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FAMILY SUCCESS ALLIANCE SETS INITIAL DIRECTION TO FOCUS ON KINDERGARTEN READINESS AND FAMILY LITERACY

Orange County, NC (April 21, 2015)- On Monday April 20th, the Family Success Alliance advisory council met to review information from their community needs assessment for the cradle-to-college/career pipeline in the initiative's two pilot zones. The meeting ended in a recommendation for the Family Success Alliance staff to ask for \$90,000, the remaining balance from the Orange County Social Justice Fund, for efforts to increase kindergarten readiness and family literacy in Zones 4 and 6.

The community needs assessment took place from January to March 2014, and included doing a door-to-door community survey in both zones, a survey of service providers and programs in Orange County, a review of existing community reports, and analysis of school, community, and health data. The results were presented back to the zones at community meetings where attendees had the opportunity to discuss the data, ask questions for future research, and vote for their initial zone priorities.

Champions from both zones presented their initial community priorities to the Council at Monday's meeting.

Representatives Aviva Scully and Rosemary Deane presented the initial Zone 4 community priorities to the Council. They reported the priorities were transportation, ensuring that children are ready for kindergarten, affordable childcare, and support for families, especially Latino families. Aviva Scully also emphasized the need for a two-generation approach, because "...for success we need to identify strategies that support both children and parents/caregivers."

Zone 6 representatives Delores Bailey, Tami Pfeifer, and Reyna Rivera presented the initial Zone 6 community priorities as well. A shared priority with Zone 4 was around early childhood, namely that children are ready for kindergarten and that families can get affordable childcare. Unique from Zone 4 was Zone 6's emphasis on the need for affordable housing for working families. Carrboro Elementary School social worker Reyna Rivera shared concerns about affordable housing in Zone 6, noting that,

“families come to me and say they are leaving to go to Chatham, Durham, or other counties where they can afford to live.”

Taking into consideration these community priorities and the model, evidence-based work of other cradle-to-college/career collective impact projects, like the Harlem Children’s Zone, Family Success Alliance staff proposed action steps for the coming months. In the next month, the Family Success Alliance will request funding from of the Orange County Social Justice Fund to expand kindergarten readiness activities for the upcoming kindergarten class and to pilot a navigator/advocate position in each zone to improve communication about existing services between families and programs in Orange County.

Finally, the Family Success Alliance Council and Zone champions agreed that increased community engagement is key to the continuing success of the Family Success Alliance’s work. According to one zone representative, “In order to make change it can’t only be our wishes. The community needs to be involved and it has to be their desire.” The Family Success Alliance encourages all Orange County residents to stay up-to-date with their activities by joining their [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) communities for upcoming meetings and ways to get involved!