

Policy Council Meeting  
3-30-21  
Submitted by: Kerry Mehling

**Members Present:** Kaci Fowlkes, Kelsey Duffield, Shantell Trevino, Heather Lambert, Laura Morehead, Veronica Torres, Rebecca Jacobs, Kathrine Macintosh, Kristina Stokes

**Board Members Present:** Diane Coon

**Staff Present:** Kerry Mehling, Donna Jenne, Pam Hebbert, Krystie Hohnstein, Maria Pineda, Nici Johnson

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

**Director's Report:**

All members received a copy of the Director's report. Donna Jenne discussed the report. Enrollment continues to stay steady for EHS and HS center base programs. New applications have been received for Home Base where we are still low with five openings. Attendance has been good and all remote learners are back in the classroom.

Health requirements continue to be an area the program is working on. It has been difficult to get physicals, lead screenings, and dental exams turned in this year, with appointments behind due to COVID and low contact with families in person at the centers. Lead Screenings are required for children ages 12 months and 24 months. The Health and Nutrition Coordinator is working with families and family advocates to contact providers directly, with a release of information, to access records if possible.

The March 6 spring indoor farmers market at the Scottsbluff Mall allowed the program to attend the first in person recruitment event in the last year! Thanks to our Mitchell Tiger Cub Policy Council proxy, Lydia Scott, for inviting us to be a part of this event.

**Finance Report:**

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Pam Hebbert, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. The end of the current fiscal year is on March 31, 2021, so the program is working on final expenditures currently and will move into final reporting by the end of June.

Pam discussed renovation work completed over Christmas at the Early Learning Center to update tile throughout the building and a recent change to purchase our own rugs, instead of renting from Ideal Linen. Next month, the program reports will show many new expenditures for supplies and wish list items purchased with end of year funds.

Pam reminded members of the purchase of new laptops for staff over the recent months with COVID funding. This was a program decision to ensure that if there were ever a requirement to work from home again, that all staff would have the ability to work off a program provided laptop to maintain their work duties, as many staff did not have laptops last year when the program moved to remote services.

The program can request to carry-over any COVID funds that are remaining but the request cannot be submitted until end of grant year reporting is completed in June. There are still minor renovations that we are hoping to complete that will utilize those funds with the carry-over, as the purchases and approvals were not possible prior

to the end of the grant year. New COVID funding for the 2021-2022 school year is also available through Office of Head Start (OHS). The application for the additional COVID funding is due on April 9.

Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA funds) reports were reviewed. The program will expense all of the T/TA funding for both HS and EHS programs as expected. Next, the Administrative percentage showed that the program has remained under the 15% maximum allowed expenses.

Pam explained to members that with the new grant year beginning, reports will look a little different as expenses are coded to the current (ending grant year-March 31) versus the new grant year (beginning April 1) and additional reports will be included at each meeting until final close-out of the current grant year is completed.

Lastly, the credit card expenditure report was discussed. Head Start had implemented a requirement with the new performance standards in 2017 to have fingerprints completed for all staff, but then put the requirement was placed on hold, as many states were unequipped to handle the volume of staff going through the process. This past year, ESU13 was able to meet this requirement in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services and the NE State Patrol office. **Laura moved to approve the finance report, including the CACFP report for February. Shantell seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Board Report:** Dr. Andrew Dick submitted his resignation as he has accepted a new position. Dr. Laura Barrett was appointed as the Interim Administrator for the period of July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022. Other items on the agenda included: approval of the Head Start Fiscal policies; new contracts for the 2021-2022 school year; resignations of certified staff for the 2021-2022 school year; and the final sale of the old Sidney ESU13 administration property.

**Old Business: None**

**New Business:**

**Change in ESU#13 Administration:**

Discussed in the Board Report.

**COLA (Cost-of-living adjustment) Funds:**

The Office of Head Start (OHS) is offering a 1.22% Cost of Living Increase for staff. Wages for all positions will be increased. More discussion occurred informing members that ESU13 employees in other departments will receive a 2.6% annual increase. Therefore, the HS program will utilize the 1.22% increase from OHS and access additional funding in the program budget to meet the 2.6% increase as other ESU13 staff will receive. The program budget will be able to support this decision through savings found due to an increase in partnership slots at the Gering Public schools. This will decrease one certified teacher in the HS program and one location's facility expenses. Submission for the COLA funding is due on April 15. **Veronica moved to approve the application submission for COLA Funds as discussed. Kaci seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

**Focus Area One Federal Review:** The Focus Area One federal review will begin on Tuesday, April 6 and be completed by Friday, April 9. The review will be completed virtually. Interviews will take place every morning with program managers and administration staff to discuss all of the component areas. Mark Sinner, President of the Board of Education will be present on Tuesday, April 6 for the Program Design and Management interview.

