

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between
Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc.'s Head Start Program and
Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Public School/ECSE**

This is an agreement between Minnesota Valley Action Council, Inc.'s Head Start program, hereinafter called MVAC and Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Public Schools and Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Public Schools Early Childhood Special Education, hereinafter called Public School/ECSE.

I. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this agreement is:

- 1) Improving the Availability of Services
Outreach, communication, and sharing information helps identify eligible children and makes delivery of services more efficient and less duplicative.
- 2) Improving the Quality of Services
Sharing resources, such as professional development, educational activities, curricular objectives, instructional strategies, and technical assistance improves the quality of children's early learning experiences.
- 3) Supporting Children's Transitions
As children move from preschool, Head Start, and child care into the public schools, their transition is facilitated by involvement from both early childhood and K-12 systems.

The scope of this agreement is:

- To improve the availability and quality of services for MVAC's Head Start children, age three to school entry, and their families in Le Sueur County.
- To support children's optimal development and readiness for school entry and long term success
- To address the unique strengths and needs of the local population, such as homeless families, children in foster care, migrant families, or non-English speaking families.
- To comply with and coordinate care around the McKinney-Vento act to work with school liaisons and coordinate services for homeless children
- To promote collaboration regarding shared use of transportation, facilities, and other resources, as appropriate.
- To promote further collaboration to reduce duplication and enhance efficiency of services.
- To define the roles and responsibilities of the named parties toward coordination and greater collaboration; enhance linkages and relationships; and exchange information on the provision of education and non-educational services.
- To coordinate a comprehensive system of activities, policies, and procedures among the named parties which guide and support their delivery of services to children and their families.
- To support ongoing communication and parent outreach for smooth transition to kindergarten
- To encourage a system of early intervention, referral, and service delivery for preschool children ages birth to age 5 years, 11 months, Le Sueur County who are at-risk for disabling conditions or have a disability as defined by Minnesota Special Education entrance criteria.

- To coordinate staff training, including opportunities for joint staff training on topics such as academic standards, trauma-informed practices, instructional methods, curricula, and social emotional development.

II. Background

The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), requires local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving Title I funds to develop agreements with Head Start and other early childhood providers to increase coordination. This new federal requirement represents an important opportunity for better coordination between school districts and Head Start and other community-based early childhood education programs to provide higher-quality learning experiences and a more seamless transition to kindergarten. In the year prior to kindergarten, children may be in federal Head Start programs, publicly-funded preschool programs, child care centers, family child care homes, or faith-based programs. These settings provide a wide range of early experiences that impact each child's preparation for school. Head Start is also mandated by law to take steps to coordinate activities with the local educational agency serving the community involved and with schools in which children participating in the Head Start program will enroll following the program. Each Head Start program must have a written agreement (MOU) with the appropriate local school systems or local education agency (LEA) and Special Education Cooperatives that operates a publically funded pre-K program in the Head Start program's service area to coordinate and collaborate to best meet the needs of children and families.

III. MVAC's Responsibilities Under This MOU

MVAC will be responsible to:

- Participate in Child Find activities.
- Facilitate the completion of health and developmental screenings if the child has not already been screened by the school district.*
- Complete ongoing assessment.*
- Facilitate dental and medical services.*
- Provide direct/indirect services for our children and families.*
- Provide parent and family education.*
- Provide early childhood education.*
- Make referrals when appropriate.*
- Participate in training activities as needed.
- Participate in interagency screening activities.
- Participate in meetings.
- Provide case management for families as needed.

*Services provided to families eligible under Federal Head Start guidelines.

IV. Public School/ECSE's Responsibilities Under This MOU

Public School will be responsible to:

- Facilitate the completion of health and developmental screenings if the child is registering with the school district for the first time. (Early Childhood Screenings)
- Provide special education and related staff to serve identified children age's birth through 5 years, 11 months (home, school, and community based).

- Use special education funds (i.e. reimbursements, transportation, and foundation aids) to support programs as appropriate.
- Complete and monitor educational due process for all children and their families as needed.
- Assign unique ID's/MARSS numbers for students residing within their district and share with Head Start staff.
- Act as lead agency in coordinating referrals and services within districts.
- Provide appropriate staff for interagency screening activities.
- Gather information and share release and referral information.
- Set screening meeting times.
- Contact parents for referral/evaluation processes.
- Provide direct/indirect special education services.
- Case management as needed.
- Provide monitoring and follow-up.
- Evaluate children.
- Be a liaison with other agencies and services.
- Inform district staff of services.
- Participate in training activities as needed.
- Child Find activities (Early Childhood Screenings).

V. It is Mutually Understood and Agreed by and Between the Parties:

The following principles will guide the partnership:

- We will develop successful linkages within the context of Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, the Head Start Act (2007) and Performance Standards, and Minnesota legislation policies and procedures;
- We will develop linkages within the context of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- We will plan and implement strategies based on practice and research that have proven to support children's school success;
- We will respect the unique needs and resources of each program and share needed data for individual children while upholding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA);
- All parties acknowledge confidentiality requirements that each must follow regarding informed parental consent and the sharing and release of personally identifiable information regarding children and families. Each part to this MOU will protect the rights of young children with respect to records and reports created, maintained, and used by the public agencies. It is the intent of this agreement to ensure that parents have rights of success and rights of privacy with respect to such reports and records and that applicable State and Federal laws for exercise of these rights be strictly followed;
- We will conduct educational activities, curricular objectives and instruction (research-based curriculum, school readiness goals);
- Head Start will give enrollment priorities for eligible children to be served by programs (ex. homeless, foster, disabilities, etc.);
- All parties will define services across areas (consistency and continuity of services across districts);

- We will provide staff training, including opportunities for joint staff training on topics such as academic content standards, instructional methods, assessment tools, curricula, and social and emotional development (Pyramid Model);
- We will coordinate program technical assistance (targeted/customized support between parties);
- Both parties will met provision of additional services to meet the needs of working parents, as applicable (ex. before/after school care);
- We will provide communication and parent outreach for smooth transitions to kindergarten (intentional seamless supports for families);
- All parties will share resources and avoid duplication of services through collaboration on, but not limited to use of facilities, transportation, and other program elements;
- Other elements mutually agreed to by parties to this memorandum (ex. share child assessment data K-3rd grade, training);
- Both parties agree on a mechanism for on-going communication and coordination.

It is understood and agreed that the entire agreement of the parties is contained herein and that this agreement supersedes all oral agreements and negotiations between the parties relating to the subject matter, as well as any previous agreements presently in effect between all parties listed relating to the subject matter hereof.

VI. Resolution of Differences

The Parties will create a process to resolve disputes or differences and to solve problems, working first to resolve disputes between them. The process will include timelines for regular communication/meetings to review the MOU, plan collaborative activities, update each other on the plan achievement, and resolve issues. Each Party will identify a liaison to be responsible for MOU communication and plan implementation.

VII. Effective Date and Signature

The Parties believe that Head Start and statewide preschool programs can create and maintain a meaningful partnership to promote school readiness so that low income children are served in a coordinated, high quality system. The Parties agree to plan and implement strategies based on practice and research that have proven to support children’s school success. The Parties agree to coordinate recruitment and enrollment so that each child and family is served in the best setting and programs cooperate to maximize community resources.

Child Development Services Director, MVAC

Date

Superintendent, Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Public Schools

Date

Mental Health and Disabilities Advisor, MVAC

Date