

Policy Council Meeting
9-30-25
Submitted by: Teena Branson

Members Present: Shayna Hudson, Kristen Gompert, Cara Edington, Debra Jo Mason, Tiah Alvizar, Jessica Brenizer, Brittain Reinmuth, Echo Woyak

Guests Present:

Staff Present: Kerry Mehling, Krystie Hohnstein, Lauren Starke, Joan DeWitt, Teena Branson

Board Members Present: Tom Millette

Policy Council Meeting called to order by Tiah Alvazar, at 6:04 pm. There were no new member introductions needed. Members reviewed the minutes from the March meeting. **Jessica Brenizer moved to approve the March minutes. Debra Jo Mason seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Director's Report: All members received a copy of the Director's report. Krystie Hohnstein reported on the enrollment numbers for the year so far. Teacher home visits have been completed. Observations for classrooms and behavior health observations are taking place. Hearing and speech screenings are happening and almost complete. Family Advocate home visits have started so data is continuing to be documented on these elements. Circle of Security Parenting is taking place with 7 people participating. There are 9 employees utilizing coaching services. Molina is partnering with Head Start to provide a "birthday bash" at the Carpenter Center on October 4th. There will be free coats for the first 120 children, gift cards, games, bounce houses and more. In-Kind progress was discussed.

Finance Report:

All members received a copy of the Finance Report. Lauren Starke, Fiscal Officer, presented the reports. Echo Woyak **moved to approve the finance report. Cara Edington seconded the motion. Motion carried by roll call vote.**

Board Report: Krystie Hohnstein reported that the ESU13 Board meeting was held September 23, 2025. An update of the Comprehensive Literacy grant was given which supports literacy across Nebraska. Several board members were recognized for their level of service at the Nebraska Association of School Board Area Membership Meeting. Updates on the Head Start enrollment slots and upcoming Rule 11 public hearing. Laura Barrett ESU13 Administrator gave updates on the ongoing digital accessibility work and updates on state and federal legislation. The 25/26 budget was reviewed and acted on and the internal controls policies were updated.

Old Business:

Head Start One-Time Funds Nutrition Grant Application: Lauren Starke shared the update that ESU13 Head Start was not a recipient of the Nutrition Grant at this time. There is a possibility of additional grant funds for this area in the future.

New Business:

October Policy Council Training & Meeting/Center Elections: Teena Branson informed members that Centers are in the election process for representation for the 2025-2026 school year. The October Policy Council Training is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 28th from 4-8pm. It is mandatory that representatives and proxies attend. Returning members are allowed to attend just the meeting portion of the schedule from approximately 5:45pm-8:00pm.

EHS/HS Continuation Grant Review Including Community Assessment, 5 year goal update, and expected changes for the 2025-26 program year.

Employment Openings - Agency-wide employment openings are found on the ESU13 website (www.esu13.org) under *Employment Openings*. Current openings for an Assistant Teacher, Nutrition Manager, and Assistant Cook positions are listed on the ESU 13 website. Prospective Employees can also apply directly on this site. This was shown to members.

New Hires: Pamela Blake was hired 9/2/25 for the full-time, full-year cook position at our Bridgeport HS/EHS location. She was the supervising cook at Morrill County Hospital for the past 5 years and previous cooking experience with HS when it was under CAPWN in Bridgeport.

Shayna Hudson moved to approve the New Staff Hire. Debra Jo Mason seconded the motion. Motion approved by roll call vote.

Celebration of Members & Return Policy Council Binders for Updates: A huge thank-you to all of our 2024-2025 Policy Council members for their commitment and service this year! Members all received a HS outdoor blanket for supporting ESU13 Head Start Programs in such an amazing way!

Center Reports: Cara Edington shared Morrill's report. Echo Wayok shared ELC's center report. Minatare's report was shared by [Joan Dewitt](#) and CDC's report was also shared.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 28th. Training will occur from 4-5:45pm. Dinner will be served at 5:45pm and the regular meeting will begin promptly at 6:00pm.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.