



Hidalgo County Head Start Program

Policy Council Regular Agenda

DATE: March 23, 2016

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

RATIONALE/NEED: The purpose of the Self-Assessment is to improve program effectiveness. The Self-Assessment was conducted during the weeks of January 25, 2016-February 5, 2016.

RECOMMENDATION: Administration recommends approval.

COST: N/A

RELATED INFORMATION INCLUDES: Hidalgo County Head Start Program Self-Assessment Results

INITIATED BY: Nora S. Munoz, Assistant Director for Programmatic Services

REVIEWED BY: Teresa Flores, Executive Director

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL: *Teresa Flores*



Hidalgo County Head Start Program 2016 Annual Self-Assessment Final Report

Introduction: The Hidalgo County Head Start Program (HCHSP) primary goal is to provide high quality comprehensive Head Start services to the children and families of Hidalgo County. HCHSP believes that this can only be achieved through continuous quality improvements that directly impact the foundation of excellence. It is the goal of HCHSP to not only meet, but exceed Program Performance Standards, moving toward program excellence in serving the children and families of Hidalgo County.

HCHSP conducts a Self-Assessment as per Head Start Performance Standards which states *“that at least once each program year, Head Start agencies must conduct a Self-Assessment of their effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals and objectives and in implementing Federal regulations”* (1304.51(i)(1)).

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 and reviewing 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.

Methodology: HCHSP conducted its annual Self-Assessment on January 25, 2016 through February 5, 2016. An extensive training was conducted on January 20, 21, and 22, 2016 for the Policy Council, Center Managers, and Self-Assessment Team respectively. The following is the composition of the Self-Assessment team:

Fiscal:

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

Nutrition:

Gilbert Silva, Nutrition Director
Karina Beckmann, Nutrition Coordinator
Aurora Figueroa, Nutrition Coordinator

Child Health & Safety:

Lucy Hernandez, RN, Health Services Director

Special Services (Disabilities):

Edna Snider, Special Services Director

Maria Martinez, LVN
Paulita Gonzales, LVN
Noemi Flores, Risk Mgmt. Specialist

Denise Chapa, Special Services Coordinator

Child Development:

Rebecca Villarreal, Administrator for Education
Homero Carrera, Education Area Director
Hector Guerra, Education Area Director
Susie Saenz, Education Area Director
Nadia De Leon, Education Area Director
Helen Meave, Compliance & Monitoring Director
Maria Luisa Barrera, Mental Health Coordinator

ERSEA/Family & Community:

Elvira Segura, Family Services Director
Ramiro Silva, Community Partnerships Director
Ana Villaurrutia, Family Services Coordinator
Debra Gamboa, Family Services Coordinator
Hermelinda Corona, Community Partnerships
Coordinator

Program Governance/Management Systems:

Teresa Flores, Executive Director
Edmundo Garcia, Assistant Program Director
Nora S Munoz, Assistant Program Director
David Guel, Administrator for Human Resources
Karina Larios, Human Resources Director
Sylvia Garza, Staff Development Director

Transportation/Field Operations:

Oscar Palacios, Field Operations Director
Oliver Solis, Transportation Coordinator

Parent Participation/Volunteers:

Karina Castillo, Hidalgo
Hiram Guajardo, Western Rd.
Maria Dominguez, Mission IV
Perla Castellanos, Mission IV
Johana Flores, Mission III
Jessica Ramos, Palmview II
Olga E. Calvillo, Alamo
Ana Bernal, A - 1
Elizabeth Medrano, Donna I
Paula Robles, Edinburg I
Alma Resendez, Edinburg V
Adela Baldazar, Edinburg V
Haydee Sandoval, Las Milpas
Marisol Luevano, Las Milpas
Oscar Gutierrez, Las Milpas
Cindy Trevino, Las Milpas
Gladys Valdez, Las Milpas
Julia Garcia, Mission I
Marilyn Padilla, Mission IV
Irma Garcia, San Juan I
Brenda Garcia, Pharr
Alicia Alvarez, Western Rd
Anabel Hurrubiate, A - 1
Olga Antuna, Mission II

