



**POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING**  
**Capitol Park Early Learning Center – 800 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Des Moines, Iowa**  
**December 13, 2017**

**Voting Members Present:** Matt Knoll, Ahmed Agyeman, Sam Carrell, Nick Dial, Cindy Elsbernd, Jem Gong-Browne, Bryan Huggins, Josh Mandelbaum, Marianka Pille, Jana Shepherd, Georgia Sheriff, Mee Yang-Lee

**Voting Members Absent:** Marvin DeJear, Rocio Hermosillo, Judy McCoy Davis, Shane Schulte, Emily Westergaard

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Dave Arens

**Ex-Officio Members Absent:** Terry Harrmann, Brook Rosenberg

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

**Guests Present:** Shelly Reck, Director, Capitol Park Early Learning Center; Stacey Walter, Early Child Care Coordinator, ECQuIP, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children

**Welcome and Introductions**

Board Chair Matt Knoll welcomed board members and guests to the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting held at Capitol Park Early Learning Center at 11:39 a.m. Quorum was met at this time.

Stacey Walter, Early Child Care Coordinator provided a brief history of Capitol Park ELC. The center was originally established as Children's Center on Methodist Hill. In the late 1980's the center moved to its current location at Wesley United Methodist Church, and the name was changed to Capitol Park Early Learning Center. The center's focus has always been to provide affordable, quality child care to low-income families and will celebrate its 50 anniversary in 2018. Georgia Sheriff shared that in the early 2000's, under the direction of Walter and in partnership with United Way, the center was able to engage in new partnerships, update the facility, and grow enrollment.

Shelly Reck, Center Director, reported enrollment is at 73 children, up from enrollment of 66 children when she started about a year ago. The center is an Early Head Start partner site. Children enrolled are 6-weeks old to 5-years old. Reck's biggest struggle has been locating qualified staff to hire to fill vacancies. With two teachers recently giving notice, she was forced to combine two classrooms until qualified staff can be hired. Walter stated exit interviews were completed with the two staff leaving this month, and both stated hourly wage was the driving factor behind their decision. Both of these employees had been with the center for at least three years

and both are leaving the field of child care for higher paying jobs by the end of the month. The timing of their departure means they will forfeit the next pilot bonus in the amount of \$400.

Reck then provided a tour of the center to members.

Following the tour, Walter and Reck answered questions from members.

- Jem Gong-Browne asked, "What do you need from PCECI as a board? How can the board best assist you?" Reck reiterated the center struggles to identify qualified staff to hire. Walter stated lack of human resources support for the independent centers is an issue. The ECQuIP team provides support writing policies and procedures. Low wages continue to be a challenge. The reimbursement rate paid by the state is extremely detrimental to the centers enrolling low-income children.
- Sam Carrell suggested researching PEO support services for additional resources for centers, especially those not a part of a larger agency.
- Barb Bremner reported Brook Rosenberg is researching support services for creation of a center "purchasing group" to allow more centers to provide health insurance.
- Nick Dial offered to meet with Bremner to discuss legal needs centers might encounter and possibly be a resource for legal information.

Sam Carrell departed at 12:20 p.m.

- The board discussed Capitol Park's board membership and their agreement with the church regarding space rental. Mandelbaum asked if the Polk County ECI board could play a proactive role in supporting independent centers with governance, board membership and in developing stronger boards.
- Sheriff suggested programs perform SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) to determine areas the board could assist in strengthening.
- Dave Arens stated these issues have persisted over time and continue as challenges as the market-rate reimbursement gap continues to increase. Iowa's low reimbursement rates are a primary factor suppressing the wages of the child care workforce.
- Mandelbaum reported New Horizons is opening a new center on SW 9<sup>th</sup> in the coming year. He stated the Minnesota-based, for-profit company indicated they will not be enrolling low-income children due to Iowa's low reimbursement rate for subsidized child care. In their centers in Minnesota this is not an issue because the state reimbursement rate is market rate. Mandelbaum suggested New Horizons would be a willing advocate to address policy makers regarding Iowa's reimbursement rates.

Bremner reported the Early Childhood Committee will be meeting January 9<sup>th</sup> and at that meeting will work on prioritizing work to support centers and to set an action plan for the next six months.

Dave Arens departed at 12:36 p.m.

### **Approval November Minutes**

The November 15, 2017 minutes were presented to the board. There were no additional comments or corrections.

*A motion to approve the minutes was made by Josh Mandelbaum and seconded by Mee Yang-Lee. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

### **Monthly Financial Statements**

Bremner presented the financial statements for October 2017. Statements are a cash presentation of financial transactions which took place through October 30th of fiscal year 2018. November and December financials will be presented at the board meeting January 24, 2018.

### **School Ready**

- FY18 Polk County ECI School Ready funding is \$2,647,000.
- Carry Forward funds total \$68,842. These were budgeted to the Healthy Start & Empowerment contract line and were fully expended in September.
- Total funds for the School Ready Budget equal \$2,715,842.14.
- Year-to-date receipts total \$1,323,500. Second quarter payment was received in October.
- Additional receipts of \$3,317.14 interest.
- At end of October School Ready funds of \$356,569.87 had been expended.
- Expenditures are 13% of total School Ready funds. Last year at end of October 2016, 11% of funds had been expended.

### **Early Childhood**

- FY18 Polk County ECI Early Childhood funding is \$1,099,883.
- Carry Forward funds total \$124,973. These were budgeted into IAAYC ECQUIP and CCRR Consultants contract lines and will be expended before FY18 funds
- Total funds for Early Childhood Budget equal \$1,224,856.00.
- Year-to-date receipts total \$549,941.50. Second quarter payment was received in October.
- Additional total receipts of \$1,822.57 interest.
- At end of October Early Childhood funds of \$167,963.20 had been expended. Spending is approximately 14% of total Early Childhood funds. Last year at end of October 2016, 19% of funds had been expended.

Josh Mandelbaum departed at 12:40 p.m.

*A motion to approve the October 2017 financials was made by Jem Gong-Browne and seconded by Ahmed Agyeman. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

### **Administrative Report**

Bremner will distribute her report electronically. She reported the December quarterly ECI director meeting included a 3-hour professional development workshop focused on leading change. The information shared and the delivery were well done and led by Kathy Peterson, PeopleWorks.

Cindy Elsbernd departed at 12:43 p.m.

The state ECI board is in the process of redesigning the ECI website and logo in preparation for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Early Childhood Iowa in 2018.

Bremner shared that Dial had missed the November meeting because that was the birth of he and his wife's first child, a daughter Britta Rosemary.

Upcoming committee meetings:

- School Ready – Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m.
- Early Childhood – Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m.

### **Old Business**

Bremner stated Rick Kozin, departing Director of Polk County Public Health, will present at the January 24, 2018 meeting. Child and Adult Care Food Program administrators will present to the board at the meeting February 28, 2018.

### **New Business**

None.

### **Public Comment**

None reported.

### **Adjourn**

*A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Nick Dial and seconded by Jem Gong-Browne. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.* The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.