

Duluth Head Start Federal Grant Status

In May 2016, we had a Federal Health and Safety Review. The reviewer found that we were in violation of Head Start Standards in two areas. One was the need to have ALL trashcans covered. We have always had the large can used for meals and art clean up but we needed to replace all the trashcans. We did replace all the cans.

The second issue was about playgrounds. The reviewer saw some surfacing pushed aside under fall zones, a hole beneath a fence and a safety issue with the tire swing, all of these at Piedmont.

In addition, the reviewer stated that while we had notices posted in the classrooms about which structures were off limits to preschoolers, that was not enough. Our Facilities people fixed all the playground issues and posted signs on each playground restricting preschoolers to the equipment deemed safe for them.

In March of 2017, we got a letter stating the Office of Head Start had closed the findings. Two things about this. First, we believed as did many in the Head Start world, if your case was closed, it was removed from the deficiency list. A deficiency gets your program in the pool for recompeting for your grant.

On March 4, 2019, we received a letter informing us we are in Competitive Grant Status. That means other entities can and may apply to be the Head Start grantee in Duluth. That is not what we see happening to our friends around the State who have been in this situation. They get their grants back.

On March 11, 2019, we wrote a letter disputing the findings and asking to have the deficiency downgraded to a non-compliance. A Non-compliance does not have the same consequences. That request was not approved. We are moving forward with the next steps. They are writing a

one-year grant until next year when we write a Re-competition Grant, taking inventory, learning the next steps in the Re-competition world. We do not stay in the poor me stage very long. We work with a system that allows this to occur and we will be making the very best of the situation. To that end, staff and parents will be ready to help.