

Policy Council Zoom Meeting  
8-25-20  
Submitted by: Kerry Mehling

**Members Present at Meeting:** Brittany Crofutt, Kelsey Duffield, Jeanne Ogden, Kathrine Macintosh, Laura Morehead, Gloria Morales

**Members Present via ZOOM connection:** Mattie Bauer

**Staff Present:** Kerry Mehling, Donna Jenne, Pam Hebbert, Crystal Smith

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Gloria Morales at 6:12pm. Members reviewed the minutes from the July meeting. **Kathrine moved to approve the July minutes. Laura seconded the motion. Motion to approve the July minutes was passed through roll call voting.**

**Director's Report:**

All members received copy of the Director's report via email and screen sharing. Donna reviewed the report with members. EHS is almost full with 73/84 slots filled. HS is at 177/202 slots filled. The program is not fully enrolled at this time. The Office of Head Start is offering flexibility with enrollment due to COVID-19. Many programs across the nation are under-enrolled as a consequence of program restrictions and parental fears. Home Base is struggling with families who are uncertain about having people in their homes. Recruitment took place in July with a team going to each community and doing door-to-door flyers. Most children are attending in person at the centers with only a handful of families choosing to have remote services.

Home Visits can take place with specific program guidelines in place. If families choose not to have the Home Visit, services will be provided remotely. Centers are screening children every day upon arrival and at noon for temperatures and COVID questionnaires with parents at arrival. Staff must also participate in the same screening process daily. Health screenings are beginning program-wide.

**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 staff personnel costs drop significantly in June and July as many of the staff are off for those months. Payments to school district partnerships also are suspended during these months as they are not in operation. The reports show that still pending is the process of adding the budgeted amounts for the COLA and Quality Improvement funds. The award for these funds have just been received, so those numbers will be added in the near future.

Head Start expenses as a percentage of the over-all budget, are greater than the percentage of the grant year expended. The reverse is true for Early Head Start, where less has been expended as a percentage of the over-all grant year. This is likely due to the conversion of funds from Head Start to Early Head Start with the beginning of the budget period in April, but the program operated in its pre-conversion structure through August. More conversation will take place to determine if a re-allocation of expenses to match funding might be warranted. Rent costs are higher as June and July rent were paid together for the new facility. T/TA funds will have some adjustments on the next report due to the cancellation of a speaker that HS was helping to pay for who was unable to come due to COVID. An alternate speaker was able to attend the conference at a lesser price so those adjustments will be reflected on the August reporting.

An update was provided to members regarding the COVID-19 CARES Act funding and expenditures to date. Head Start has spent \$5400 and Early Head Start has spent \$3000. Specific guidance was given to programs

regarding how the funds can be utilized to prepare for, respond to, or prevent COVID-19. Documentation must be thorough to show how the purchases are justified as a response to COVID-19. The program is keeping a running chart of those purchases.

Examples of purchases to date include:

- Extra staff for check-in each morning and for extra sanitizing duties, as well as products to be used.
- Masks/PPE for staff
- Hands free sinks have been installed at the new location (Early Learning Center);
- Infrared toothbrush holders have been purchased for all classrooms (to be used when tooth brushing at school can resume). Extra tooth brushes and tooth paste will be provided to send home to all enrolled children to encourage tooth brushing at home, especially while we cannot brush at the centers.
- The program has also invested in the Choosy Kids application for classroom. This app provides activities for music and movement and can be utilized at home and virtually for remote services as needed.
- The Ready4K program will continue to serve all enrolled families in stand-alone HS/EHS centers remotely to enhance family engagement by providing developmentally appropriate learning activities, tips, and tools at home including health and social-emotional development through text messaging 3 times weekly.
- The Creative Curriculum Cloud was purchased to provide enhanced resources for remote services if/when needed due to closures or absences.

The credit card expenditure report reflects many of the COVID purchases. In addition to the above purchases, the credit card report shows activities such as:

- Summer services for children who were going to Kindergarten and children on IEP's. Each child received a backpack with materials inside and weekly lessons for 5 weeks.
- Hands free thermometers were provided to classrooms and the buses prior to opening with regular 2020-2021 services.

