

Bright Starts Cooperative Early Learning Centre Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 7:30pm

Chairperson: Robilyn Vanos

Meeting by Videoconference

In attendance: Karen Hinnigan, Stacey Reid, Michelle Bauer, Angie Docking, Edwin Ng, Emily Kozlowski, Robilyn Vanos, Jennifer Bleakney, Mariam Hassan

Meeting called to order at 7:34pm.

Motion to approve the agenda

- Moved by Jennifer
- Seconded by Mariam
- All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions
- Motion carried

BDO audit presentation

- Susan Russell and Tim Sothern present the audit financials to the Board
 - [Financial statements](#)
 - [Audit report to Board](#)
- All indicators show a strong and healthy year
- There are no markable signs of fraud reported by the Board
- All reports presented during the meeting have been included in the April meeting folder.
- The Board thanks Tim & Susan for their presentation.

Motion to approve the draft financials as presented by BDO

Moved by Jenn

Seconded by Emily

All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions.

Motion carried

- Stacey will send an email confirmation to Tim and Susan that everything has been approved by the Board, and then BDO will forward a letter of representation.

Motion to approve the March minutes

Moved by Michelle

Seconded by Angie

All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions.

Motion carried

Executive Director's report

Financial

- The Region has allowed us to keep the recoverable funding; they reached out a couple of days ago to confirm. Have also received 2022 Region funding approval for \$296K.
- Region sent along agenda for May 9 professional development day - Stacey has uploaded it in the Google Drive for the Board to review if interested. Region has also provided up to \$3K in technology funding for the day. Stacey has applied for iPads to add to the classrooms.
- Stacey has applied for the cost of the play loft to be covered by the quality improvement grant.
- Stacey has also applied for money for additional professional development (\$1.2K). Heidi is taking some courses at Conestoga College and is sharing her knowledge with leadership.

- Capacity building/retention funding - Stacey exploring hiring a staff person on a 1-yr contract for employee engagement program; Heidi has been doing this work on trial basis and it is going well. Heidi would be the preferred candidate for the staff retention role, so replacement staff would be needed to backfill Heidi's position. This provides an opportunity for current educators to step into a team leader role, which don't open up often at Bright Starts.
- Audit is now complete.

Health & Safety

- The Ministry has revoked all COVID-19 regulations from child care act, so that means all COVID protocols are now up to centres to implement on their own.
- Stacey is not recommending we suspend any pandemic policies as Bright Starts has seen a spike in cases in the last month. She recommends considering implementing the policies developed during this time to help think about general illness policies.
 - Stacey has issued another masking survey to staff and got the results same as last month - most are feeling they'd like to wear masks indoors. Bright Starts will revisit again in May/June.
- As a result of numerous COVID cases and all staff testing positive, Bright Starts closed Preschool 2 + 5 due to spike in positive cases + symptomatic absences. All have recovered. Bright Starts followed all policies and believes this spike in cases was unavoidable with community spread.
 - Were there a large proportion of families that were affected by the closure or were many of them symptomatic and isolating and would have had to miss the time? Stacey - yes, we would have had half the children ready to come back after their initial isolation period. Even though there are closures in other rooms, this one was different because Bright Starts chose to close due to staff shortage.
 - Is there any funding from the Region that's really available to cover these fee credits? Stacey - no. Estimate is it would cost approx. \$5K to offer fee credits to affected families.
- Board suggests we discuss the necessity of offering a fee credit to families; perhaps it is not necessary because lots of families are used to quarantining because of COVID. Jennifer notes that we need to appreciate that we're setting a precedent with this decision, and we should be clear about the justification for why we're returning fees. It is noted that families could begin to expect credits for all closure days (including snow days).
 - Are the staff that are required to isolate receiving a full wage from the Centre? Stacey - No. This could be a justification for why we return fees in these types of COVID closures, rather than closures like snow days (where staff are compensated).
 - How did you know when staff were ready to be back? Stacey - coordinating 5-day isolation periods and staying in touch to ask how they were feeling.
 - Are there any guidelines on how staff can return? Return 2 negative tests within 48-hrs.

Motion to compensate families for 3-day room closures due to room closures related to COVID-19

Angie to move the motion

Seconded by Mariam

All in favour, none opposed, 2 abstentions

Motion carried

Enrolment

- Bright Starts is 100% full and will stay that way in May.
- Stacey sent a note to families prompting them to share summer plans to help prompt withdrawal notices; Stacey has already received a few withdrawal notices from families and expects more.

Staffing

- All families are dropping off and picking up inside the Centre now.

- Stacey hoping to move back to secured job entry this week; families to receive a note about this tomorrow and Bright Starts will start issuing key cards this week.
- Current families will not be charged for these key cards; new families moving forward will be charged a non-refundable \$10 per keycard. There will be a replacement costs for lost keycards.

