McAllen school district made available an elementary school building which services one-hundred thirty-seven (137) Head Start children and families, at very low cost.
- HCHSP partnerships with the Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District, the Mercedes Independent School District and the McAllen Independent School district to participate in the Texas Literacy Initiative (TLI) to improve school readiness and success in the area of language and literacy.
- HCHSP partnership with the McAllen Independent School District assigns a Pre-School Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD) unit to the Austin One-Stop Head Start Center to mainstream severely disable children and prepare them to be school ready.
- HCHSP utilizes the C.I.R.C.L.E curriculum which is research based and is aligned with Texas School Readiness initiative, Head Start Child Development and Early Head Start Framework and the State Early Learning Guidelines.
- HCHSP utilizes ABRA, a computerized record keeping systems for personnel records which facilitates monitoring and compliance with local, state and federal regulations
- HCHSP is able to maintain food costs under control and currently utilizes funds from the USDA to absorb 39% of the personnel costs for custodians in the Program.
- HCHSP conducts health clinics at center level which has dramatically improved the process of complying with physicals, immunizations and health screens for parents.
- HCHSP has strong parent curricula that include Exploring Parenting and Financial Literacy as part of PFCE framework.
- HCHSP has maintained outstanding auditable records with no findings by the external auditors over the past seven years. Procedures for Non-Federal share match have been strengthened.

- HCHSP has highly qualified personnel. Currently fifty six percent (56%) of teachers have an associate's degree, forty three percent (43%) have a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and one teacher has a master's degree. Sixty four (64%) of assistant teachers have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, twenty four (24%) have an associate's degree, three (3%) have a Pre-School Certificate and the remaining are enrolled in CDA classes.
- Currently 39% of the Hidalgo County Head Start Program employees are current or former parents. Parents are also given priority consideration to fill the substitute vacancies for classroom staff. Many parents began their career tract as classroom volunteers and transitioned to jobs such as assistant teachers, bus aides, disability aides, custodians, etc., and have enrolled in college degree programs to become teachers.

Self-Assessment Summary and Plan for Improvement:

- ERSEA: Program's ADA is at or below the acceptable level (85%).
HCHSP will put in place a plan to initiate a more intentional coordinated effort to ensure the Program's required ADA is maintained and surpassed.
- TRANSPORTATION: HCHSP's fleet of buses is old, not as fuel efficient as newer models, and in need of repair.
HCHSP will develop a bus replacement plan to replace older buses.
Bus Diver turnover is high, making it very difficult to retain trained personnel.
HCHSP will develop a plan to recruit, hire and retain bus drivers. In addition bus-aides will be trained in social-emotional development to extend the classroom environment onto the bus and improve CLASS standing for the Program.
- FIELD OPERATIONS: Playgrounds are in need of upgrading and new equipment.
HCHSP will implement a plan to enhance playgrounds that will include new and different type of equipment for gross motor development as well as social/emotional development.
- HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: Personnel functions and monitoring of deadlines need to be revised to include better use of electronic processes.
HCHSP will implement an annual calendar of events to maximize the use of ABRA (software for personnel) for time sensitive deadlines, establishing priority events and establish a more efficient use internal procedures and validation of data. Additional research will be conducted to consider electronic storage of employee records. This process will eliminate the repetitive storage of hard copy records and allow staff to use clerical time for record management. Tracking systems will be established and monitored for existing non-employees such as volunteers and school district professionals working through partnerships.
- NUTRITION: Plate waste is a problem that impacts food production cost.
HCHSP will be address over the preparation of food issue through additional training and closer monitoring. In addition, a plan to replace and update equipment will be developed and implemented to ensure correct portion size and quality control.

- **SPECIAL SERVICES:** Documentation preparation needs to be improved.
HCHSP will design a plan that will include additional T/TA to address documentation and ensure accuracy and consistency across the Program.
- **CHILD DEVELOPMENT:** Consistency is needed in the implementation of the Dual Language Program.
HCHSP will develop an ongoing training plan to ensure the consistent implementation of the Dual Language Program across all Head Start classrooms.

Potential Area of Non Compliance:

- **CHILD DEVELOPMENT:** Data collected through the self-assessment shows that the average score across all classrooms observed, were below the National Average (2014) in two of the three CLASS Pre-K domains, Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. HCHSP will develop a plan to strengthen competencies of classroom staff and other Program staff in Instructional Support, Classroom Organization and Emotional Support, as defined in CLASS and in the School Readiness Plan.
HCHSP will expand the development and implementation of the Coaching Plan for classroom staff, center managers and others to improve the delivery of instruction in all areas of the Head Start Framework and CLASS domains.
HCHSP will increase the number of CLASS reliable staff to assist in the implementation of the Coaching Plan.
HCHSP will develop a cadre of internal trainers to address the need for CLASS reliable staff.

Policy Council Approval Date:
Commissioners' Court Approval Date: