

Policy Council Meeting

11-25-25

Submitted by:

Members Present: Sydni Closson, Meagan Richardson, Trevor Cecil, Ericka Medina, Emily Mannon, Emilio Medina, Raul Fernandez, Danielle Parker, Char Zander, Robert White, Jessica Brenizer, Brittian Reinmuth, Briana Blanco.

Guests Present:

Staff Present: Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein, Joan DeWitt, Teena Branson, Melissa Rodriguez, Lauren Starke, Jake Ryker, Melissa Rodriguez, Brianna Ewing, Eluisa Duque.

Board Members Present: Tom Millette

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Teena Branson, at 6:10pm. All members gave short introductions. Members reviewed the minutes from the October meeting. Sydni Closson **moved to approve the October minutes**. Brittian Reinmuth **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 that the program continues to make steady progress in enrollment, performance requirements, staff development, and community engagement. Screening completion rates for new enrollees remain high across developmental, social-emotional, vision, hearing, and speech screenings. Dental exams, physicals, immunizations, and lead screenings will continue to reach the federal performance targets. Family partnership work is ongoing, with agreements and goal-setting still in progress for many families, and referrals continuing as needs arise.

Staff development remains active. This month, ESU 13 Digital Accessibility Training and Creative Arts Early Learning Guidelines were provided in-house, and our Mental Health Specialist continues training in the FAN model. Coaching efforts have been successful, with seven coachees supported by one coach and 27 goals completed. CLASS observations are nearly finalized, and behavioral health observations continue with feedback and resources being shared.

Community partnerships and family engagement remain strong. Sites have been involved in various events, including vision screenings with Dr. Mahoney, fall festivals, family gatherings, and parent meetings focused on child development, safety, and community resources. Several father engagement activities were also held. Recruitment efforts continue through regular social media outreach, and staff participated in the Holiday Parade on November 23, where our decorated bus and team helped share program information with the community. The In-Kind report was shared and efforts will continue for us to reach our required amount.

Finance Report:

All members received a copy of the Finance Report along with two months of the USDA report since it was unavailable last month. Lauren Starke, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. Char Zander **moved to approve the finance report**. Robert White **seconded the motion**. **Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Board Report: HS Director Krystie Hohnstein presented the information from the November ESU13 Board Meeting. The budgeted items were discussed and the financial statements for November were covered. The Head Start Governance Training was presented by Laura Barrett due to Krystie being out ill. Jody Walker gave

a report on the “Desk Audit” that was happening at ESU13. Dr. Barrett also presented on the efforts that ESU13 is making to work with partners WNCC, Twin Cities Development and Regions 1 Nebraska to expand career pathways and CTE training. The 24-25 Annual Report was also presented to members along with updates about the Meridian expansion and updates to federal legislative issues. Patricia Jones was appointed as the NASB delegate. Clifton Strengths and substitute teacher wages finish out the meeting.

Old Business: None at this time.

New Business:

Election of Officers (Executive, Personnel, and HMHSAC): Positions and responsibilities were discussed

Executive Committee:

President:	Vice President:	Secretary:
Nominees: Erica Medina	Nominees: Robert White Jessica Brenizer	Nominees: Brandy Klinesmith
<i>Elected – Erica Medina</i>	<i>Elected- Jessica Brenizer</i>	<i>Elected – Brandy Klinesmith</i>

Volunteers for Committees

Personnel: Sydni Closson, Raul Fernandez

Health and Mental Health Services Advisory: Char Zander, Trevor Cecil, Briana Blanco

Char Zander **moved to approve the officers.** Megan Richardson **seconded the motion.** **Motion carried by roll call vote.**

2025-2030 Strategic Priorities Review and Discussion- Krystie Hohnstein discussed the four pillars that make up the Strategic Priorities with the PC representative. ESU 13 Head Start outlines four strategic pillars: improving family education and engagement, building a positive program culture, expanding mental-health supports, and increasing community presence. Success will be measured through staff training, family participation, feedback surveys, coaching and wellness efforts, mental-health referrals and procedures, and enhanced marketing and partnerships.

Program Governance Policies Review and Discussion- Krystie Hohnstein discussed the policies that were outlined and dispersed last month. Among this information is the overall information that will determine how and by whom the Policies and Program Governance is performed.

HS/EHS Continuation/5-Year Grant Approval: Krystie Hohnstein discussed the changes that are proposed to take place for the 26/27 school year. Classrooms from the Early Learning Center will be moved to the Child Development Center for Early Head Start and remaining 15 HS slots will be converted into Partnership slots for the next year with the Child Development Center Head Start room remaining open 12 months with 15 enrollments. This move will support the budget, along with financial stability for the upcoming grant years. **Robert White moved to approve the 2025-30 5-Year/Continuation Grant submission. Danielle Parker seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote. President, Erica Medina, signed the document verifying Policy Council approval for grant submission.**

Employment Openings - Agency-wide employment openings are found on the ESU13 website (www.esu13.org) under *Employment Openings*. Current openings for Teacher and Assistant Teacher positions

are listed on the ESU 13 website. Prospective Employees can also apply directly on this site. This was shown to members.

New Hires: Employees that have been hired since the October meeting are Melissia Miller as Assistant Cook at CDC, she has children enrolled there and previously worked as a cook in a EHS center in Texas. Luiza Guzman was hired as the new Nutrition Coordinator, she was previously employed as a WIC peer counselor at CAPWN and is set to complete her Associates in Dietetics in July of 2026.

Danielle Parker moved to approve the New Staff Hires. Erica Medina seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Center Reports: Reports were presented from CDC EHS/HS, Morrill HS, Mitchell Gering and Bayard

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 27th. Dinner will be served at 5:45pm and the meeting will begin promptly at 6:00pm. There is no meeting in December.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50p.m.