

Policy Council Meeting
6-29-21
Submitted by: Kerry Mehling

Members Present: Laura Morehead, Veronica Torres, Jeanette Lara, Kaci Fowlkes, Maria Rosario Sanchez, Diana Delgadillo

Board Members Present: Diane Coon, Ray Richards (via phone)

Staff Present: Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein, Pam Hebbert, Kristen Bauer, Maria Pineda, Tory Bauer, Susie Dominguez

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Laura at 6:12pm. New member introductions were made. Members reviewed the minutes from the April meeting (no meeting held in May). **Kaci moved to approve the April minutes. Jeanette 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. Currently, EHS is fully enrolled and HS has one slot open in the full-year classroom that will be filled this week. Attendance is a little lower due to vacations for enrolled families. Dental exams continue to be a challenging requirement that we continue to work on due to lack of pediatric dentistry in the area and difficulty getting in to see providers. Lead screenings also continue to be a challenge to get in. The program will be hiring for several positions due to changes in the management team and openings within classrooms. The Nebraska Department of Education approved the waiver for non-certificated teachers. The program has one certificated teacher on staff currently and was unable to hire additional certificated teachers for the upcoming school year due to a lack of applicants. All other teachers meet the HS/EHS Performance Standard requirements. Growing Great Kids Curriculum training has been completed for family advocates and home educators working with children and families ages birth-three. In July, preschool family advocates will attend training for certification to use this family curriculum also.

Finance Report:

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Pam Hebbert, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. Members received reports for both April and May because there was no meeting held in May. Pam highlighted items including the expense for the ELC facility that was not originally budgeted for but was possible because of excess funds due to COVID closures and the creation of the Gering Partnership. Pam explained to members that the program continues to track funds separately for the EHS and HS programs. However, new regulations indicate the ability for programs to move operating funding from one program to the other (HS and EHS) where that was not allowed in the past. The Administrative percentage has remained under the required 15%.

Pam then gave an update on the funds awarded for COVID response. The program anticipates having approximately \$68,000 of funds left over from the COVID 1 Funds. An application to the Office of HS to request to carry-over these funds will give a detailed plan on how the funds will be used. The program plans to continue with facility updates including installing a washer and dryer (with plumbing updates) at Bridgeport HS, new dishwasher at ELC, and an added expenditure for Creative Curriculum that will enhance the use of the curriculum. A statement of approval will be requested by both PC and BOD chairpersons when the carry over request is submitted in late July.

COVID 2 funds were awarded in the amount of \$86,077. This money has a 2-year timeline to be completely spent with a final deadline of March 31, 2023. The program budgeted to hire additional classroom support

personnel to help with curbside pick-up and drop off procedures, heightened sanitization procedures, and to meet the added need for substitutes due to illness and short staff.

Pam then mentioned that the PP2-2 reports in May do not have the program budgeted amounts entered yet. This process is taking place as the program works to restructure personnel. The program also budgeted for five certificated teachers, but after closing out the hiring process for these positions, will only be paying one certificated teacher in the upcoming year. This will dramatically affect the budgeted amount for teachers with excess funds in HS.

COVID 3 funds were awarded recently for \$342,000 and have a 2-year timeline for spending. The program intent with these funds is to provide personnel support for family engagement (additional family advocate), to reduce caseloads. This will support family advocates with additional time to work more directly with families to ensure that education and training needed is taking place. Additional assistant teachers in the classrooms will continue to ensure that staff have ample support and time to take on the added duties that have occurred with the impact of COVID. The program is also focusing heavily on recruitment to ensure that we are able to reach out to the community to meet full enrollment and establish a good waitlist after the last year with COVID restrictions preventing community recruitment opportunities.

The credit card report was reviewed along with the USDA reports for April and May. May was a partial month of serving meals because most HS classrooms closed for the summer. **Jeanette moved to approve the finance report, including the credit card report and CACFP report for April and May. Veronica seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Board Report: Krystie reported for the last two board meetings since we did not meet in May. Minutes from the meetings are available on the ESU13 website. In May, Dr. Laura Barrett, Nici Johnson, and Donna Jenne gave an update to the Board regarding ESU's commitment to support continuous improvement of the HS Program. The results of the Focus Area One Review for HS was reported. The program was in compliance in all areas. Donna Jenne's resignation was approved for HS. In June, a summary of ESU 13's efforts toward compliance of Rule 11 with Nebraska Department of Education was submitted with the State Board of Education approving the waiver request. ESU13 accreditation was approved. Approval of employee handbooks and staff policies, along with the handbooks for the Day Treatment Center and Meridian/LifeLink also took place.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Approval of Interim HS/EHS Director:

An overview of Krystie Hohnstein's qualifications was shared with members. Krystie has worked in several childcare settings and with at risk youth throughout her career. She currently holds a Bachelor's degree in Human Resources and Family Science with an emphasis on Child Development. Krystie is working on her Master's Degree in Special Education with an early childhood endorsement birth – 5 and has been employed with ESU13 Head Start for five years as the Education Manager. **Kaci moved to approve Krystie Hohnstein as the Interim EHS/HS Director. Jeanette seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

Update on Focus Area One Federal Review Results: The final report submitted by the Office of Head Start stating that the ESU13 Head Start program is in full compliance with the HS Performance Standards was routed for members to review. There were no areas identified for improvement in the Focus Area One Review.

