

Policy Council Meeting
1-26-21
Submitted by: Amanda Flores & Kerry Mehling

Members Present: Kaci Fowlkes, Veronica Torres, Laura Morehead, Kelsey Duffield, Kathrine Macintosh, Andrea Rodriguez, Salvador Lopez, Lydia Scott, Madison Koch, Juan DeLaCruz, Amanda Flores, Kristina Stokes, Nellie DeLosSantos, Jeanette Lara, Heather Lambert (Zoom).

Staff Present: Kerry Mehling, Donna Jenne, Pam Hebbert (Zoom), Teena Branson

Policy Council Meeting called to order by President, Kelsey Duffield at 6:15pm. New member introductions were made. Members reviewed the minutes from the December meeting. **Laura moved to approve the December minutes. Andrea seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Director's Report:

All members received copy of the Director's report. Donna Jenne discussed the report. The Home Base option for EHS still has openings. Donna reported that the program is considering offering Home Base services in the Sidney area if qualified applicants are received. Currently there is 1 opening in Head Start at the Scottsbluff Bear Cub Stadium partnership. There are many referrals in process for children with possible disability concerns. Family Advocates will be discussing the Nutrition Analysis with families to provide parents with feedback from our contracted dietician identifying nutrition strengths and concerns noted within their family. The program continues to follow up on documentation for physicals and dental exams for enrolled children. Policy Council members can help to remind parents that when those appointments are completed a copy will need to be turned in to their child's teacher or family advocate. *Heather Lambert noted that in the Sidney area, families are struggling to find a dentist that will take Medicaid. The program will explore the possibilities for dental providers in that area.* Lastly, Donna reported that the second round of classroom observations are beginning to support teachers in social emotional learning, environments, instruction and materials.

Finance Report:

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Pam Hebbert, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. Reports were presented for both November and December with the main focus on the most current report in December. The program is 63% into the budget period for Head Start. Pam explained the format of the reports as well as the comparisons from month to month in order to note any major changes that might occur. Pam explained that some expenses do not take place every month and that there are different times of the grant year where higher expenditures are noted in certain areas. Pam highlighted a couple areas on the report where the percent of expenditure seemed higher or much lower than what was originally budgeted and explained the program decisions that have impacted those areas. Changes in buildings over the past year have made it difficult to accurately estimate the expected expenditures at some locations. Pam clarified that the budget is still looking good for the budget period and % of budget expended. The reduction in program expenses over-all because of COVID has provided flexibility for the budget. EHS saw a large increase in water/sanitation expense in December. Pam explained that 2 bills were paid in December because a bill for a new facility (ELC) was not initially received. In addition, the City of Scottsbluff sends invoices every other month, so charges from the previous month would not compare. Professional services was an area indicating that the program was overspent. Pam again explained that the decisions made this year took into account decreased program expenses due to COVID.

T/TA funding report shows that there were several conference registrations and tuition expenses for teachers who are pursuing their early childhood teaching education. The January reports will show more of this as tuition payments are being made currently. Pam reports that the program is on track to spend all of the T/TA funds by the end of March as projected.

An additional report for the CARES ACT Funding in response to COVID-19 was also included. The program received \$251,000 to help support additional expenses that are incurred due to COVID-19. There is no timeline to have these funds spent. There is about 90,000 left to spend in this area. Budgeted expenses include hands-free sinks at CDC and the Bridgeport HS. This has already happened at ELC. Some health and safety purchases will be charged in the regular operating funds to ensure those funds are spent first because they cannot be carried over to the next budget year. COVID-19 funds can be carried over to the next budget year.

The administrative report shows that percentage is at 16.21%, over the 15% allowed. The reason for this being high is because the non-federal share (in-kind) is much lower than it normally would be as a result of limited volunteer opportunities in response to COVID-19 health and safety guidelines. This is true across the nation. The program does receive a large portion of in-kind from the public school partnerships and will expect about \$500,000 to be documented in the next month or so, and this will balance out the administrative cost. The January report will probably also show a high administrative percentage, but by February the number should go back down below 15%. Donna reminded members how important the in-kind calendars are to support the volunteer in-kind for the program.

Credit card report shows several registrations fees for virtual trainings and supplies for the classrooms. During classroom closures, some diapers and formula was sent home for families who were struggling.

Finally, Kerry reviewed the USDA report of reimbursement for meals served including the months of November and December 2020. All members received a copy of these reports. In review, it was noted that the number of meals for December did not seem to be accurate. Kerry and Donna will check on this with the Health and Nutrition Manager and adjust any errors to the report before asking for approval. ***The November and December reports will be placed on the agenda as Old Business for the February meeting to reconcile. Kathrine moved to approve the finance report without the USDA report for November and December. Lydia seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.***

Board Report:

Donna discussed the board report from the last meeting. The annual reorganization meeting was held to elect officers within the Board of Education. The Federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) voluntary extension was approved to allow any employee who has not exhausted all of their leave during the 2020 calendar year to carry over COVID-19 related paid leave. HVAC replacement and computer lab renovation at ESU#13 Administration Building in Scottsbluff was approved to begin in May. ESU#13 Strategic Planning on goal #3 continued with reporting on progress and next steps. Ray Richards and Diane Coon will begin attending the Policy Council meetings to serve as a liaison between the Board and the Policy Council. A public auction was held for the Sidney ESU#13 building with no bidders, so efforts will continue to try to sell the building. Resignations were accepted from Lisa Myles and George Schlothauer.

New Business:

Continuation Grant Submission Update: The Continuation Grant was submitted on December 22nd. Conversations with the Regional Office are taking place regarding any follow-up questions that they may have. Final notification of the grant approval should happen by March 2021.

Planning & Monitoring/Communication & Record Keeping Written Plans MS01-MS05 & MS07-MS09: Topics included in these policies include: Program Planning; Communications with General Community; Communication with Families; Communication with Governing Body and Policy Groups; Communication amongst Staff; Record-Keeping & Reporting Systems; and Program Self-Assessment & Monitoring. No further discussion was held. **Andrea moved to approve the Planning & Monitoring/Communication & Record Keeping Written Plans. Veronica seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

ERSEA Written Plan Review/Revision including Eligibility Training & General Procedures as well as Approval of the 2021-2022 Selection Criteria: Teena Branson, Enrollment Manager, presented Eligibility Training and information on the updated Selection Criteria for 2021-2022 applications. All members received a copy of the training slideshow. Teena provided information to members on the eligibility process including documentation that is used to determine income eligibility. Each family circumstance is taken into account based upon their unique circumstances. Teena discussed income eligible, mid-income and over-income determinations based upon the DHHS Poverty Guidelines that are updated annually.

Next, discussion about recruitment efforts took place and the various activities that the program staff will engage in to reach out to potentially eligible families in the community.

Members were able to review the Selection Criteria proposed for the 2021-2022 school year. Teena explained how the selection criteria is utilized to provide points to applicants based upon their family circumstances. Applicants are then ranked by our Child Plus data system and placed on the waitlist accordingly. Applications are taken interview style to ensure that all family circumstances are taken into consideration. The selection criteria are then completed by the enrollment manager.

The program must have all enrollment slots filled within 30 days of any opening and the total enrollment must encompass at least 10% of children who have a diagnosed disability. A selection committee works together to make final enrollment decisions. Children who are accepted into the program will be officially enrolled once they have completed a program orientation process.

Finally, attendance monitoring takes place on a regular basis and the program is expected to meet at least 85% attendance. Follow-up occurs with families who are not meeting regular attendance expectations. **Veronica moved to approve the 2021-2022 Selection Criteria. Lydia seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

Policy discussion followed the eligibility training including topics: Determining community strengths, needs & resources; community assessment; determining, verifying & documenting eligibility; eligibility verification-application; Recruitment of Children; Selection of Children; Enrollment of Children; Enrollment Criteria; Attendance, Absenteeism, and Withdrawal of Children; Suspension & Expulsion of Children; Change in Status; Policy on Fees; Intake and Record Keeping Systems & Data Entry. **Laura moved to approve the ERSEA Written Plans. Kaci seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

Employment Openings were passed around for members to review. Openings included:

Inclusive Practices Mentor & Coach – Special Education Department.

Professional Learning Coordinator – Professional Learning Department.

Early Childhood Certified Teacher 2021-2022 - Head Start/Early Head Start

Director of Alternative Education – Alternative Education Department

Speech/Language Pathologist 2021-2022 – Special Education Department

School Psychologist 20-21 & 21-22 school years. Behavior-Mental Health Department

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

Substitute Head Start Assistant Teacher – Head Start/Early Head Start

Substitute Para Educators – Meridian School – Special Education Department

Substitute Teachers – Meridian/Lifelink Schools – Special Education Department

Substitute Job Coaches – Valts & Lifelink Schools – Special Education Department

Substitute VALTS Facilitator Sidney – Special Education Department

Job descriptions including credential requirements can be found at www.esu13.org (Employment Opportunities).

New Hires:

Cheryl Nelson – Assistant Cook @ CDC. 35 hours/week – 12 month position.

Lydia moved to approve the New Staff Hires. Kathrine seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Center Reports:

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.