

Policy Council Meeting  
7-26-22  
Submitted by: Kerry Mehling

**Members Present:** Laura Morehead, Kathrine Macintosh, Kristina Stokes, Veronica Torres, Shayna Hudson, Mackenzie Schreiber

**Board Members Present:** Ray Richards and Diane Coon

**Staff Present:** Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein, Lauren Starke, Kristen Bauer

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Laura at 6:25pm. New member introductions were made. Members reviewed the minutes from the June meeting. **Veronica moved to approve the June minutes. Kathrine seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Director's Report:**

All members received a copy of the Director's report. Krystie Hohnstein discussed the report. The program is nearing the end of the 2021-2022 school year so percentages are closely showing final results, although some data entry will continue through July. Conversations have taken place with Bayard's new superintendent to discuss the partnership, and Gering administration and teachers due to expansion of sites/classrooms at that district.

**Finance Report w/ Updates on COVID Funding:**

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Lauren Starke, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports for June 2022, including revision of credit card expenditures, USDA report, and updates on COVID-19 funding. All members received a copy of the reports in their packets. The reports showed the final expenses for the previous grant year ending on March 31, 2022 and the current expenses for the new grant year that began on April 1, 2022. Lauren mentioned that the reports closing out the previous grant year show an unspent amount of \$55,000 that reflects the amount of the carry-over application that the Policy Council has been discussing over the previous months. Administrative percentages remain under the maximum threshold for both grant year reports. COVID-1 funding has been completely expensed, and the program is working on spending COVID 2-3 awards on facility updates at ELC and playground updates at Bridgeport, CDC and ELC. Other projects include offering employee incentives for staff retention at this time. COVID 2-3 awards will expire on March 31, 2023. **Kathrine moved to approve the finance reports. Mackenzie seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Board Report: No meeting held in July.**

**Old Business:**

**Approval of June Action Items** including: May 2022 minutes, Finance Reports and USDA for April and May 2022, approval of Health Written plans, and approval of New Staff Hires for June. Recommendations for approval by members who were present at the June meeting were made to the rest of the group. All members received copies of these documents with exception of the New Staff Hires in their packets. New staff hires are shared verbally during the meeting. **Kathrine moved to approve the May minutes. Veronica seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote. Laura moved to approve the Finance Reports. Shayna seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote. Laura moved to approve the Health Written Plans. Kathrine seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote. Veronica moved to approve the New Staff Hires. Kathrine seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Approval of carry-over funding request for vehicle purchase:**

Lauren discussed the process of applying for the carry-over request with the \$55,000 of leftover funding in the previous grant year operating budget. The original request and discussion with Policy Council was for \$40,000, however, the program has been unable to purchase a vehicle that meets their needs and has increased the amount to ensure funding for this purchase due to the cost and low availability of vehicles of this nature. If there is leftover money from the vehicle purchase, the excess will be absorbed into the current grant year's operation budget. **Mackenzie moved to approve the carry-over funding application. Kathrine seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**COLA & Quality Improvement Funding Awards:**

The program has received the award notification and have utilized the funding to increase the starting wage scale for new employees, and increase all current staff wages by 7% this year, retroactive to April 1, 2022. All staff who are currently working will see this lump sum and wage increase beginning with their August paycheck. New staff hires will start at a higher wage than in the past, and eventually receive the full 7% increase in a step fashion following successful completion of employment after 6 months.

**New Business:**

**Approval of Nutrition Written Plans:** Kristen Bauer, Health & Nutrition Manager, presented the Nutrition Written Plans. All members received a copy in their packets. Kristen noted that the only changes in nutrition policies included the process for which Individual Health Plans will be completed along with Meal Accommodation form completion. **Kathrine moved to approve the carry-over funding application. Kristina seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Approval of EHS Reduction application:**

The program is planning to submit an EHS Reduction application to the Regional Office specifically targeting the Home Base program eventually being eliminated due to a long history of enrollment difficulties, and an addition of one center base classroom in Bridgeport of 8 slots. This will reduce EHS slots by a total of 12 slots. Community assessments and surveys have shown the need for infant/toddler care in the Bridgeport area and a declining need for Home Based services in the service area. The date of the changes will depend on when approval is received. The program's earliest goal will be January 2023, with the latest date for change occurring at the start of the 2023-2024 school year in August 2023. The program is not currently recruiting for Home Base as there is one home educator position that is vacant. To fill the position would take a lot of money for hiring, training, etc. and since the program has not had a waitlist for several years, the decision has been made not to hire or recruit past 10 slots for our current home educator. This home educator will have a position when the change takes place to continue working in a capacity that they are satisfied with and qualified for. **Kathrine moved to approve the submission of the EHS slot reduction application. Laura seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Approval of Playground Surfacing Projects:**

The program is looking towards enhancing playground surfacing at the Bridgeport, CDC, and ELC locations. Conversations with landlords have been successful for approval of the projects, and discussions of longer term lease agreements have been positive. COVID funding is being utilized to pour concrete paths and surfacing that will not result in fluctuations and tripping hazards for the children. The bid amounts for each location are as follows: Bridgeport \$34,185; CDC \$13,725; and ELC \$7,770 with a total expense amount of \$55,680. **Kristina moved to approve the playground surfacing projects. Kathrine seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Parent/Staff Self-Assessment Survey:** Kerry Mehling presented the results of the final staff/parent survey for the 2021-2022 school year. All members received a copy of the results in their packets.

**Enrollment/Recruitment Update:** Kerry Mehling provided an update to current accepted slots and openings for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year. Currently, there are 59 slots open (including the Home Base slots they will not be filled). Locations still working to fill include Minatare, Morrill, Bayard, and Bridgeport preschool programs. Very few slots remain in EHS classrooms. An upcoming recruitment event will be at the National Night Out in Scottsbluff on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Enrollment manager participated in a recruitment event in Bridgeport at the swimming pool and a family advocate updated flyers throughout the service area at local businesses and agencies who were willing to allow them to be displayed this month.

**Employment Openings** were shared with members. Openings included:

Title 1C Educational Liaison

Sidney VALTS Distance Learning Facilitator 2022-2023

Behavior Tech – Day Treatment/School

School Psychologist – Behavioral Health

Paraeducator Meridian School

Head Start Cook

Ecological In-Home Family Treatment Consultant - Chadron

Ecological In-Home Family Treatment Consultant

Title 1C Education Mentor: Sioux, Dawes, Sheridan Counties

Title 1C Education Mentor: Cherry and Sheridan Counties

Early Childhood MTSS Facilitator – Region 5 (ESU's 13,15,16)

Head Start Floater/Assistant Teachers

Job descriptions including credential requirements can be found at [www.esu13.org](http://www.esu13.org) (Employment Opportunities).

**New Hires:**

Jackie Garza – CDC EHS Assistant Teacher – Full-Time

Jaslen Corona – ELC Preschool Assistant Teacher – Full-Time

**Center Reports:**

Centers who shared reports for the meeting included: CDC EHS

**Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 30, 2022 at 6:00pm. Policy Council members are elected to serve through September 2022. Attendance at summer meetings is a responsibility of the position.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:25pm