University Child Care Committee
Tuesday January 13, 2015
Room 67 Bascom
1:30-2:30 pm

Approved May 12, 2015

Present: Lynn Edlefson, Phillip Braithwaite, Chris Bruhn, Cara Streekstra, Katie Austin, Carol Noreen, Laurie Cox

Agenda:

1. Review the recent plan to merge the two preschool lab sites in the Linden facility.

Many of you have seen the newspaper article describing the merging of the preschool lab on Mineral Point Road with the site on Linden. The link is below


Here is a brief overview of events: Note: this information was sent to all campus teachers on Tuesday January 13 and essentially summarized the information that was provided to the committee.

“Dear Teachers;

By now, many of you have seen the newspaper article describing the merging of the preschool lab on Mineral Point Road with the site on Linden. Admittedly, while I made sure to talk to each director last week, the news may have been, or may still be, a surprise to some of you. It was certainly not intentional to leave anyone out of the process and I appreciate Lisa Marie reminding me that there are many of you to communicate with.

As the article states, Dean Shim made a difficult decision in December that financial support, and the research mission of the Preschool Lab could be addressed in the best way by merging the two sites and increasing the sustainability of the lab program. Staff and families were personally called by Abbi Kruse, Jenny Lee and Jill Riley right around New Year’s and there was an all staff meeting with Linden and Mineral Point staff held on January 2nd with subsequent meetings all last week with the families. The church has been notified and the University Child Care Committee heard about it just today in a meeting I called for that purpose. The site will be open through August 21, 2014 with a plan to open two new classrooms at the Linden Site. Campus will lose 7 infant care FTE’s, but Eagle’s Wing will add 7 in the fall. Linden will give priority enrollment to the current MP families and it is hoped that all who wish to transfer to that site will be able to do so. I have offered the help of our office to help any family who wishes to consider moving to a different
program. Thus far, I have had only one email from one family. Linden will have known capacity for 4 teachers, so clearly there is not a position for everyone. Again, our office will do all we can to help refer those interested to other viable positions in our system.

I believe that the article outlines the Dean’s concern about fiscal stability and her focus on increasing the research focus at the preschool lab. She has recently hired, or is in the process of hiring new faculty with interests in young children. Some of you may know Heather Kirkorian and Julie Poehlman who are engaged in child and family research. I believe that this expansion of early childhood faculty is a good thing and that Dean Shim is both committed to and supportive of early childhood education.

Dean Shim included me to evaluate all options and I did so to the best of my ability with the goal of maintaining the program. Sadly, I could not obtain the financial support needed from a different university department or administration to maintain the program "as is." And, there were several other options considered and evaluated -- and you can feel free to contact me for the details on these options if you wish. One option still under consideration is a possible Early Head Start Program at the site; however, this would not allow the current teachers to maintain with university employee status.

I am more than happy to answer anything about the process or the plan going forward. If your staff does not have formal meetings coming up soon; please give me an idea of a day and time that I could stop over to informally answer any questions.

Your support of your colleagues at the Mineral Point site is deserved and appreciated. I’m attaching a copy of the campus teacher’s list that was updated as of August 2014 that provides their contact information should you care to write a supportive note to them. And, I apologize if we are missing anyone -- please share with us the staff names and emails that may be missing so that we can be sure to include them on this registry.

I’ll be happy to send out updates as we go along; I want to make sure that your questions are answered to the best of my ability, so let me know if you’d like me to stop by where and when!

Warmly, Lynn”

The committee had a general discussion of the information above and Lynn requested assistance from committee members with communicating with others on campus who may have questions. A hand out describing the 4 options for the site was disbursed.

Submitted by Lynn Edlefson   ledlefson@provost.wisc.edu

01-14-2015
Please contact Lynn with corrections or omissions. The next meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2015. An agenda will be forthcoming prior to the meeting.