



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING
United Way of Central Iowa
Leadership Room
December 20, 2023

Voting Members Present: Kevin Abler, Dave Arens, Rob Barron, Deanna Bennigsdorf, Sandy Carter, Suzanne Cohrs, Sam Early, Adam Montufar, Marianka Pille, Christian Ramirez, Shay Scholtes, Eric Tubbs, Emily Westergaard; participating via teleconference: Jessica Bruning, Alicia Chilton, Eva Morales, Stephen White

Voting Members Absent: Tabitha Choquette

Ex-Officio Members Present: None

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aaron Johnson, Barb Merrill

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Tammy Engebretson, Director of Quality Initiatives; Ashley Otte, Director of Workforce Initiatives, both from the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC); Lanette Nelson, Healthy Start & Empowerment Outreach Manager, EveryStep

Welcome

Board Chair Sam Early welcomed members and called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 11:31 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Teleconference participant and guest introductions were made.

Approval November Minutes

Minutes of board meeting November 15, 2023, were presented. Early asked for changes or corrections to the minutes as presented.

Eva Morales noted the meeting location was incorrect.

A motion to approve the corrected November 2023 minutes was made by Emily Westergaard and seconded by Kevin Abler. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

November FY24 Financial Report

Kevin Abler presented the November FY24 financial report. Expenditures are tracking with historical data. School Districts are starting to submit Preschool Programming invoices. Bondurant-Farrar and Johnston have not submitted invoices yet. Bremner will follow up with these districts.

School Ready

- FY24 School Ready funding is \$2,965,062
- Carry Forward funds total \$304,473.51

- FY24 Total School Ready funds \$3,269,535.51
- Interest accrued through November 2023 totals \$4,126.02
- Expended School Ready funds end of November 2023 total \$677,613.26.
- At the end of November 2023 21% of School Ready had been expended. End of previous November 2022 24% of funds had been expended.

Early Childhood

- FY24 Early Childhood funding is \$969,361
- Carry Forward funds total \$141,469.91
- FY24 Total Early Childhood funds \$1,110,830.91
- Interest accrued through November 2023 totals \$1,671.65
- Expended Early Childhood funds at end of November 2023 total \$274,591.35
- At end of November 2023 25% of Early Childhood had been expended. End of previous November 2022 28% of funds had been expended.

A motion to approve the November FY24 Financial Report was made by Marianka Pille and seconded by Suzanne Cohrs. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Abler shared that EMBARC for contract for \$80,000 has not been executed; these funds are being held in the School Ready budget. The Audit Committee discussed using some of funds allocated to EMBARC to amend contracts with Knock and Drop and with Mary's Helping Hand which were each reduced 10% this fiscal year. To increase each contract by 10% Knock and Drop would receive an additional \$2,500, and Mary's Helping Hand would receive an additional \$4,840.

These funds would be transferred from the line holding \$80,000 for the EMBARC Parent Navigator contract while RIVA and EMBARC worked through their organizational separation issues. There has been no update provided by either agency. The agencies have continued services. If the agencies come to an agreement the board could request an updated application to review and determine funding on a shortened contract for the remainder of this fiscal year.

Knock and Drop just made a substantial children's winter coat purchase. They also see a higher pantry usage this time of year. Mary's Helping Hand budgets their invoices based on their annual contract. Bremner is confident both agencies could fully expend the additional funding.

A motion to approve the \$2,500 increase in funding for Knock and Drop and \$4,840 increase in funding for Mary's Helping Hands was made by Kevin Abler and seconded by Suzanne Cohrs. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

2023 Iowa Child Care Workforce Study

Ashley Otte, Director of Workforce Initiatives, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children presented the *2023 Iowa Child Care Workforce Study*. IAEYC worked with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Child Care Resource and Referral, Iowa Workforce Development, Early Childhood Iowa, and the I2D2 study team at Iowa State University. She reviewed the recommendations from the study. A copy of the report was shared with members.

The full report can be accessed on-line at [Iowa's Integrated Data System for Decision Making | I2D2 \(iastate.edu\)](https://iastate.edu/I2D2).

Child Care Coalition Updates

Tammy Engebretson, Director of Quality Initiatives, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children presented updates on the coalition child care centers. These centers serve a minimum of 30% children enrolled through Child Care Assistance; most centers serve over 60% CCA. She shared updates on each center's progress on their transition to the IQ4K rating system, and challenges and successes both the centers and the ECQuIP team have faced this year.

Legislative Communication

January 11th begins the 90th Iowa General Assembly. Members are asked to contact their legislators with a hand written note. A list of 2024 legislators and board members in each district has been provided along with a sample correspondence.

Early shared making our representatives aware of the issues we support and that we are available for input as questions come up during session is important to our work. Members were asked to use the listing to send a short communication to their legislator's home address over the holiday season. Bremner asked members to go to the website to locate their legislators, from there they can learn more about them, what committees they sit on, sign up for their newsletters, and see when they will be holding events.

Administrative Report

Bremner attended the Iowa Women's Foundation Summit on Child Care Initiatives on December 6th at Prairie Meadows. Debi Durham, Iowa Economic Development Authority Director presented on workforce issues. A legislative panel including Senator Edler, Senator Boulton, Representative Jones and Representative Matson discussed policy and child care. Ryan Page, Director of Child Care at Iowa Department of Health and Human Services presented on state initiatives designed to support child care.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- None

Public Comment

- Lanette Nelson, EveryStep, thanked the board for their work and continued support.

Adjournment

Kevin Abler made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Adam Montufar seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Early adjourned the meeting at 12:56 p.m.