

Policy Council Zoom Meeting
4-28-20
Submitted by: Kerry Mehling

Members Present via ZOOM connection: Trevor Eirich, Lori Lore, Kelsey Duffield, Jeanne Ogden, Mattie Bauer, Veronica Ramirez Venzor, Kathrine Macintosh, Brittany Crofutt

Staff Present via ZOOM connection: Kerry Mehling, Donna Jenne, Pam Hebbert, Krystie Hohnstein

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Vice President Kathrine Macintosh. Members reviewed the minutes from the March meeting. **Jeanne moved to approve the March minutes. Brittany seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Director's Report:

All members received copy of the Director's report via email and screen sharing. Donna reviewed the report with members. Data entry for requirements has been ongoing during closure. There are 4 openings throughout EHS and HS slots that occurred after the closure for COVID-19. The program is not required to fill these slots while centers are still closed. The goal is that if we are able to reopen this summer for the year around classrooms, slots in those centers will be filled for the remainder of the service year. Donna pointed out that some requirements may not reach the full expectation due to closures. Teachers are continuing to contact families and provide educational activities while completing Parent-Teacher Conferences via zoom or phone. Family Advocates are working on completing their 3rd Home Visits and contacting families to ensure everyone is doing okay during the closure as well. Staff are also participating in a multitude of professional development opportunities via webinars, online trainings, and self-research.

Finance Report:

All members received a copy of the Finance Report via their packets in the mail and screen sharing. Pam Hebbert, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. Pam pointed out that March personnel expenses were higher than the previous months. She stated that this is because the program became fully staffed during this month, where it hadn't been prior to that. Pam also pointed out some credits that were recorded on the report to explain differences shown. One of the busses had to have new tires purchased. ESU#13 also purchased safety radios for the buildings to utilize, so a higher expense is shown under building maintenance. There is a large unemployment expense in March for two employees who filed in a different state and it took a long time for it to come through Nebraska so ESU13 had to catch up on payments that were owed for these qualifying employees. There could be some additional large payments that may come in during the upcoming months for unemployment in reference to other qualifying employees who left the agency and have had trouble finding employment due to the COVID-19 closures.

Pam reminded members that the end of the 5th grant year was March 31st, but there will be expenses shown all the way through June as the program has 90 days to close out the grant year. Next month, reports will be presented for the end of the last grant year and the new grant year that is starting. This will be seen for the next couple of months where there are additional finance reports to show all activity between the 2 grant years. The T/TA funds are projected to be totally expensed as planned for the end of grant year 5. In budget periods when the program uses all of its funding, indirect costs expensed to ESU 13 are adjusted in order to balance the total of the award.

Pam also pointed out the Surplus spending that reflects the end of the year grant funds are reported in the two line items highlighted in yellow under the budget section. Administrative costs are at 10.92%. Indirect costs that were paid in April for January through March expenses were not reflected here but should only raise the administrative percentage to about 12%. The program is on target to remain under 15%.

The credit card report shows some travel expenses that were planned but canceled due to the COVID-19 closures. These amounts will still be relevant as the conferences have been rescheduled for the fall. The travel agent has been working to adjust the airline travel. Pam is working with the Head Start regional office on flexibilities that are offered for expenditures in this scenario.

Kerry reviewed the USDA Report of Reimbursement for March 2020. **Lori moved to approve the finance report. Kelsey seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Board Report:

The board is reviewing the employee handbook and a surveillance policy for the agency. Approval was granted for the application to be submitted for the Head Start COLA Increase, and Quality Improvement funds. ESU13 2020-2021 calendar and annual staff compensation increases were discussed and approved. A new classroom will be added in Sidney for VALTS in the new building. The distance learning lab and front entrance at the administration building in Scottsbluff will also be updated. The board accepted 1 employee resignation from a school psychologist. Finally, the board approved the hire of 2 certified teachers for Head Start.

Old Business:

Child Outcomes & School Readiness Goals Discussion: All members received the child outcomes graphs from the EHS and HS fall and winter checks via their packets in the mail and screen sharing. Krystie Hohnstein, Education Manager, discussed the outcomes with members. Unfortunately, due to closures, we will be unable to complete the 3rd check of the school year. All areas showed growth for children in the infant/toddler, preschool, and partnership classrooms. Areas of focus for next school year will include mathematics and a continued emphasis on social-emotional development. Training opportunities are in process of being developed while an inventory of materials was also completed. Purchase of materials has taken place with end of grant year funds.

