

Policy Council Zoom Meeting
5-26-20
Submitted by: Kerry Mehling

Members Present via ZOOM connection: Kelsey Duffield, Mattie Bauer, Gloria Morales, Kathrine Macintosh, Brittany Crofutt.

Members emailing in voting who could not attend Zoom connection: Jeanne Ogden, Lori Lore, Veronica Ramirez Venzor, Trevor Eirich

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

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Gloria Morales at 6:09pm. Members reviewed the minutes from the April meeting. **Kelsey moved to approve the April minutes. Kathrine seconded the motion.** Could not approve without a quorum but members on Zoom meeting recommend for approval.

Follow-up emails from members who could not attend Zoom meeting include a Yes vote from: Jeanne Ogden, Lori Lore, Veronica Ramirez Venzor, Trevor Eirich. Motion to approve the April minutes was passed.

Director's Report:

All members received copy of the Director's report via email and screen sharing. Donna reviewed the report with members. The program exceeded the requirements of children enrolled in the program who meet the 10% requirement for children with identified disabilities. Many of the screening percentages have increased dramatically as parents are continuing to turn in documents even during closure and data entry is caught up. 2nd parent teacher conferences were still in session and the Education Supervisors are working on data entry on those. Home Visits are being done virtually or via phone and data entry is being completed on those for family advocates and home educators. Recruitment efforts are difficult at this time but the program sent "refer a friend" cards out to parents in the program to share with friends and family who could benefit. Advertisement is taking place on the big screen at the Western Travel Terminal for 6 months to help with spreading the word.

Center locations for the 2020-2021 school year will change. A new partnership has been formed with Gering Public Schools for 18 slots in 2 double session classrooms and 1 full day classroom. The program will also be moving into a new location in Scottsbluff where Central Head Start and 3 Infant Toddler Classrooms will be relocated. The Home Educators will move into this building as well along with an Education Supervisor and a Family Advocate. Northfield will still have 2 preschool classrooms. At CDC there will be 5 EHS classrooms. Bridgeport HS will continue. Existing partnerships also continue with Bayard, Minatare, Scottsbluff Bear Cub, Mitchell, Morrill, and Sidney.

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 revisited the conversation that began during the April meeting regarding Unemployment Benefits for staff. Qualifying Separation Determinations were received for 2 previous staff members, but the CARES ACT will pay for the unemployment benefits for these 2 employees as they were a direct result from the COVID-19 closures. This will not come out of the HS budget.

Reports for the previous grant year were shared along with reports for the new grant year. For the grant year ending on March 31st, expenses will continue to be paid through the month of June as there are 90 days allowed

to close out the grant year. T/TA funds will likely be spent by the end of May. There is approximately \$100,000 left unspent in Operating funds. The program is waiting for a determination from the Regional Office to see if those funds can be allocated to ESU 13 through the use of the non-restricted indirect cost rate, which is higher. In large part, the money left unspent is due to a dramatic decrease in the indirect cost rate last fall.

The rows noting Surplus Spending reflect funds available at the end of the year that are utilized for purchases that the program does not normally purchase on a regular basis. Some of the items purchased include broader classroom supplies, upgraded technology, and support materials for the Creative Curriculum implemented in the classrooms.

For the new, current grant year, the reports do not show a lot of activity yet. The budget has not yet been attached to the current report due to the pending applications submitted in early May for COLA funds and Quality Improvement funds. When the funds are received, they will be incorporated into the budget. The budget will be attached once the results of those grant applications come in. There have not been any T/TA funds expensed yet in this grant year. The administrative costs are below the 15% maximum requirement.

Next the credit card report was shared. Most charges were incurred in March before the closures. Several of the charges are related to conferences that took place prior to closure or online registrations for training that is coming up. Various other charges were discussed per inquiry from members.

There is not any reporting for USDA Report of Reimbursement in April 2020 as all centers were closed due to COVID-19. **Brittany moved to approve the finance report. Kelsey seconded the motion.** Could not approve without a quorum but members on Zoom meeting recommend for approval.

Follow-up emails from members who could not attend Zoom meeting include a Yes vote from: Jeanne Ogden, Lori Lore, Veronica Ramirez Venzor, Trevor Eirich. Motion to approve the Finance reports was passed.

