

Policy Council Meeting
11-28-23
Submitted by: Kerry Mehling

Members Present: Vanessa Gleason, Kyle Schneider, Sydni Closson, Amelia Maldonado, Maria Oliva, Dehlia Cardona, Karina Garza, Tiffany Hogsett, Tiah Alvizar, Brittain Reinmuth, Jessica Brenizer, Kianna Franklin, Alexis Griner, Maria Garcia, Veronica Ramirez, Adriana Gonzales

Guests Present: Lacey Hunter

Staff Present: Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein, Lauren Starke, Susie Dominguez, Joan DeWitt

Board Members Present: None

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Kerry Mehling, at 6:15p.m. New member introductions were made. Members reviewed the minutes from the October meeting. **Tiah moved to approve the October minutes. Maria Oliva 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 and continued training with members on the program requirements and reporting. Krystie reminded members of the 10% disability requirements, 85% attendance, 45 and 90-day requirements. EHS classrooms are falling below the 85% attendance requirement at this time. There has been a lot of illness at the start of the school year that has contributed to the lower attendance percentages. Enrollment has fluctuated quite a bit due to many families moving from the area after the start of the school year. The program has maintained full enrollment per HS requirements even with the ongoing movement. Continuing to refer families and take applications is important to maintain an active waitlist.

DHHS Grants were received as additional funding in the amount of \$70,784 and must be used directly for staff wages. The program will be using those as staff incentives throughout the year and the first payment will occur with December paychecks. The program has until March 2024 to utilize the entire amount and will be working on plans to continue distribution throughout the year.

Focus Area 2 Federal Review was completed the last week of October. Reviewers gathered data, visited classrooms, and engaged in discussions with management team members, Policy Council and Board of Education members, staff, and parents. We will not receive the results from the review for approximately 10-12 weeks; however, the program staff feel that it went very well and positive feedback was received during the review process.

Non-federal share was explained again and the target amount of 20% of the total grant award as members reviewed the In-Kind report.

Finance Report:

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Lauren Starke, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. Lauren continued training with members on how to read the reports. She compared expenses from September to October, reviewed T/TA expenses, credit card, and USDA report for October. Lauren explained the tuition to other school districts amount of \$44,495.50 as it did not occur in September but now will be a regular expense that members will see on the report as payments to public school partnerships has begun for the school year (only on the HS report as we do not have partnerships for EHS). On the T/TA report, there were staff who attended an out of state

training and payments for college courses for staff who are required to take classes has also begun in both HS and EHS. Lauren reminded members that we are allowed to over-spend in the T/TA funding, and then utilize regular program funding for additional training as needed and as available, but we are not allowed to under-spend in the T/TA budget. She also reminded members to watch the Administrative Percentage to ensure that it stays under the maximum allowed 15%. The credit card expenditure report was given to members and Lauren discussed the October 2023 USDA Report of Reimbursement. **Veronica moved to approve the finance report. Tiah seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Board Report: Krystie presented the program governance training to board members. The HS Continuation grant was presented and approved by the Board. Krystie also provided an update on the Focus Area 2 Federal Review. On January 26th, the program is hosting a training on implicit bias and poverty simulation training, and board members are being requested to attend. The 2022-2023 financial audit was completed and the report will be shared when it is available. The February Mid-Winter Conference is coming up and all staff and school districts across the area will be attending this event as they do annually. Hail damage repairs are in process. A new bus barn will be built in the future. The HARMS Center will also have some renovations there and some programs will be displaced during that process. There is one vacancy on the board of education and there is one letter of interest from someone who is interested in filling the vacancy.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Election of Officers: Officers engaged in elections for the following Policy Council leadership positions and volunteered for program committees: Executive Committee including a President, Vice President, and Secretary. Other committee opportunities include: Personnel and Health Services Advisory Committees. An explanation of each committee occurred and members had the opportunity to nominate self or others. Nominees had the opportunity to talk about their interest in the position, and why they felt they would be a reliable candidate to carry out the responsibilities. **Maria Oliva moved to approve the Officers and Committee Members. Adriana seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

Executive Committee:

President:	Vice President:	Secretary:
Nominees: Tiah Alvizar	Nominees: Alexis Griner	Nominees: Karina Garza
<i>Elected – Tiah Alvizar</i>	<i>Elected- Alexis Griner</i>	<i>Elected – Karina Garza</i>

Volunteers for Committees:

Personnel: Adriana Gonzales, Dehlia Cardona, Jessica Brenizer, Alexis Griner, Kyle Schneider

Health Services Advisory: Vanessa Gleason, Tiah Alvizar, Amelia Maldonado

Office of Head Start (OHS)/Region 7 Discussion: Members received an Organizational Chart visualizing the chain of command in the ESU13 Head Start Program and oversight from the Region 7 Office and the Office of Head Start. Head Start has several regions in the United States. Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, and Iowa are in Region 7 and a map was provided showing all of the regions in the United States as well as the contact information for the Region 7 Office. Program leaders engage in a monthly call with Region 7 program and grant specialists to provide information about the program, ask any questions, and to obtain guidance as needed. The Office of Head Start provides the grant funding and updates to the regulations and standards programs must follow.

HS/EHS 2024-2025 Continuation Grant Approval: Krystie Hohnstein discussed what the upcoming continuation grant will encompass. We are writing for the continuation grant for the 5th year in our 5-year grant cycle. The grant must be submitted by December 31st, 2023.

Krystie gave an overview of the grant with no proposed service changes. The program plans to serve a total of 274 children with 7 public school partnerships in Bayard, Gering, Minatare, Mitchell, Morrill, and Scottsbluff and Sidney. A total of 202 slots will be preschool, with 148 of those slots in the public school partnerships. The additional 72 slots are designated to EHS center-base locations.

Program goals for the next 5 years were included in the discussion. Annual community assessment surveys, parent surveys, staff surveys, and the self-assessment process have helped to guide the process for the continuation grant and service delivery for 2024-2025. **Veronica moved to approve the 2024-25 Continuation Grant submission. Alexis seconded the motion. Motion approved 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.

New Hires:

Tessa Peterson – 11-20-23 start date – Floater/Assistant Teacher in Bridgeport. Full time/9-month position.

Alexis moved to approve the New Staff Hire. Tiffany seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Center Reports: Center reports were presented from: Bayard, CDC108, EHS ELC, HS ELC

Members were reminded that there is no meeting in December. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 30th at 6pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40p.m.