Motion to go in-camera

Moved by Emily

Seconded by Michelle

All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions

Motion carried

[IN CAMERA]

Motion to come out of in-camera

Moved by Michelle

Seconded by Jenn

All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions

Motion carried

- Rachel has resigned from her relief position.
- Stacey has put out an ECE ad to help back-fill positions and has received 6 responses already, which includes a few students who will be graduating from Conestoga and have been placed here before. Stacey notes there's a ECE-shortage across the province and she's constantly recruiting. She is glad to have some of the Region-funding to cover some recruitment cost.
- There are some students leaving and maternity leaves coming, so will hire as many as she can.
- Inclement weather policy - both School boards have reverted to their old policy where they will no longer be closed. This should result in fewer closures for Bright Starts in the winters.
 - If the buses are cancelled, but schools are open, do we automatically close? Stacey - no.
 - Is this a policy most centres have (to follow the School Board's lead)? Stacey - yes.
- Resource room is done! A few final touch-ups to go. Staff have been utilizing it and Stacey has purchased a table to furnish it. Staff on the other end of the building are interested in having their own. Toddler 5 room is available should the Board consider this for the future.

Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement

- Region is hosting a tele-conference on Friday this week. The fee reduction planned for now is 25% once we opt in to participate in the program. Another 25% reduction will happen in December. Final reductions happen in September 2024, September 2025 to get to \$10/day.
- Once we've applied and have been accepted, fees would be reduced retroactively to April 1st.
- Centres need to decide that they want to be part of this by September.
- Region will provide info on how to opt-in to the program (likely to take up to September). Bright Starts will maintain current fees until we've signed on with the Region.
- The Region has put a fee freeze on all regional Centres' fees. If you opt-out, you no longer have to follow fee freeze. Final window to sign-on would occur in 2023.
 - What would the reason be to not sign on? Stacey – there are not many. Based on for-profit or non-profit, some centres may not be eligible for certain funding.
- Stacey recommends signing on to the \$10/day but does have questions she's hoping the Ministry/Region can help answer re: budgeting for future years.
- Bright Starts will communicate to families that we're choosing to sign on with the system in order to keep parents informed. Will also ensure families understand the difference between base fees and non-base fees (i.e. non-base: NSF fee for bounced check, registration fees, etc.)
 - \$10/day for all ages? Stacey - yes and it's not related to income. Province will be keeping benefits for families in place (i.e. income tax deductions and subsidies)

- Part of the increase in childcare accessibility means the province is looking to create 86K childcare spaces. Stacey is looking for clarity on what compensation changes mean.

Motion to opt-in to the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Childcare Agreement

Moved by Michelle

Seconded by Angie

All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions

Motion carried

Treasurer's report

- March's highlights – revenue is \$27.5K over budget, expenses \$3.5K over budget; net income: \$10,478.
 - Michelle will retroactively go back and change Jan/Feb to account for some funding that arrived late.
 - Payroll expense less than budgeted
 - General admin over budget, \$12,249 - total expenditure was about \$13K.
 - Michelle to present financials at the AGM

AGM planning + expectations

- Presented on Zoom - financials, presidents report, ED report, slate of nominations.
- Will need to update previous talking points, utilizing Jenn's great script from last year.
- Angie to prepare the votes / re: Zoom pollings; and Robi/Angie to monitor chat.
 - Do we solicit questions in advance? Stacey – we can.
- Edwin will modify the registration form to add a field to submit questions and he will also add a line to the next email that goes out to let parents know they can submit questions in advance.
- New exec would be elected during the next Board meeting.
- Angie to prepare the meeting agenda as per last year's; and she will ensure the following Board meeting's start time is for 7:15pm.

Recruitment update + motion to confirm slate of Board nominees

- Received 3 applications by first deadline and received another 4 after next deadline.
- Nomination committee was happy with new applicants as candidates have diverse skill sets.
- Edwin shares experience of each nominee included in the slate.
 - Are these candidates being confirmed for two year terms? Edwin - yes.
- Emily has also agreed to serve as Treasurer. She will be confirmed in that first Board meeting. Robi can pass the motion to pass the exec committee to another member so there's no conflict of interest. Mariam to present the motion.
- Jenn will connect with Edwin to discuss how to present the nominations.
- As this is Jennifer Bleakney's final meeting, the Board thanks her for all her many contributions.

Motion to confirm slate of Board nominees

Moved by Mariam

Seconded by Edwin

All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions.

Motion carried

Motion to adjourn the meeting

Moved by Michelle

Seconded by Angie

All in favour, none opposed, no abstentions.

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:56pm.