



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING
United Way of Central Iowa – Leadership Room
Des Moines, Iowa
November 18, 2015

Voting Members Present: Matt Knoll, Sam Carrell, Jem Gong-Browne, Judy McCoy Davis, Joyce Pingel, Georgia Sheriff, Craig Sieverding, Tom Slater, JoEllen Spriggs-Dixon; Natali Justiniano Pahl arrived at 11:45 am

Voting Members Absent: Mike Bandstra, Marvin DeJear, Nick Dial, Cindy Elsbernd, Claudia Hawkins, Rocio Hermsillo, Bryan Huggins, Josh Mandelbaum, Kimberly Peterson, Shane Schulte

Ex-Officio Members Present: Terry Harrmann

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Dave Arens, Brook Rosenberg

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Henny Ohr, Executive Director, EMBARC; Abigail Sui, Family Advocate, EMBARC; Karen Bougher, Compliance/Project Manager, Youth Emergency Services and Shelter

Welcome and Introductions

Board Chair Matt Knoll welcomed board members and guests to the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting at 11:38 a.m. Quorum was not met at this time.

EMBARC Parent Navigator

Abigail Sui, Family Advocate, EMBARC, provided an update on the Parent Navigator program. Currently there are 10 Parent Navigators involved in trainings and community building. These 10 are from 4 distinct ethnic groups. In October the group went apple picking. The training in November addressed appropriate discipline. All training topics have arisen from surveys conducted within the community and with participants. EMBARC and the Navigators will be providing outreach for the refugee community to address the concerns and challenges these newly settled families face. Pre- and post-tests are given after each training for the Navigator project. Participants discuss services they need and use, and how they apply the knowledge they have gained.

A challenge faced is that there are 12 distinct languages spoken by the Burmese in Central Iowa. Henny Ohr, Executive Director, EMBARC, addressed some of the challenges the EMBARC staff face on a daily basis due to the fact that many of the families require intensive case management. EMBARC collaborates with many community partners and continues to work to elevate refugee community members into leadership positions to help strengthen the refugee infrastructure. Ohr also reiterated the need to build local interpretation services with a formalized structure so that EMBARC and the individuals providing translation and case management can receive funds from hospitals and other agencies. Community-based interpreters are critical because the refugee community does not always trust outside interpreters.

Board members discussed the infrastructure needs as EMBARC continues to meet community need. Members called upon each other to brainstorm current community connections that would be beneficial to EMBARC for their long term growth.

Minutes and Financial Statements

The October 28, 2015 minutes were presented to the board. There were no comments or corrections. These minutes will be on the agenda for approval at the next meeting.

Barb Bremner reported since the November meeting occurred one week earlier because of the holiday, the monthly financials were not yet available from the Fiscal Agent. October financials will be presented to the board at the next meeting in December.

Deer Ridge Preschoolers - Update

Bremner presented members with an update on the Deer Ridge Transportation Project. FAST assessment data showed the importance for preschool for the 11 children participating in the program last school year. The GOLD assessment throughout last preschool year demonstrated great growth as well.

Bremner reported that while the board had approved use of funds in FY15 there was no need because of successful fundraising by private donors. The Board's contribution was Bremner's time facilitating the partnerships and communicating with potential donors. Because the situation is much the same this school year the project is being repeated for 11 children. Funds continue to be raised to fund the transportation. United Way of Central Iowa continues to receive these funds and to issue payment for the transportation service provided by Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa.

There is more demand than capacity for preschool in the area of Des Moines where Deer Ridge is located. With limited availability of space and partners on the south side of Des Moines, community partners have been working with Cornerstone Church in the hopes they will open a preschool classroom in their facility before next fall. The group will meet in December to learn of progress made to date.

ECI State Board Update

Judy McCoy Davis and Bremner attended the State ECI LOE Appeal Review Committee meeting held November 5th. The committee recommended to reject the Polk County ECI Board's appeal and to recommend acceptance of the LOE recommendation of "compliant" for Polk County ECI. At the November 6th State ECI Board Meeting the Review Committee made this recommendation and articulated that committee members felt the Board should accept the original DOM staff recommendation. The State ECI Board voted to accept the Review Committee's recommendation. The result is that Polk County ECI's LOE designation is compliant. This will be effective through June 30, 2018. This means the next LOE portfolio will be due December 31, 2017 if the LOE system and review cycles remain as they are now.

Administrative Report

None

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Comment

None reported.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Craig Sieverding and seconded by Sam Carrell. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

The next meeting of the Board will be December 16th from 8:00 a.m.– 9:30 a.m.