

Policy Council Meeting
3-25-25
Submitted by: Kerry Mehling & Teena Branson

Members Present: Tiah Alvizar, Carmen Torres, Vanessa Gleason, Maria Garcia, Kristen Gompert, Cara Edington, Makenna Sempek, Dehlia Cardona, Shayna Hudson, Debra Jo Mason, Jessica Goodrich, Madison Koch, Veronica Gonzales (*left early*)

Guests Present: Juan Gallardo (*left early*)

Staff Present: Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein, Joan DeWitt, Shannon Yeoman, Teena Branson, Susie Dominguez, Melissa Rodriguez,

Board Members Present: Tom Millette

Policy Council Meeting called to order by President, Tiah Alvizar, at 6:05 pm. There were no new member introductions needed. Members reviewed the minutes from the February meeting. **Veronica Gonzales moved to approve the February minutes. Jessica Goodrich 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 highlighting enrollment and attendance information and disabilities numbers, along with bus evacuation dates, as they were not listed on the report. She shared that the program has received Notice of Award for the next five-year grant period 2026-2030. The 2025-2026 grant year is awarded with 50% funding at this time and the other 50% to come later, which is a common occurrence for grant awards. The program remains funded for 202 Head Start Preschool and 72 Early Head Start children.

Finance Report:

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Lauren Starke, Fiscal Officer, was not present but the reports were observed by members in attendance. Basic overview was shared by Director, Krystie Hohnstein. The T/TA funds have been fully expensed and over the budgeted amount. It was explained that this is okay and reminded members that T/TA funds can only be used for training and not operating expenses, but that operating funds can also support professional development opportunities. The administrative percentage remains below the maximum allowed of 15%. The one-time funds for mental health programming, credit card and USDA reports were also reviewed. No further discussion. **Madison Koch moved to approve the finance report. Carmen Torres seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Board Report: Krystie reported that she continues to discuss the RAN incident report with the BOE just as they do with the Policy Council. Dr. Barrett provided information on conferences and updates on current agency events, and data on enrollment trends for local school districts. BJ Peters, Technology Director, announced that he will be retiring from his position at ESU13 at the end of the summer 2025.

Old Business:

Updates on RAN Report/Safety Updates:

Krystie shared the spreadsheet recording all actions that have been taken for improvement as a result of this incident. There have been no changes needed in the policies for the program, but new precautionary plans are now in place to help ensure that another incident is avoided. For example, improvements to the name to face check implemented in classrooms have occurred. The bus staff are also currently using a name to face check during transitions between the bus and classrooms. In addition, signage has been placed around the classrooms

for reminders to complete the checklist and a digital app is being utilized as well. Multiple trainings have happened over the last few months and were offered in a variety of ways and through a variety of formats including additional online trainings for active supervision, and specific training at onboarding and orientation for new employees. The next RAN meeting will be held in April with our team to evaluate revised processes. Partnership classrooms are also being observed and procedures are being noted on active supervision with feedback given as needed. School partnerships are required to provide us with their active supervision policy that is utilized in their locations to re-enforce the compliance with these procedures.

New Business:

Education & Child Development Services Written Plan Review (includes Disability & Transition and Child Outcomes & School Readiness Goals): Shannon Yeoman, Health, Education and Special Services Manager presented these topics. No major changes were necessary to the majority of policies. Topics included: effective teaching practices, the classroom environment, an overview of the curriculum used, child screenings and assessment, parent and family engagement, approaches to learning, disabilities service plans, recruitment and eligibility for children with specialized needs, screening and referral process for areas of concern, and the provision of services. Next, transition services were discussed for children aging out of the EHS to preschool program, or transition from preschool to kindergarten. Lastly, Teaching Strategy GOLD Outcomes were shared from Fall to Winter 2024/25 for all age groups including data showing growth in the areas of social-emotional learning, physical, language, cognitive, literacy and math. Updates to the Behavior Guidance policy were explained as an approval item. **Veronica Gonzales moved to approve the Behavior Guidance policy. Madison Koch seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Mental Health Written Plan Review: Kerry Mehling, PLMHP, Mental Health Specialist, presented these topics. Discussion included mental health consultants/mental health professional services, child mental health and social emotional well-being, child mental health/behavior protocol, program initiated behavioral health referrals, parent initiated behavioral health referrals, CHILC classroom observations, consultation and scheduling, child or parent mental health emergency protocol along with parent involvement in child mental health services. Information and images of the new space for mental health services were shared. Other options for employees were noted that are offered for support. **Jessica Goodrich moved to approve the mental health written plans. Maria Garcia seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Safety Written Plan Review and Revision: Krystie Hohnstein, Director, presented the updated safety written plans, with a specific need for approval for updates to the lead testing for paint and water policy. Lead testing is required every two years starting in 2025 (the previous requirement was every 5 years). PPHD will work with our agency, as well as public school partnerships, to complete the testing at all locations where Head Start children are enrolled. **Makenna Sempek moved to approve the safety written plans. Debra Mason seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Continuation Grant Update: The 5-year grant for the project period 2025-30 has been approved and reported on by Director Krystie Hohnstein.

Update on Certified Teachers: The program employs one certified teacher currently. It is a requirement that the program actively attempts to recruit certified teachers annually. The program assists current staff members who are seeking certification with financial support towards classes as they work towards their own professional development. One certified teacher will return next year and there is one teacher that will be student teaching this fall to meet their certification requirements.

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:

Lehla Ehler - Assistant Teacher – CDC

Ashley Wells - Assistant Teacher - ELC.

Madison Koch moved to approve the New Staff Hires. Cara Edington seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Center Reports: Bayard, ELC EHS, Morrill, Roosevelt, Mitchell, EHS/HS CDC, Bridgeport. Leyton sent in their classroom report as the representative was unable to attend this meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 29. Dinner will be served at 5:45pm and the meeting will begin promptly at 6:00pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:27p.m.