



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING

Zoom Meeting Only

May 27, 2020

Meeting conducted electronically pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.8. The current circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor's proclamation directing that no more than 10 individuals may meet in a public gathering, and CDC guidelines regarding social distancing dictate that conducting this meeting in person is impossible or impracticable.

Voting Members Present: Craig Sieverding, Ahmed Agyeman, Rob Barron, Deanna Bennigsdorf, Sandy Carter, Bryan Huggins, Matt Knoll, Josh Mandelbaum, Jeanie McCarville Kerber, Charles Mercer, Eva Mancuso, Marianka Pille, Jana Shepherd, Georgia Sheriff, Emily Westergaard, Mee Yang-Lee

Voting Members Absent: Marvin DeJear, Nick Dial, Jem Gong-Browne

Ex-Officio Members Present: Dave Arens

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Terry Harrmann, Barb Merrill, Brook Rosenberg

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Leann Andre, Child Care Consultant Supervisor, Child Care Resource & Referral; Susie Guest, Early Childhood Program Director, Des Moines Public Schools; Heidi LaBounty, ECQuIP Project Manager, IAEYC; Lauren Linnenbrink, T.E.A.C.H. & WAGES\$ Coordinator, IAEYC; Jessie Mireles, Regional Quality Initiatives Specialist, Child Care Resource & Referral; Lora Patton, Regional Director, Child Care Resource & Referral; Abigail Sui, Program Manager, EMBARC; Cindy Winn, Healthy Start Director, EveryStep; Courtney Wolterman, Smile Squad, Dental Connections

Welcome

Board Chair Craig Sieverding called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Quorum was met at this time.

Approval April Minutes

Minutes of the April 29, 2020 meeting were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the April 2020 minutes was made by Emily Westergaard and seconded by Marianka Pille. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

FY20 Financial Statements

Bremner presented financial statements for April 2020. Statements are a cash presentation of financial transactions which took place through April 30th of fiscal year 2020.

School Ready

- FY20 Polk County ECI School Ready funding is \$2,818,639.00.
- Carry Forward funds total \$80,629.94.

- Total School Ready funds in FY20 budget are \$2,899,268.94.
- Interest accrued through April 2020 \$12,531.24.
- At end of April 2020 School Ready funds of \$1,878,317.23 had been expended.
- Expenditures are 65% of FY20 School Ready funds. In previous fiscal year at end of April 62% of funds had been expended.

Early Childhood

- FY20 Polk County ECI Early Childhood funding is \$954,796.00.
- Carry Forward funds total \$139,252.23.
- Total Early Childhood funds in FY20 budget are \$1,094,048.23.
- Interest accrued through April \$5,862.41.
- At end of April 2020 Early Childhood funds of \$758,718.77 had been expended.
- Expenditures are 69% of FY20 Early Childhood funds. In FY19 63% of funds had been expended.

A motion to approve the April 2020 financial report for both grants was made by Marianka Pille and seconded by Josh Mandelbaum. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Governance Committee Update (Policy 2.4)

Rob Barron reported the board has 15 returning members and is seeking applications of four male and one female to raise board membership to the maximum of 20. Barron reported Emily Westergaard has identified three potential candidates, he will be meeting with a potential candidate and Georgia Sheriff has submitted a potential female candidate. Dave Arens will be rolling off the State Board this year and has submitted his application for board membership. Barron encouraged members to forward any potential candidates to Westergaard, Bremner or himself for review. The committee will make final recommendations for approval at the June meeting.

FY21 Budget Draft

Members were presented with Draft FY21 School Ready and Early Childhood budgets. Each ECI area has been provided an allocation based on their current year's funding based utilizing the funding formula for each grant. Bremner worked with Sieverding to develop the draft budgets presented for use by the committees as they discuss contracts. A budget will be presented for review and approval at the June meeting and subsequently submitted to the state. Bremner reported she took a conservative approach to the FY21 budget and used a 15% reduction when setting numbers. Carry forward numbers are estimates; final numbers will not be known until books are closed in July.

The Contingency/Emergency Funds-non-contracted funds can be applied towards program funding to off-set funding reductions. Bremner reported Administrative costs, i.e. liability insurance, website costs and rent remain status quo. United Way has let staff know salaries will be status quo for FY21, which includes Jody Kanne's administrative position with Polk County ECI.

Bremner reported the budget will reflect the initial allocations provided by the state with estimated carry forward amounts. The initial draft budget has reserved 15% as non-contracted funds.

Contracts will be issued in July. Dependent on final funding the board may need to amend contracts.

Sieverding asked about splitting contracts between School Ready and Early Childhood as was done in FY20 with EveryStep's Child Care Nurse Consultants. This was negotiated between the committees for this contract but Bremner does not recommend funding additional contracts in this manner.

Bremner reminded committees to consider McCarville Kerber's recommendation at the April meeting of considering low-performing programs and the possibility of not funding contracts.

