



Memo

Cherokee Nation

To: Corey Bunch, Chief of Staff
Sheila Bowlin, Secretary of State
From: Chuck Hoskin, Jr., Principal Chief

CC: Bryan Warner, Deputy Principal Chief
January Hoskin, First Lady
Cabinet and Sub-Cabinet
Date: March 19th 2024

ADMINISTRATION MEMORANDUM ON RECONVENED CHILD CARE TASK FORCE

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide direction relating to my oral directive of March 18, 2023, calling for a Cherokee Nation Child Care Task Force to reconvene and focus on two particular issues by May 31, 2024.

Background

The [Verna Thompson Early Childhood Education Act of 2021](#) called for a biennial report on specific areas of early childhood education and child care, commencing with Fiscal Year 2022. I assembled a Task Force, which issued a report dated September 22, 2022, a copy of which was delivered to the Council, made publicly available via the Anadisgoi website and a copy of which will in the near future be placed on Cherokee Nation's website. Per the Act, the next report is due this fiscal year (2024).

Among the subjects addressed by the 2022 Report as well as follow up memoranda is the issue of potential consolidation of Head Start and Child Development Centers under a single administrative umbrella. Stakeholders from both programs were invited to and provided input. By memorandum of November 14, 2022, a copy of which was provided to the Council, the Task Force advised that administrative consolidation of the two programs would assist the Principal

Chief in achieving the purpose and policies of the 2021 Act. I have not yet taken action based on that recommendation.

On March 18, 2024, I signed an amended and expanded version of the [Verna Thompson Early Childhood Education Act](#). The new law doubles authorized spending on Head Start facility replacement, leaves in place the biennial report requirement. The 2024 amendments also addresses program consolidation, as follows:

Section 5. Consolidation of Head Start and Child Development Centers into a single Early Childhood Education Program

A. *The Principal Chief is authorized, at his or her discretion, commencing with fiscal year 2024, to consolidate the administration of Head Start and Child Development Centers in order to maximize early childhood education resources, achieve administrative efficiencies for said programs, provided early child education services are not reduced as measured by non-administrative staffing, children served or facilities in operation as a consequence of consolidation, provided further:*

a. *The Principal Chief provides 30 day notice to the Council of such authorized consolidation and said consolidation, including the requirement of non-reduction of service is memorialized in the next biennial report required by Section 4 §3 of this act.*

At the Rules Committee at which the 2024 amendments were approved Council members expressed interest, and some concern, over the potential consolidation of the two programs. I committed to Council members that I would gather further input from the programs and that I would ensure that any reconvened task force would include Head Start staff or leadership. Recently employees, Council members and members of the public have expressed an interest in ensuring that the Cherokee Nation workforce, and the workforces of our family of businesses and other entities, have adequate access to childcare.

Based on the foregoing, I gave two oral directives at the March 19, 2024, signing of the amended Act, to be executed by a reconvened child care task force, summarized as follows:

1. Examine gaps in childcare for the Cherokee Nation workforce and the workforces of our family of businesses and other entities.
2. Further examine the propriety of the administrative consolidation of Head Start and Child Development Center operations, within the meaning of Section 5 of the Verna Thompson Early Childhood Education Act, as amended.

I called for Secretary of State Bowlin, Chief of Staff Bunch and First Lady Hoskin to reconvene the child care task force for these narrow purposes.

The child care task force described herein was not established by the Act or a formal executive order. It operated in the nature of an ad hoc executive branch work group¹. Any reconvened task force under this memo, therefore, remains an ad hoc work group which, in this case, is to be empaneled informally by Chief of Staff, Secretary of State and the First Lady.

Directive

Based on the foregoing, please convene a Child Care Task Force to examine the two questions posed above. This task force should operate, in terms of subject matter and time frames, separate from any task force assembled to issue the biennial report prescribed by the Act. In assembling the Task Force, the following departments or units should be represented by staff members who can add substance to addressing the two narrow issues posed herein:

- Administration
- Education
- Human Services
- Child Development Center
- Head Start
- Commerce
- Finance

The task force need not assemble for in person meetings. Rather, COS and SOS, or designated leaders of the task force, can likely simply pose questions written to task force members and receive feedback.

The questions are restated below, along with some guidance:

- 1. *Examine gaps in childcare for the Cherokee Nation workforce and the workforces of our family of businesses and other entities.***
 - a. Examine the usage of our workforce of the following Cherokee Nation programs or services: Head Start, Child Development Centers, Child Care Subsidy program.
 - b. Consider an employee questionnaire concerning child care usage, needs and gaps to include employees across the various work forces at issue.
 - c. Identify opportunities for on-site childcare services based on need, work site worker population, etc.
- 2. *Further examine the propriety of the administrative consolidation of Head Start and Child Development Center operations, within the meaning of Section 5 of the Verna Thompson Early Childhood Education Act, as amended.***

¹ The Task Force produced an excellent report that has resulted in real progress in the area of childcare and early childhood education, including but not limited to support for our own child care workforce and our commitment to a first of its kind for Cherokee Nation child care center planned for CNB's corporate campus in Catoosa.

- a. Solicit feedback on the question from CDC and Head Start leadership, conditioned on a requirement that each express “pros and cons” of consolidation.
- b. Identify potential gains from consolidation.
- c. Make a recommendation as to consolidation, including where the programs should consolidate (if at all) based on a consensus of the task force, taking care to identify any dissenting considerations.

Please provide a written report on these two subjects by May 31, 2024, or any requested extension of time that I may approve.

Wado,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chuck Hoskin Jr." in a cursive, slightly stylized script.

Chuck Hoskin Jr.
Cherokee Nation Principal Chief