

McPherson USD 418 Competition Grant Application

Competition Identification Number: R07-KS-2001

McPherson and Marion Counties

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Project Summary:

Project Title: McPherson-Marion County Head Start

Applicant Name: McPherson Unified School District (USD 418)

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The McPherson Unified School District is reapplying to be the grantee for Head Start services in McPherson and Marion County. The McPherson School District has been providing students and families in McPherson and Marion County who qualify for Head Start with comprehensive and quality programming since 1990. Students and families have developed strong relationships with the communities they live in through the Head Start Program.

The McPherson-Marion County Head Start Program serves 3-5 year old students and families in McPherson and Marion Counties. Students and families who qualify for Head Start services and that live in any of the five school districts in McPherson county are eligible to receive Head Start services through the McPherson School District. Marion county includes five school districts. Students and families who qualify for Head Start services and that live in any of the five school districts in Marion County are eligible to receive Head Start services in either the Marion or Hillsboro School District.

Between Hillsboro, Marion, and McPherson, Head Start has the capacity to serve 115 students and families that qualify for Head Start services. McPherson has the capacity to serve 76 students and families who qualify for Head Start. Marion County has the capacity to serve 39 students and families that qualify for Head Start.

The mission of McPherson-Marion County Head Start Program is committed to supporting children, families, and staff in a safe, nurturing, and educational environment through quality, comprehensive, programming and community relationships. McPherson-Marion County Head Start Goals are:

- Emphasize professional development, collaboration, and communication opportunities.
- Improve the social/emotional well being of children, families, and staff.
- Play a critical role in helping prepare children and families for school entry.

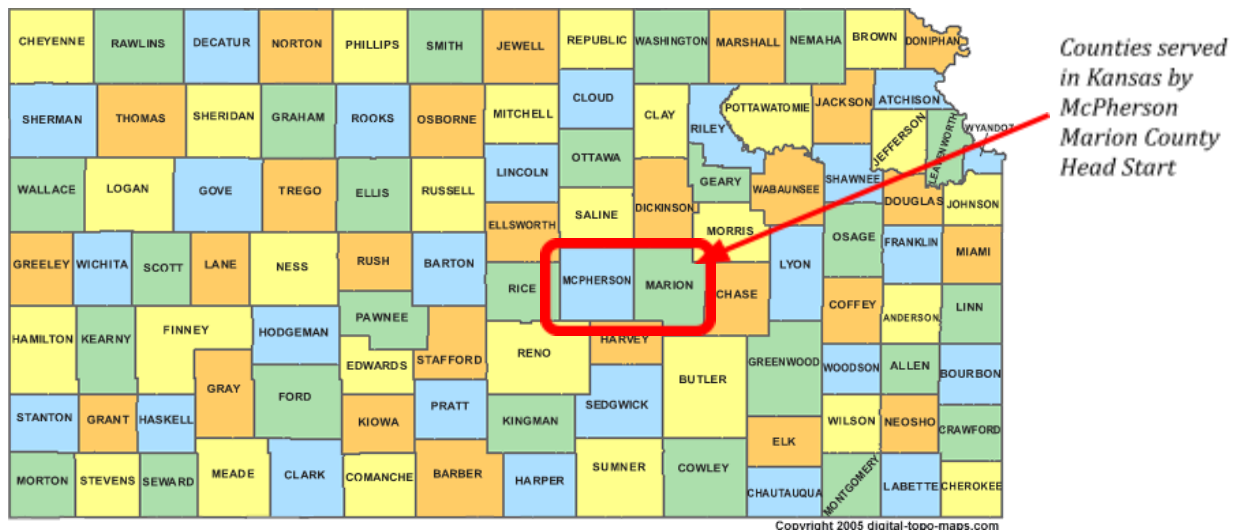
These goals are monitored on an ongoing basis using program data, child level outcome data, self assessment data, and community assessment data. Data is used to make decisions that are informed by stakeholders to improve the quality of services students and families receive.

Through collaborative efforts with local school districts, local special education providers, and community resources the McPherson-Marion Head Start Program is equipped to continue to provide comprehensive child development and family services. Services provided enhance the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of students in the domains of physical development and health; social and emotional development; approaches to learning, language, and literacy; cognition; and general knowledge. Parent engagement is enhanced through the efforts of the program and school district to provide staff and opportunities that

support parents to move toward self-sufficiency. Through comprehensive services the main goal is to prepare students and families for kindergarten entry.

Section 1: Demonstration of Need: Location, Population, and Service Delivery Options

The McPherson-Marion Head Start Program(MMHSP) provides quality early childhood services to families living in McPherson County and Marion County in Kansas. McPherson County is considered mostly urban, while Marion County is considered mostly rural by the U.S. Census Bureau. According to the United State Census Bureau 2021 report, the estimated population of McPherson County is 30,012. McPherson is the 19th largest county in Kansas out of 105 counties. The estimated average growth rate of population is 0.34% each year since 2021. The estimated population of Marion County is 11,868 and the growth rate is -0.72% since 2021. Marion is the 37th largest county in Kansas out of 105 counties. The two counties are approximately 1,844 square miles with a combined population of approximately 41,840. The map below shows the two counties that are served by the McPherson-Marion Head Start.

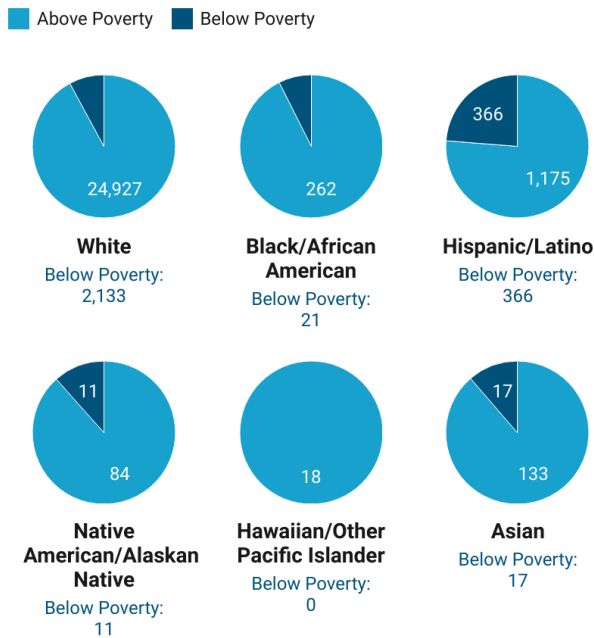


Rationale For Which Ages of Children are Proposed to be Served

The racial and ethnicity breakdown for McPherson County are as follows: White alone: 27,060 with 8.9% or 2,133 persons living below the poverty level. Black or African American

alone: 283 with 12.23% or 21 persons living below the poverty level. American Indian and Alaska Native alone: 95 with 28.21% or 11 persons living below the poverty level. Asian alone: 150 with 8.76% or 17 persons living below the poverty level. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone: 18 with 0% living below the poverty level. Hispanic or Latino origin: 1,541 with 28.93% or 366 living below the poverty level. McPherson County has a total of 8.7% of its population living below the poverty line. See the chart below that demonstrates this data.

McPherson County Demographics

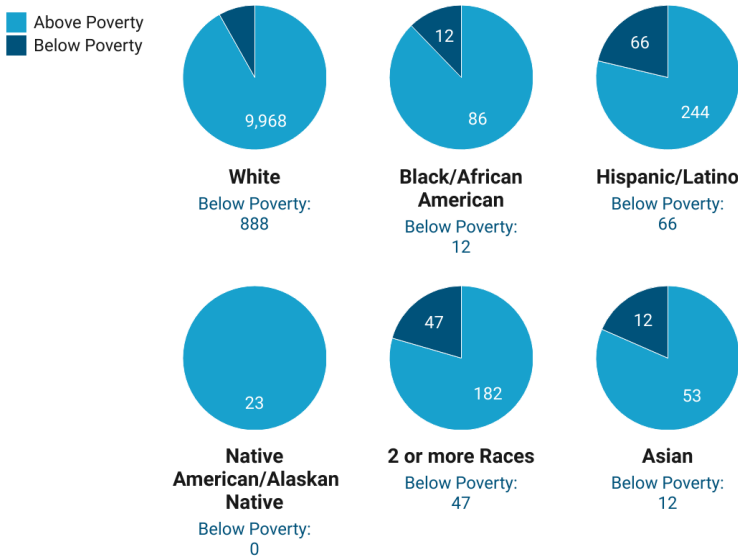


McPherson County has 1,441 individuals aged 25 and over that have less than a high school or equivalent degree.

The racial and ethnicity breakdown for Marion County are as follows: White alone: 10,856 with 8.56% or 888 persons living below the poverty level. Black or African American alone: 98 with 20.83% or 12 persons living below the poverty level. American Indian and Alaska Native alone: 23 with 0% living below the poverty level. Asian alone: 65 with 23.08% or 12 persons living below the poverty level. Two or more races: 229 with 14.04 % or 47 persons

living below the poverty level. Hispanic or Latino origin: 300 with 15.83% or 66 persons living below the poverty level. In total, Marion County has 8.7% of its population living below the poverty level. McPherson County has 1,441 individuals aged 25 and over that have less than a high school or equivalent degree, and Marion County has 811 individuals. The chart below demonstrates this data.

Marion County Demographics



Marion County has 811 individuals aged 25 and over that have less than a high school or equivalent degree.

The findings for the 2022 Community Assessment within the MMHSP identified mental health, lack of services for birth to three, and preschool program options to be top concerns for the communities and the families served within the Head Start program. Marion County has Parents As Teachers(PAT) which provides services to approximately 80 children yearly but McPherson County does not have a PAT program. With a lack of resources in the two counties, the MMHSP is able to play a crucial role in assisting families and communities in creating a bridge out of poverty.

Mental health access and availability is a concern in McPherson and Marion County. McPherson County has four sites for mental health and counseling services, with only three early childhood specific counselors. Marion County has two mental health and counseling centers, with only two counselors providing counseling early to children 5 and under. Availability of appointments and access to mental health for all ages continues to be a problem in both counties. McPherson and Marion County Special Education Cooperatives have hired School Social Workers to help with mental health needs in the schools in the counties. MMHSP hired a School Social Worker to serve the early childhood mental health needs in the program and contracts with the local mental health agency to provide counseling services and case management services to students. By providing counseling and therapeutic services at the schools, students are able to receive consistent mental health services and families don't have to travel to appointments.

Wraparound services for families in McPherson and Marion County are lacking and create many barriers for families and especially those families in poverty. Childcare, medical resources, and other services are not accessible for some families or are at capacity. Kansas Health Matters reported McPherson County as having 62.9% of infants fully immunized at 24 months, while that number is thought to be low, it is still a concern for the community that lacks resources when it comes to immunizations. The overall immunization rate for Kansas is 65.3% which indicates that McPherson County is lower in their number of children vaccinated. Marion County had 73.6% of infants fully immunized at 24 months. Lack of transportation and accessibility to services proves to be difficult for the two counties.

McPherson County has 547 average monthly enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program, while the average monthly enrollment for children on Medicaid was 1,951. Marion County has an average of 235 children enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program, while the average monthly enrollment for children on Medicaid was 918.

According to Kansas Action for Children KIDS Count 2021 , 12.2% of children under the age of 18 in McPherson County live in food insecure households. 11.7% of children under the age of 18 in Marion County live in food insecure households. The average monthly enrollment in the Kansas Food Assistance Program (SNAP) for McPherson County was 1,195 and Marion County was 569 in 2022. The average monthly enrollment in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Kansas for 2022 was 30 in McPherson County and 12 in Marion County. According to the Kansas State Department of Education, the schools in McPherson County have a 36.3 % rate of students receiving free and reduced lunches and Marion County schools have a 37.7% rate of students who receive free and reduced lunches. The state of Kansas has a rate of 46.9% of students who receive free and reduced lunches, which shows that McPherson and Marion county are close to the state average of free and reduced lunches and poverty.

The median household income for McPherson County is \$63,816 and the state median household income is \$68,925 and the median household for Marion County is \$54,679. The unemployment rate for McPherson County is 1.6% and 4.7% for Marion County. The chart below shows the poverty data for McPherson and Marion County:

McPherson/Marion County Data

	McPherson County	Marion County	Column 1
Median Income	\$63,816	\$54,679	
Unemployment Rate	1.6%	4.70%	
Food Insecure Households	12.2%	11.70%	
Receive Free and Reduced Lunch	36.3%	37.70%	
Enrolled in SNAP	1195	569	
Infants Fully Immunized at 24 months	62.9%	73.60%	
Children under the Age of 5	1821	691	
Kids Enrolled in a Child's Health Insurance Plan	547	235	
Kids Enrolled in Medicaid	1951	918	

The McPherson school district, USD 418 has 41 students qualifying as homeless under the McKinney-Vento definition for homeless children. No school district in Marion county reported a number over 10 students that fell under the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless and therefore they were not included in the published number by the Kansas State Department of Education.

Analysis of Access to other Early Childhood Education Programs

Childcare and preschool options are a concern in McPherson and Marion county. McPherson County has a few more options for childcare than Marion county, but only meets the needs of 64% of families. Marion County is more rural and has a shortage in childcare availability, with 40% of the need for childcare being met. According to the Child Care Aware

of Kansas Point in Time Data, the chart below shows the need in both counties for childcare/preschool:

	McPherson County	Marion County
Children under 6 with parents in labor force	1,114	520
Residents Under 6 years of age	1,821	691
Potential Child Care Slots Needed	414	353
Child Care Centers	6	2
Head Start	1	1
Family Day Care Homes	22	13
Preschools	2	2
School Age Programs	5	NA

(Information included in this report is maintained by Child Care Aware of Kansas Data Sources)

This data shows the need for more quality care for children under the age of 6 years old, which is one of the reasons that MMHSP provides all day preschool options to help families have access to quality care and education for their child all day.

The data provided for both counties has indicated that there is a need for child care/preschool services for children under the age of 5. The MMHSP will help support this need by providing free half day or all day preschool options to families. All the preschools in the program are located in the local school districts in town. This allows families to have one drop of place for their children, form relationships with the elementary staff who will potentially have their students for elementary school and have easier access to extended services.

In McPherson County, there are two private preschools other than Head Start, and in Marion County there are two other preschool programs other than Head Start. The average rates

for preschool in Mcpherson and Marion County are as follows:

Average Family Child Care Rates McPherson County

Age	Avg. Part Time/Week	Avg. Part Time/Month	Avg Full Time/Week	Avg. Full Time/Month
Preschool 3	\$88.00	\$352.00	\$129.12	NA
Preschool 4	\$85.83	\$343.32	\$125.59	NA

Average Center Rates McPherson County

Age	Avg. Part Time/Week	Avg. Part Time/Month	Avg Full Time/Week	Avg. Full Time/Month
Preschool 3	\$130.00	NA	\$162.00	\$704.00
Preschool 4	\$130.00	NA	\$162.00	\$704.00

Average Family Childcare Rates Marion County

Age	Avg. Part Time/Week	Avg. Part Time/Month	Avg Full Time/Week	Avg. Full Time/Month
Preschool 3	\$77.00	\$210.00	\$125.50	\$420.00
Preschool 4	\$77.00	\$210.00	\$125.50	\$420.00

Average Center Rates Marion County

Age	Avg. Part Time/Week	Avg. Part Time/Month	Avg Full Time/Week	Avg. Full Time/Month
Preschool 3	NA	NA	\$157.50	\$787.50
Preschool 4	NA	NA	\$157.50	\$787.50

(Data taken from Kansas Child Care Aware Point In Time Data 2023)

Every elementary school in McPherson and Marion County provides state pre-k at risk preschools. These preschools meet some of the needs, but most of the schools have a limited number of slots that can be provided free of charge for students who qualify for the Kansas state preschool at risk program.

Enrolling Children with Disabilities

The MMHSP partners with the local Infant and Toddler center that provides early intervention services. When the family is eligible, they are offered a position in the Head Start program. The MMHSP also provides transition service to preschool that involves the Toddler center staff, the students' teacher for the next year, parents, and various other support staff from both parties. Staff also attends monthly early intervention screenings for families who have developmental concerns for their children. Staff make referrals and take applications at these screenings.

Need For Full-day, Full-year Services in the Community

Program wide 71% (73/103) of Head Start students are currently in a full day program, 29% (30/103) are in a 3.5 hour/128 day program.

McPherson and Marion County Program Operation Calendar Data			
Site	Hours per Day	Days per Week	Weeks per Year
McPherson County (4 sites; Full Day)	7	5	31.2
Marion Elementary (Double session)	6	4	26.5
Hillsboro Elementary (Double session)	6	5	33.8
Hillsboro Elementary (Full Day)	7	5	33.8

See Center Location Chart below:

Locations/ Centers	# of classrooms	# of classes	Age /s	# of students possible	Collaborate with	Primary District/s served
McPherson County						
Three year olds-Full day sessions						
Roosevelt	1	1	3	17 per class	HS, Sped, Peer	418, 419, 400, 448
Lincoln	1	1	3/4	17 per class	HS, Sped, Peer, State PreK	418,419, 400, 448
Eisenhower	1	1	3	17 per class	HS, Sped, Peer	418,419, 400, 448
Washington	1	1	3	17 per class	HS, Sped, Peer	418,419, 400, 448
Sub Totals	4	4		68		
McPherson County						
Four year olds-Full day sessions						
Washington	1	1	4	17 per class	HS, Sped, Peer, State PreK	418, 400, 448
Roosevelt	1	1	4	17 per class	HS, Sped, Peer, State PreK	418
Roosevelt	1	1	3/4	17 per class	HS, Sped, Peer, State PreK	418
Lincoln	1	1	3/4	17 per class	HS, Sped, Peer, State PreK	418, 400
Eisenhower	1	1	4	17 per class	HS, Sped, Peer, State Pre K	418
Sub Totals	5	5		85		
Marion County:						
Hillsboro-Two Three/Four Combination- ½ day sessions & One Full Day 4 year old session.						
Marion-Two Three/Four Combinations- ½ day sessions						
Hillsboro	1	1	3/4	15 per class	HS, Sped, Peer, State PreK	410
Hillsboro	1	1	3/4	15 per class	HS, Sped, Peer, State PreK	410
Hillsboro	1	1	4	17 per class	HS, Sped, Peer, State PreK	410
Marion	1	2	3/4	34 (15/17)	HS, Sped, Peer	408
Sub Totals	3	6		81		
Grand Totals	13	13		234		
Total sites	6					Total districts - 6

All services are presented in a center-based format and are referred to as ‘sites’.

These sites are located within collaborative school districts. The objective is to have children attend their neighborhood school to develop long lasting relationships and support curriculums within the educational system. If a neighborhood school site is not obtainable then space is

made available to any Head Start qualifying student in the County at any of these sites. These students are placed in the closest site. Great care is given to transition and keeping open lines of communication between Head Start and the neighborhood schools. Early childhood staff from all collaborative partners are included in transition meetings.

Community Engagement

During the Spring of 2021 the MMHSP started to collaborate with one of the McPherson elementary schools and a variety of community partners to provide a food pantry for the families of the MMHSP. The goal is to be able to provide additional support in the form of food, hygiene or household products for families. The program is currently working with the local food bank, churches, and banks to conduct food drives and provide other resources. During the 2022-2023 school year, the foodbank was fully functional and provided an opportunity for families to obtain those needed resources and bridge the gap of the community services. For the 23-24 school year the food bank continues to be available for families that have a need.

The advocate team conducts a monthly resource meeting where a community program is brought in to share and train about the service they offer and how the program might best access their services or partner with them to address family needs. This has allowed for community partnerships to form and for the advocate team to have direct contact with organizations and have adequate contact information along with an understanding of how other organizations work and what they offer.

The program is looking into ways to further its partnership with local health care agencies to offer services to its families. There is a need for children to be up-to-date on medical requirements and there are many challenges for families to complete this need.

Family Advocates partner in assisting families to complete their health needs and requirements for Preschool and Kindergarten entry. The program continues to collaborate with GraceMed and the county health departments and is working on expanding medical collaborations.

The McPherson Community Coalition continues to meet bi-monthly and discuss how mental health is affecting the community, each service area, and the services that are provided. As a coalition, they look for ways to keep mental health at the forefront for the community. They provided different opportunities for the community during 2022, including their annual Suicide Prevention and Resource Awareness Walk. McPherson Community Coalition and Child Care Aware of Kansas partnered together to host the Communities In Action workshop. This was done in an effort to develop short-term and long-term goals to support the child care needs of the community. The Community Coalition will be reestablishing the Child Care Task Force as an avenue to meet the ongoing need for child care services in McPherson.

Marion County has a Marion County Early Childhood Task Force that is held monthly for the purpose of all county agencies that support early childhood and families meet together. The task force also includes parents that are receiving services for their infant or preschooler so they can have a voice in what services they would like to receive but also learn about all the options provided in the county. In these meetings, the task force looks for ways to improve early childhood needs as well as collaborate and share resources for the county. Marion County offers free parenting classes through the FACT agency. Families can sign up and attend virtual parenting classes covering Conscious Discipline© through four different sessions.

Mental health resources are also a top priority for the program to continue to work and collaborate with various agencies. McPherson and Marion County have a lack of available

providers who deal with children under seven. This is a noted concern found both in the community needs assessment and analyzing family goals. This will take an innovative solution to the multifaceted problem. There is a need for family mental health support but also for more ongoing support for mental health in the classroom. Many challenges such as funding, lack of resources, and time hinder a quick resolution to this issue.

On the community side, the program attends the McPherson Community Coalition who have dedicated their meetings to focus on the community wide mental health issue. The program is able to advocate for more resources and network with resources that are available and help bridge the gaps for families.

The MMHSP was able to hire a full time social worker dedicated to supporting the mental health needs of children in the program. This has allowed for the Head Start program to meet the standards but also to provide better support to teaching staff and families to help assist with challenges that children might be facing. Other notable collaborators with the program are: GraceMed, providing low cost dental and medical services, along with guidance for applying for state insurance; the local for-profit agencies that donate toys and supplies for the winter season, and the local special education coop who provides services to 10% of students in the program with disabilities. The program has recently collaborated with the local Health Department to offer training to the staff of the Health Department and to also have an advocate available once a month on site to do applications and provide information. The program is working on revitalizing the McPherson task force to provide a format to share information and collaborate.

During the 22-23 school year and this current school year, McPherson County programs partnered with a local Mental Health agency to provide case management services in the

classroom for students that need those services. The agency is also able to work with families to get them signed up for outside services. The program continues to look for innovative approaches to these challenges by partnering with the community and exploring usages of technology that will benefit families and meet the needs that might have otherwise been unmet.

In the summer of 2023, a Together McPherson Community Resource Fair was held in McPherson. The goal of this resource fair was to provide the community with access to learn about resources in-county as well as provide employment opportunities for families. There were approximately 23 agencies from the community that attended the event to provide families with resources and the committee is hopeful to make this an annual event. McPherson County plans to make this an annual event to continue to support families in receiving and being aware of services provided in the county.

Section 2: Achieving Early Learning and Development Outcomes

MMHSP School Readiness Goals align with Head Start's Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF), Kansas Early Learning Standards and Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment areas of development and learning. The school readiness goals and plan sets the program's expectation for students in the program across the domains in ELOF. The School Readiness goals were originally established in consultation with parents and staff. All McPherson-Marion staff will support the school readiness goals and plans. The overall school readiness goal is: all preschool children (ages 3-5) will make progress in all TS gold areas of development and learning, with at least 85% of them at or above the "Widely Held Expectations" for their age.

During the 2024-2025 school year, the program will continue to utilize Creative Curriculum® as its core curriculum. There is an identifiable scope and sequence that is organized around individual learning domains. For some activities (“Intentional Teaching Cards” and “Mighty Minutes”), the scope and sequence is linked to the individual learning activities. The Creative Curriculum® is fully aligned with the Head Start child development principles, as well as research literature. The curriculum presents learning activities that follow a sequential and ordered pattern. The curriculum is based on five foundational principles: positive interactions and relationships with adults are critical for learning; social-emotional competence is a significant factor in success at school; constructive and purposeful play supports learning; the physical environment affects the type and quality of learning interaction; and teacher-family partnerships promote learning and development. These principles align with Head Start child development principles fully. The link to the following document on the Creative Curriculum® Website shows how The Creative Curriculum® is aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five.

MMHSP follows research that has shown that the first five years of a child’s life is crucial in developing the whole child. The program understands that early development and school readiness are key factors in ensuring exposure to many learning experiences. On-going assessments, structured nurturing environments and ensure quality interactions are forming a foundation, which supports future school success.

MMHSP is passionate in preparing preschoolers to be school ready in literacy knowledge and language, mathematics and reasoning skills, the development of fine motor manipulation for the purpose of writing, emotional regulations of behaviors in the classroom that

are appropriate to situations, and sustainability to work on age-appropriate, interesting tasks.

Ensuring school success includes fostering rich-relationships with families to help them grow in their engagement with their child's education. Through family engagement MMHSP focuses on setting goals, relationship building, encouraging social interactions, connection to peers, and problem solving.

The MMHSP recognizes that for many of the children, school success includes learning a second language. Dual language learners are supported through interventions to ensure they acquire English in their preschool environment while maintaining their home language and culture. Interpreters are used to assist the program needs with dual language learners. This area is one of the program goals that is being worked on to improve the support of Head Start Training and Technical Assistance.

All Families are provided many opportunities to be involved in their child's early childhood experiences. Within 45 days of enrollment families are invited to participate in the ASQ screeners. Involvement and engagement of a family to their child's development creates success in school. The staff in the MMHSP supports families by sharing information during conferences, such as curriculum data and ASQ data, family home visits where individual student and family goals are made, teacher newsletters, open house, and Learning Journeys. Connections between home and school further guides kindergarten readiness.

Currently 22% of children who qualify for MMHSP are receiving special education services in the classroom. Each classroom is designed to be a fully inclusive classroom, which integrates Kansas Standards, Head Start School Readiness Goals, PFCE, and services to children with disabilities. Children who have identified disabilities are integrated into classrooms to the

greatest extent possible. Families are included in the process from the beginning. Individualized Education Plans (I.E.P.s) are written and implemented by staff as well as by the special education support staff in both counties. Goals and objectives are written into students' I.E.P.s, which are based on the children's needs; this is similar to the writing of goals for the Head Start children and to the Family Partnership Agreements written with the parents. An important area to be considered is the service provided to families for students with identified disabilities. All students are integrated into the regular ed classroom. Special education teachers come into the classroom to work with students. Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, School Social Workers, and Speech Therapists also provide services inside and outside the classroom.

The MMHSP is committed to supporting children, families, and staff in a safe, nurturing, and educational environment through quality, comprehensive programming and community relationships. The program values the experiences that Dual Language Learners bring to school and recognize that the students have specific needs that can impact success in the classrooms. Techniques, methodology and specialized curriculum are designed to teach Dual Language Learners English Language skills. These skills include listening, speaking, reading, writing, study skills, content vocabulary, and cultural orientation. Most instruction is in English. The goal for Dual Language Learners is English language proficiency.

MMHSP promotes the full and effective participation of children who are dual language learners and their families, by:

- Utilizing information from the community assessment about the languages spoken throughout the program service area to anticipate child and family needs;
- Identifying community resources and establishing ongoing collaborative relationships

and partnerships with community organizations that provide support and services for children who are dual language learners and their families; and,

- Systematically and comprehensively addressing child and family needs by facilitating meaningful access to program services, including, at a minimum, curriculum, instruction, staffing, supervision, and family partnerships with bilingual staff, oral language assistance and interpretation, or translation of essential program materials, as appropriate.

The MMHSP has chosen Creative Curriculum® for Preschool. Teaching Guides are comprehensive, carefully sequenced, detailed instructional plans that span several weeks. The guides feature studies, which are long term investigations of meaningful topics. The guides are available in English and Spanish, and help provide teachers with large- and small-group activities and ideas for reading books aloud in children’s home languages. The studies featured in The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool Teaching Guides are in-depth investigations designed to engage children in interesting topics that are relevant to their daily lives. All children, including dual-language learners, have prior knowledge of and experience with the study topics, such as clothes, trees, and balls. Each study is organized as a series of investigations. Each investigation is based on a meaningful question that encourages children’s active participation. Strategies for encouraging family involvement are also provided.

Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is a research-based tool for assessing all areas of children’s development in both English and Spanish. Assessed objectives include social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science and

technology, science and the arts. This tool provides objectives, indicators, and examples that specifically reflect the unique patterns of Spanish language and literacy development.

Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is inclusive, has goals and objectives that are developmentally appropriate and complement/align with the Head Start Performance Standards and Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. It is also aligned to the Kansas Early Learning Standards.

MMHSP values the experiences that all children and families bring to the school and recognizes that they have specific needs that can impact success in the classrooms. To support families experiencing homelessness and children in the child welfare system, the program collaborates with community partners to assist families find housing. In McPherson County, The McPherson Housing Coalition (MHC) which helps low-income families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness find a decent, affordable place to live and with the financial costs of moving into a new place, assisting with the deposit, first month's rent, and set up of utilities. Family advocates assist families with getting connected with this agency as well as can provide food from MMHSP's food pantry to the family. In Marion county there is an agency called Main Street Ministries that provides housing to women and children who are homeless. Family advocates work closely with homeless families to assist them in providing options for services that they need.

The Kansas Department for Children and Families reported McPherson County having 26 children in foster care in 2023, which represents all children under the age of 18. Marion County was reported as having 16 children in foster care in 2022, which represents all children under the age of 18. The family advocates and teachers work closely with the foster families who

house the children in the welfare system to assist them in receiving the support they need as well as any assistance. Staff collaborates with the foster care agencies to ensure that all the educational needs are being met. If the biological family still has rights and are allowed to be involved, they are included in any of the meetings that may be held to discuss their child and they are encouraged to participate in the decision making process of their child. Family advocates work with both the foster parents and biological parents to ensure that they are informed of their students' progress.

Health/Mental Health

School readiness begins with health and early childhood staff work diligently in helping families establish medical and dental homes and being up-to-date on health requirements. A priority of the program is to form stronger community partnerships to help meet the health needs of families in the program. Family advocates are strong components in helping the families. They strive to help families not only establish medical and dental homes, but to also help them gain access to insurance; remaining up-to-date on health care requirements and establishing follow-up care. Family advocates offer support to families by providing or helping find transportation, help schedule appointments; assist with finding interpretation as well as finding additional resources as needed. School nurses are also an important piece in helping families meet health requirements and work in partnership with the family advocates to assist families. Listed below are some of the health services that are provided to families by the McPherson Marion County Head Start:

1. Oral Health- dental screenings are provided by GraceMed at all of the sites except one. That school uses Salina Family Health Care Center. Both counties that are served struggle with

finding dental providers that accept KanCare. Currently McPherson county has two providers that accept KanCare and Marion county has none. Staff meet this need by offering transportation or by assisting them with finding transportation to appointments.

2. Nutrition- nutrition assessments are completed at the first home visit. Assessments are reviewed by a registered dietician that provides feedback and gives resources based on results. Families also have opportunities to meet with the registered dietitian for further assistance. The registered dietitian also prepares monthly special diet menus to ensure all special diet needs are being met. The MMHSP partners with the Kansas State Extension office to offer nutrition classes for the program families. These classes cover topics such as eating healthy; shopping on a budget, cooking, etc.

3. Hearing and Vision Screenings- Hearing and vision screenings are completed within forty five days of entry. School nurses and an audiologist that is contracted by the school district perform both screenings. School nurses and family advocates work together in assisting with any follow-up that is needed from the results of the screenings.

The early childhood staff will determine if each child is up-to-date on all schedules of health care and immunizations. Completed services are tracked in ChildPlus. The Health & Safety Coordinator, school nurses and family advocates work collaboratively to help meet the health needs of the children and their families.

Early childhood staff use the ASQ-SE (Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social Emotional) to determine which children might need additional supports in the social-emotional and mental health area. These are completed within 45 days of entry into the program. Results from scores are analyzed by teachers and the management team to develop action plans for students who fall

below the cutoff according to the ASQ-SE. For those families needing additional supports, family advocates work with families and the School Social Worker to determine the best services for the family. The School Social Worker consults closely with the family advocates, teachers and families to support the students mental health and social emotional needs. Early childhood teachers use Conscious Discipline© in their classroom to help teach social emotional skills to all children. The school social worker provides coaching to teachers to help implement Conscious Discipline into the classroom. If more social emotional or mental health help is needed for a student, the school social worker can provide counseling with students and consult with families for support or referrals to appropriate services.

The head start program utilizes The (CLASS) Classroom Assessment Scoring System tool twice a year, fall and spring in each classroom. CLASS measures high quality teacher-child interactions. The education coordinator renews their certification annually in CLASS as a certified observer. During Pre-Service before the start of each new school year, all staff members are given professional development on what CLASS is and how to support(use) it in their daily interactions and instruction with children. The education coordinator then observes classrooms and works with classroom teams to set goals for self-improvement in areas of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Teachers are provided additional coaching and support as needed or requested.

Each child in Head Start will receive a developmental screening, with parental consent, within 45 days of enrollment, unless the child is already receiving special education services. Head Start children that are not on an IEP will be screened using the ASQ3 and the ASQ: SE-2 screeners. The ASQ's will be administered twice per year, once in the fall and once in the

spring. Teachers will use the screening information to help make informed decisions while lesson planning. The Head Start Director, Education Coordinator, Health & Safety Coordinator, Social Worker and Teaching Staff will have Data Meetings twice per year, once in the fall and once in the spring to aggregate and analyze individual student data. This data includes, ASQ, ASQ SE, and Teaching Strategies Gold.

Transitions

The MMHSP establishes and maintains procedures to support successful transitions for children and families into the Head Start Program. The program has procedures to transition Head Start students leaving the program into kindergarten classrooms. Transition is an area of strength for the program due to having early childhood students already placed in their neighborhood schools. Students and families have already had an opportunity to develop relationships with school personnel such as: Building Principals, Secretaries, Counselors, and Librarians. During transitions, family advocate staff will inform families of pre-kindergarten children about the need for any required documentation they may need to provide prior to elementary school enrollment. Families are invited to their neighborhood school sponsored spring kindergarten and pre-kindergarten round-ups. Round-ups provide parents with a meet and greet atmosphere and information for the next school year. When applicable classroom teachers will visit and observe classrooms of students they will have the next school year (i.e. 3 year old teachers will visit the part C Infant/Toddler classrooms, 4 year old teachers will visit the 3 year old classrooms, kindergarten teachers will visit the 4 year old classrooms.) Transition meetings in the spring prior to the next school year will occur between pre-kindergarten teacher, special education teacher (if applicable), family advocate, education coordinator and building principal

with future kindergarten teacher and future principal, if different from prior year. Child outcome data, support for dual language learners, support for children with disabilities and IEP accommodations will be shared at this meeting. The Early Childhood Office will monitor or transfer records and child outcome data to non-McPherson elementary schools with the consent of families.

When transitions from one program to another occur, teachers and family advocates work together to share relevant information (child outcome data, dual language learners, support for children with disabilities, IEP accommodations) with the receiving team to ensure a successful transition for the student and family.

The MMHSP intentionally integrates program services to improve the School Readiness Goals and Parent Family Community Engagement goals for children and their families. Fundamental to both sets of goals is the recognition that parents are children's first teachers. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to participate in daily classroom activities, parent committee meetings, Policy Council, family event nights, parent teacher conferences and home-visits. All services provided to families are offered in both English and Spanish, upon request. The program currently works with the USD 418 school district's ESL program to offer translation services. The program will continue to look at ways to offer more options for dual language learners and ways to better serve their families. The focus on fathers-child involvement during the "Week of the Father" is aided by sending home daily activities to promote and celebrate the father-child relationship. The program plans to continue to look at ways to incorporate and celebrate father involvement. Documentation of attendance and engagement is kept in childplus and is used to monitor the success of all efforts.

Classroom teachers host two evenings of parent teacher conferences, one in the Fall and one in the Spring. Conferences are well attended by parents, it is not uncommon to have 99% attendance at both sets of conferences. The conference data is shared with the principal and director for monitoring purposes. To continue to build relationships and further engagement, classroom teachers perform two home visits each year for each student with the family advocate. The first home visit happens prior to the student attending class as a welcome and gathering of information. The second home visit is at the conclusion of the school year and serves as an evaluation and reflection time for both the family and teacher. The classroom teachers document home visits in ChildPlus. Family Advocates host at a minimum, quarterly family events. These events are advertised to the families via internet format and printed flyers, both offered in English or Spanish. Events include: academic, health, social-emotional and relationship activities. These events are well attended by families and may coincide with the school building events. The school building events are a great way for families to build relationships with not only other families within the program but also families and staff within the entire school building, which they will attend after preschool. During the 2021-2022 school year, the MMHSP offered Conscious Discipline© classes once a month for four months during the 2nd semester. These classes are offered virtually by sending out videos that cover different topics on Conscious Discipline© and opportunities for followup and answering questions throughout the month. Activities are also sent home that reinforce the idea or concept taught. During the Spring semester of 2024, the McPherson County Head Start Programs will be offering a four session Conscious Discipline© parenting class for parents to attend. The program will also survey parents and see what they would like to see provided regarding parenting topics and education.

Family advocates provided monthly resources to families that aligned with the PFCE framework to extend services to families. During the 2020-2021 school year, the advocate team selected a new family assessment to use to help identify needs and goals for families. The data was reviewed from previous years of using the Crittenden Assessment and it was found that parents did not feel comfortable rating themselves in different areas on a scale from 1 to 3. The program used the ESQ that followed a similar format to the ASQ screeners that families fill out. This provided better data and was less overwhelming for families compared to the previous benchmark assessment. This assessment is given twice a year with the data shared with parents marking growth or areas for continued support.

Family Advocates perform a minimum of 4 home visits, per child, per year. Depending on the needs and family goals, the Family Advocates may execute more support than four home visits. These home visits allow the family advocate to work with the families on identifying strengths, needs, and goals by using the Crittenden Family Assessment. This tool is used to provide a comprehensive tool for parents, families and the Family Advocates to assist, establish and plan a tailored, individualized family partnership agreement with goals that meet the needs of the families in a manageable and specific manner. The Crittenden Family Assessment tool is used before the second home to assist in writing family goals and identifying strengths; the third home visit, the assessment is referred to and progress is marked and new goals may be established and at the final home visit, it is reviewed to note and celebrate progress and accomplishments. The assessment is also done at the end of the year to track progress and show growth and areas of improvement, this data also allows for monitoring of the PFCE goals. The PFCE goals and plans have been reviewed, evaluated, and modified to ensure that each goal and

indicator can be measurable and each area be improved by offering more ways for families and community members to be engaged and not just participate. It is anticipated that families will gain further success in goal achievement through the assistance from family advocates, Head Start staff, events, and collaborating partners.

Along with home visits, Family Advocates regularly communicate with parents through phone, text, emails, Facebook and face-to-face contacts to assist in providing resources, checking in, assisting in keeping families informed, listening and noting concerns, and doing whatever possible to help build relationships. Documentation of all parent contact and parent participation is kept in ChildPlus and monitored by the Assistant Director of Family Services. The program has 6 Family Advocates. The Family Advocates average Head Start caseload is around 20 Head Start families, but can vary due to student placement of homeschools.

During the Spring of 2021 The MMHSP collaborated with one of the McPherson elementary schools and a variety of community partners to provide a food pantry for the families of the MMHSP. The goal was to be able to provide additional support in the form of food, hygiene or household products for families. The program is currently working with the local food bank, churches, and banks to conduct food drives and provide other resources. The foodbank continues to be fully functional and provides an opportunity for families to obtain those needed resources and bridge the gap of the community services.

The advocate team conducts a monthly resource meeting where a community program is brought in to share and train about the service they offer and how the program might best access their services or partner with them to address family needs. This has allowed for community partnerships to form and for the advocate team to have direct contact with organizations and have

adequate contact information along with an understanding of how other organizations work and what they offer.

The program is looking into ways to further partnerships with local health care agencies to offer services to families. There is a need for children to be up-to-date on medical requirements and there are many challenges for families to complete this need. The program continues to collaborate with GraceMed and the health department and is working on expanding medical collaborations.

Challenges include the lack of resources in McPherson and Marion County, time to collaborate with other agencies, and lack of extra funding to build on opportunities for families. The program continues to look for innovative approaches to these challenges by partnering with the community and exploring usages of technology that will benefit families and meet the needs that might have otherwise been unmet.

Section 3: Past Performance

Professional Experience of Management Team

The Executive Director is the current Superintendent of McPherson Public Schools. He holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership. He has been in his current role for three years. McPherson Public School currently has 2,342 enrolled students. The Executive Director has experience in Building and District Management including fiscal operations. The Program Director has effectively managed this Head Start Program the last six years. He has a current Administrator Certificate issued by Kansas State Board of Education, a Masters in Leadership, a Masters in Education, a Degree in K-8 Education and Special Education and previous experience as an Early Childhood Coordinator. The Education Coordinator has supported this

Head Start Program for the last five years. Has a current Early-Late Childhood Generalist Degree, a Masters in Curriculum and Instruction and previous experience as a Preschool Teacher in this program for two years. The Health and Safety Coordinator has been with the program for two years and has a Bachelor's Degree in Exercise Science. The Family Services Coordinator has a Bachelors of Science in Psychology. She had previous experience as a Family Advocate in this program for two years. The Mental Health/Early Childhood Social Worker-LMSW has a Masters Degree in Social Work, is Kansas Behavioral Science Regulatory Board Licensed, has previous experience as a Conscious Discipline© Certified Instructor and previous experience as a Preschool Teacher. As a team they work together to effectively administer the MMHSP.

Fiscal Management

The program is audited yearly by an outside accounting firm. Yearly audits have resulted in zero findings in regards to Head Start funding. Program and district staff oversee the day to day fiscal operations of the program. Internal processes and procedures allow for internal control of the management of fiscal resources. The governing board and policy council provide oversight in effective fiscal management.

All requisitions and purchases involving Head Start dollars are coded with an account number based on the item/service being purchased and based on the current cost allocation plan. Requisitions are prepared by the Head Start administrative assistant, reviewed and signed off by the head start director, sent to the district central office for the business manager to review and sign off on. The head start director and staff from the district business office meet monthly to aggregate and analyze fiscal data, ensure compliance with the current cost allocation plan is being followed, and to review upcoming reports that need to be submitted.

The governing board and policy council are provided with monthly fiscal reports to review and monitor how funds are being utilized. The governing board and policy council are provided with ongoing training to assist them with interpreting and providing oversight using the fiscal reports. Composition of the governing body consists of a member that has a background in fiscal management, a member that has a background in early childhood education and development, and one member that is a licensed attorney.

Overview of Non-compliances, Deficiencies, and Correction

On April 4, 2022 the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a monitoring review. Based on information gathered during the review the MMHSP was found to be deficient in 1302.47(b)(5)(iv) due to an inappropriate release that occurred at one of the sites.

A follow up review was conducted from June 3, 2022 to June 9, 2022. The follow up review resulted in the deficiency being corrected. The deficiency was corrected. From April 4, 2022 to June 3, 2022 the program took several actions to address the violation.

The program enhanced the processes for early release to authorized adults to ensure substitutes understood them. One enhancement was the development and implementation of a Subs Need to Know Form. The form includes essential information substitutes needed to know when working in preschool classrooms and a statement that substitutes would not release children from classrooms.

Training was provided to staff that covered the expectations and practices related to the pick-up/drop off policies and procedures and included verifying identification, the early release process, and the staff members responsible for releasing children. Principals and office staff were trained to provide substitutes with the Subs Need to Know form. In addition, teachers were

trained during collaboration meetings to include the Subs Need to Know form in the substitute-plan packet. The substitute and an early childhood staff were required to sign and date the form.

Parents were provided the pick-up/drop-off policies and procedures through an agency-wide communication system and the program’s social media accounts. A review of the parent handbook found the dismissal process was outlined for parents.

No inappropriate releases have occurred in the program since the implementation of the above processes and procedures.

From October 3, 2022 to October 7, 2022, the Administration for Children and Families conducted a Focus Area Two (FA2) monitoring review of the MMHSP, the review resulted in 7 areas of non-compliance. During the week of May 15, 2023 the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a monitoring review to determine whether the previously identified findings had been corrected.

In the chart below you will see the original areas of non compliance, the standard, the finding, the initial review status, and the follow up compliance level. Three areas have been elevated to a deficiency and are currently being worked within the timeline to correct.

Service Area	Standard	Initial Review Status	Follow Up Compliance Level
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Program Governance	1301.3(a)	ANC	Elevated to deficiency
Determining, verifying and documenting eligibility	1302.12(k)	ANC	Corrected
Safety Practices	1302.47(b)(1)(iii)	ANC	Corrected
Safety Practices	1302.90(c)	ANC	Corrected
Ongoing Fiscal Capacity	1302.91(c)	ANC	Elevated to Deficiency
Program Management	1302.92(b)	ANC	Corrected
Budget Execution	75.405(a)	ANC	Elevated to Deficiency

1301.3(a) Policy council and policy committee. From the review conducted in October of 2022 it was determined that the grantee did not establish and maintain a policy council to support the oversight of quality services for Head Start children and families. At the time of review the McPherson-Marion County Head Start program had been unable to find parents or community members interested and able to participate in governance activities to guide the grant recipient’s services. During the 21-22 year the policy council consisted of only one parent who volunteered to serve. Due to this the policy council was unable to complete formal approvals, including the refunding application, program reports, or budget and financial reports.

During the follow up review in May of 2023 1301.3(a) was elevated to a deficiency. While a team of parents had been established to serve as members, that team was not formed by

election and consisted of members from only one center who volunteered to serve. After initial recruitment efforts at all sites resulted in zero parents signing up to stand for election efforts were focused on one center in an attempt to build interest and form a team of parents and community members to provide oversight. Efforts were successful and a team from one site that was composed of parents and community members was formed. Because members were not elected to serve as members, the policy council was unable to formally approve the refunding application, program reports, or budget and financial reports.

As of the writing of this application a review has not been conducted during the 23-24 school year to determine if this finding has been corrected. Actions have been and are currently being taken to correct this finding. With assistance from parents, program policies that establish a recruitment plan for the policy council were formed. The plan consists of policy council information forms going out to parents during orientation and back to school nights. Policy Council recruitment nights were also hosted by each site in August and September. Parents at every site were informed of these nights during back to school night and first home visits. During recruitment nights an overview of the policy council was provided and parents were given an opportunity to complete an interest form to have their name included on the election ballot. If parents were not able to attend they were given an opportunity via electronic communication to review information about the policy council and to submit an interest form.

After recruitment nights and time given for parents to complete an interest form, ballots were sent out to each site for parents to elect their representatives for each site. If sites did not have any parents interested initially, ballots were still sent out to parents from those sites with the

option to write in a parents name. Ballots were collected and counted and the top vote getters from each site were elected to the policy council.

Currently the policy council consists of nine parents that have students in the program. As the program also consists of students and families from the communities it serves that do not qualify for Head Start, parents of community students are also provided an opportunity to serve on the policy council. The current by-laws stipulate that the policy council will be a reflection of the current program structure and members will be current parents of enrolled students regardless of the families funding source. Composition of the policy council must consist of a majority (at least 51%) of parents whose students qualify for Head Start. 67% (6/9) parents serving on Policy Council are parents whose students qualify for Head Start services. 33% (3/9) parents serving on Policy Council are community members. A representative from the McPerson School District school board also serves on the Policy Council.

Between Head Start families and community families, there is parent representation from 5 out of 6 sites. If a site does not currently have representation a spot on policy council is left open for a parent from that site. For sites that do not currently have representation, recruitment efforts consist of information going out on a monthly basis to inform parents of the opportunity along with family advocates reaching out to individual parents to serve on policy council. If a parent is interested in serving on the policy council after elections have taken place they would attend a policy council meeting and inform the policy council of their interest in serving and why. The policy council would then take action through voting to elect the parent to the policy council.

While awaiting a follow up review from ACF to determine if the actions that have been taken during the 23-24 school year have corrected this area of deficiency, actions taken during the 23-24 school year have established through an election process a policy council that is representative of parents from a majority of the sites. A recruitment plan and annual review of that plan has been established to ensure the formation of a policy council on a yearly basis will continue to occur.

1302.91(c) ongoing fiscal capacity. From the review conducted in October of 2022 it was determined that ongoing services of a fiscal officer with sufficient education and experience to meet its needs were not secured. The federal and state compliance officer at the time did not have a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in accounting or related field.

During the follow up review conducted in May of 2023 this area was elevated to a deficiency. From the time the initial review report was received in January to the time the follow up review took place the McPherson School District superintendent was established as the CFO of the Head Start program as the grantee's board of education has appointed budget duties to the superintendent per board policy and state law. After reviewing the plan with training and technical assistance the superintendent was listed as the CFO in HSES. A fiscal organization chart was also developed that details fiscal roles of employees in the district business office and the Head Start office. A new policy was also written and approved that identifies the policy and procedure to ensure fiscal capacity.

The grantee is currently in the process of disputing this deficiency with the Office Of Head Start. Additional documentation (transcripts, board policy, examples of budget work, state statutes) have been provided to the regional office demonstrating the superintendent does have

the sufficient education and experience to meet the needs as the grantee's CFO.

Other options are currently being explored to be compliant with this standard. Options being explored consist of identifying qualifications of business officers in partnering school districts or consulting local CPA firms to identify individuals that may have qualifications that would be deemed compliant with the standard.

75.405(a) Budget Execution. From the review conducted in October of 2022 it was determined the program did not ensure goods and services charred to the Federal award were in accordance with relative benefits received. Cost allocations for teachers and instructional aides salaries and benefits was based on enrollment. The cost allocations at the time did not meet the current enrollment of 52%. The cost allocation plan for salaries had not been updated for approximately five years.

Through a review of various expenses two transactions were disproportionate to the benefits received as they did not follow the established cost allocation plan for supplies.

During the follow up review in May of 2023 this area was elevated to a deficiency. From the time the initial review report was received in January to the time the follow up review took place the Head Start director and Superintendent met with T/TA on two occasions to review the deficiency and establish action steps to correct the deficiency. A cost allocation meeting between the superintendent and Head Start director took place to update salary cost allocation numbers for the 23-24 school year. The analysis of enrollment showed the two-year average of enrollment in all funding programs reflected 52 percent of children were enrolled in Head Start. This information was used to update the cost allocation plan and allocation of shared salaries of teachers and instructional aides. The superintendent and head start director agreed that it would

not be reasonable or allowable to make these adjustments during the school year as the district budget had already been established for the school year. It was also agreed that if the cost allocation analysis would have resulted in Head Start needing to contribute more money to teacher and instructional aide salaries the district would not expect Head Start to make that adjustment during the school year as the Head Start budget had already been established. In addition the school district has consistently provided in-kind contributions by providing staff that support the head start program and the head start program is not charged for those services. The cost allocation plan was reviewed and approved by the governing body for the 23-24 school year.

The cost allocation plan for supplies and services was also reviewed and it was determined that the cost allocation plan for supplies and services would be reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis. A review of purchases from June-Dec versus cost allocation plan for supplies and services was conducted and adjustments were made to ensure transactions were compliant with the cost allocation plan. Upon a review of six transactions and the adjustments made, compliance with the cost allocation plan for non-personnel expenses was determined.

While awaiting a follow up review from ACF to determine if the actions that have been taken during the 23-24 school year have corrected this area of deficiency, actions taken during the 23-24 school year have established the cost allocation of teacher and instructional aide salaries to be reflective of 52 percent cost to Head Start as established by the cost allocation plan that was approved by the governing body in March of 2023. Documentation is available to show that this adjustment has taken place. Quarterly cost allocation adjustments have continued to be made to ensure non-personal expenses are being allocated based on relative benefits received.

Administration is confident that a review of the current cost allocation plan and documentation to support the cost allocation plan is being followed will demonstrate compliance with this standard.

1302.92(b) Training and Professional Development. During the follow up review in May of 2023 it was determined ongoing training and professional development to support staff in providing high-quality services was occurring.

A review of documentation found that all staff received training related to positive guidance strategies, safety practices, ERSEA procedures, and fiscal operations. Examples of staff displaying an understanding and implementing policies and procedures were identified during classroom observations, child file reviews, and the fiscal data tour.

1302.90(c) personnel policies. During the follow up review in May of 2023 it was determined all staff used positive strategies to address children's challenging behaviors.

The standard of conduct was reviewed with staff on an annual basis, and training and support were provided to all staff. The standard of conduct was updated to further information regarding actions that will take place if the standard of conduct is violated. A standards based walk-through form was developed and implemented to establish consistent monitoring of the standard of conduct and other safety policies being implemented in classrooms.

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is used twice yearly to monitor classrooms. A review of documents found coaching was provided to classroom staff as outlined in the coaching plan. Individual coaching varied depending on need and occurred bi-weekly or monthly and included coaching on the curriculum fidelity tool. Coaching conversations occurred using data from CLASS and the curriculum fidelity tool.

A Conscious Discipline Action Team was formed. Teachers and support staff from each location met monthly with the early education social worker and the early education coordinator. These meetings provided staff an opportunity to share experiences and the coordinators arranged training on topics of interest to staff.

During classroom explorations, all adults used appropriate tones and engaged and interacted with children using positive guidance. Staff also monitored the implementation of the Creative Curriculum and Conscious Discipline techniques in each center.

1302.47(b)(1)(iii) safety practices. During the follow up review in May of 2023 it was determined the program ensured that all facilities were free from pollutants, hazards, and toxins. Water testing was completed at each center and documentation was provided to show all classrooms were free of lead exposure in paint.

1302.12(K) determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility. During the follow up review in May of 2023 it was determined that all child enrollment files contained evidence of accurate eligibility determinations.

New family advocates were trained within 90 days of hire and did not make eligibility determinations prior to completing training. The family and community coordinator received training from the regional training and technical assistance providers and attended the regional management acceleration program.

ERSEA 101 training for family advocates was provided during monthly meetings. A review of documents found Family Advocates received ERSEA training during February, March, and April 2023. Each Family Advocate had a professional development and training plan to ensure comprehensive training of all ERSEA requirements.

The program accurately determined eligibility based on the child’s age and family income. A review of child files contained proof of income and indicated in-person or telephone interviews. The family and community services coordinator monitored each application and verified with their signature that each application contained all required information. The administrative assistant also signed the application to verify it was complete after inputting the information into Child Plus.

Through past performance the current MMHSP has demonstrated an ability to administer a project of the size, complexity, and scope. Processes are in place that support program management, planning, and oversight of all systems in the management wheel to ensure quality child and family outcomes.

Section 4: Staffing, Compensation, and Supporting a Strong Early Learning Workforce

Current program policies reflect key program staff are required to have qualifications that meet or exceed Head Start Standards. Below is a table that compares Head Start Qualifications and Competency Requirements to current qualifications of key program staff

Position	Head Start Standard	Job Description Requirement	Qualifications of Current Staff
Head Start Director (6 Years)	Minimum, bachelor's degree and experience in supervision of staff, fiscal management, and administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Administrator Certificate issued by Kansas State Board of Education (requires Masters) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has current administrator Certificate issued by Kansas State Board of Education • Masters in leadership and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> degree) • Degree in Early Childhood or closely related field. • Previous experience preferred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masters in Education • Degree in leadership, K-8 Education, and Special Education • Previous experience as an early childhood coordinator
CFO (2 years)	Certified Public Accountant or minimum, a baccalaureate degree in accounting, business, fiscal management, or a related field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masters degree from an accredited educational institution. • Bachelor's degree in business administration, accounting, finance, or related field • Experience in public school financial management or such experience in other similar organizations with a minimum of 5 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctorate in educational leadership (related field, includes fiscal management) • Previous experience in building and district management (includes fiscal management)
Education	Bachelor's degree in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early-Late

Coordinator (5 Years)	early childhood education or bachelor's degree and equivalent coursework with early education teaching experience.	degree in Early Childhood Education	Childhood Generalist Degree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masters in Curriculum and Instruction • Previous Experience as a pre-k teacher
Health and Safety Coordinator (2 years)	Bachelor's degree related to one or more disciplines they oversee	Bachelor's degree in related field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelors in Exercise Science
Family and Community Services Coordinator (1 Year)	Bachelor's degree related to one or more disciplines they oversee	Bachelor's degree in related field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelors of Science in Psychology
Mental Health (3 Years)	Licensed or Certified Mental health professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensed or certified mental health professional • Masters degree in Social Work • Kansas Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board License 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LMSW • Masters degree in Social Work • Kansas Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board Licensed • Previous experience as Conscious Discipline© Certified Instructor • Previous

			experience as preschool teacher
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The current management team has a combined total of nineteen years of experience managing the current program that combines complex social services and education services. The management team meets on a weekly basis. The purpose of the first meeting of the month is to monitor and analyze data to determine the strengths of the program and to determine next steps to address the needs of the program. The data policy and data plan include the following key information: system monitored, time frame, data system used, data management, and data analysis.

