

Policy Council Meeting  
8-31-21  
Submitted by: Kerry Mehling

**Members Present:** Kelsey Duffield, Laura Morehead, Kristina Stokes, Veronica Torres, Kathrine Macintosh, Andrea Rodriguez, Jeanette Lara

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

**Staff Present:** Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein, Pam Hebbert, Crystal Smith

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Kelsey at 6:16pm. New member introductions were made. Members reviewed the minutes from the July meeting. **Kathrine moved to approve the July minutes. Kristina 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. An update on enrollment included report of two openings remaining in the home based program for EHS and one opening at the Sidney partnership for HS. Screenings are now in progress as the year begins for the 45 day requirements. Data entry is also in progress so numbers will continue to rise over the next few months. Teachers and Family Advocates have begun home visits. Some illness recorded with home base families. Family Engagement events are in planning and the first family gathering for all sites should be completed by the end of September in order to elect new Policy Council members and Parent Committee officers at the local site. Behavioral Health observations are in the planning stages. This year, two doctoral students in the Psychology and Behavioral Health department will complete these observations.

**Finance Report:**

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Pam Hebbert, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. Pam directed members to look at the administrative percentage currently at 13.75%, which remains under the 15% threshold. In-Kind has not yet been included in the reporting as the program is working on some adjustments to the process of documentation for non-federal share. The program is 3 months into the budget period, with 21% of the grant funding expended for HS and 23.5% expended for EHS. Pam recapped some of the budget savings that have taken place for the program so far this program year including: the expansion of the Gering Partnership, relocation of some classrooms into existing buildings, as well as some restructuring in positions within the program. Decisions are now in process to discuss some of the ideas for how the program can best utilize these excess funds as we move forward through the program year.

Next, Pam discussed COVID funding updates. No expenditures in July for COVID 1 funds, but the program is anticipating expenditures in August and September. There will be \$70,000 of carry-over funds requested by the program to the regional office. COVID 2 funds have had limited spending so far, and COVID 3 funds have not been used at all to date. The program has been working to spend out of COVID 1 funding due to the carry-over request.

Lastly, credit card expenditures and the USDA report discussed. **Jeanette moved to approve the Fiscal Reports. Andrea seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Board Report:**

Krystie presented a summary of the August Board of Education Meeting. Six board members attended the Nebraska Association of School Boards Area Membership Meeting. Updates to Meridian and Panhandle Beginnings Day Treatment Student Handbook were reviewed. The NDE monitoring review for the Title 1C Program was completed with no corrective actions required. Discussion of the receipt of the Teacher Retention Grant opportunity was held as a means to work towards special education teacher retention in the state of Nebraska.

**Old Business:**

The Policy Council revisited agenda items from the July agenda, with recommendations provided for approval by the members who were present for the discussions in July. **Agenda items included the approval of the June minutes, Fiscal/COVID Reports, Nutrition Written Plans, and New Hires.** The results of the ratification of these agenda items are as follows:

- Laura moved to approve the **June minutes**. Kathrine seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.
- Kristina moved to approve the **Fiscal Reports**. Veronica seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.
- Kathrine moved to approve the **Nutrition Written Plans**. Kelsey seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.
- Kristina moved to approve the **New Hires**. Laura seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.

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

Crystal Smith, Human Resources, presented the changes to the employee handbook and human resources written plans. All members received a summary of the changes in their packets. There were minor changes this year for the employee handbook. Additions and edits of the board policies now reflect the employee handbooks. Updated human resources policies included the policies on weapons, professional boundaries, telework, release from contract, and travel. Telework is a new policy to support the necessity for remote working due to COVID restrictions and to support employees who may need to work remotely for other reasons as well. There were some employee benefit changes with an increase in health premiums. The Board of Education are involved in changes that take place by utilizing the formation of small committees to support a thorough review and address suggestions as needed to break down the complexity of the work. **Veronica moved to approve the employee handbook changes. Andrea seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll vote. Andrea moved to approve the Human Resources Written Plans. Jeanette seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**LDO – Waiver Partnerships Class Size:**

In July, the program presented to Policy Council the need to submit a waiver to the Regional office to address classrooms who may be serving a majority of 3-year-olds with an enrollment of up to 20 children in the classroom. The Regional Office informed the program that this would likely not be approved, so the waiver was not submitted. The program then discovered that it is necessary to apply for a waiver for double session classrooms who are serving 20 children in mixed-age classrooms, with the majority of children being 4 year olds. The allowed number of children, according to the HS Performance Standards is 17 without a waiver. This scenario is relevant to several of the public school partnerships who have double session classrooms and serve up to 20 children in each session. **Jeanette moved to approve the submission of the LDO Waiver for Partnerships Class Size. Veronica seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Continuation Grant:**

Members were asked to provide input to the 2022-2023 grant process as discussions begin for submitting the grant by the end of December 2021. Each month, this will be on the agenda for Policy Council members to add their ideas for services. No further discussion at this meeting.

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

Head Start Grant/Fiscal Officer

Head Start Floater/Assistant Teachers

Substitute VALTS Facilitator Sidney

EIHFT Family Consultant

Para Educator Meridian 21-22 school year-Special Education

Head Start Partnership Liaison

School Mental Health Provider 2021-2022 – Sidney area

School Psychologist 2021-2022 school year

Substitute Para educators Meridian, ECEC, VALTS

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

**Fiscal Officer Opening:** Pam Hebbert, current Fiscal Officer, has announced her resignation for the program. The job opening is advertised and the program will add this into the restructuring plan that is currently in progress. Pam will assist with training when a new individual is hired, and is continuing to support the program with some final projects and tasks until the position is filled.

**New Hires:**

Maria Herrera – Assistant Cook @ CDC/ELC. Full-time, full year position.

Alejandra Garza – Assistant Teacher @ Bridgeport. Full-time, 10-month position.

Schila Strain – Floater/Assistant Teacher @ ELC. Full-time, full year position.

**Veronica moved to approve the New Hires. Laura seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Policy Council members are elected to serve through September 2021. Please make attendance a priority as this is a program performance standard and we must have a quorum to continue business.**

**Please bring your Policy Council Binders to the next meeting to return for updates for the 2021-2022 representatives.**

**Center Reports:** Home Base, Gering

Meeting adjourned at 7:40p.m.