



# Highlands Recreation District

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[www.highlandsrec.ca.gov](http://www.highlandsrec.ca.gov)

*"A Community Place to Learn, Grow & Play"*

## Agenda for EEC Parent Advisory Ad Hoc Committee

Time: Mar 25, 2021 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/91049270403>

Meeting ID: 910 4927 0403

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1. Call to order 7:00 p.m.
2. Introduction of guests
3. Communications, Announcements & Public Comments
4. Presentation: Update on HRD plan to address EEC Parent Advisory Ad Hoc Committee feedback (Attachment: Staff Report March 9, 2021)
  - o Discussion and Questions
5. Adjournment

Public comments can be submitted to the District prior to the meeting by emailing [admin@highlandsrec.ca.gov](mailto:admin@highlandsrec.ca.gov). Public comments will also be taken during the meeting.

Board Meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who need special assistance or disability-related modification or accommodation (including auxiliary aids or services) to participate in this meeting; or who have a disability and wish to request an alternative format for the agenda, meeting notice, agenda packet or other writings that may be distributed at the meeting, should contact the

Board Secretary at [admin@highlandsrec.ca.gov](mailto:admin@highlandsrec.ca.gov). Notification in advance of the meeting will enable the District to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting and the materials related to it. Public records that relate to any item on the open session agenda for a regular board meeting are available for public inspection. Those records that are distributed less than 72 hours prior to the meeting are available for public inspection at the same time they are distributed to all members, or a majority of the members of the Board. The Board has designated the office of the Highlands Recreation District, located at 1851 Lexington Ave, for the purpose of making those public records available for inspection.



## STAFF REPORT

**Date:** March 9, 2021

**To:** HRD Board of Directors

**From:** Natalee Garay-Espinal, EEC Director

**Re:** Discussion: Review and discuss plan to address EEC Parent Advisory Ad Hoc Committee feedback

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The EEC Parent Advisory Ad Hoc Committee was formed at the Board regular meeting on September 8, 2020 for the purpose of engaging parents in discussion about the EEC program. In preparation for the first committee meeting, parents met to discuss their goals and priorities for the committee. A brief was presented to the committee and later to the entire Board. The committee met three times in October, November, and December and discussed the following topics:

- EEC budget overview Staff development and retention
- EEC Director hiring process
- COVID-19 safety guidelines and protocols
- Opportunities for improved communication

On December 8, 2021 the committee presented the parent feedback they received (Attachment A) and directed District staff to return with a proposal to address the various recommendations.

### **DISCUSSION:**

In response to the EEC Parent Advisory Ad Hoc Committee recommendations, District staff propose the following actions:

#### **Staff Development**

1. Professional development is important for the EEC teachers to improve their professional practice, grow and learn from each other, and remain current with the latest best practices in the field of Early Childhood Education. Currently the EEC is working with Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC) and Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS) to improve the center's learning environment and teaching methods. Attached is a copy of a draft EEC Teacher Professional Development Plan (Attachment B).
2. In addition to the professional development plan, staff recommend increasing the number of staff development days from two to four in the next fiscal year. This would result in the 2 additional closure days for the center. Staff will consider the local school district calendar as well

as work with parents to select closure dates that are the least impactful to families. The EEC maintains the least number of program closure days out of comparative schools in San Mateo County and has a lower number of staff development days than the average for the schools which is 3.

Programs	Closures	Staff Development Days
EEC	11	2
Petite Sorbonne	31	1
Odyssey Preschool	32	5
Peninsula YMCA	18	2
Early Bird Preschool	26	5

3. Create EEC staff specialist roles to provide opportunities for growth and leadership. EEC specialty titles will expand learning, collaboration, and enhancement of the EEC.

Some of these roles may include:

#### Curriculum Coordinator

- Will research, observe and share information regarding Reggio inspired curriculum that all staff can have access to through a shared drive. Every two weeks, staff will share what they have observed or what the Reggio educational community is using to create meaningful provocations.

#### Classroom Environment Facilitator

- Will research, observe and share information regarding Reggio inspired environments that all staff can have access to through a shared drive. Every two weeks, staff will share what they have observed or what the Reggio community is using to enhance environments.

#### Music and Movement Leader

- Will plan and create music for each classroom. The EEC administration will provide staff the opportunity to lead a 10-15 min session with one of the classrooms preferably at circle time. This role will require staff to create a schedule so that they are able to visit each classroom in a rotation.

#### Garden Specialist

- Will plan and research various flowers, plants and vegetables, that would best be planted yearly or by seasons. Staff will share information and pictures about the EEC's garden on a shared drive for teachers to be able to use for curriculum or circle time. Once veggies have been grown, staff would be responsible for creating a giving basket to be placed outside of the classrooms for families. Other ideas for this role would be to grow herbs for cooking or create flower arrangements to enhance the classroom environments.

### Communication Plan

1. EEC Community Zoom Coffee Chat
  - Every second Wednesday of the month, the EEC will host a discussion on various early childhood education topics that are provided by the program administration, teachers or parents. The first of these discussions is scheduled for May 5 at 5:00 p.m. At this

zoom meeting, the staff will introduce our Reggio inspired curriculum as well as address the benefits of mixed age groups. They are optional for staff and parents to attend.

2. EEC Monthly Parent Newsletter

- Each month the EEC will publish an email newsletter with information about each classroom's happenings, resources for families, and upcoming events at the EEC. It will also include important board meeting dates, particularly if there are topics of interest to the parents and a link to the agenda. Parents will have the opportunity to opt-in or out from receiving the newsletter.

4. Parent-Teacher Conferences

- First held in 2020, the staff will continue the practice of parent-teacher conferences on an annual basis. This year the conferences began on February 15 and will continue until March 5. These conferences are a great addition to the EEC in response our families continued interest in the developmental aspects of their children ongoing learning.

5. Quarterly parent meetings (in-person or via zoom)

- Similar to the meetings held by the EEC Parent Advisory Ad Hoc Committee, staff will host a quarterly check-in meeting with parents to share important information concerning the program and District, as well as an opportunity to hear from parents to ensure the program is meeting the needs of the families.

### **Holiday Closure Dates**

One of the committee recommendations was to consider increasing the number of holiday closure dates between Christmas and New Year's. This is an additional benefit to employees that will allow for greater work life balance and may improve staff retention. One proposal was to fully close on both Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve days when the center is open a half day. These days are least attended by the children and would have minimal impact to families if the center is closed.

District staff recommend that the EEC observe full day closures on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Currently the ECC is open from 8am-12:30pm on those days. Staff understands that this decision may have District-wide implications and recommends further study. Some options to consider but not limited to would be for staff to have the option to use existing leave balances for the additional 8 hours of holiday time or allow staff to work the half day engaged in other work (staff development, curriculum planning, training, room preparation etc.) or explore increasing employee holiday leave by 8 hours.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The District currently budgets approximately \$3,500 annually (\$318 avg. per person) for staff professional development and training. The addition of two staff development days would allow staff to attend a training conferences in early childhood education and/or to hire a trainer to provide an on-site workshop for staff. Staff estimate and additional investment of \$2,000 for fiscal year 2021-22 or \$5,500 total for the year would be adequate or (\$500 avg. per person). The fiscal impact for additional holiday closures and employee holiday leave will require additional study that can be presented to the Board as part of the 2021-22 fiscal year budget process.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

District Staff recommend that the Board review and discuss plan to address the EEC Parent Advisory Ad Hoc Committee's feedback and recommendations and provide feedback and direction on next steps for implementation.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. EEC Parent Advisory Ad Hoc Committee Update Memo
- B. EEC Professional Development Plan

**Report reviewed by:**

Derek Schweigart  
General Manager



## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** December 8, 2020  
**To:** Highlands Recreation District Board of Directors  
**From:** Andrew Aquino, Vice-President and Eric Olbekson, Board Member  
**Re:** Early Education Center Parent Advisory Ad Hoc Committee Update

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Dear Board Members,

The EEC Parent Advisory Ad Hoc Committee was created at the September 2020 Regular Board meeting for the purpose of engaging parents in discussion about the EEC program. Nine parent advisors were identified and the committee met three times in October and November.

Discussion topics included:

- EEC Budget Overview
- Staff Retention & Development
- EEC Director Hiring Process
- COVID-19 Safety Protocols
- Opportunities for improved communication

Included below is feedback from the advisors. Some of these items may require Board action, while others may be implemented by staff. The feedback is included here to encourage Board consideration, discussion, and if appropriate, action. As an addendum to this memorandum is a Brief that was submitted to the Ad Hoc Committee by Parent Advisors, prior to our first meeting. Many of the topics outlined in the Brief were covered in our meetings.

We thank the advisors for their commitment and engagement during the meetings. We received valuable insights into what makes the program great and identified areas of opportunity to enhance the program and improve operations.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Aquino & Eric Olbekson

#### EEC Ad Hoc Parent Advisory Committee Feedback:

1. Consider offering additional staff development days, increasing the current development days from two to four. (regular work days, not on weekends. Parents also suggest better communication around this if they are taken, explanation of the importance and benefit to the program as well as noticing far in advance; also benchmark comparisons with other preschools/childcare programs)
2. Consider offering a holiday closure between Christmas and New Year. At the very least offer paid days off for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. (These are currently ½ days off, proposal is for the full day off)
3. Expand career development opportunities for EEC staff by creating specialist roles. Examples include Curriculum Specialists and Site Supervisors.
4. Continue with regular parent-teacher conferences. This is a new development but was well received by the parents.
5. Communication:
  - Recommend that the District sends an email reminder to stakeholders, including EEC and ASP parents, Senior Network, pool patrons, etc., each month to notify them of Board meetings, including an agenda.
  - Recommend that EEC Director and/or GM notify EEC parents, via email, when an agenda item specific to EEC is being considered by the Board.
  - Recommend that Board Members hold monthly or quarterly office hours or coffee chats to make ourselves more available to the community.
  - If possible, improved automation/processes around notifications which would allow parents to opt in/out of the type of information they would like to see (GM to explore options)
  - Recommend quarterly parent check-ins similar to the EEC Ad Hoc Parent Advisory Committee format.

#### EEC Parent Advisors:

Malini Amin

Liza Ashbrook

Tanya Banzhaf

Peter Banzhaf

Ruoxing Liu

Julie Pitts

Lisa Savcak

Mariana Shargorodsky

Stella Treas



## Professional Development Plan (QRIS/PITC)

### Summary:

- This report identifies the plan for Professional Development in the Early Education Center for the remainder of the fiscal year. The programs professional development planning and process will assist teaching staff to acquire and improve knowledge and competency.

### Current Professional Development:

- Zoom meetings with QRIS analyst once a week for 20 mins
- Zoom meetings with PITC analyst once a month for 30 mins
- Fairy Dust teaching workshops
  - Once per month

### Program for Infant Toddler Care:

- PITC believes that children benefit most when their teachers have high levels of formal education and specialized early childhood professional preparation. Opportunities for teaching and administration staff to participate in ongoing professional development ensure that their knowledge and skills reflect the profession's ever-changing knowledge base.

### PITC Matrix:

- 20 Hours of Professional Development.
  - These hours will be divided by the remaining 5 months of staff meetings.
  - The purpose of these meetings will be to assess, and improve the level of quality within relationships of staff, children and families for the EEC.

### Quality Rating and Improvement System:

- A QRIS is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs.

### QRIS Matrix:

- 21 Hours of Professional Development.
  - These hours will be divided by weekly zoom sessions with our assigned QRIS analyst.
  - The purpose of these meetings will be to assess, and improve the level of quality for the EEC.

### Conclusion:

By participating in our State's QRIS, early and school-age care providers embark on a path of continuous quality improvement. In addition, the Program for Infant Toddler Care will offer group coaching in various areas of development such as language, social/emotional, gross

motor, and cognitive. The EEC will benefit from on-going educational opportunities, and quality instruction from mentors in the field of Early Childhood Education.