Currently there are monthly collaboration meetings with all of the sites and the Early Childhood Office for the purposes of aggregating and analyzing site data, monitoring site compliance with standards, and providing updates and identifying needs.

Staffing meetings are conducted twice a year with each site, once in the fall and once in the spring. At staffing meetings, the individual needs of each student are discussed including results of behavioral and cognitive screeners, classroom performance, and if the student has all required screenings completed. Action plans are developed based on the needs of each student.

Competitive Salaries

Due to the close partnership with the school district, the MMHSP is able to offer competitive salaries and benefits to staff that allows the grantee to implement a high-quality program. McPherson/ Marion Head Start uses a Wage Comparability Study that is done every two years by the Kansas Head Start Association to measure how it competes with other Head

Start programs in the state in regard to salaries. The program also utilizes salary information from other local and state school districts to compare wages of administrative, certified, and classified staff.

Teaching staff are required to have a teaching license to be a lead teacher in the classrooms. Due to this Head Start teachers follow the same pay scale as any other teacher in the district they are teaching in. Head Start teachers are part of the school district's negotiated agreement to ensure the program remains competitive with salaries. Certified and classified pay scales account for experience and qualifications by allowing for step and column movement. McPherson's base pay for a first year teacher with a Bachelor's Degree is \$41,000. The range on the pay scale for certified staff with a bachelor's degree is \$41,000-\$50,568. When compared to the Wage Study conducted by KHSA the range for certified staff with a bachelor's degree is \$28,642-\$76,996. The average teacher salary with a BA or above is \$43,267 and the average salary for early childhood teachers in the program is \$50,893.92. The range for program assistants (paras) in the program is \$11.15-\$21.83 an hour or \$14,885.25 per year to \$28,651.88 per year. The range for program assistants (paras) in other programs is \$8.79-\$18.63 an hour or \$18,278-\$38,750. Each year classified salaries are examined to determine yearly increases to classified staff salaries. Classified salaries is an area of improvement for the program and will be looking at adjusting the pay scale for Head Start Classified Staff for the 24-25 school year in order to be competitive with other programs.

All of the classrooms in McPherson county are combined to include Head Start, State Pre-K, Community, and students receiving special education. Teacher and instructional aide salaries are allocated based on the percentage of enrolled students. Head Start pay's 52% of

teacher salaries and benefits while the other 48% is allocated between state pre-k funding, community funding, and funding from the school district. Enrollment percentages are reviewed yearly to determine if any changes need to be made to the cost allocations for the following year.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed with the Marion School District and Hillsboro School District. Each Memorandum of Understanding outlines the fiscal responsibilities of Head Start and the School District regarding staffing. The Memorandum's are reviewed on an annual basis.

Benefits

Besides the employer match for FICA, unemployment insurance, and workers compensation the district health insurance plan provides single coverage insurance to all employees that want it. Cost per month for the 23/24 school year is \$752 per month per eligible position. Health insurance premiums for the 24/25 school year are unknown at this time. The spreadsheet titled Fringe shows the benefits that are paid using Head Start funds. Teacher Fringe Benefits (FICA, Medicare, Unemployment, and Workmans Comp) are calculated at 52% of their salaries. Health and Life Insurance are calculated at 52% of \$9,024 for health insurance and 52% of \$54 dollars for life insurance.

Career Development Opportunities

Currently, the program implements an annual training and technical assistance plan. The technical assistance plan addresses individualized training and technical assistance needs that support program goals, opportunities to increase staff capacity, professional development, and address qualifications. The plan also addresses Head Start Mandatory training. All educational staff are required to complete fifteen hours of professional development during the school year.

Completion of hours are tracked and monitored throughout the year to ensure compliance with this requirement. All professional development opportunities are documented through an agenda and sign-in sheet. Professional development hours are documented in Child Plus.

Individual training that supports program goals includes professional development opportunities provided by the school district and building professional development to address individual site needs. Professional development is also provided to staff by request. If there are individual needs staff can submit a request and Head Start staff will work with the individual to develop a plan to meet their needs.

Annual Conscious Discipline© training is provided to all staff on an ongoing basis by utilizing the Conscious Discipline© Action Team that includes a variety of staff from multiple sites. The Conscious Discipline© Action Team provides resources and materials to all staff on a monthly basis. The program also has an established coaching plan where teachers are given the opportunity to request coaching based on their individual needs. If teachers request coaching an individual coaching plan is developed between the education coordinator and staff receiving coaching. The education coordinator provides coaching to all classrooms throughout the year utilizing the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Using CLASS teachers and other instructional staff are provided feedback on strengths and areas of growth. In addition to the fifteen hours of required professional development, first year teachers are provided with three hours of professional development on a monthly basis and second year teachers are provided with three hours of professional development every other month.

Instructional aides/assistant teachers are provided with job specific professional development before the start of the school year in addition to required pre-service professional

development. Professional development includes program overview, guidelines and expectations, child guidance and behavior management, Child Development Associates Guidelines, and program information. Throughout the year instructional aides that are new to the program receive professional development on a bi-monthly basis. For staff that start with the program after the school year begins, staff are provided with onboarding that covers program information that is required by Head Start Standards and information that the program has identified as important information to know before starting in the classroom. Within the first three months of employment staff are provided at a minimum with two check-ins as well as two coaching conversations. The program also pays for staff to complete their CDA and/or renew their CDA. If staff complete their CDA they are provided with a pay increase.

Family services staff are provided with training at the start of the year that reviews information that is relevant to their job responsibilities. Family services staff are provided with ongoing training during monthly Family Services staff meetings.

When job openings occur in the program positions are first advertised internally in the school district to give potential internal candidates that meet the qualifications an opportunity to apply. After internal applicants are given an opportunity the position is posted and advertised externally. As applications come in they are reviewed by staff to determine if candidates meet the required qualifications.

Interviews are scheduled with candidates meeting the qualifications and a team consisting of current staff members conducts the applications, reviews references, and makes a determination based on qualifications, experience, and potential fit for the position.

Section 5: Planning and Implementation

Systems are in place for continued operation of current facilities without a delay in services to students and families. The MMHSP is not proposing any construction, renovation, or adaptation of space to meet requirements. The program would continue to operate in the facilities that the current twelve classrooms are located at. The three school districts (Hillsboro, Marion, and McPherson) donate classroom space for Head Start to operate in. Head Start does not pay rent for any of the classroom spaces as the spaces are donated by the school districts.

MMHSP currently supports twelve classrooms located in six sites and three different school districts. There would not be a delay in services to the students and families due to construction or renovations. Facilities are currently fully operational there is no plan needed for alternative services provisions.

All classrooms are instructional pre-k programs that are operated by the Board of Education. State Statutory Authority K.S.A. 72-67,115 authorizes Boards of Education to offer and conduct preschool programs for children under the age of eligibility to attend kindergarten or to enter into agreements or contracts to provide such programs. If the Board of Education operates a preschool program or enters into an interlocal agreement to operate a preschool program, these preschool programs are not required to be licensed by KDHE. This includes Head Start programs.

Head Start health and safety standards are implemented and monitored through monthly classroom walkthroughs, daily playground inspections, and health and safety screeners three times a year. When issues arise those are reported to the Head Start Director and Building Principal so issues can be addressed in a timely manner.

The program currently has qualified staff that support the Head Start programs. As openings occur between now and the start of the 24/25 program year the current process will be utilized to recruit, hire, and train qualified staff. When openings do occur they are first advertised internally to identify the internal interest of qualified staff. If the position is not able to be filled internally it is advertised externally through a variety of methods (website, newsletters, word of mouth, job fairs etc.). Upon hiring employment requirements (background check, health assessment, T.B. test, drug screening) are completed before any orientation or training takes place. Before starting the 24/25 school year new teachers are provided with 6-8 hours of program specific professional development in addition to the approximately 14-16 hours of professional development all staff will receive before the school year starts. Staff will be in place, trained, and prepared to start the 24/25 program year on time.

Section 6: Organizational Capacity and Governance

The governing board of the grantee is the McPherson USD 418 board of education. If awarded the continuation of the grant the McPherson USD 418 board of education would continue to serve as the governing body. The governing body is composed of seven board members from the McPherson School District. These individuals are selected to their positions by public election. The business office manager and superintendent provide expertise in fiscal management. The special education director for the McPherson County Cooperative provides expertise in special education. The Head Start director and the district director of curriculum and instruction provide expertise in education and child development. The board retains the services of legal representation that is available to provide legal guidance to the governing body. Board members are elected community members of the district they serve and are representative of the

communities that the sites are in.