### **Disability & Transition Written Plan Review:**

Maria Pineda, Special Services Manager, presented the written plans. All members received a copy of the written plans for review. Maria summarized the area of special services with some important highlights related to the HS Performance Standards. She stressed that the program must meet 10% enrollment with children who have been identified at enrollment or sometime during their enrollment with the program for special services outlined in an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP).

Maria stressed that parents must be involved in the entire process and give consent prior to any referrals or evaluations for their child. The process involves a coordinated approach with family and other professional team members to ensure the full and effective participation of all children in the program. Evaluations must be completed in 30-45 calendar days from time of referral. The Ages and Stages Assessment Tool is utilized for developmental and social-emotional screenings. The following laws also guide the process: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). All services should take place within the EHS or HS classroom to the extent possible. **Shantell moved to approve the Disability & Transition Written Plans. Kaci seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

### **Mental Health Written Plan Review:**

Maria Pineda, Special Services Manager, and Krystie Hohnstein, Education Manager, presented the written plans. Krystie pointed out that the program has collaborated with Dr. Mark Hald with Options in Psychology for monthly, 1-hour consultations, by staff or enrolled families for several years. This year, the program provided the opportunity for parents who needed additional support to receive three paid sessions with a provider at Options in Psychology during COVID, and utilizing the COVID funding.

The ESU13 Psychology and Behavioral Health Department has also supported the program by providing a LMHP or Doctoral student to provide observations and feedback to each of our classrooms. This strategy supports social-emotional learning for all children in the classroom environment. Maria and Krystie shared some additional resources that are available in the classrooms to help support social emotional development and learning. The Social Emotional Pyramid Model is used within the program for staff training. Parent modules are shared at each center location with families to support home and school learning. **Kathrine moved to approve the Mental Health Written Plans. Kristina seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

### **Education Written Plan Review & Child Outcomes & School Readiness Goals Discussion:**

Krystie Hohnstein, Education Manager, presented the Education Written Plans and the second Child Outcomes report. Krystie pointed out that the program service areas are all coordinated and intertwined with each other to promote the best services for children and families. Ongoing assessments occur to ensure that the program is monitoring and documenting the growth in children as they participate in the program.

Krystie continued to share with representatives the fall and winter assessment results. Graphs showing outcomes results were displayed. Child assessments occur in the areas of: social-emotional development, language, physical development, cognitive, literacy and mathematics. The data informs program planning for staff training and increasing materials in the classrooms. Krystie mentioned that the area of mathematics is typically the lowest area of growth because it can be harder to define what math is for infants, toddlers and preschool children. However, all areas show growth for EHS and HS children in all domains.

Each classroom teacher receives their classroom results and teachers will discuss individual results with parents during home visits or parent-teacher conferences. Training or coaching will take place to support staff who may be struggling with the process or to ensure reliable scoring. **Kaci moved to approve the Education Written Plans. Rebecca seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

**Continuation Grant Update:** The program has received the award from the Office of Head Start for the 2021-2022 school year.

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

Ecological In-Home Family Treatment Supervisor – Psychology & Behavioral Health

Director of Professional Learning – Professional Learning

School Mental Health Provider 2021-2022 School Year – Psychology & Behavioral Health

ASD Behavior Specialist – Special Education

School Psychologist 20-21 & 21-22 school years. Psychology & Behavioral Health

Special Education Classroom Teacher 20-21 school year – Day Treatment/School – Psychology & Behavioral Health

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

Floater/Assistant Teachers – Head Start/Early Head Start

Speech/Language Pathologist 2021-2022 – Special Education

Substitute VALTS Facilitator Sidney – Special Education

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

Substitute Para Educators – Meridian School – Special Education

Substitute Teachers – Meridian/Lifelink Schools – Special Education

Substitute Job Coaches – Valts & Lifelink Schools – Special Education

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

**New Hires:**

None this month for approval.

**Center Reports:**

Centers who shared reports for the meeting included Gering, CDC 102, CDC103, Home Base, Mitchell, Bayard, Roosevelt, ELC EHS, ELC Preschool, and Northfield South.

Meeting adjourned at 8pm.