

Policy Council Meeting

3-26-24

Submitted by: Karina Garza & Kerry Mehling

**Members Present:** Kyle Schneider, Sydni Closson, Shayna Hudson, Veronica Gonzales, Juan Gallardo, Maria Oliva, Dehlia Cardona, Karina Garza, Tiffany Hogsett (via Zoom), Tiah Alvizar, Jessica Brenizer, Alexis Griner, Veronica Ramirez, Adriana Gonzales

**Guests Present:** None

**Staff Present:** Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein, Lauren Starke, Joan DeWitt, Shannon Yeoman

**Board Members Present:** Tom Millette and Ray Richards

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Tiah Alvizar, at 6:22pm. New member introductions were made. Members reviewed the minutes from the February meeting. **Veronica Gonzales moved to approve the February minutes. Adriana 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. The program has experienced many changes in enrollment this year and is fully enrolled. Attendance percentages remain low with a lot of illness amongst children. A suggestion was made by Maria O. to have staff send home packets for children who are out ill in an effort to support children's learning at home, while including some wellness and health tips to help parents, too.

Second parent teacher conferences or home visits are currently in process. Behavioral health observations are more than half completed for the spring semester. The in-kind report does not yet accurately reflect all in-kind received for this fiscal year, but is reported to have been met fully this month as partnership services rendered amounts are completed and will reflect in the reporting in March.

**Finance Report:**

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Lauren Starke, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. Lauren highlighted the indirect cost payments in February, as these are not expenses that occur on a regular basis. The fiscal year ends on March 31 and it is expected that all funds will be obligated by then and fully expensed by the deadline of June 30. Obligated funds will be utilized to enhance security at the Bridgeport location, offer employee health and wellness incentives, provide updated materials to classrooms, and for professional staff development. The T/TA funds have been fully expensed and over the budgeted amount. Lauren 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 credit card and USDA reports were also reviewed. No further discussion. **Adriana moved to approve the finance report. Veronica Ramirez seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Board Report:**

Updates to the Strategic Priority 4: Collaborative Partnerships with Community Partners were presented. A report on the NE Rural Community Schools Association Conference provided. Updates were discussed on the HS Monitoring Review progress for correcting the areas needing improvement and the self-assessment survey results reviewed. The ESU13 Safety Team completed training on Safe2Help for anonymous reporting of threats, or potential threats. It is available on the ESU13 website. The remodel at the Harms Advanced Technology Center, impacting the ESU wing, was discussed. The proposed calendar for the upcoming school year was approved.

**Old Business:**

**Update from Federal Monitoring Review:** Krystie gave updates on program progress for correcting areas of concern or noncompliance areas from the federal monitoring review. The process of updating and monitoring of professional development plan requirements and staff updates has been completed. A policy will be written and presented on this in the near future. The Human Resources policy review is in progress and will be finalized for approval at the April meeting. The wage comparison study is in progress with other programs and local entities supporting data collection and wage comparison. Two partners in this process include NCAP and Loup City Head Start Programs. The Human Resources Manager is also coordinating with other HR leaders in the area. Safety policies are updated and on the agenda for approval.

**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. Discussion included effective teaching practices, the classroom environment, curriculum, child screenings and assessment, parent and family engagement, and approaches to learning. Next, additional services for children with disabilities and service plans, recruitment and eligibility, screenings and referral, and provision of services were reviewed. Transition services, including transition into the program, or transition out of EHS or HS followed. Lastly, Teaching Strategies GOLD Outcomes from fall to winter were shared along with strengths and areas of concern. This data will help program managers to prioritize upcoming professional development opportunities for education staff.

**Mental Health Written Plan Review:** Kerry Mehling, PLMHP, Assistant Director, FCP Manager 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, MHP classroom observations, consultation scheduling, and child or parent mental health emergency protocol along with parent involvement in child mental health.

**Safety Written Plan Review and Revision:** Krystie Hohnstein, Director, presented the updated safety written plans. Topics included in the policy review: active supervision of children, infant sleep positions, cot and crib spacing and safety, diapering and toileting, cleaning, sanitation, and disinfection, and authorized release of children. The standard response protocol followed, including evacuation, pedestrian and transportation safety education, lead testing for paint and water, facility security, incidents and injuries, and monthly health and safety checklists. Lastly, special diet/food allergy accommodation, breastfeeding and management of breast milk/formula, emergency supplies, and protection from contagious/communicable disease completed this discussion. **Adriana moved to approve the safety written plans. Veronica Gonzales seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

**Meeting Times:** Beginning in April, the meal will be ready at 5:45pm so that the meeting will begin at 6:00pm. Members should arrive accordingly to be ready to start the meeting promptly at 6pm.

**Dr. Walker Program Specialist Site Visit:** Region 7 Program Specialist, Dr. Caran Walker, will be visiting the program during the week of the next Policy Council meeting in April (April 29-May 1). She will be visiting sites throughout her visit and plans to attend the Policy Council meeting. We urge members to attend and to take the opportunity to meet her.

**Continuation Grant Update:** The grant for the 2024-25 school year has been approved. This will be the fifth year of our five-year cycle.

**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.

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

**New Hires:**

Trinity Zwetzig – Assistant Teacher @ ELC. FT/Full Year position.

**Veronica moved to approve the New Staff Hire. Adriana seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.**

**Center Reports:** ELC PK, Minatare, CDC EHS, SBBC-Stadium, ELC EHS, Bayard

*The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 30. Reminder that dinner will be served at 5:45pm and the meeting will begin promptly at 6:00pm.*

Meeting adjourned at 7:45p.m.