Mandelbaum inquired about the number of programs that have changed focus during the pandemic? Their service delivery may be different, do we want to be responsive to those needs? Bremner reported the state has been very direct, if the agency is not providing services, they cannot receive funding. She reported she continues to receive updates for the agencies. CCR&R and the ECQuIP team are working with providers on the CARES Act funding. Polk County ECI contracts have a 30-day clause giving us the opportunity to reduce, amend or terminate a contract if necessary. Bremner added Polk County ECI will continue to be responsive to our partner's needs as they develop.

Marianka Pille departed the meeting at 8:29 a.m.

Executive Director Evaluation and Compensation Committee Recommendation (Policy 3.4 & 3.6)

Members discussed the results of the Executive Director's Compensation survey. Sieverding reported many organizations are dealing with compensation concerns this year due to COVID-19. Survey results were again very positive reflecting the work Bremner does throughout the year for the board. Members agreed they need a strong leader in charge during this time to steer both the board and agencies through this pandemic.

Last year the committee looked at past historical trends and comparable executive director compensation packages. As a result, the board made efforts to catch Bremner up with current compensation packages. The committee recognizes Bremner's hard work and service to the board and the community. However, they recommend keeping her salary status quo due to the current environment. Sieverding has been in communication with Bremner of this decision and expressed this is not reflective of her value to this board. The committee expressed support to make efforts to increase her compensation package up when the board feels it is appropriate.

McCarville Kerber suggested reviewing the compensation package once a final budget is received from the state.

The committee recommendation for the Executive Director Compensation of a status quo compensation package, with the opportunity to re-evaluate after the budget is finalized, was approved unanimously.

Preschool Committee Recommendations

Due to time, Sieverding will schedule a committee meeting to discuss FY21 funding recommendations. Bremner will work with Sieverding to create a survey to email to the programs to complete to determine their current funding needs and concerns before the scheduled meeting.

Stay Bonus Committee Recommendation

Due to time, Huggins will reschedule the Early Childhood committee meeting.

Huggins recommended some program staff attend the beginning of the committee meetings to give updates and provide input.

Bremner will work with committees to determine meeting structure. Members will make funding recommendations to present to the full board at the June meeting.

Program Review Results

Bremner reported program review results have been uploaded to Google Drive along with today's meeting materials for committee reviews. The document details program scoring based on the rubric, volunteer comments, program funding history, and FY21 program funding requests. Bremner reminded members this data is all pre-COVID-19. She has not received answers back from the agencies yet. Those will be shared with committees once received.

Program Updates

Program staff participating in today's meeting provided updates regarding how their work is progressing during this crisis:

- Susie Guest, Des Moines Public Schools, reported teachers continue to reach out to students on a weekly basis to check-in with them. She is working to put together a learning plan for the state by July 1. This plan will incorporate virtual, face-to-face and a hybrid learning plan. Current CDC guidelines recommend 10 students per classroom making a hybrid classroom situation a possibility. Guest envisions children in the classroom two days per week and a virtual setting two days per week. The district will be sending out a survey to parents with enrolled preschoolers to determine their needs. She reported enrollment is very low at all sites. Districts met with the Department of Education last week to receive guidance.
- Abigail Sui reported EMBARC navigators have been busy assisting families who are now finding themselves unemployed. They are working with parents to make sure they have the proper technology allowing their children to continue to learn from home and keeping them connected with schools. They are also distributing 300+ DMPS meals to families who cannot get to the food sites.
- Lora Patton reported Child Care Resource & Referral consultants are busy supporting providers with technical support for the CARES Act online applications with DHS. DHS has approved virtual visits so consultants can begin working with providers. The first Friday in May was Provider Appreciation Day. Over 700 providers participated in the virtual event which included a motivational speaker and provider giveaways. Patton reported with the Governor opening up more businesses, providers who had closed are beginning to reopen under the new guidelines.

- Heidi LaBounty, IAEYC, reported many of the coalition centers that have remained open are seeing increased enrollment as well with the state opening up. Many centers applied for stipends under the CARES Act to remain open. LaBounty reported the EveryStep Child Care Nurse Consultants have been invaluable working with center directors during this pandemic.

Jeanie McCarville Kerber departed at 9:15 a.m.

- Cindy Winn, EveryStep, reported Healthy Start & Empowerment case managers are receiving 5 – 10 new referrals weekly. Nurses have been working with 20 – 25 positive COVID-19 families for treatment. They have been working with DMPS and DHS to address domestic violence. They are working in conjunction with United Way of Central Iowa to provide literacy kits to families tailored to each child. Winn reported the Child Care Nurse Consultants continue to be extremely busy consulting providers and providing resources.
- Agyeman stressed technical access and technical training along with food insecurity is critical right now. He reminded the board how important it is to work with programs and look for ways to support emerging needs as they arise.

Administrative Report

No Administrative Report was filed.

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Public Comment

None reported.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Georgia Sheriff and seconded by Emily Westergaard. The meeting adjourned at 9:29 a.m.