



**POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING**  
**United Way of Central Iowa**  
**Conference Room F**  
**February 28, 2024**

**Voting Members Present:** Alicia Chilton, Suzanne Cohrs, Sam Early, Matthew Klemme, Adam Montufar, Eva Morales, Marianka Pille, Crhistian Ramirez, Shay Scholtes, Emily Westergaard; participating via teleconference: Kevin Abler, Dave Arens, Stephen White; Eric Tubbs joined via teleconference at 11:34 a.m.; Tabitha Choquette arrived at 11:32 a.m., Jessica Bruning arrived at 11:39 a.m., Rob Barron arrived at 11:42 a.m.

**Voting Members Absent:** Deanna Bennigsdorf, Sandy Carter

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** None

**Ex-Officio Members Absent:** Aaron Johnson, Barb Merrill

**Staff Present:** Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

**Guests Present:** Lanette Nelson, Healthy Start & Empowerment Outreach Manager, EveryStep; Dr. Amy Shriver, MD, Blank Children's Pediatric Clinic and Assistant Professor of Specialty Medicine at Des Moines University; Christy Vasey, Child Care Consultant Supervisor, Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R), Cindy Winn, Healthy Start Director, EveryStep participated via teleconference

**Welcome**

Board Chair Sam Early welcomed members and called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 11:30 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Teleconference participant and guest introductions were made.

**Approval January Minutes**

Minutes of board meeting January 24, 2024, were presented. Early asked for changes or corrections to the minutes as presented.

*A motion to approve the January 2024 minutes was made by Emily Westergaard and seconded by Suzanne Cohrs. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

Tabitha Choquette arrived at 11:32 a.m.

**January FY24 Financial Report**

Matthew Klemme presented the January FY24 financial report. Expenditures are tracking as expected. The School Ready, Preschool Programming invoicing for Bondurant-Farrar and Southeast Polk are a behind the approximate 50 percent. Bremner reported Bondurant-Farrar will invoice all their funds at one time. Southeast Polk continues to bill monthly; they will have

carry forward funds. She has spoken with the district, and they are aware they will have unused funds.

Eric Tubbs joined via teleconference at 11:34 a.m.

EMBARC has submitted a funding request for the Parent Navigator program for the remainder of the year. The board held full funding for the program in the budget, any funds not used for the new contract will be moved to the General Use, Contingency/Emergency Funds line item.

Bremner has been in contact with Tammy Engebretson, Director of Quality Initiatives at IAEYC regarding the remaining funds for the Capacity Building, Quality Support Coalition Center line item. ECQuIP consultant team is working with the coalition centers to create a list of needs.

Shalom has expended their one-time grant of \$20,500 for classroom supplies. Bremner worked with the board's liability insurance company, ICAP, to receive a \$1,000 safety grant. Bremner purchased car seats and booster seats for Shalom. ICAP will reimburse Polk County ECI for the cost.

### **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 January 2024 totals \$7,077.44
- Expended School Ready funds end of January 2024 total \$1,192,300.34
- At the end of January 2024 37% of School Ready had been expended. End of previous January 2023 40% 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 January 2024 totals \$2,672.07
- Expended Early Childhood funds at end of January 2024 total \$459,849.13
- At end of January 2024 41% of Early Childhood had been expended. End of previous January 2023 45% of funds had been expended.

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

Jessica Bruning arrived at 11:39 a.m.

### **EMBARC Funding Request**

Early reported EMBARC is now able to apply for funding for the Early Childhood Parent Navigator program for remainder of the fiscal year (March – June).

Bremner shared they have applied for 501c3 and are awaiting approval; they have a formal agreement with the Community Foundation to act as their fiscal agent. They submitted their board list and are meeting quarterly. Bremner will check on their Secretary of State certification.

EMBARC staff have continued to do work on a smaller scale during the transition period and have the capacity to continue doing the work. The staff was being paid by RIVA during that time. Abigail Sui has continued to lead the work and will serve as the Executive Director.

Rob Barron arrived at 11:42 a.m.

*A motion to approve EMBARC's funding of \$34,500 for the remainder of this fiscal year was made by Emily Westergaard and seconded by Eva Morales. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

### **Brain Development: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) & Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs)**

Dr. Amy Shriver presented on the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in a child's life and how Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) foster a sense of belonging and can mitigate the toxic stress caused by the ACEs.

She encouraged members to be open to funding community-wide services. Programs such as Reach out to Read, EveryStep's First Five, and the Des Moines Public Library's 5 Simple Steps programs provide needed resources to families along with fostering a sense of belonging and connectedness in children at an early age.

Dave Arens departed the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

### **Save Babies Court Team (SBCT)**

Board member Eva Morales, Polk County Attorney's Office, presented on the Save Babies Court Team (SBCT). Polk County makes up the largest group of children in need of assistance and is the only SBCT site in Iowa. The team focuses on children 0 to 3 who are determined in need of assistance and removed from their home. SBCT is a systems-change approach to connect families to supports and eventually reunite families.

### **Program Review: Process & Materials**

Bremner will email regarding the program review process and materials. EveryStep staff will present the Healthy Start and Empowerment program at the March meeting. All board members will review this program and its funding request; it is the largest contract issued.

### **Administrative Report**

The Association of Early Childhood Iowa Areas and Advocates will hold a legislative coffee March 6<sup>th</sup> from 7 – 9 a.m. at the Capitol in the Legislative Dining Room. Members were asked to contact staff for more information if interested in attending Bremner's Administrative Report is included in today's packet.

### **Old Business**

- Early reported he will be reaching out to members regarding joining the Nominations Committee.

### **New Business**

- Early and Bremner are in the planning stages for a spring luncheon social.

Adam Montufar departed the meeting at 12:56 p.m.

### **Public Comment**

- Guests thanked board members for their continued support.

### **Adjournment**

*Alicia Chilton made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Marianka Pille seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

Early adjourned the meeting at 12:57 p.m.