

2022 - 2023

**Interagency Agreement
Between
Vestal Central School District and Greater Opportunities Head Start**

I. Purpose of Agreement

- A. To improve the availability and quality of services for children, age three through age five, and their families; living in the School District geographic area.
- B. To support children's optimal development and readiness for school entry and success;
- C. To address the unique strengths and needs of the local population, such as homeless, migrant, or non-English speaking families;
- D. To promote collaboration regarding shared use of transportation, facilities, and other resources, as appropriate;
- E. To promote further collaboration to reduce duplication and enhance efficiency of services;
- F. 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 educational and non-educational services; and
- G. 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?

II. Program Descriptions

- A. Greater Opportunities Head Start serves the rural areas of Broome County including the several school districts contained therein.

Head Start is a nation-wide Federal grant program funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is a comprehensive child development program for families with young children in the areas of education, social services, health, and family involvement. Head Start preschool programs are for children from 3 to 5 years of age and their families.

Greater Opportunities Head Start are mandated to assume a leadership role in the development of partnerships with community agencies and service providers. Each Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal, and American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start program must have a written agreement with the local school systems (LSS) or local education agency (LEA) to coordinate and collaborate to best meet the needs of children and their families.

- B. The **Vestal School District** serves the children within their specific district. Funding for New York State Public Schools comes from three sources; the federal government, state formula aids, grants, and locally raised revenues.

III. Authority

- A. Greater Opportunities Head Start's responsibility for coordination and collaboration with the School District responsible for managing publicly funded preschool programs in the service area of the Head Start grantee is mandated in the Head Start Act: Public Law 110-134 "Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007."
- B. The Vestal Central School District is authorized by the New York State Education Department.

IV. Guiding Principles

- A. Create and maintain a meaningful partnership to promote school readiness so that children from low-income families in Head Start programs, or who is preschool-age, may receive comprehensive services to prepare them for elementary school and to address any potential “achievement gap.”
- B. Plan and implement strategies based on practice and research that have proven to support children’s school success.
- C. Respect the uniqueness of our community’s needs and resources.
- D. Promote the involvement of members of the early care and education communities.
- E. Share commitment, cooperation, and collaboration for a coordinated service delivery system.

V. Joint Roles in System Review, Coordination, Collaboration, Alignment, and Implementation

Vestal Central School District and Greater Opportunities Head Start will review and develop plans for the coordination, collaboration, alignment, and implementation of each of the following activities, as mandated by the Act.

- A. Educational activities, curricular objectives, and instruction including:
 1. Implementing a research-based early childhood curriculum that is aligned with the Head Start Child Development and Learning Framework developed by the Secretary and, as appropriate, Universal Prekindergarten Learning Standards the New York State Pre-K-12 Common Core Standards.
 2. Establishing ongoing communications between Greater Opportunities Head Start and the School District for developing continuity of developmentally appropriate curricular objectives (which for the purpose of the Head Start program shall be aligned with the Head Start Child Development and Learning Framework and, as appropriate, with Universal Prekindergarten Learning Standards the New York State Pre-K-12 Common Core Standards) and for shared expectations for children's learning and development as the children transition to school.
- B. Public information dissemination and access to programs for families contacting the Head Start program or any of the preschool programs including:
 1. Generating support and leveraging the resources of the entire community in order to improve school readiness.
 2. Establishing ongoing channels of communication between Head Start staff and their counterparts in the schools (including teachers, social workers, local educational agency liaisons designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)), and health staff to facilitate coordination of programs.
- C. Selection of eligible children to be served by programs including:
 1. Developing and implementing systems to increase Head Start and Universal Prekindergarten program participation of underserved populations of eligible children.
 2. Developing procedures for identifying children who are limited English proficient, and informing the parents of such children about the instructional services used to help children make progress towards acquiring the knowledge and skills and acquisition of the English language.
 3. Collaborating with all public or private entities providing early childhood education and development services or programs in the community and addressing any barriers to such collaboration that the agencies encounter including:
 - (i) Programs implementing grant agreements under the Early Reading First and Even Start programs;
 - (ii) Other preschool programs operating under Title I;
 - (iii) Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education Programs serving children with disabilities; under section 619 and part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.)
 - (iv) Child care programs;

- (v) The educational programs that the children in the Head Start program involved will enter at the age of compulsory school attendance; and
- (vi) Local entities, such as a public or school library for—
 - a. Conducting reading readiness programs;
 - b. Developing innovative programs to excite children about the world of books, including providing fresh books in the Head Start classroom;
 - c. Assisting in literacy training for Head Start teachers; and
 - d. Supporting parents and other caregivers in literacy efforts.
- D. Definition of service areas: The **Vestal Central School District** geographic area.
- E. Staff training, including opportunities for joint staff training on topics such as academic content standards, instructional methods, curricula, and social and emotional development and transition-related training for school staff and Head Start staff.
- F. Program technical assistance including linking services provided in the Head Start program with educational services, including services relating to language, literacy, and numeracy, provided by school district.
- G. Provision of services to meet the needs of working parents, as applicable.
- H. Communication and parent outreach for smooth transitions to kindergarten including:
 - 1. Developing and implementing a systematic procedure for transferring, with parental consent, Head Start program records for each participating child to the school in which such child will enroll.
 - 2. Establishing comprehensive transition policies and procedures that support children transitioning to school, including by engaging the local educational agency in the establishment of such policies.
 - 3. Conducting outreach to parents and elementary school (such as kindergarten) teachers to discuss the educational, developmental, and other needs of individual children.
 - 4. Helping parents of limited English proficient children understand—
 - (i) The instructional and other services provided by the school in which such child will enroll after participation in Head Start; and
 - (ii) As appropriate, the information provided to parents of limited English proficient children under section 3302 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7012)
 - 5. Developing and implementing a family outreach and support program, in cooperation with entities carrying out parental involvement efforts under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and family outreach and support efforts under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, taking into consideration the language needs of parents of limited English proficient children.
 - 6. Assisting families, administrators, and teachers in enhancing educational and developmental continuity and continuity of parental involvement in activities between Head Start services and elementary school classes.
 - 7. Helping parents, including grandparents and kinship caregivers, to understand the importance of parental involvement in a child's academic success while teaching them strategies for maintaining parental involvement as their child moves from Head Start to elementary school.
 - 8. Helping parents understand the instructional and other services provided by the school in which their child will enroll after participation in the Head Start program.
- I. Provision and use of facilities, transportation, and other program elements including:
 - 1. Collaborating on the shared use of transportation and facilities, in appropriate cases.
 - 2. Collaborating to reduce the duplication and enhance the efficiency of services while increasing the program participation of underserved populations of eligible children.
 - 3. Exchanging information on the provision of non-educational services to such children.

J. Mandates for children with disabilities:

1. **Program Mandates:**

(i) Responsibility of School District:

- a. Ensure that children (ages 3-21) with disabilities are identified, located and evaluated following the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- b. Ensure that preschool children with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education including the development and implementation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP), procedural safeguards, and the provisions of related services.
- c. Place preschool children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment with the opportunity to interact with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.
- d. Work with appropriate community agencies to ensure that services are provided to preschool children with disabilities.

(ii) Responsibility of Greater Opportunities Head Start:

- a. Maintain an outreach and recruitment process to actively locate, recruit and enroll children with disabilities. No less than 10% of the enrollment opportunities in Head Start shall be available for children with disabilities who are eligible to participate.
- b. Screen all enrolled children for potential problems in the areas of health and development. (IEP), procedural safeguards, and the provisions of related services.
- c. Assist parents in referring children found to be at risk to the appropriate professionals for diagnostic evaluation.
- d. Develop and implement plans, with parent participation, for children based on diagnostic information.
- e. Work closely with other community agencies in order to provide services to children with disabilities.

2. **Referral and Evaluation Process:**

- (i) Greater Opportunities Head Start will inform parents of the services available for their child under IDEA and will assist the parents in referring a child to the Committee on Preschool Special Education (CPSE).
- (ii) The School District will accept the parental referral and promptly provide parents with necessary paperwork including, a copy of the due process procedural safeguards, form for consent to evaluate and list of approved evaluation agencies.
- (iii) Greater Opportunities Head Start will assist parents as needed with completion of paperwork in order to ensure timely responses.
- (iv) The School District will contact evaluation site of parent's choice to arrange for an evaluation.
- (v) Greater Opportunities Head Start will be responsible for getting releases signed by parents so that Head Start can share information with the CPSE and the evaluation agency.
- (vi) Greater Opportunities Head Start will provide the CPSE and the evaluation agency with information regarding the child's screenings, assessments and progress as needed.
- (vii) Greater Opportunities Head Start will assist parents with transportation for evaluations and CPSE meetings as needed.
- (viii) Greater Opportunities Head Start will meet with parents to review evaluations and discuss CPSE meeting procedures prior to the initial CPSE meeting.