The governing board receives training at the beginning of the year over program governance. The training that occurs for the governing body outlines the area the program serves, composition of sites, the process for determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility, funding sources, and organization of Head Start. The governing board is also trained on the various leadership responsibilities that include:

- Participation in the development, planning, and evaluation of the Head Start program
- Procedures of accessing and collecting information.
- Development of standards of conduct
- Establishment of Policy Council by-laws and election procedures
- Review of funding applications and amendments
- Review and approval of:
 - Major policies and procedures
 - Progress on implementing the Head Start grant
 - Personnel policies regarding the hiring, evaluation, termination, and compensation of agency employees.
 - Fiscal management, accounting, and reporting policies
 - Major expenditures and operating budget
 - Selection of an auditor and actions to correct audit findings
- Receive and use operational reports:
 - HHS secretary communication
 - Financial statement

- Program information summaries
- Data on school readiness goals
- Enrollment
- USDA
- Financial Audit
- Self assessment
- Community assessment
- Program information report

The governing body receives monthly updates from the Head Start director regarding enrollment, attendance, waitlist, progress on 45/90 day screenings, fiscal reports, and human resources. The governing body is provided with data on school readiness goals on a quarterly basis. On an annual basis the governing body reviews the self assessment, community assessment, and program information report. HHS secretary communication (program instructions and information memorandums) are provided to the governing body on an ongoing basis. All materials shared with the governing body are accessible to the public through the McPherson School District website. In addition the Head Start director shares the monthly head start report with all program staff.

The current policy council consists of parents that have students in the program. Policy council is represented by parents from the McPherson, Hillsboro, and Marion programs. The policy council includes community representation through parents of current pre-k students that qualify for special education, state pre-k, or tuition paying families. 67% of current policy council members are families who qualify for Head Start services. Policy Council by-laws are

reviewed and updated on an annual basis to be in compliance with standards as well as an effort to meet the needs of the communities that are served. Changes to the recruitment, election, and make-up of the policy council have been implemented during the 23-24 school year in an effort to be compliant with standards and to improve the overall functioning of the policy council. A recruitment plan has also been developed and is subject to review on an annual basis to ensure steps are being taken to guarantee the formation of a policy council as early in the program year as possible.

The Policy Council receives ongoing training on topics that include: what their role is and how to interpret various reports and documents. Program governance training is provided during the first meeting of the program year. The training that occurs for the policy council outlines the area the program serves, composition of sites, the process for determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility, funding sources, and organization of Head Start. The policy council is also trained on key responsibilities of the policy council. Materials for upcoming meetings are posted to the program website several days before the meeting and are also emailed out to policy council members.

Impasse procedures are in place and documented in the policy council by-laws and in program policies. A governing body representative serves as a liaison between the governing body and the policy council to be able to communicate between the two parties. The policy council and the governing body are provided with the same reports and materials during meetings. Any and all board members are welcome to attend policy council meetings and policy council members are welcome to attend board meetings. By having a representative from the board serve on the policy council there is consultation and collaboration from both parties when

it comes to viewing and approving necessary reports and documents. A conflict resolution process is in place should there be a dispute between the governing body and the policy council. There has not been a need to use the conflict resolution process as the policy council and the governing board has not had any conflicts.

Training of the policy council and governing body is documented on an annual basis through a program training and technical assistance plan. The governing board, policy council, and management team are prepared to continue to oversee operations that comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Section 7: Budget and Budget Justification

A detailed budget spreadsheet has been created to develop a comprehensive budget. The proposed budget aligns with the amounts requested for direct costs that provide the required services to children and families. MMHSP used the 2022 Wage Comparability Study and salary information from other local and state school districts to compare wages of administrative, certified, and classified staff. Travel, supply, contractual, and other operational costs have been estimated based on previous and current costs.

Personnel (\$1,000,821.80)

The sum of personnel and fringe benefits exceeds the normal range of 60%-80%. It is important to note that while projected costs for personnel exceed the normal range contractual, construction, and supply costs are low due to the collaboration between Head Start and the school districts it serves. Partnering school districts provide classroom space and utility costs at no charge to Head Start. Supply costs are cost allocated between Head Start and its partnering school districts. This allows Head Start to provide salaries and benefits that are competitive with

other staff in each school district.

To stay competitive and to attract quality teachers all teachers have a bachelor's degree or above and are paid on the same salary schedule as all other certified teachers in the district. Since all of the classrooms in McPherson county are combined to include Head Start, State Pre-K, Community, and SPED students Teacher and instructional aide salaries have been allocated based on the percentage of enrolled students. In McPherson, Head Start will pay 52% of teacher salaries and benefits while the other 48% will be allocated between state pre-k funding, community funding, and funding from the school district. Cost allocations for personnel will be updated on an annual basis. Hillsboro staff allocations are at 50% per the current MOU between the Hillsboro school district and Head Start. Marion staff are paid for 100% through Head Start as the classroom is a Head Start classroom and is not blended like classrooms in McPherson are.

Salary Class Category	Salary
Program Managers and Content Specialists	\$106, 914
Teachers	\$365, 026
Instructional Aides	\$165,207
Mental Health/Disability Services	\$65,231
Family Design and Management	\$53, 123
Other Family and Community	\$123,577
Clerical	\$32,512
Fiscal	\$0
Managers	\$89,232

Fringe Benefits (\$270,667.04)

The estimated total includes the employer match for FICA, unemployment insurance, and workers compensation. The district health insurance plan provides single coverage insurance to all employees that want it. Cost per month for the 23-24 school year is \$752 per month per eligible position. Health insurance premiums for the 24/25 school year are unknown at this time. Increases for the next school year have been estimated based on a 9% increase as that was the percent increase that occurred from the 22/23 school year to the 23/24 school year. Health insurance for next year is estimated to be \$819 per month. McPherson teacher and instructional aide Fringe Benefits (FICA, Medicare, Unemployment, and Workmans Comp) and insurance costs are calculated at 52%. Hillsboro staff fringe benefits and insurance costs are calculated at 50% of the total cost. Marion staff fringe benefits and insurance are calculated at 100% of the cost.

Travel (\$3,101)

Out of town travel costs are allocated for scheduled staff training. The leadership team will attend the annual Region 7 Leadership Conference and the Director will attend the Region 7 Director Caucus. There is also money budgeted for additional region or state meetings that are offered. It is estimated that \$653 dollars of T/TA dollars will be used for travel expenses (hotel and meals).

Equipment: No funds have been budgeted for this object class category.

Equipment needs are not anticipated for the 24-25 school year as classrooms and sites are equipped with the necessary equipment to carry out programming.

Supplies (\$40,751.61)

Office Supplies: The program contracts for copier lease services. Most office supplies are purchased through local businesses.

Child and Family Services Supplies: Each classroom teacher receives a \$1,500 annual budget for classroom and instructional needs. Money is also budgeted for training and program wide curriculum supplies and for parent engagement events. It is estimated that \$659 of T/TA funds will be used to support Conscious Discipline training for staff and parents.

Other Supplies: This includes funding for technology needs as well as costs for medical and dental supplies.

Contractual (\$63,543.74)

Administrative Services: Annual dues to KHSA and NHSA

Health/Disabilities: Funds budgeted for activities/resources to support staff wellness.

Food Service: The program contracts with the district dietician and consultant to modify menus as needed for students with special diets. The program also reimburses the district for snacks and staff meals as staff provide supervision during lunch time.

Child Transportation Services: As a district, transportation is not provided for the students, however if able learning journeys do require transportation. The cost of a bus driver for those trips is covered by the program.

Training and Technical Assistance: Costs include the annual T.S. Gold Contract and the annual Child Plus contract.

Family Child Care: No costs

Other Contracts: The program provides cell phones for the family advocates to be able to communicate with families without having to give out their personal cell phone numbers.

Construction: No funds have been budgeted for this object class category.

Other (\$34, 183.81)

Building maintenance/ Repair: Money budgeted for equipment upgrades in classrooms.

Local Travel: Costs associated are for fuel for Head Start Vehicles, auto insurance, fuel reimbursement for parent travel, and auto repairs.

Publication/Advertising/Printing: Costs associated with advertising and website design for the program.

Training and Staff Development: Registration for professional development and training are allocated as well as funding for CDA courses for paras/instructional aides who need to register. It is estimated that \$14,160 of T/TA funds will be used to provide staff with training opportunities to meet individual and program goals.

Start-Up/Pre Award Costs

Since the USD 418 District is the current grantee, there are no major changes in scope to the current programming and start-up/pre award costs are not being requested.

Non-Federal Match

The estimated total for non-federal match for the 24-25 school year is \$353,313. The program anticipates being able to meet the federal match due to salaries and benefits provided by district staff that provide a service to Head Start at no cost to Head Start. The table below shows the estimated categories and amounts for the non-federal match:

Category	Amount
Personnel	\$323,651.47
Benefits	\$29,661.53
Total	\$353,313

Personnel

By being part of a school district the program benefits from receiving support and services from district employees at no cost to Head Start. The partnership with the school district provides special education services at all locations in McPherson county based upon identified needs of enrolled Head Start Children. Services provided include special education certified teachers, psychologists, speech pathologists, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and classroom paras. Fiscal, food service, nursing, counselors, secretaries, library aides, technology support, and other district administrative staff in-kind their time to meet the needs of the students and teachers. In-kind amounts are calculated using the employees salary in relation to the relative benefit that Head Start receives from each staff member. For staff members that provide services to students their salary is divided by the total number of students they serve and multiplied by the amount of head start students they serve. For staff members that provide services for staff their salary is divided by the total number of staff they serve and divided by the number of head start staff they support. For staff members that provide fiscal services their salary is multiplied by 4% (Head Start Budget is approximately 4% of the district budget).

Benefits

Benefits are calculated based on current salaries of staff members, divided by total students they serve, multiplied by the number of Head Start students they serve, and multiplied by 21.63% (benefit rate) to get the amount that is cost allocated for each employee.