

Policy Council Meeting
1-28-25
Submitted by: Brandy Klinesmith & Kerry Mehling

Members Present: Cara Edington, Maria Garcia, Carmen Torres, Vanessa Gleason, Makenna Sempek, Sydney Closson, Skylar Pottorff, Dehlia Cardona, Kristen Gompert, Jessica Goodrich, Debra Jo Mason, Jessica Brenizer, Brandy Klinesmith, Shayna Hudson, Brittain Reinmuth

Guest: None

Staff Present: Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein, Teena Branson, Joan Dewitt, Shannon Yeoman, Susie Dominguez, Michel Ramirez, Jessica Rivera, Jazmin Raya

Board Members Present: None

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Kerry Mehling, at 6:08p.m. New member introductions were made. Members reviewed the minutes from the November meeting. **Sydney Closson moved to approve the November minutes. Vanessa Gleason and Makenna Sempek seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Director's Report:

All members received copy of the Director's report. Krystie Hohnstein discussed the report. She highlighted the performance indicators and program reports, which are all looking good. Dental exam completion continues to rise, in comparison to the past when more families struggled to get these exams completed in the area. Immunizations are looking good. Physicals are a little low, but higher than in the past, as well as, lead screenings. Data entry is continuing for home visits. Two out of three bus evacuation have been completed for the year. Progress is being made on family goals. The 5-year grant was submitted just before break in December. The program has a new Program Specialist assigned that we are waiting to meet and begin working with. Krystie discussed ongoing training opportunities and coaching. Spring behavior observations will start in February. We are ahead of where we were last year for the In-Kind report. Public School Partnership In-kind amounts come in towards the end of the fiscal year, so even though the report looks like there is a long way to go, the program is confident in meeting the required amount.

Finance Report:

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Krystie Hohnstein, Director, presented the reports for November and December. Operating budget, T/TA and credit card reports were all reviewed with no further discussion or questions. The one-time funding for mental health program expansion was also discussed. In addition, the November USDA report was received. December and January USDA reports will be presented at the February meeting. **Makenna Sempek moved to approve the finance report. Maria Garcia seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Board Report:

Elected President, Vice President and Secretary. The Professional Learning Department will be increasing literacy support and hiring a coordinator for this process. Discussed grant for the tech project and the bids that were reached out for. Each school was able to put together what they needed before it was put into the bid and it was approved for Cytech Media to take on the project. Other discussion about the playground upgrades for Meridian occurred, with work to start this Spring.

Old Business:

Incident Report/RAN (Risk Assessment Notification) Review Update: Official notification has been received with the outcome of a non-compliance with the incident. This is the best outcome where the program is allowed to work on policies and procedures and report back to ensure the issue has been corrected. The other outcome could have been a deficiency. The program now has 120 days to ensure all documentation is in place to outline the changes that have been implemented to ensure that policies and procedures are sufficient in ensuring that this situation does not occur again. An official meeting will be set following that timeframe to review the documentation and provide a resolution. The Policy Council will continue to be included in the updates and information. Representatives may be asked to sit in on the final meeting once a date and time has been established.

New Business:

In-Kind Presentation: *This will be tabled until the next meeting.*

Child Outcomes & School Readiness Goals Discussion: Education and Special Services Manager, Shannon Yeoman was in the meeting to present. There are no policy changes to vote on. Shannon shared the program's School Readiness Goals. She discussed how the goals are updated and changed as needed to remain in alignment with multiple different curriculums and assessment tools utilized. The 2nd Step Social Emotional Curriculum was highlighted for members to view a piece of what this curriculum looks like. Each tool was described including the Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF), Teaching strategies Gold with 10 focus domains, and Gold Outcomes that are completed 3 times per year. The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Two's; and Preschool were also shared. The Gold domains and outcomes were discussed for each age group for the fall outcomes.

ERSEA Written Plan Review/Discussion: Teena Branson, Enrollment Manager presented training on the ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance) component.

Eligibility- Income and age eligibility are the main factors for consideration. Candidates will be placed into an income eligible, mid income, or over income category. Families receiving SNAP, SSI, meet the homeless definition (kinship care is included) or are in the foster care system are considered categorically eligible. Early Head Start children are eligible until they turn age 3 after 1st enrollment year. Head Start children are eligible for 2 years. If the child remains age eligible for a third year, the family would have to complete a 3rd year application with new income documentation provided. Income calculation documentation, including new updates defined in the HSPPS (Head Start Program Performance Standards) were explained. A new option added this year allows families who are over income to submit specific household costs, and those over 30% of the household income are able to be subtracted from their total income for eligibility determination.

Recruitment-Program recruitment efforts were highlighted.

Selection-Selection is based on the selection criteria and has to be voted on every year. This selection is used by the selection committee anytime there is an open position available as a tool to determine highest need with children on the waitlist. The process includes a review of all factors for the classroom, child and family needs.

Enrollment-The process for enrollment was discussed. All open spots expected to be filled within 30 days.

Attendance-The program is required to maintain 85% average daily attendance. Discussed the negative patterns that tend to evolve with young children who have a high percentage of absent days and how it impacts the rest of their schooling. Action plans could be put into place if this becomes a common occurrence. A policy council member asked for more details about what happens for a child with low attendance due to a health care need. Teena stressed the importance in communication and documentation with any absence. She closed with going over the policy updates from OHS. **Cara Edington moved to approve the updated ERSEA Written Plans. Carmen Torres seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

ERSEA 2025-2026 Selection Criteria Approval: Teena handed out the updated 2025-2026 proposed eligibility selection criteria form. She discussed changes that the program hopes to implement in the coming year with the selection criteria and explained the reasoning behind those changes according to the community needs being identified as well as required considerations identified by the HSPPS. A discussion occurred about Medicaid as it is not a consideration for categorically eligible at this time and is not a part of the selection criteria. However, SNAP is included and has made an impact on enrollment eligibility for many families. **Jessica Brenizer moved to approve the updated ERSEA 2025-2026 Selection Criteria. Vanessa Gleason seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

New Hires:

Olivia Mack - Assistant Teacher-CDC, Full-Time, Full Year Position

Maria Hernandez – Assistant Teacher – CDC, Full Time, Full Year Position

Makenna Sempeck moved to approve the New Hires. Brittain Reinmuth seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.

Employment Openings - Agency-wide employment openings are found on the ESU13 website (www.esu13.org) under *Employment Openings*. Prospective Employees can also apply directly on this site. This was shown to members. Updates are being made to the website.

Center Reports: Center reports were presented from: Bayard, ELC EHS, Gering (Geil, Lincoln & Northfield), Minatare, Bridgeport, and Leyton.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 25th with meal service beginning at 5:45pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.