Health Written Plan Review:

Kristen Bauer, Health and Nutrition Coordinator, presented the Health written plans. All members received a copy of the health written plans for review prior to the meeting. There were no questions by members regarding the health written plans. Kristen shared that the program is exploring options to hold a summer health fair in the future to engage local providers with HS families to support the challenging process to complete dental and physical program requirements as an effort to assist families in staying up to date on their child's health needs.

Kristen then discussed the COVID back to school plan. It is located on the ESU13 website for further review if members would like to view it in full. The program responds to the risk dial as released by Panhandle Public Health District during weekly briefings. Currently, wearing masks is optional for staff, parents, and students while the risk dial is in the yellow or green. The program will continue taking temperature checks for children upon arrival throughout the upcoming school year to assist with keeping illness out of the classrooms. Heightened sanitization procedures will continue this school year as well. Tooth brushing is still not allowed currently, but the program is hoping to start this back up in the fall. Drop off and pick up procedures will be adjusted to allow parents to come into the centers with a limited number of parents allowed in the building at a time. ELC will begin the process in July and CDC will begin in August. Site Supervisors are working to adjust staffing needs and expectations to accommodate this change. The program is excited to have more communication and face-to-face interaction with parents in the coming months. **Veronica moved to approve the Health Written Plans. Jeanette seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

Child Outcomes and School Readiness Goals Discussion: Krystie discussed the child outcomes/school readiness goals. A summary report along with graphs were provided to members to support understanding in how the data is collected and aggregated throughout the school year. The results of the data are shared individually with parents during parent-teacher conferences for their own child, and within the program to purchase new materials and identify staff training needs in areas where enhancement is identified as a need. Children are measured in the areas of social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, and mathematics.

In EHS, the highest area of growth was in the physical area, while the lowest area of growth was in mathematics. All areas showed overall growth of children. The program will continue to work with staff and families on the concept of math skills for infants and toddlers. Materials have been purchased for the classrooms to help to support teaching of these concepts.

In HS classrooms, children also showed growth in all areas. Areas of least growth were social emotional for 3 year old children and literacy in the 4 year old children. Physical development was the area of highest growth. The program continues to provide ongoing training to staff and parents utilizing the Social-Emotional Pyramid Model to support skills at home and school. Examples include identifying and expressing feelings, problem-solving, building friendships, and helping others. The Second Step Curriculum is also used in the classrooms to support social emotional learning and safety.

School Readiness Goals alignment ensures that children are provided opportunities that support optimal development to prepare children for future learning. Krystie presented this document to members so that they were able to gain a visual representation of how the program's school readiness goals are aligned with the HS Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF), Early Learning Guidelines, Teaching Strategies Gold, Creative Curriculum, NE Kindergarten Standards, and the NE Rule 11 requirements.

Enrollment/Recruitment Update: The program has currently accepted 63/84 slots for EHS and 147/202 HS slots (including stand-alone centers and public school partnerships). The enrollment manager has been actively involved in several community events over the past few weeks. She has presented at the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library Summer Reading Program and the Bridgeport Summer Reading program. Information was also available at the Midwest Theater during their summer movie series for families. Upcoming events include Oregon Trail Days, the Scottsbluff County Fair, and the Morrill Farmer's Market.

Employment Openings were shared with members. Openings included:

Early Development Network Services Coordinator – Early Childhood

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

Head Start Cook – Head Start

Title 1C Recruiter – Title 1C

Life Skills Coach at Meridian & Lifelink Schools – Special Education

Music-Fine Arts Life Skills Teacher – Special Education

ASD Behavior Specialist – Special Education

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

Floater/Assistant Teachers – Head Start/Early Head Start

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

New Hires:

Olivia Taylor – Summer Assistant Teacher – CDC – 40 hours per week until July 31, 2021

Stephanie Dominguez – Summer Assistant Teacher – CDC – 40 hours per week until July 31, 2021

Tory Bauer – Family Advocate – Sidney/TBA – 40 hours per week/full year position

Magdalena Quintanar – Floater/Assistant Teacher – CDC – 40 hours per week/full year position

Kaci moved to approve the new hires. Veronica seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.

Reminder –Next Meeting July 27th. Due to construction at ESU 13 the meeting will be held at Harms Advanced Technology Center and childcare available at the Western Nebraska Child Development Center like it was in June.

Center Reports: CDC 102, CDC 103, CDC 104, ELC

Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm.