



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING

Zoom Meeting Only

January 27, 2021

Meeting conducted electronically pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.8. The current circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor's proclamation directing that no more than 10 individuals may meet in a public gathering, and CDC guidelines regarding social distancing dictate that conducting this meeting in person is impossible or impracticable.

Voting Members Present: Ahmed Agyeman, Dave Arens, Rob Barron, Sandy Carter, Tabitha Choquette. Nick Dial, Bryan Huggins, Matt Knoll, Matthew Klemme, Jeanie McCarville Kerber, Charles Mercer, Eva Morales, Marianka Pille, Jana Shepherd, Mee Yang Lee; Deanna Bennigsdorf and Adam Montufar joined at 8:03 a.m.; Eric Tubbs joined at 8:23 a.m.

Voting Members Absent: Emily Westergaard, Jem Gong-Browne

Ex-Officio Members Present: Aaron Johnson

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Terry Harrmann, Barb Merrill, Brook Rosenberg

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Leann Andre, Child Care Consultant Supervisor, Child Care Resource & Referral; Susie Guest, Early Childhood Programs Administrator, Des Moines Public School District; Danielle Johnson, Finance Officer, United Way of Central Iowa; Amy Kolln Early Childhood Coordinator, Ankeny School District; Joy Palmer, Director Johnston Early Learning Academy, Johnston School District; Lora Patton, Regional Director, Child Care Resource & Referral; Kristin Rourk, Early Childhood Special Education and Preschool Program Administrator, West Des Moines Community School District; Joannie Sanger, Preschool Administrator, Bondurant- Farrar School District; Jackie White, Early Childhood Coordinator, South East Polk School District; Cindy Winn, Healthy Start Director, EveryStep

Welcome

Board Vice Chair Ahmed Agyeman called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Quorum was met at this time.

Approval November Minutes

Minutes of the November 18, 2020 meeting were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the November 2020 minutes was made by Marianka Pille and seconded by Dave Arens. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Deanna Bennigsdorf and Adam Montufar arrived at 8:03 a.m.

Financial Statements November/December 2020

Barb Bremner presented the financial statements for November and December 2020. These statements are a cash presentation of financial transactions which took place through December of fiscal year 2020.

School Ready

- FY21 Polk County ECI School Ready funding is \$2,787,342
- Carry Forward funds total \$296,753.93
- Total School Ready funds in FY21 budget are \$3,084,095.93
- Interest accrued through December 2020 totals \$5,793.33
- Expended School Ready funds end of December 2020 total \$931,737.58
- Expenditures are 30.21% of FY21 School Ready budget. At end of December 2019 34.28 % of FY20 budget had been expended

Early Childhood

- FY21 Polk County ECI Early Childhood funding is \$928,174
- Carry Forward funds total \$123,624.28
- Total Early Childhood funds in FY21 budget are \$1,051,798.28
- Interest accrued through December 2020 totals \$2,366.54
- Expended Early Childhood funds end of December 2020 total \$228,253.48
- Expenditures are 21.7% of FY21 Early Childhood budget. At end of December 2019 34.58% of FY20 budget had been expended

A motion to approve the November/December 2020 financials was made by Marianka Pille and seconded by Mee Yang Lee. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ad Hoc Compensation Committee

Agyeman reported Bremner's employer of record through Polk County ECI is United Way of Central Iowa. United Way of Central Iowa implemented a new payroll process effective January 1, 2021. This payroll change moved employees to a bi-weekly payroll system and made the first pay period four days shorter. After meeting with the United Way Finance Department, Board Chair Emily Westergaard convened an ad hoc committee, which included Ahmed Agyeman, Bryan Huggins, Eva Morales, and Eric Tubbs to review the new payroll system. The committee determined the new system would have no effect on Bremner's annual salary or the Polk County ECI budget and approved the fiscal agent implementing the same process for Bremner as for United Way staff for the first payroll period of January 2021.

Center Appreciation Funds

Bremner asked board members for approval to issue a letter from the board along with a \$50 gift card for each staff member of the child care centers participating in the pilot program, including Oak Academy. The letter and gift card would express board appreciation for staff continued dedication through this pandemic. There are approximately 100 staff members employed at these centers. Bremner requested expenditure of up to \$6,000 for gift cards to come from non-contracted funds in early childhood budget: Other Services, Contingency/Emergency Funds line item. Bremner has discussed this with Shanell Wagler at the State ECI office who approved of the

expenditure and shared other areas have provided similar appreciation or hazard pay bonuses for child care providers.

A motion to approve spending up to \$6,000 for appreciation gift cards for the child care centers was made by Jeanie McCarville Kerber and seconded by Marianka Pille. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

FY20 Audit (7/1/2019 – 6/30/2020)

Danielle Johnson, Finance Officer, United Way of Central Iowa, presented the audit completed by BerganKDV. Johnson shared effective September 1, 2020 Brooks Lodden, P.C. merged with BerganKDV. This has been a seamless transition with the Brooks Lodden team moving over and continuing to be involved. The BerganKDV staff offers additional non-profit experience for our organization.

Eric Tubbs arrived at 8:23 a.m.

Johnson reported both Early Childhood and School Ready carryover amounts increased in FY20. These increases were allowed by the state and were to be expected due to COVID-19. Johnson reported because United Way of Central Iowa exceeded the Federal Grant Funds threshold of \$750,000 for the second year in a row, they were required to submit a single audit. Due to the single audits the past two years, UWCI was not considered a low-risk auditee. After two clean audits in a row that qualification will change. Johnson stated the audit process was efficient with most of it being conducted virtually. No material weaknesses or deficiencies were noted. No management letters were brought to United Way's attention regarding their handling of Polk County ECI's records.

Members can request hard copies of the audits from Johnson at djohnson@unitedwaydm.org

Preschool Program Updates

Kristin Rourk, Early Childhood Special Education and Preschool Program Administrator, West Des Moines Community School District; Joannie Sanger, Preschool Administrator, Bondurant- Farrar School District; Joy Palmer, Director Johnston Early Learning Academy, Johnston School District; Susie Guest, Early Childhood Programs Administrator, Des Moines Public School District; Jackie White, Early Childhood Coordinator, South East Polk School District and Amy Kolln, Early Childhood Coordinator, Ankeny School District updated members on their preschool programming for the current school year:

- WDM – Parents were able to choose on-site or virtual learning at the beginning of the school year, it was a 50/50 split. Parents were able to re-choose for second semester and a third of families chose virtual. The district had to cap their Tiger Cubs programs.
- Bondurant-Farrar – District did not offer virtual option. District did move to a hybrid model for a period of time but is now back to full time in-person learning. Enrollment is good, program is full, and they have started a wait list.
- Johnston – The program started the year on-site with a virtual option. Families could choose to go back to on-site at trimester. Currently one teacher is working with 38 students

online. Program has enrolled eight new students since the beginning of 2021, with six openings remaining.

- DMPS – First semester offered virtual and in-person programming; 40% virtual, 60% in-person four days per week. When the district moves to in-person learning preschool will move to five days per week. Enrollment is down 24%. The district has a plan in place to address staff attendance issues due to COVID-19 starting with individual buildings juggling building support staff and including administrative staff if necessary. If teachers are quarantined because of exposure they are teaching virtually.
- SE Polk – District cut preschool numbers in order to socially distance students. District did not offer programming to out-of-district families and capped classes at 13 students. Program follows K-12 schedule; program has 45-50 virtual learners. They have begun registration for next year and are hoping to have numbers back up in the fall.
- Ankeny – District had two teachers out for quarantine. Program follows K-12 schedule; two teachers are working with 55 virtual students. Enrollment is down.

Bremner asked panelists to address any summer learning opportunities:

- DMPS – Currently working on summer plan for students entering kindergarten in the fall who have not had a preschool experience. Would be a six week program, four days per week at 20 elementary schools throughout the district. This was in the works for last summer before COVID-19. It is difficult to secure a plan not knowing what things will look like this summer.
- Johnston – Looking at creative ways to offer optional summer activities weekly to families.

Pille asked how much daily interaction the virtual students receive:

- WDM and Johnston reported their districts mirror the in-person schedule. Opening the day with large groups, transition into small group exploratory play, 20-minute snack break providing educational resources on healthy snacks then back into small group gross motor skills activities and end the day back in the large group.
- Johnston shared students out due to quarantine have a slightly different schedule but are still provided interactive opportunities.

Barron asked the panelist about district concerns/plans for potential drop in next year's funding due to low enrollment this year:

- DMPS – They are following the discussion of the legislature potentially using fall 2019 enrollment numbers to determine funding. The district was able to use some CARES funding to make up deficit from other funding sources. Looking into using some carry over funding to fill gaps.
- Jeanie McCarville Kerber voiced concerns regarding a voucher option Senator Zaun will be introducing. This will be detrimental to public schools with no accountability attached to charter/private schools.
- WDM – District is not as worried about the upcoming year with current enrollment not down too much. Currently enrollment for next year is down 50% which is concerning.

Members thanked the directors for their hard work providing value to families and students.

Agyeman asked the directors to reach out to the board with any needs their program may face.

Program Review Process and Timeline

Bremner reviewed the Funded Program Review Spring 2021 timeline. She reported funded programs are in the process of submitting their program data and scope of services, due Friday, January 29th. Program narrative will be based on the impact COVID-19 has had on each program and services.

Bremner will be sending review materials out to members the week of March 8, 2021. Virtual review meetings with partners will be scheduled for the week of April 5, 2021.

Jeanie McCarville Kerber departed the meeting at 9:01 a.m.

Committee Appointments

Bremner reviewed the Polk County ECI Committee document included in today's materials. Three program review committees have been established. The Ad Hoc Committee members have been assigned to the Executive Director Review & Compensation Committee. Emily Westergaard, Eva Morales, and Jana Shepherd have been assigned to the Advocacy Committee. Members for the Nomination and Governance Document Review Committees will be assigned in the spring. Members were asked to contact Bremner if they needed to change their committee assignments.

Mee Yang Lee departed the meeting at 9:08 a.m.

Administrative Report

Bremner's Administrative Report was included with today's materials and will be emailed with minutes.

- United Way staff, state ECI TA staff and many of our funded program staff continue to work remotely.
- The Association is working with lobbyist Eide Walton Lobbying and Government Relations again this year. Eide is meeting frequently with the Association Executive Board to keep up to date on legislative issues.

Rob Barron departed the meeting at 9:12 a.m.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Comment

None

Adjourn

Dave Arens made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Deanna Bennigsdorf seconded. Agyeman adjourned the meeting at 9:19 a.m.