



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING
United Way of Central Iowa
Conference Room F
April 24, 2024

Voting Members Present: Kevin Abler, Jessica Bruning, Tabitha Choquette, Suzanne Cohrs, Sam Early, Adam Montufar, Eva Morales, Marianka Pille, Shay Scholtes, Eric Tubbs, Emily Westergaard; participating via teleconference: Crhistian Ramirez, Stephen White; Dave Arens joined at 12:04 p.m.; Rob Barron arrived at 11:33 a.m.

Voting Members Absent: Deanna Bennigsdorf, Sandy Carter, Alicia Chilton, Matthew Klemme

Ex-Officio Members Present: Brook Rosenberg

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aaron Johnson

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Kristie Vasey, Child Care Consultant Supervisor Region 4, Child Care Resource & Referral

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. Guest introductions were made.

Brook Rosenberg, Ex-Officio member, encouraged members to reach out to him with any questions or concerns to bring forward to the State ECI Board.

Approval March Minutes

Minutes of board meeting March 27, 2024, were presented. Early asked for changes or corrections to the minutes as presented.

A motion to approve the March 2024 minutes was made by Emily Westergaard and seconded by Marianka Pille. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Rob Barron arrived at 11:33 a.m.

March FY24 Financial Report

Kevin Abler presented the March FY24 financial report. Expenditures are tracking as expected. The Early Childhood, Capacity Building pilot program quarterly payments have been processed. The School Ready, Preschool Programming invoicing for Bondurant-Farrar has been submitted and funds are fully expended. Barb Bremner shared the School Ready Committee recommends reducing FY25 funding for SE Polk based on the amount they are expending from this year's contract. SE Polk has underspent the last three years. EveryStep is projecting \$36,000 in Carry

Forward funds from the Healthy Start & Empowerment contract. Bremner is in contact with programs to determine Carry Forward amounts.

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 March 2024 totals \$11652.13
- Expended School Ready funds end of March 2024 total \$1,666,264.76
- At the end of March 2024 51% of School Ready had been expended. End of previous March 2023 58% 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 March 2024 totals \$4,044.36
- Expended Early Childhood funds at end of March 2024 total \$582,740.39
- At end of March 2024 53% of Early Childhood had been expended. End of previous March 2023 57% of funds had been expended.

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

Program Reviews

Bremner led members through the Program Scores and Review document detailing review committees' comments and funding recommendations.

Early Childhood Committee members:

- IAEYC – T.E.A.C.H. – Organization has received funding from the state through FY25 - \$2m for T.E.A.C.H. and \$5m WAGE\$ for the programs statewide. They anticipate having more requests in Polk County than they are receiving state funding for. Polk County ECI is the only external agency they are asking for funding from. Funding would go directly to participants enrolled in the T.E.A.C.H. program. They anticipate a wait list for participants without additional funding. Last board contract for T.E.A.C.H. was FY22 for \$87,050. Bremner will speak to IAEYC to get more information.
- Oakridge – Prepare 2 Care – Request is twice current funding. Staff lead is retiring. Oakridge leadership team proposes moving services to Adult Family Support programming with two half-time positions.
- Families Forward submitted a request for \$10,000 to offset the costs of staff salaries and benefits at the child care centers. Discussed supporting coalition centers with operational grant.

Dave Arens joined via teleconference at 12:04 p.m.

- Discussed option of one-time grant to coalition centers in FY25. With centers losing HHS ARPA funds, and CCA work requirements affecting enrollment, these would be funds the centers could use at their discretion. Members noted if approved, they would like a report on how the funds were used, how they affected their bottom line.

School Ready Committee members provided input:

- Polk County Health Department – Lead Poisoning – High need program, we are a small percentage of their budget.
- Seeing an overlap of funding for essential needs and maternal health programs in specific communities.
- Shalom – Increased funding request. Currently run two classrooms, one paid for by board and another with volunteer lead teacher. Not accessing CCA funds yet. They continue to serve a growing population.
 - Pastor Eugene has met with Urbandale elected officials and has met with Community Foundation. Will be meeting with Variety. Recently became registered and licensed. Would be helpful to be connected with services to access CCA reimbursement.
- Does board need to look at our funding as more start-up funding to get new nonprofits going and connected with the proper services?
- Does board need to set up a timeline to get new agencies/programs connected with the available services?
- Will initial start-up funding be able to get them to a sustainable level and after several years begin to reduce funding as they find new funding streams to continue to grow? Sustainability is key.

New applications:

- ICOACH – Started by serving school age students, connected to community resources, has an established board and will be holding a Strategic Planning session. Does not charge tuition and families are not signed up for CCA. Currently has two preschool classrooms. Requested funding to add a classroom but now planning on expanding hours for the two existing classrooms.
- African Immigrants & Refugee Transition Services and Iowa Afghan Community & Cultural Organization – Both new programs focusing on expecting mothers/those with new babies who do not know how to navigate systems of support.
- Jai Olive Wellness/Rooted Women’s Health – Doula services focusing on black and underserved cultural communities. Funding request to support doulas to hold mobile events to connect with clients.
- Raising Readers in the Heartland – Franchise of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library – Funds requested to add new zip codes in Des Moines to enroll low-income families.

Members were encouraged to reach out to Bremner with feedback on draft budget and today’s discussion.

Old Business

- Upcoming board social will be Tuesday, May 7th at 11:45 a.m. at Palmers Deli on Ingersoll Avenue for an informal lunch gathering.

- Cohrs reported the Nomination Committee has five individuals interested in joining the board. Bremner and Cohrs have met with and received three applications. The committee will meet early May to discuss all applications.

New Business

- Early is leading the Executive Director Compensation Committee which is working on the Executive Director performance review and compensation recommendation. An Executive Director Performance survey will be emailed to members, and all are asked to complete as soon as possible. Survey results will be shared with the board. The committee will make a compensation recommendation at the May meeting.

Marianka Pille departed 12:56 p.m.

Administrative Report

- Bremner continues to follow-up with funded partners to regarding contract expenditures.
- Bremner will attend an HHS child care stakeholder focus group April 30th.
- Bremner will attend an in-person ECI Director meeting all day May 6th. No agenda has been distributed yet.

Public Comment

- None

Adjournment

Cohrs made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Eric Tubbs seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Early adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.