

## **I. Executive Summary**

A. As soon as the Cape Cod Collaborative received the information that our proposal was approved and given a commencement date, we began working to form the Grant Planning Committee by reaching out to both public and private early educators in two regional districts and the four towns. Credibility had been established through our work during the previous two and one-half years of the 808 grant. The Cape Cod Collaborative had expanded the Early Learning Network across the Cape and Islands and had also formed the Early Childhood Administrators and Principals' Group. Through these meetings, committee membership was publicized. The Planning Committee quickly formed and began with regularly scheduled meetings.

By the end of February, the Planning Committee had met, established criteria for employing Strategic Planning consultants, and contracted with Strategies for Children, Inc., Dr. Chris Martes, as consultants to the committee. The Grant Manager, Planning Committee, and Consultants quickly designed data-gathering and outreach plans to complete a comprehensive needs assessment. All meetings are public and broadcasted digitally to provide maximum input from all 32 members and stakeholders across the towns in addition to personal visits.

The Planning Committee and Grant Manager have completed several actions. Seven Committee meetings have been held; a brochure and two press releases have been published; and two public forums have been presented. Additionally, online consultation is continuous among committee members, the Consultants, and Grant Manager. All of the publications as well as the committee meeting agendas and notes are available online. Our web page is: <http://www.capecodcollaborative.org/index.cfm/projects/preschoolearly-learning-initiatives/>.

**B.** Partners are the following: Grant Planning Committee which includes both public and private early learning educators, representatives across the towns; Strategies for Children, Inc. (President, Chris Martes); Barnstable Public Health, Barnstable representative DCF, and Cape Cod Child Development (Head Start).

**C.** The Strategic Plan needs to be written, presented and published. There will be a public forum, "Culminating Event" on June 14<sup>th</sup>, to share the Plan and garner public comment before its submission.

## II. Project Manager and Key Personnel

- A. The Grant Manager is Jan Rotella, who is also serving as one of two grant coaches. After working on the grant proposal development, Jan has been coordinating all activities since the commencement of the grant period (February 22<sup>nd</sup>), with all the school district and community-based preschool personnel. Her responsibilities include the following:
- Conduct scheduled planning committee meetings;
  - Maintain all documents relevant to the planning process;
  - Complete timely correspondence with planning committee members and community stakeholders, including meeting notes and relevant articles;
  - Compose and publish monthly press releases to inform communities of public events and planning process;
  - Compose, publish, distribute brochures describing the planning grant;
  - Visit community-based preschools, public preschools, and discuss the planning process with both administrators and classroom educators;
  - Maintain communication with all stakeholders and committee members as well as school personnel, both public and community-based preschools.
  - Complete additional tasks as necessary to meet the needs of the grant and the grant stakeholders.
- B. The Grant Coach Julie Hall, working with the Grant Manager, is providing coaching and support for the preschool educators, administrators, and community agency leaders. She is also assisting with meetings, public forums, and various outreach activities among the community-based preschool centers. She will be visiting private, community-based preschools during the remaining grant weeks.
- C. Dr. Joe Gilbert is the Grant Administrator for this Grant. He is the Special Projects Director for the Cape Cod Collaborative and is able to provide the institutional support and facilities that are so essential for effective regional work. He is also responsible for budget and overall direction.
- D. The Preschool Expansion Grant Planning Committee is composed of thirty-two members who are representatives from the two public, regional school districts, community-based preschools in the four towns, local social agencies (i.e., Barnstable County Public Health, Department of Children and Family Services), and directors of the Cape Cod Child Development Program (Head Start). This is a very active committee whose members regularly participate in all grant activities, such as the public forums, in addition to the committee meetings.
- E. Strategies for Children, Inc., led by their President, Dr. Chris Martes, are the consultants for strategic planning and for consultative composition of the final strategic plan. Mr. Titus DosRemedios, Director for Data & Research at Strategies for Children, is also part of this consultant team. Dr. Martes and Strategies for Children were hired by the Planning Committee based on set criteria and through the interview process.

### III. Leadership

A strong and experienced leadership team is in place, facilitated by Jan Rotella, Grant Manager. She and the Planning Committee have diligently reached out to schools, centers, parents, community leaders, and any interested persons regarding preschool expansion. Personal visits and phone calls have been part of the outreach.

Chris Martes and Titus DosRemedios from Strategies for Children, Inc., are working in collaboration with the Preschool Grant Planning Committee. Their work has been essential in the preparation of federal, state, and local data, assistance in constructing agendas for weekly and bi-weekly meetings, and leading local community forums. They attend all meetings and engage in continuous collaboration throughout the planning process at each stage and after each step in the process. They ensure that families' voices continue to be heard conducting surveys, making phone calls, using gatherings and other "points of entry". In addition, they have served as liaison to EEC's presenting updates and revisions.