Board Report:

Personnel policy updates are in process. Day School/Treatment Facility has signed a lease agreement with the Terry and Hazeldeane Carpenter Intergenerational Center. Menu of Services for the 2020-2021 ESU13 programs was approved. COVID-19 CARES ACT was discussed. Contract with ESU#5 for speech-tele therapist for the next school year. Sidney building renovations – Cytek Media Systems for the Audio Visual system. Approval of the Head Start renovation project at the new location in Scottsbluff. Approval of four ESU 13 Certified contracts.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

Re-opening of Full Year Classrooms: Letters have been sent out to parents at Central and CDC EHS regarding June 1st program reopening for working parents only. Classrooms must be in group sizes of 15 or smaller. Strict health guidelines and screenings will be in place before a child can come into the center. Parents will not be allowed in the center. Staff members will conduct the screenings every morning with a questionnaire that will need to be answered by the parents. Staff are also being screened upon arrival to work. Children will also receive a second temperature check at noon. The program is following guidance from Panhandle Public Health District regarding procedures throughout this process and into the future of service provision.

COVID-19 CARES ACT: The program did submit for the one-time funds and is awaiting response from the Regional office on the approval of the application. Ongoing conversations are taking place as to how the funds will be used to plan for remote service delivery in the future if needed, additional health and safety measures at facilities, and efforts to support families with their needs during the COVID-19 crisis.

COVID-19 Summer Services Funds: The program decided that we would not be writing for the summer service funds due to the uncertainties of the closures. Now, the Office of Head Start is providing more COVID-19 funds to help support remote services or continued services as needed. This will be an automatic disbursement for all programs. Ideas for utilizing the funds could include phone cards for families, supporting internet access for parents, continue virtual services for pre-K throughout the summer, increasing technology access for staff, etc. Other ideas from members include providing more at-home packets, dry erase materials to be reused, games, and consumable materials for children and families. These funds will be applied automatically to the COVID-19 CARES ACT funds. This is a decision that was made by the Office of Head Start to award these additional funds without an application for summer services.

COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) Funds:

As was discussed last month, the Office of Head Start offered supplemental funds in form of a 2% COLA totaling \$62,197 for Head Start and Early Head Start. The program submitted its application on May 15, 2020, and is awaiting the approval and award of the funds. The program intends to implement COLA increases to current staff retroactive to April 2020 in order to coincide with the April 1 to March 31 budget period of the grant.

Quality Improvement Funds:

The program is awaiting approval of Quality Improvement funds totaling \$90,856. That application was also submitted May 15, 2020.

Transportation Written Plan Review: Transportation for centers has not been decided for the 2020-2021 school year, as the program is looking for guidance on this process during the added health restrictions. The program employs 2 bus drivers and expects that transportation will only be provided to those families who need the transportation and have no other means to get their child to school. This will likely be offered only in Gering next year (Northfield classrooms).

Donna reviewed the transportation written plans TR01-TR12. Topics include: Provision of transportation for children; child restraint systems; required use of school buses or allowable alternate vehicles; maintenance of vehicles; inspection of new vehicles at the time of delivery; operation of vehicles; driver qualifications; driver and bus monitor training; trip routing; safety education; transportation services and children with disabilities; and coordinated transportation. **Kathrine moved to approve. Kelsey seconded the motion.** Could not approve without a quorum but members on Zoom meeting recommend for approval.

Follow-up emails from members who could not attend Zoom meeting include a Yes vote from: Jeanne Ogden, Lori Lore, Veronica Ramirez Venzor, Trevor Eirich. Motion to approve the Transportation Written Plans was passed.

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

School Mental Health Provider – Location TBA
 Title 1C Service Provider – Northwestern Counties
 Title 1C Service Provider – Southern Counties
 EIHFT Family Consultant

Behavior Tech – Day Treatment/School 2020-2021 School Year
Early Childhood Teacher 2020-2021 School Year – Head Start service area
Day Treatment School Special Education Classroom Teacher 2020-2021 School Year – Scottsbluff area
Speech/Language Pathologist – Scottsbluff, Sidney, Chadron
VALTS Distance Learning Facilitator 2020-2021 School Year – Scottsbluff

New Hires:

None to report this month.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:20pm.