New Business:

COVID-19 Summer Services Funds:

These are one-time funds to offer extra support to an identified population of children. The program is working to survey parents who have children who are going on to Kindergarten in 2020-2021 school year, or children on IEP's in the 9-month stand-alone classrooms. Public school partnerships are not included in this. The option for summer services would be based upon Panhandle Public Health District recommendations for reopening classrooms and could entail services for 4 half day sessions per week (Monday-Thursday), with breakfast and lunch being served. The time period would be for 4 weeks. Locations for services are yet to be determined and will be decided upon when the parent and staff surveys are complete and interest is assessed. Program staff are being surveyed to ensure we would have staff to work during this additional time period outside of their annual contracts. The program has submitted an "Intent to Apply" and will make the final determinations in the upcoming week as to if we will be offering summer services. **Jeanne moved to approve submission for the funds. Brittany seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

COVID-19 CARES ACT: 250 million in funds offered – to be used for one-time activities in response to COVID-19. Programs can utilize these funds to prepare for future closures that may be necessary again in the

upcoming year. The idea is for programs to think about the difficulties faced during the current closures and what could have been helpful as we moved to offering services remotely. Program thoughts for purchase include: Hands free sinks, soap and paper towel dispenser for classrooms to encourage a more sanitary environment when children are in session. Laptops will also be considered for purchase to assist staff when working out of the office. Other items could be consumable materials that we could send home to families to help them in teaching their child at home such as markers, paint, manipulatives, etc. Families have also reached out for help with diapers, wipes and formula that Head Start can help to provide. Other suggestions from families: Snack packs/fruit-veggie vouchers, paperwork for families at home if they don't have technology available, or event tablets or chrome books that could be signed out to families. **Lori moved to approve the submission of the application for the COVID-19 CARES Act One Time Funds. Brittany seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) Funds:

The Office of Head Start has offered a supplemental grant that includes a 2% COLA increase in the amount of \$62,197 for Head Start and Early Head Start. In its application, the program will write to use all of the funds to increase staff salaries and benefits by at least the 2.5% Compensation Package Increase that the ESU 13 Board of Directors has approved for ESU 13 staff. **Kelsey moved to approve the submission of the application for the COLA funds. Trevor seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

Quality Improvement Funds:

Funds for quality improvement in programs are not offered very often. The program is looking to invest funding into training the family advocates to become independent trainers for the Circle of Security parenting course. This will allow this outstanding curriculum to be offered to families during home visitation or facilitated within the Head Start Program. Training for 7 family advocates and 2 home educators is the goal. Any additional funding within the quality improvement funds will be utilized to support the certificated teacher wages that are going to impact the program budget as staff work to meet Rule 11. **Brittany moved to approve the submission of the application for the Quality Improvement Funds. Jeanne seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

EHS/HS 5 Year Grant Update & Review of 2020-2021 Changes:

The new 5 Year grant that was submitted in December 2019 was approved along with the reduction/conversion that was included for the 2020-2021 school year to reduce 2 preschool classrooms in order to add 2 additional infant/toddler year-round full day classrooms. This decision was based upon results from the community needs assessment. Enrollment slots will change within the program as follows: 84 EHS Infant/Toddler slots will be available (64 center base, 20 Home Base slots) 202 preschool slots including partnerships. Classroom locations are still being determined.

New 5 Year Goals: Donna reviewed the new 5 year goals with Policy Council representatives. All members received a complete set with goals and objectives outlined with action steps, timelines, resources, and data tools that will be utilized to measure achievement of the goals within the 5 year grant period.

Discuss Community Assessment for coming year: Results from the ESU13 community assessment with all public school districts were shared with members.

Discuss Results of Self-Assessment: Parent and staff survey results conducted throughout 2019-2020 school year were shared with members. The program is also working on the self-assessment report that is submitted

annually with the continuation grant during program planning. Data is being reviewed and program strengths, concerns, and improvement plans are being developed for this document. It will be shared with members in the upcoming months.

Employment Openings were shared for members to review. Openings included:

School Mental Health Provider – Location TBA

Early Childhood Teacher 2020-2021 School Year – Head Start service area

Day Treatment School Special Education Classroom Teacher 2020-2021 School Year – Scottsbluff area

School Psychologist – Scottsbluff area

Speech/Language Pathologist – Scottsbluff, Sidney, Chadron

VALTS Distance Learning Facilitator 2020-2021 School Year – Scottsbluff

School Nurse 2020-2021 School Year - Scottsbluff

New Hires:

Stephanie Reynaga – Certified Teacher for the 2020-2021 school year – Scottsbluff area – 40 hour per week/185 day contract.

Nikita McConnell – Certified Teacher for the 2020-2021 school year – Scottsbluff area – 40 hours per week/185 day contract.

Kelsey moved to accept the new hires. Jeanne seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.

May 2020 Meeting Option: Members agreed that it would be beneficial to add a Policy Council Meeting in May where there was not originally a meeting scheduled in order to share updates regarding classroom openings based upon health recommendations. The group will plan to meet on Tuesday, May 26th @ 6pm via Zoom. Agenda to be determined for this meeting. Correspondence to members will take place via email and phone.

Center Reports: No reports. Centers closed due to COVID-19.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.