Ana Hernandez, Las Milpas
Alicia Alvarez, Western Rd.
Vanessa Millan, Mission IV
Rachel Calvillo, Sullivan
Eunice Salas, Mission III
Maria G. Narvaes, Palm. II
Maria Acosta, Alton
Maria R. Esquivel, A - 1
Maria Luisa Ruiz, Edin. I
Sonia E Rodriguez, Edin. V
Frances Martinez, Edin. V
Rosa Rhodes, La Herencia
Francisca Espinosa, Las M.
Sarah Terrell, Las Milpas
Veronica Valdez, Las M.
Maricela Charles, Las M.
Karla Orozco, Las Milpas
Cecilia Villanueva, Palacios
Rocio Nava, San Juan I
Beatriz Gonzalez, Palm. II
San Juanita Paz, Western Rd
Adriana A. Tubaes, W. Rd
Mara P. Rincon, Mission II
Anabel Martinez, M II

Gladys Valdez, Las Milpas
Crystal Ochoa, Mission IV
Maribel Cepeda, Mission IV
Delinda Balderas, Sullivan
Erika Alvarez, Mission III
Martha Gomez, Alamo
Elfega Castro, A - 1
Gabriela Diaz, A - 1
Teresa Hernandez, Edin. I
Blanca Quiros, Edin. V
Leea Cepeda, Edin. V
Cecilia Ugalde, La Herencia
Beatriz Villegas, Las Milpas
Stephanie Saucedo, Las Milpas
Erica L. Alvarado, Las Milpas
Ana Lilia Hernandez, Las Milpas
Mayra Sequera, Las Milpas
Brenda Zapata, Pharr
Martina V. Tapia, Mission II
Josefa Trevino, Palmview II
Alma Lozano, Western Rd
San Juanita Leal, Western Rd
Ericka Marquez, Mission II
Alma D. Richmond, Mission II

Griselda Pacheco, Palacios	Diana Macias, Palacios	Maria D. Reyna, Palacios
Maria D. Macias, Palacios	Diana Hernandez, Progreso	Esmeralda Martinez, Sullivan
Raquel Sifuentes, Progreso	Amity Lopez, Progreso	Juanita Gonzales, Mission II
Rosa Zuniga, UTRGV	Rafael Zuniga, UTRGV	Gladys Vargas, McAllen V
Iriana Quintero, McAllen V	Marina P. Foster, Wes. III	Alejandra Guerrero, Weslaco III
Jessica Avalos, McAllen IV	Karla Garza, Mercedes	Maria Campos, Mercedes
Dina Garcia, Mercedes	Alma Guajardo, Edin. II	Claudia Villanueva, Edinburg II
Maria Sanchez, San Juan II	Iris Olivares, La Joya	Maria Moreno, Palm. III
Maymie Olivarez, Palmview III	Alejandra Robledo, P. III	Viviana Villarreal, Palm. II
Guadalupe Ledesma, Palm. II	Rosa Vasquez, Palm. II	Ruby M. Gonzalez, Mission IV

HCHSP’S plan for this year’s Self-Assessment included the analysis of the following data:

- CLASS Observations conducted by the Education Area Director and Center Managers in the Fall
- Children’s Pre and Mid Assessment results
- Children’s Average Daily Attendance for PY 2015-2016
- Staff Training/Development
- Parent participation in training/workshops
- Data collected from Center visits and On-Going Monitoring
- Previous results from PY 2014-2015 Self-Assessment

In addition to the analysis of data, the Self-Assessment team visited every Head Start center; two children’s files (selected at random) from every classroom were reviewed and documented; One classroom from every center (selected at random) was observed and documented using the Preschool Early Language and Literacy Quick Check; One classroom from every center (selected at random) was observed using the Mental Health On-Site Observation tool; Two files from every center (selected at random) were reviewed for ERSEA compliance; Two First Aid Kits from every center (selected at random) were monitored for compliance; A Center Safety Checklist was conducted at every center; An American with Disabilities (ADA) Checklist was conducted at every center; A Playground Checklist was conducted at every center; A Bus Route Monitoring Report was submitted for every bus providing transportation services; And, one-hundred and twenty (120) personnel files were reviewed for compliance.

Key Insights:

Strengths:

Fiscal/Procurement:

- HCHSP’S governmental accounting system facilitates the monitoring, reconciliation and preparation of financial reports on a daily basis such as the general ledger, and reconciliations, general ledger transactions, electronic requisitioning, purchase order processing, payroll processing, quarterly reports and many others. Additionally, the most recently implemented Fixed Assets Tracking System enables us to physically account for all assets by utilizing a bar code scanner to tag fixed assets and easily track their location.