Discussion continues regarding possible purchase of the electrostatic fogger machines for classrooms to enhance sanitizing in areas where normal cleaning cannot reach.

The administration percentage is higher than it has been and is being monitored closely. Indirect cost payments impact this percentage quarterly and a payment has just been made.

Kerry presented the USDA report of reimbursement for July. Meal counts are still lower due to the limited services being provided for essential workers during the summer months. *The program will double check on why adult snacks are higher than adult lunches.* **Jeanne moved to approve the finance report. Kelsey seconded the motion. Motion to approve the Finance reports was passed through roll call voting.**

**Board Report:** Donna presented the Board Report. Topics included: Revision of Board Policy, Article 5, Section 1 (Non-Discrimination); amendment of Statement of Non-Discrimination section in the Employee and Student Handbooks; COVID supplement added to the 2020-2021 Student Handbook; Memorandum of Understanding between ESU13 and ESU13 Education Association; Revision and Updated Nutrition Written Plans for Head Start; Telework Policy; approval a Certified Employee Resignation and a Certified Teacher contract; and resolution to increase restricted funds authority by an additional 1%.

#### **Old Business:**

None – all July items were passed through ZOOM meeting attendance and follow-up email voting.

**New Business:****ESU#13 Employee Handbook Review & Human Resources New Employee Onboarding Written Plans:**

Crystal Smith, Human Resources Manager, discussed the changes that were made throughout the ESU13 Employee Handbook. When new employees are hired, they receive a binder with the necessary forms, agency organizational chart, and the employee handbook. Employees are engaged in a thorough discussion about the handbook and employee requirements. Employee agreements are sent out to new staff based upon the position that they hold. New hires are going through a longer process to learn about their new position and the agency. With Head Start, background checks and finger printing takes more time than in some other departments to meet the required standards. New employees can now begin accruing sick and vacation time with their first pay check. This is a change from previous years as they had to wait through a 90 day probationary period before beginning to accrue this time.

Staff who must quarantine (Family First Response Act) will still be paid 80 hours without having to use personal or sick time with a letter provided from PPHD that they or a household member or close contact are being tested and awaiting results, or have tested positive for COVID-19. If staff are not sick, they may be asked to do some work from home until they are allowed to come back to work. With jobs that do not allow staff to work from home, they are still able to be paid without fulfilling any job duties at home. A release letter is also provided by PPHD for staff to return back to work. Monitoring takes place in the Human Resources office. **Kelsey moved to approve the ESU#13 Employee Handbook Review and the Human Resources Written Plans. Kathrine seconded the motion. Motion to approve the ESU#13 Employee Handbook and HR Written Plans was passed through roll call voting.**

**COVID-19 CARES Act Funding Updates:** Covered in Finance report. Please refer back to this section.

**Continuation Grant** - Discussion took place regarding some of the new changes that have taken place in the new 5 year grant period beginning April 1, 2020, and how those changes are working so far. Full-day classrooms have made a huge difference for working/school parents. Half day public school partnerships are struggling to fill those slots. The school districts have to choose to make those changes, as that is not something that HS can do. Parents agreed that the part-day sessions are very difficult for working parents. Members were encouraged to think about ideas that they might have for the upcoming continuation grant that might help as we begin thinking about submission in December, 2020.

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

Head Start Substitute Bus Driver – Scottsbluff area

Special Education Classroom Teacher 20-21 school year – Day Treatment School

Speech/Language Pathologist (PT Position)

Substitute Para-educators – Meridian School

Substitute Teachers – Meridian/Lifelink Schools

Substitute Job Coaches – Valts/Lifelink Schools

**New Hires:**

Laura Johannsen, Assistant Cook at CDC, full-time/full-year position

Julie Fegler, Floater/Assistant Teacher at CDC, full-time/full-year position

**Jeanne moved to approve the New Hires. Kathrine seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call voting.**

**Center Reports:** No reports have begun yet due to COVID-19.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20pm.