3. **Individual Education Program (IEP) Development and Delivery:**

- (i) The School District will inform parents and Head Start of CPSE meeting dates with an appropriate release signed by parents.
- (ii) Greater Opportunities Head Start, with parental consent, will ensure the participation of appropriate Head Start staff at CPSE meetings.

- (iii) Greater Opportunities Head Start staff will aid in facilitating the active involvement of parents at CPSE meetings and IEP development.
- (iv) The CPSE will review evaluations and develop IEP for children determined to be eligible for services and in coordination with GREATER OPPORTUNITIESHS will determine appropriate placement within the Head Start program.
- (v) The School District, with parental consent, will provide Head Start with a copy of the IEP.
- (vi) Greater Opportunities Head Start will assist in coordinating and scheduling services when related services are provided at a Head Start site. Head Start will also assist with coordinating and scheduling services for children when services cannot be provided on site.
- (vii) Greater Opportunities Head Start will assure that the goals of the IEP are supported in the classroom by education staff.

4. Reviewing and Monitoring Child Progress:

- (i) Greater Opportunities Head Start will obtain parental consent to share information with service providers regarding child's ongoing services.
- (ii) Greater Opportunities Head Start will aid in facilitating communication between service providers and the parents.
- (iii) The School District personnel may visit Head Start classrooms, with parental consent, to observe a child in preparation for the CPSE Annual Review Meeting.
- (iv) Greater Opportunities Head Start, with parental consent, will attend the CPSE Annual Review meeting and provide a report on child's progress.
- (v) The School District will receive reports from service providers for the Annual Review meeting.

5. Counting and Reporting:

The School District and Head Start have systems for counting and reporting children with disabilities. Head Start will provide the School District with the number of children receiving services under IEPs for the Child Count report by December 1 annually.

6. Transition:

- (i) Greater Opportunities Head Start staff will work with parents to attend CPSE meetings for children enrolled in Head Start who are transitioning from Early Intervention Services into the CPSE system. Head Start will collaborate with the committee to facilitate a smooth transition into the CPSE system.
- (ii) Greater Opportunities Head Start staff will attend each child's Annual CPSE Review meeting with parental consent and provide input about the child's progress. Head Start will collaborate with the School District to facilitate a smooth transition into the public school.
- (iii) Greater Opportunities Head Start, with parental permission, will follow-up with kindergarten teacher regarding each child's public school transition and adjustment.

7. Training and Technical Assistance:

- (i) Greater Opportunities Head Start will provide ongoing training and information for staff and parents to increase their knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the CPSE process. The GREATER OPPORTUNITIES Head Start Special Services Coordinator will offer training opportunities to ensure quality services for children with disabilities.
- (ii) The School District and Greater Opportunities Head Start shall share information regarding joint training opportunities and resources as deemed appropriate for parents and staff.

K. Other elements mutually agreed to by the parties.

VI. Confidentiality

All acknowledge confidentiality requirements that each grantee and agency must follow regarding the sharing and release, with the consent of families, of personally identifiable information regarding children and families. Each grantee and agency 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 access 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. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) will be followed. (See 34CFR 303.460.)

VII. Dispute Resolution

Parties will first attempt to resolve the dispute between or among them. All local agencies will ensure that a system is in place to resolve disputes and solve problems. The system should include:

- A. Timelines for regular meetings to review local agreements, plan collaborative activities, and resolve issues; and
- B. The identification of a liaison from the School District and a liaison from Greater Opportunities Head Start.

VIII. Review of Agreement

The agreement will be jointly reviewed by all parties annually and more frequently if laws and regulations are amended that will significantly impact this agreement, or when a party requests a formal change.

IX. Term of Agreement

The agreement will become effective immediately after being signed and dated by all parties and run through the end of the **2022-2023 School Year**. By signing the agreement, **Greater Opportunities Head Start** and the **Vestal Central School District** agree to the terms. This agreement may be terminated by either party upon 30 days written notice.

X. Signatures

Vestal Central School District

School District Representative

Date

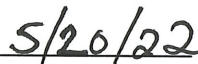
Director of Special Education

Date

Greater Opportunities for Broome and Chenango, INC.



Chief Executive Officer



Date



Special Services Coordinator



Date