- HCHSP's process in documenting in-kind contributions has been strengthened to ensure adherence to Head Start standards. A certified independent appraisal of all real property has been conducted for all center buildings and land to more accurately value in-kind contributions. Additionally, the supporting documentation provided to the centers has been redesigned and fortified to more accurately support in-kind valuation of Take-home activities.
- HCHSP's outstanding audit results within the past 7-10 years are indicative of the strong internal controls the Program has in place. The fact that there has not been any areas potential non-compliance is indicative of the continued efforts and dedication of the Head Start staff. This enables the fiscal/procurement departments to be audit ready every day, produce financial reports accurately, efficiently and effectively, minimizing errors, and maintaining the integrity of the Program's funding resources.
- HCHSP's full automation of the accounting purchasing allows for easy tracking and maintenance of each request for purchases by every Head Start department. Funds for purchases are accounted for by the built in monetary budget balance for each line item.

ERSEA/Family and Community Partnerships:

- HCHSP maintains an active waitlist of over 395 applications.
- HCHSP has met the required 10% enrollment opportunities to children with disabilities (369 children required - current report – 400 children enrolled).
- HCHSP's independent audit reviews have found all the ERSEA files to be 100% Head Start eligible and in compliance and include supporting documentation.
- HCHSP maintains a Family Partnership Agreement system that aligns with the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework outcomes and School Readiness Outcomes.
- All families, including recently enrolled children, have completed the Family Partnership Agreement with follow-ups.
- All centers have registered parent and community volunteers with appropriate documentation as required.
- HCHSP maintains a Family and Community Engagement Advisory Committee.
- HCHSP maintains strong collaborations with LEA's and community organizations such as local Housing Authorities, the County of Hidalgo Community Service Agency, the University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley, South Texas College, and Region One Educational Service Center.
- HCHSP maintains a strong Family Literacy program that promotes a parent/child "Read-Aloud" program, to include Reading Lending Libraries at all Head Start classrooms as well as the HEB-Read 3 Program.
- HCHSP maintains a strong parent education program to include the Exploring Parenting curriculum and the Financial Literacy program; Partnerships with the local education agencies also provide English as a Second Language and GED education.

Child Health & Safety:

- In comparison to the 2015 Self-Assessment, there is marked improvement in follow up care concerning child health screens and/or assessments.
- Several centers have children starting on the first day of enrollment with all or nearly all health criteria up to date.

- A considerable improvement is noted on the collection of dental exams along with the follow up exams being completed and collected.
- Documentation of daily/weekly health checks and child safety protocols also demonstrate consistency throughout the centers program wide.
- Classroom and playground safety also demonstrate consistency in meeting and exceeding Performance Standard criteria.

Early Childhood Development:

- Classroom staff develop and implement intentional Lesson Plans that include engaging interactions and learning concepts with a purpose.
- Children's work is displayed through-out the centers and classrooms.
- Classroom Teachers maintain excellent classroom management and children are always on task.
- Children are happy and well-adjusted to the learning environment.
- Parent engagement is evident by the number of volunteers participating in the Self-Assessment and by the documentation available for review.
- HCHSP partners 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's collaboration efforts with the Pharr San Juan-Alamo (PSJA) school district have generated great results. They make available to the Program twenty-one classrooms in three elementary campuses as well as additional school district personnel for the Head Start classrooms. Currently three-hundred and ninety-three (393) children are being served out of local school district campuses. A total of forty-seven (47) Head Start classrooms in facilities are located in the district. Sixteen (16) certified teachers serve Head Start children full day (Palacios and Farias Head Start) and fifteen and a half (15 1/2) certified teachers serve Head Start children in Head Start centers in the district 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.

Nutrition:

- HCHSP is able to maintain food costs under control and currently utilizes funds from the USDA to absorb 42% of the personnel costs for custodians who assist to serve the food in the classrooms in the Program.
- HCHSP's annual Nutrition Contest generates a substantial number of parents who are engaged in healthy nutritional awareness in our community.

Special Services:

- HCHSP's 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. This community based setting allows children who have more significant disabilities to be educated in a least restrictive environment allowing for total inclusion.

- HCHSP continues to work collaboratively through Memoranda of Understanding with the Special Education Department (13) to establish cooperative working relationships to ensure services are provided to our special needs children.
- HCHSP assigns Disability Classroom Assistants to classrooms where there are children with a more significant disability to assist the teacher and allows for children with special needs to develop along non-disabled children.
- HCHSP provides training to parents and staff on IDEA in order to assist them be better advocates for their children.
- HCHSP collaborates with Early Childhood Intervention Agencies to allow eligible children to make the transition into the Head Start Program.

Transportation/Field Operations:

- HCHSP is currently operating twenty-two (22) bus routes and thirteen (13) double routes.
- HCHSP collaborates with the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District transportation department to provide a bus, a bus driver and bus-aide to transport thirteen (13) Head Start children to and from home, at no cost to the Program.
- Bus-aides interact with the children while on the bus, extending the educational program, by reciting nursery rhymes, numbers, shapes, colors, etc.
- HCHSP's Transportation Department staff has been accident-free for the last eight (8) years.

Program Governance/Management Systems:

- HCHSP utilizes ABRA, a computerized record keeping system for personnel records which facilitates monitoring and compliance with local, state and federal regulations.
- Employee records are properly maintained and the present system is proven to be effective. The personnel record audits conducted by Child Care Licensing Representatives have met a "No Deficiency" status.
- Currently 36% 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.

Recommendations:

Fiscal/Procurement: HCHSP will undertake the initiative and innovative process of reviewing and updating its Accounting Manual and Procurement Manual to reflect the newly reorganized 45 CFR Part 75 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for HHS Awards.

ERSEA/Family and Community Partnerships: HCHSP's current Average Daily Attendance for children is at 90%. We will continue the intentional effort to reach our goal of 95%. Additional training will be provided to the Support Services Staff on the Family Partnership Agreement to ensure individualization of services to our families and appropriate follow up on referrals.

Child Health & Safety: HCHSP will continue to work on improving the time frame between the request for health data, in assisting the parents in the collection process, and in documenting in health records all efforts that have been made to secure health information. HCHSP will provide the center staff additional community resources that parents may utilize to improve accessibility to health care. In addition to generating a greater pool of community resources to help meet the family health needs, developing strong relationships with these providers will help parents become confident advocates for the health maintenance and improvement of their child's health. Individualized training on health services by the Health Services Coordinators at the center level will help close the gap between parent need for health follow up and access to care.

Early Childhood Development: HCHSP has identified Classroom Teachers in need of assistance and support. The Education Department has developed a plan for improvement that includes working with the Center Managers and Classroom Teachers in providing training, support, modeling and follow up in the teaching and learning process. Teachers have been identified and classified by priority of needs:

Priority 1: Classroom Teachers failing to meet expected gains of 10 + points per domain in LAP-D and Classroom Teachers scoring LOW in CLASS Observations for years reviewed

Priority 2: Classroom Teachers failing to meet expected gains of 10 + points per domain in LAP-D and Classroom Teachers scoring HIGH in CLASS Observations for years reviewed

Priority 3: Classroom Teachers identified and recommended by Education Area Directors as needing assistance and first year Classroom Teachers and others needing continued support

Results: 42 (21.5%) Classroom Teachers in Priority 1 group
26 (13.3%) Classroom Teachers in Priority 2 group
38 (19.4%) Classroom Teachers in Priority 3 group

Classroom Teachers in Priority 1 and 2 will be provided support by the Education Area Directors and Center Managers. Classroom Teachers in Priority 3 will be provided support by an assigned Peer Coach.

Nutrition: HCHSP will continue to improve in the area of small equipment standardization in order to continue to help control food cost and overall plate waste. The Nutrition department staff will provide additional training and support to Classroom staff to expand the area of Family Style service.

Special Services: HCHSP will continue to work with the Local Education Agencies Special Education Departments to expand collaboration efforts and provide the needed services to 10% of our Funded Enrollment.

Transportation: HCHSP's fleet of buses is old, not as fuel efficient as newer models, and in need of repair (8 buses were manufactured in 1995). The Program will develop a bus replacement plan to replace older buses as funding becomes available. Bus Driver 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.

Program Governance/Management Systems: The Human Resources department will continue to increase the use of electronic storage of hard copy records that are duplicated annually. The Staff Development department in conjunction with the Education department will enhance the New Classroom Staff Orientation and Training Module to include the implementation of a computer-based program (Beginning Teacher Series) which offers strategies to train staff that are new to Head Start.