

Policy Council Meeting  
6-28-22

Submitted by: Kaiya West and Kerry Mehling

**Members Present:** Laura Morehead, Veronica Torres, Katherine Macintosh, Kaiya West

**Board Members Present:** None at this meeting

**Staff Present:** Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein, Lauren Starke, Shannon Yeoman, Kristen Bauer

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Laura Morehead at 6:13 pm. New member introductions were made. *There was not a quorum at this meeting. It was the consensus of the members in attendance to move forward with discussion of business on the agenda, with recommendations to members at the following meeting for approval.* Members reviewed the minutes from the May meeting. *It was the consensus of the members in attendance to recommend approval of the minutes during the July meeting.*

**Director's Report:**

All members received a copy of the Director's report. Krystie Hohnstein discussed the report. Two stand-alone classrooms, Bridgeport and CDC 108 are closed for summer break, as well as all HS Partnership classrooms with public school districts. Home Base continues to be under-enrolled. Screening, nutrition, and immunization percentages increased for both HS and EHS. Center and home base visits have been completed; parent-teacher conferences are done for the school year. Progress towards family goal completion continues for the full year classrooms. Home Base home visits continue to be low, and leadership would like to see improvement. The program had representatives present at the Director's Caucus in Kansas City, and the Young Child Institute virtual training. Coaching and classroom observations will resume in the fall. All parent and community projects have been completed for the school year.

**Finance Report w/ Updates on COVID Funding:**

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Lauren Starke, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. End-of-the-year purchases and training fees were reflected in both the April reports for HS and EHS. COVID 1 funds have expired and have been completely expensed. COVID 2 and 3 funds still have plenty of time to use, and future spending plans will be discussed. Credit card statements reflect several purchases like supplies, activities, trainings, and travel expenses. May reports reflected slowed spending due to the summer months where there is less activity. The new grant period financials show an increase in spending from April's report as a result of regular expenditures occurring in the new grant period, such as salaries and wages. USDA Reimbursement funds decreased, due to lower student attendance at the end of the school year with two classrooms closing for summer break.

Renovations are planned this summer at the ELC location to remove a wall to increase space for the preschool classroom, adding a toilet in place of a urinal, as well as the addition of a toilet and sink in the front room. These improvements will use COVID 2 funds. *It was the consensus of the members in attendance to recommend approval of the finance reports, credit card expenditures, and USDA reports for April and May during the July meeting.*

**Board Report:**

May and June summaries:

- Approved new hires
- Presentation from Psychological and Behavioral Health department
- ESU will receive \$893,107.96 in core service dollars

- Mental Health proclamation was reviewed and approved
- Student program calendars were approved from 2022-2023 school year
- ESU currently uses COGNIA as its accreditation provider, but many schools have switched Nebraska Frameworks. It is suggested that ESU makes the switch to be consistent with the schools it serves
- Employer of the Year Award for ESU 13
- Updated Board policies were reviewed and approved
- Certified staff evaluation process was revised, reviewed, and approved
- Student program handbooks, staff handbooks, Title 1C personnel handbooks were reviewed and approved

**Old Business:**

**Update on carry-over funding request for vehicle purchase:**

HS would like to carry over \$55,000 from last year's budget. A request will be made at a future meeting for final Policy Council approval.

**Submission of COLA & Quality Improvement Funding Applications:**

Applications were submitted May 31, 2022. No further information on the award is available at this time.

**New Business:**

**Reduction/Conversion of EHS Home Base slots:**

Continued under-enrollment data was presented for the Home Base option from 2016 to current date. Consistent attendance at home visits and engagement at socializations has also been difficult for several years, partially due to more families working outside of the home. As a result of the data showing ongoing enrollment struggles and staffing shortage of one home educator following the resignation of a long-term staff member, the program is planning to write for a reduction/conversion in the EHS program. If approved, this will eliminate the Home Base program and increase center base infant/toddler slots by one classroom, or 8 slots.

The goal is to open this classroom in the existing Bridgeport facility, following community exploration into the need for infant/toddler care in this part of the service area. Community needs show an increased need in center base care with a decreased interest in home based services. Several recruitment efforts have occurred over the years to increase enrollment in Home Base with very little response. Continuing a program that has had years of struggle to achieve and remain fully enrolled may negatively impact the HS grant. For families who would still require services like EHS Home Base, referrals to other local resources such as Sixpence and Healthy Families America, will be an option. Conversations will continue with the Policy Council and a final approval will be requested prior to submission of the reduction/conversion application.

**Update to Eligibility Selection Criteria (SNAP benefits):**

The criteria required for enrollment for HS/EHS has now added SNAP benefit approval as one of its selection criteria. Proof of SNAP eligibility would be all that is needed for future applicants who receive this benefit.

**Health Written Plan Review:**

Kristen Bauer, Health & Nutrition Manager presented the written plans. All members received a copy of the plans for review in their mailed packets. An additional change was discussed on the Medical/Physical Care Plan policy since the time that policies were mailed. Kristen explained that the Individualized Health Plan forms for children will be completed for medical needs, and a separate form will be completed for food/nutrition related needs. *It was the consensus of the members in attendance to recommend approval of the Health Written Plans during the July meeting.*

### **Child Outcomes & School Readiness Goals Discussion:**

Shannon Yeoman, Education & Special Services Manager, presented the child outcomes discussion. EHS and HS progressed in all GOLD areas in the 2021-2022 school year for 230 enrolled children. Cognitive assessments reflected the greatest overall gains and literacy had the lowest overall growth. In summary, ongoing training is happening, classrooms are consistently monitored, and staff is adapting curriculum and strategies to best serve our EHS/HS students.

### **Enrollment/Recruitment Update:**

- 7 open seats at Home Base with a staffing shortage of 1 home educator.
- 66 openings for HS – locations with the highest number of openings include Bayard, Bridgeport, Minatare, Mitchell, and Morrill. With the public school districts, often times applications are completed closer to the start of the school year as most staff at the districts are on summer break. ELC and CDC are almost full for both the EHS and HS slots.
- Acceptance letters are being prepared and sent to families as enrollment meetings occur.

### **Employment Openings** were shared with members. Openings included:

Educational Therapeutic Coach – Day Treatment/School

Behavior Tech – Day Treatment/School

School Psychologist – Behavioral Health

Paraeducator Meridian School

Title 1C – Education Recruiter

Head Start Cook

Ecological In-Home Family Treatment - Chadron

Ecological In-Home Family Treatment Consultant

Day Treatment Elem/MS Teacher

Title 1C Education Data Specialist

Title 1C Education Mentor

VALTS Teacher Scottsbluff or Sidney

Early Childhood MTSS Facilitator

Head Start Floater/Assistant

Job descriptions including credential requirements can be found at [www.esu13.org](http://www.esu13.org) (Employment Opportunities).

### **New Hires:**

Alyssa Gonzales – Assistant Teacher at CDC

Jackie Garza – Assistant Teacher at CDC

*It was the consensus of the members in attendance to recommend approval of new hires during the July meeting. These staff will be added to the list in July for approval.*

### **Center Reports:**

Centers who shared reports for the meeting included: CDC, Home Base and Mitchell

**Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 26, 2022 at 6:00pm. Policy Council members are elected to serve through September 2022. Attendance at summer meetings is a responsibility of the position.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm