

Policy Council Meeting  
9-28-21  
Submitted by: Kerry Mehling

**Members Present:** Kelsey Duffield, Kathrine Macintosh, Laura Morehead, Kristina Stokes, Veronica Torres

**Board Members Present:** Raymond Richards, Diane Coon

**Staff Present:** Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein

**Members Responding via Email Voting who could not attend meeting:** Nellie DeLosSantos, Andrea Rodriguez

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Kelsey at 6:15pm. New member introductions were made. ***There was not a quorum present at the meeting.***

***Board members recommended a conversation with ESU13 attorney to ensure approval process for Policy Council without a quorum. Follow-up was initiated with the ESU13 attorney as suggested in the days after the meeting. Information was provided regarding the Head Start Performance Standards, the Head Start Act, and the Policy Council By-Laws and it was found that the Policy Council could indeed move forward with absentee voting through email or phone as needed to complete business on those rare occasions when a quorum could not be met, if approved by Policy Council to do so. Because this was written into our By-Laws that are approved annually by the Policy Council and the Board of Education, it was found that this was an approved procedure. Kerry Mehling initiated follow-up emails with absent members to gain their votes on the Action items for September.***

Members reviewed the minutes from the August meeting. **All members present recommended approval of the August minutes. Follow-up emails from members who could not attend meeting include a Yes vote from Nellie DeLosSantos, Andrea Rodriguez. This gave the Policy Council 7 votes, passing this action item.**

**Director's Report:**

All members received a copy of the Director's report. Krystie Hohnstein discussed the report. The program continues to have three openings in the Home Base program, two new openings in the Bayard partnership, and one remaining opening at the Bridgeport location. The program has already met and exceeded the 10% requirement for serving children with special needs. Attendance in EHS classrooms has been low (82%) due to viruses such as RSV and hand, foot, and mouth. There have also been a limited number of COVID cases in EHS classrooms. Head Start attendance remains above 90%. The requirement for attendance percentage program-wide is 85%. Screenings, home visits, family goal setting and needs assessments are in progress along with data entry. Numbers are expected to continue rising as these deadlines are met. Staff are participating in Pyramid Training and some education class have been involved in follow-up trainings for equity/exploring bias. Parent Committees and event planning at each location are in progress as elections and first parent meetings are being held.

**Finance Report:**

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Krystie presented the reports. Pam Hebbert continues to support the program through training other ESU#13 fiscal staff and supporting questions. At this time, no applications have been received for her position of Fiscal Manager, and the program continues to advertise in the newspaper, social media, ESU#13 website and others such as Indeed, Linked-In, and the NHSA website. A suggestion to also advertise on the Nebraska Works website was noted.

Krystie discussed COVID funding updates. Reports were provided for COVID 1, 2, and 3 Funds. Krystie then discussed the COVID-1 carry over request.

**Addition to Agenda Items: Approval of COVID One Carry-Over Request:**

The program is prepared to submit a carry-over request for the COVID One Funds as has been discussed during the past several months. The final amount requested for carry-over is \$68,966. Projects that are intended for the carry-over funds include: upgrades to the ELC HVAC system, dishwasher, and EHS playground, software/curriculum updates for Creative Curriculum program-wide, air gaps in the CDC and ELC kitchen, and a plumbing/washer/dryer at the Bridgeport HS. A new washer/dryer for the CDC site was also purchased and new locks on the doors at CDC will be installed for safety. The program is continuing to provide the Ready4K program to stand-alone HS and EHS sites as a parent engagement virtual curriculum. These projects are expected to fully utilize the remaining COVID One Funds. With Policy Council and the Board of Education approval, the carry-over request will be submitted in October.

Lastly, credit card expenditures and the USDA report discussed. No further discussion. **All members present recommended approval to submit the carry-over request and approve the Fiscal Reports. *Follow-up emails from members who could not attend meeting include a Yes vote from Nellie DeLosSantos, Andrea Rodriguez. This gave the Policy Council 7 votes, passing both of these action items.***

**Board Report:**

Krystie presented a summary of the September Board of Education Meeting. The Nebraska Association of School Board Area Membership meeting contents were discussed. Board members who received Awards of Achievement were recognized. Next, the ESU 13 Pandemic Response Plan was modified for sites to move to the high-risk category if the location has confirmed cases in 5% of staff and students.

Discussion was then held by the Policy Council regarding the mandate for all EHS and HS staff to be vaccinated by January 2022. Policy Council members were concerned about what might happen with the program if there are staff members who choose to leave their employment and with an already large concern with short staffing across the state, where would that leave their children? The program will continue to inform the Policy Council as laws and regulations are passed regarding this issue.

The Board approved the 2021-2022 proposed budget for the operation of ESU 13 including the setting of the 2021-2022 property tax request and they approved the 2021-2022 ESU 13 Emergency Operations Plan.

**Old Business:**

None

**New Business:**

**Update on LDO – Waiver Partnerships Class Size** (*originally on the agenda as an action item; however, more information is needed before asking for approval from the Policy Council. Information was provided at this meeting only*).

The program applied for a waiver for double session classrooms who are serving 20 children in mixed-age classrooms. The allowed number of children, according to the HS Performance Standards, is 17 without a waiver. This scenario is relevant to several of the public school partnerships who have double session classrooms and serve up to 20 children in each session. The waiver request was denied by the Regional Office. The program is now working towards a solution as this waiver denial currently affects the Gering and Mitchell partnerships.

More information will be provided to Policy Council as decisions are made. Currently, the program will remain in these partnerships and work with partnership and ESU13 administrators, Policy Council, and Board of Education towards a solution.

**Bridgeport Teacher Waiver:** A waiver was submitted and approved for the Bridgeport Teacher. The current teacher has a CDA and is nearing completion of her Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. She has worked at the Bridgeport center for the past two years.

**Review Program Information Reports (PIR):** *Tabled to the next meeting. Unavailable at this time from the Office of Head Start.*

**Continuation Grant:**

Members were asked to provide input to the 2022-2023 grant process as discussions begin for submitting the grant by the end of December 2021. Each month, this will be on the agenda for Policy Council members to add their ideas for services. No further discussion at this meeting.

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

Special Education Retention Program Manager

Title 1C Education Recruiter

Title 1C Education Service Provider

Head Start Grant/Fiscal Officer

Head Start Floater/Assistant Teachers

Substitute VALTS Facilitator Sidney

School Mental Health Provider 2021-2022 – Sidney area

School Psychologist 2021-2022 school year

Substitute Para educators Meridian, ECEC, VALTS

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

**New Hires:**

April Halverson – Partnership Liaison, Full-time/10 month position.

**All members present recommended approval of the New Hire. Follow-up emails from members who could not attend meeting include a Yes vote from Nellie DeLosSantos, Andrea Rodriguez. This gave the Policy Council 7 votes, passing this action item.**

Policy Council Binders were returned for updates for the 2021-2022 representatives.

**Policy Council Governance Training is scheduled for Saturday, October 16<sup>th</sup> from 9am-Noon.**

2020-2021 Members were celebrated and thanked for their past year of service to the Head Start Program!

**Center Reports:** Home Base and Mitchell

Meeting adjourned at 7:45p.m.