

Policy Council Meeting

4-29-25

Submitted by: Brandy Klinessmith and Teena Branson

Members Present: Brandy Klinessmith, Echo Woyak, Carmen Torres, Jessica Brenizer, Shayna Hudson, Tiah Alvizar, Kristen Gompert, Jessica Goodrich, Debra Jo Mason, Brittain Reinmuth, Madison Koch

Guests Present: None

Staff Present: Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein, Teena Branson, Lauren Starke, Joann Dewitt

Board Members Present: Tom Millette, Ray Richards

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Tiah Alvizar, at 6:06 pm. There were no new member introductions needed. Members reviewed the minutes from the March meeting. **Shayna Hudson moved to approve the March 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. Both HS and EHS are above the desired attendance and disability percentages for enrolled children. The third bus evacuation was completed. High percentage of family goals are in progress. There are 4 coachees and 25 goals are completed. All behavior health observations have been completed. In kind report goal was exceeded in March and the goal was met. In-kind from partnership schools was received in March. This amount increases the in-kind amounts significantly from previous months.

Finance Report:

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Lauren Starke, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. Quarterly indirect cost payments were made in March. We have until June 30th to liquidate funds for the 2024-2025 grant year and the one-time funding for mental health expansion. Some T/TA expenses were transferred to the one-time mental health grant as qualifying trainings for this funding. Administrative percentage is well below 15%. There was a fraud charge on one of the HS credit cards. This resulted in issuance of new card. There were no questions or further discussion. **Madison Koch moved to approve the finance report. Debra Jo Mason seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Board Report: Presented by Krystie Hohnstein. Megan Macey put together a summer camp for visually impaired students, to bring them together for sporting events. There will be adaptive sporting equipment for swimming, baseball, and other sports as well. Krystie presented Head Start information. The indirect cost rate was approved. The Western NE School Mental Health Conference will be held in September 2025. The HARMs center remodel is almost complete and students will be able to move into the space by August. Tim Horn resigned his position on the board and his position has opened up. He introduced a guest that was interested in the board position.

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. Notice was received for final review on May 8, 2025. Program policies and procedures, trainings, and updates will be reviewed. There were no questions in regards to the incident at this time.

New Business:

Family & Community Partnerships Written Plan Review: Kerry Mehling, Family & Community Partnerships Manager presented these topics. Kerry discussed the importance of parents as primary teachers and overall parent involvement in the program, parent rights and responsibilities, home visits, the family partnership process, family partnership building, parent involvement in child development and education, parent activities to promote child learning and development, parent involvement in health, nutrition and mental health, community advocacy, parent involvement in transition activities, community partnerships and transition, parents as volunteers, law enforcement contact and disqualification guidelines for parents and volunteers.

An overview of the Family & Community Engagement Framework was discussed and all parents received a copy of this in their binders.

Parents as volunteers was an extended conversation and volunteer training was discussed. Regular volunteers must receive volunteer training and complete the law enforcement contact form. The program will no longer have all parents complete the form for family engagement events, but will continue to follow NE DHHS Child Care Licensing for volunteers. **Jessica Brenizer moved to approve the changes to Family & Community Partnerships Written Plans. Carmen Torres seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Fiscal Written Plan Review: Lauren Starke, Fiscal Officer, presented these topics. Lauren discussed budget and program revisions, monitoring financial performance, competition, procurement procedures, and professional service costs. **Madison Koch moved to approve the fiscal written plans. Echo Woyak seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

ESU13 Indirect Cost Rate: The Head Start program will budget at a rate as close to the non-restricted rate as workable when writing and submitting the yearly funding application. The budgeted rate will be used when expensing direct costs from April through August. In September, when certified teacher costs (or other budget uncertainties) are determined, the program may adjust the indirect cost rate accordingly. For ESU 13 budgeting purposes, the Head Start program will pay a minimum of the restricted indirect cost rate. If there are unobligated funds at the end of the Head Start budget period, the program can pay up to the non-restricted rate as long as the program doesn't exceed the 15% administrative maximum.

Transportation Written Plan Review: Krystie Hohnstein, Director, presented the transportation written plans. All vehicles have safety equipment, child seating, and are required to have accident reports if needed. Head Start requires all drivers to have a CDL and complete a regular physical to determine physical and mental well-being. There is annual bus driver and bus monitor training completed. There are multiple steps in place for trip-routing to ensure that children being transported are able to make it safely to and from the classroom, including release of children. Safety training is completed for the staff, as well as, the children riding the bus. Transportation for students with disabilities and coordinated transportation were also discussed. There were no changes to policies for approval needed.

Self-Assessment Results (Winter): All members received a copy of the summary in their packets. Kerry presented the summary of the parent, staff, and partnership survey results. Overall there were good results in all areas. There were no questions in regards to the winter survey.

EHS/HS Continuation Grant Review (including Community Assessment, 5-year goal update, and expected changes for the 2025-26 program year): The program is currently in the process of closing out the prior grant period and April 2025 was the first month of the new fiscal year. The program does not anticipate any changes to number of children served or locations in 2026-27 grant year.

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:

Matthew Vasquez - Cook at ELC – FT, Full-year position.

Madelyn Hansen - Assistant Teacher at ELC, FT, Full-year position.

Berlyn Spencer - Assistant Teacher at CDC, FT, Full-year position.

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

Center Reports: Center Reports were presented by Gering, HS ELC, Bridgeport, Leyton, Scottsbluff Bear Cub, CDC EHS and HS. Reports were received from ELC EHS and Minatare (reps were not present).

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 24th. Dinner will be served at 5:45pm and the meeting will begin promptly at 6:00pm. There is no meeting in May.

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.