The major constituents of the team include a grant manager, local superintendents, representatives of collaborating agencies, public and private early childhood educators, principals and directors of both public and private preschools, CFCE coordinators, grant coach and grant administrator. Planning committee members include parents who have reached out to on-line mothers' groups. The grant manager, together with the consultants, has taken the lead in preparing agendas, providing frequent communications to all team members, and chairing meetings. Together, these thirty-two invested individuals have worked tirelessly to brainstorm, engage, and consider different points of view.

The committee is honored to connect ideas with the Barnstable County Public Health Department, DCF, Head Start, Cape Cod Collaborative, CACCI, and Cape Cod Children's Place. In other words, key providers and stakeholders on Cape Cod are connecting and working in partnership to initiate conversations, ensure that high quality learning programs conform to EC learning guidelines, and strategize in building capacity especially in high need areas with increased social services and family supports.

Many activities have been initiated to date. These efforts include the list below as well as related activities.

- Reviewing the preschool expansion grant and scheduling bi-weekly Planning Committee meetings
- Establishing criteria in the selection of consultant services, interviewing, and hiring the consultant.
- Distributing agendas and questionnaires that will serve to inform the committee of concerns, strengths, and questions.
- Publishing monthly press releases and a brochure, "Preschool Expansion: What it means" (the press releases and brochure are available at the website listed in the Executive Summary).
- Building consensus in describing a 'mixed delivery model' looking to high quality, licensed, preschools that coordinate with local public schools. All preschool education programs are aligned with Massachusetts' EC Guidelines, Standards for Social/Emotional Development, and the Approaches to Play and Learning Standards. Educators in all public and private preschools receive comparable professional development in training sessions that are open and available to all early educators.
- Collecting data through committee developed surveys, questionnaires, and needs assessments that were distributed through all of the public and private licensed preschool programs in all four towns as well as the region's on-line moms' group.
- Attending a regional meeting in Worcester.
- Arranging and hosting public forums for both regional school communities. Collecting concerns, comments, questions, and barriers unique to each participant in the forum.

The leadership of the Planning Committee, its members and consultants, is on-going with a clear commitment to develop a strategic plan that will provide for expansion of access to high quality, licensed preschool education. As much as the full committee is involved, they also realize that the work of writing the Strategic Plan must be completed by a smaller task force. Mrs. Rotella has organized a representative sub-committee to work with our consultants, Dr. Martes and Mr. DosRemedios, in this writing and compilation of the Strategic Plan. Their work will be submitted to the full Planning Committee, and Grant Administrator, for approval prior to its submission to the Department.

#### **IV. Planning Implementation (Program Design, Development, and Costs)**

At this point, planning has consisted of brainstorming and extensive work completing the needs assessment. The committee and Leadership Team quickly learned that any needs assessment is just a point in time; in other words, needs change quickly and data has to be updated frequently. However, the trends and issues across these four Cape towns are consistent. The needs assessment is complete, to date, for expanded access to high quality, early learning programs. The unanimous consensus is that expanded access is critically needed with major consideration for transportation and fiscal feasibility.

The Planning Committee and Leadership Team are meeting next week (April 25) to finalize a vision statement for the Strategic Plan and Program Design. We strongly believe that a clear, succinct vision statement will be a driving direction for the Strategic Plan. Such a statement will also be a good beginning for talking points with all stakeholders (educators, parents, agencies) and with media publications.

Superintendents of Schools, in both regional districts, the Head Start CEO and her professional development director, and administrators/directors of private, licensed preschools are involved. They are committed and to the active process of planning for the expansion of access to high quality preschool for children ages 2.9 to 5 years of age. The common understanding is that this access must be universal in the multiple communities across Chatham, Dennis, Harwich, and Yarmouth. They will continue to work in the efforts to meet the needs of children in these communities. The needs of the area have been documented through data, research, and public forums.

The program design, costs, and all components of the Strategic Plan will be completed over the next 6 weeks. A task force, or subcommittee, of the Planning Committee has been formed. This task force will work directly with the Strategies for Children consultants to write the final plan. Each component and draft of the plan will be brought back to the full Planning Committee for review, edits, and approval.

The final Strategic Plan and Program Design will be published and presented at our planned Culminating Event – a Multi-town Public Forum on June 14<sup>th</sup>. At this event, the Strategic Plan and Program Design documents will be distributed as well as presented by the Strategies for Children consultants. Following the presentation, Planning Committee members, with the Leadership Team, will lead small group discussions focusing on the individual components of the plan. Participants in this Culminating Event will be able to add their comments, suggestions, and concerns, prior to our final submission to the Department of Early Education and Care.

**V. Budget**

The budget submitted with our proposal in December was adjusted in a February budget submission as requested by EEC in order to *conform to the EEC workbook line item format*.

We do not anticipate any changes in the approved February budget throughout the remainder of the grant period, or through June 20, 2016.

This budget statement and summary is submitted by the Grant Administrator, Dr. Joe Gilbert.