

Policy Council Meeting

8-27-24

Submitted by: Karina Garza & Kerry Mehling

Members Present: Vanessa Gleason, Alexis Griner, Tiah Alvizar, Karina Garza, Tiffany Hogsett, Dehlia Cardona, Jessica Brenizer, Brittain Reinmuth, Adriana Gonzales, Kyle Schneider, Veronica Gonzales, Juan Gallardo

Staff Present: Lauren Starke, Kerry Mehling, Crystal Smith, Krystie Hohnstein, Joan DeWitt

Board Members Present: Tom Millette

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Tiah Alvizar at 6:07p.m. New member introductions were made. Members reviewed the minutes from the July meeting. **Adriana moved to approve the July minutes. Alexis 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. Screenings and health requirements are in progress for the new 2024-2025 school year. Data entry will occur once those screenings have been completed. Some open enrollment slots remain in a few locations and the program continues to recruit in those communities. Fall in-service activities have been completed with several training requirements met.

Finance Report:

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Lauren Starke, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. Spending is on target for the grant year and training costs are beginning to rise as staff engage in educational requirements for their positions. Administrative percentages are well within the 15% limit. The credit card expenditure and USDA reports were also reviewed. **Tiffany moved to approve the finance report. Adriana seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Board Report:

Lauren presented in-kind training to the Board of Education. Discussions occurred regarding the funding applications that were submitted for enhancement of the mental health component. Several board policies and the employee handbook were reviewed.

Old Business:

Updates on the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Grant were provided: no updates have been received yet.

Updates on the Head Start One-Time Funding Application were provided: no updates have been received yet.

New Business:

****Addition to Agenda - Approval of update to policies FC02 & FC17 – Specific to Report of Law Enforcement Form:** All members received a copy of the policies with the update outlining how the program will approach parents who refuse to disclose on the form any type of legal charges they have faced. Refusal to disclose will result in the strictest disqualification and will be enforced to ensure the safety of children in the program.

ESU#13 Employee Handbook/Human Resources Written Plan Review:

Crystal Smith, Human Resources Manager, reviewed the updates for the 2024-2025 school year. The first policy that was updated and reviewed was for outside employment and staff reporting to ensure that there is no conflict of interest with services and payment. A new policy on snow days is being implemented for itinerant staff. A change to the bereavement policy adds 2 hours of paid leave per occurrence for persons not in the immediate family. A new policy for leave of absence regarding dock time/leave without pay was implemented to include disciplinary measures if an employee has more than 5 unpaid leave days in their contract period. The travel policy was updated to ensure efficiency and promote accountability for travel expenditures.

Crystal also reviewed exit surveys and reasons for staff turnover and rates of turnover with a comparison from year to year. She reported that turnover had decreased this past school year from 44% in 2022-23 to 20% in 2023-24, and provided comparisons in different service areas and national average comparisons in those industries. She also showed some feedback from exit surveys including length of services, returning staff from year to year and if these staff would return to the same department, along with reasons for leaving. An analysis of employee benefit satisfaction was also included. Other questions were related to the individual's relationship with supervisor and other staff in the department, as well as relationships with staff in other departments in the agency.

Continuation Grant (Due December 2024): The program is completing year 5 of the current grant cycle and will begin working on the next 5-year grant cycle, strategic plans and service offerings. The program is not expecting any major service changes. Members are encouraged to ask questions and offer suggestions as the grant writing process begins.

We Care for Kids Campaign: Members were informed about the opportunity to participate in a public service announcement about their experiences with their child care settings and taking part in an interview that will be shared across the state. Contact Krystie Hohnstein if you are interested.

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:

Danielle Gomez – Assist. Teacher @ ELC

Alexia Pate – Assist. Teacher @ ELC

Samantha Gregory – Assistant Teacher @ Bridgeport

Jazelle Dominguez – Assistant Teacher @ CDC

Rebecca Fiscus – Assistant Teacher @ Bridgeport

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

Return Policy Council Binders in September for Updates: Members are welcome to keep their binders but if they would like to turn them in so that they can be recycled and updated for the next group of members, please bring them to the next meeting or to your center teacher to be reused.

Center Reports: None at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10p.m.