

Policy Council Meeting

3-28-23

Submitted by: Kathrine Macintosh & Kerry Mehling

Members Present: Mary Brumage, Danielle Hoxworth, Tia Alvizar, Madison Koch, Laura Morehead, Kianna Ybarra, Maria Oliva, Tess Martin, Kathrine MacIntosh

Staff Present: Lauren Starke, Krystie Hohnstein, Kerry Mehling, Roxane Humphrey

Board Members Present: Ray Richards, Diane Coon

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Laura Morehead, at 6:12p.m. New member introductions were made. Members reviewed the minutes from the February meeting. **Kathrine MacIntosh moved to approve the February minutes. Tiah Alvizar seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Director Report:

All members received copy of the Director's report. Krystie Hohnstein discussed the report. EHS is still showing a shortage in enrollment while the work is completed on the Bridgeport facility to prepare for the EHS center base classroom that will open following the Home Base reduction approval. In the meantime, home base families are continuing to receive services, but the program is not taking new enrollments for this program option.

Krystie reported that the health requirements are in progress and percentages are expected to increase with data entry completion. Many documents have been received per request from the program from providers. With the long-term staff vacancy in the health area, other staff are helping with this. Classroom observations are almost completed and parent engagement and recruitment events continue. A breakdown of the in-kind amounts collected per site was included.

Krystie announced that the CDC and ELC locations recently received a well-deserved Step 4 rating from Step Up to Quality and congratulated staff on their hard work!

Finance Report:

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Lauren Starke, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. Lauren reported that spending would increase with final expenditures as the program reaches the end of the grant year. The Early Head Start and Head Start T/TA funds are over-spent, with the overage covered with regular program funds. This ensures that all T/TA dollars are utilized. COVID 2 is completely spent. COVID 3 money remains, but is obligated as of March 31. The program has until June 30 to have all the funds liquidated. Many projects are still in process. Administrative percentages remain under the maximum allowed. The credit card expenditure report and USDA report of reimbursement were also reviewed. **Tiah Alvizar moved to approve the finance report. Kianna Ybarra seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Board Report:

The board is exploring with ESU13 staff and stakeholders new ideas for measuring progress, thinking of what a successful ESU looks like. Policy Council members were asked to think about this question and to share ideas. The board members gave their approval for the submission of the applications for Head Start Quality Improvement and COLA funds.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Disability & Transition Written Plan Review: Roxane Humphrey, Partnership Education & Special Services Manager, facilitated the written plan presentation. She explained that the program is required to maintain a Disability Service Plan. Children are to receive services in the least restrictive environment. Children eligible for services under IDEA must fill at least 10% of funded enrollment. Children cannot be denied enrollment due to a disability or health condition. If the completed screenings indicate area of concern, the child may be rescreened and then referrals will follow with parent consent. The Early Development Network (EDN) or school district providers will determine child eligibility for either an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for any student from age birth-5.

Families participate in a program orientation upon entrance to the program to learn about program expectations and to share important information about their child with staff. Children who will be transitioning out of EHS to HS will begin a planning process with staff and parents. This starts at least 6 months prior to a child's 3rd birthday. If the child had an IFSP staff and parents work together to transition to an IEP before they begin in preschool. When children are transitioning from HS to Kindergarten, the program provides support as they explore programs and prepare. If a child has an IEP, it is reviewed to ensure it encompasses needs related to the child and to facilitate a smooth transition.

Education Written Plan Review & Child Outcomes/School Readiness Goals Discussion: Roxane Humphrey, Partnership Education & Special Services Manager, facilitated the written plan and child outcomes presentation. She discussed effective teaching practices that promote growth of the whole child. The environment must support learning across all domains and materials rotate to support child interest and units of study. The curriculum utilized must be research-based with sufficient staff training to support effective implementation. Several child screenings and assessments take place within 45 calendar days of when the child first enrolls in the program. Parent and Family Engagement is imperative to program and child success. *Members suggested that center staff alternate times of parent meetings as an attempt to provide opportunities for those with rotating or different scheduling to attend.*

Roxane Humphrey then presented the Teaching Strategies GOLD Outcomes for all classrooms for Fall-Winter 2022-2023. Areas discussed included Social Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy and Mathematics. A review of areas of lowest growth occurs to see what improvements are needed with staff training and enhanced materials. Overall, children showed growth in all areas. A third check is scheduled for late spring.

Mental Health Written Plan Review: Kerry Mehling, Assistant Director & Family & Community Partnerships Manager, facilitated the mental health written plan presentation highlighting the importance of child mental health and social emotional well-being. Mental Health Consultants are available to work with children and families if concerns arise for an individual or group. Classrooms are observed twice per year to see how teachers support and communicate with children, teach conflict resolution, provide positive behavior guidance in the room, and to ensure materials are available for social emotional learning.

The program will not suspend or expel children who are exhibiting behavior challenges as staff and mental health consultants will collaborate with parents to ensure the best support for the child in an inclusive environment. Program management, staff, and mental health professional implement processes for identifying mental health concerns that may arise for a child by using multiple forms of documentation. The program currently consults with Dr. Mark Hald at Options in Psychology for brief staff or parent consultations monthly. He may offer suggestions or resources for support with behavioral issues or family concerns that come up. The program or a parent may also initiate a Behavioral Health Referral. An external referral form is completed with parental

consent in each case. Procedures are also in place should the program experience a mental health emergency with a child or parent/adult. ***Members suggested facilitating an opportunity for child abuse education and awareness for parents (through Capstone, DHHS, or Region I)***

Head Start COLA Increase: Head Start/Early Head Start requests a motion to approve that the 5.6% Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) in the amount of \$190,133 offered by the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families be used in its entirety to support a 5.6% increase in pay for Head Start employees. **Kathrine MacIntosh moved to approve the 5.6% COLA increase for Head Start and Early Head Start employees. Kianna Ybarra seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

Head Start Quality Improvement Increase: Head Start/Early Head Start requests a motion to approve the Quality Improvement funding increase in the amount of \$87,530 offered by the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families be used in its entirety to support an increase in pay for Head Start employees. **Tess Martin moved to approve the Quality Improvement funding increase of \$87,530 for Head Start and Early Head Start employees. Laura Morehead seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

Continuation Grant 2023-2024 Update: The program has received notice that the continuation grant for the 2023-2024 year is approved. The reduction of the Home Base slots to add a center base infant/toddler classroom in Bridgeport was the only change in services for this grant application.

Update on Certified Teachers: This year the program employed two certified teachers. One certificated teacher submitted their resignation effective May 2023. Currently, the ESU13 website has certificated teachers listed for open positions for the 2023-2024 school year.

Employment Openings - Agency-wide employment openings are located on the ESU13 website (www.esu13.org) under *Employment Openings*. Prospective Employees can also apply directly on this site. The website was visible to members for review of current open positions.

New Hires:

Jade Riker – Floater/Assistant Teacher @ CDC. Full-time/Full Year Position.

Tia Alvizar moved to approve the New Staff Hires. Kianna Ybarra seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Center Reports: Center reports received from Home Base, CDC EHS and HS, Gering.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02p.m.