



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING
United Way of Central Iowa
Conference Room F
March 27, 2024

Voting Members Present: Dave Arens, Deanna Bennigsdorf, Jessica Bruning, Sandy Carter, Alicia Chilton, Suzanne Cohrs, Sam Early, Matthew Klemme, Christian Ramirez, Shay Scholtes, Emily Westergaard; participating via teleconference: Rob Barron, Tabitha Choquette, Eric Tubbs, Stephen White; Eva Morales arrived at 8:04 a.m.

Voting Members Absent: Kevin Abler, Adam Montufar, Marianka Pille

Ex-Officio Members Present: None

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aaron Johnson, Brook Rosenberg

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Brianne Emunah, Healthy Start Manager; Jen Groves, Vice President Community Health Services; Lanette Nelson, Healthy Start & Empowerment Outreach Manager; Cindy Winn, Healthy Start Director, all with EveryStep; Sophia Eng, Administrative Specialist and Tammy Engebretson, Director of Quality Initiatives both with Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children

Welcome

Board Chair Sam Early welcomed members and called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Guest introductions were made.

Approval February Minutes

Minutes of board meeting February 28, 2024, were presented. Early asked for changes or corrections to the minutes as presented.

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

February FY24 Financial Report

Alicia Chilton presented the February FY24 financial report. Expenditures are tracking as expected. The Early Childhood, Capacity Building pilot program quarterly payments will be processed in April. The School Ready, Preschool Programming invoicing for Bondurant-Farrar has been submitted for their full funding amount. Bremner has been in contact with FosterSquad, West Des Moines School District, and Des Moines Public Schools, they are projecting to fully expend their funds. The EMBARC contract has been executed and invoicing should begin showing up next month.

Eva Morales arrived at 8:04 a.m.

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 February 2024 totals \$9,156.02
- Expended School Ready funds end of February 2024 total \$1,431,641.07
- At the end of February 2024 44% of School Ready had been expended. End of previous February 2023 51% 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 February 2024 totals \$3,266.89
- Expended Early Childhood funds at end of January 2024 total \$459,849.13
- At end of February 2024 47% of Early Childhood had been expended. End of previous February 2023 51% of funds had been expended.

A motion to approve the February FY24 Financial Report was made by Suzanne Cohrs and seconded by Alicia Chilton. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Healthy Start & Empowerment (EveryStep)

EveryStep staff were introduced: Brianna Emunah, Healthy Start & Empowerment Manager; Jen Groves, Vice President Community Health Services; Lanette Nelson, Healthy Start & Empowerment Outreach Manager; Cindy Winn, Healthy Start & Empowerment Director.

Cindy Winn, Healthy Start & Empowerment Director, shared a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the Healthy Start and Empowerment program funded by Polk County ECI. She shared the history of the program, data on who the program serves, and changes to the use of the Federal Healthy Start funding for the new grant cycle including a new partnership with Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board and the addition of group-based parent education. The Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board serves the Native American tribal communities across the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Iowa. Healthy Start & Empowerment are working to become an affiliate of the Parents As Teachers (PAT) model in 2024. Guidance from HHS has been for all ECI-funded family support programs to adopt an evidence-based curriculum. This model has an extensive child development curriculum to share with families and will partner well with EveryStep's other programming.

Lanette Nelson, Healthy Start & Empowerment Outreach Manager, provided information and data on community partners, outreach and recruitment, and community events.

Brianne Emunah, Healthy Start & Empowerment Manager, provided information on the classes and educational opportunities for families. Certified doula Jazzmine Brooks oversees their doula program which has seven doulas enrolled in the program.

Discussions:

- Why the drop in numbers served?
 - Winn shared this was due to staff out on medical leave over the past year. Their caseload was moved to other staff, which resulted in fewer families being served. Their current wait list is 2 months, they have made the decision to only keep families on the wait list for 4 weeks. If they cannot serve the families or enroll in the program, they will be referred to other community services/agencies. Some families will now be referred to the group-based programming. Families on the wait list are always provided other available community services while awaiting program enrollment.
 - With the switch to the PAT curriculum, numbers for FY25 were reduced due to more longevity working with the families.
- Workforce:
 - Jen Groves shared many times Outreach team members will move up to the Healthy Start team openings.
 - EveryStep provide strong supports for staff; staff members take advantage of the T.E.A.C.H. program to advance their careers.

Program Review: Process & Materials

Program review materials were included in today's packet. Early reviewed the EveryStep Healthy Start & Empowerment application. Bremner reviewed the Performance Measure data and scoring rubric. All members will be reviewing and scoring EveryStep's Healthy Start and Empowerment. Members were asked to submit their scores for this program to her by Friday, March 29th.

All review materials will be uploaded on Google Drive by committee along with the scoring rubric and investment review schedule. Members were asked to review program materials prior to meetings. Members will complete the rubric following the in-person investment meetings and submit to Bremner by April 17th.

In the event a member cannot attend a scheduled review session, they were asked to score the program, provide comments, and submit by the requested deadline.

Administrative Report

Bremner thanked Chilton and Morales for attending the Association of Early Childhood Iowa Areas and Advocates legislative coffee March 6th at the Capitol in the Legislative Dining Room. Approximately 15 legislators attended the event. Chilton shared it was an excellent learning experience and recommended members participate in future events.

Christian Ramirez departed at 9:28 a.m.

Old Business

- Early reported Cohrs is pulling together members for the Nomination Committee. Members interested in joining the committee were asked to reach out to her.
- Members were asked to refer potential board candidates to Bremner.
- The board member luncheon social is scheduled for May 7th at Palmers on Ingersoll. Bremner will be sending out the calendar invite.

New Business

- None

Public Comment

- Tammy Engebretson thanked board members for their continued support.

Adjournment

Suzanne Cohrs made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Deanna Bennigsdorf seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Early adjourned the meeting at 9:29 a.m.