



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING
United Way of Central Iowa
1111 9th Street, Conference Room F
September 22, 2021

Voting Members Present: Ahmed Agyeman, Dave Arens, Deanna Bennigsdorf, Sandy Carter, Sam Early, Bryan Huggins, Matthew Klemme, Marianka Pille, Eric Tubbs; Adam Montufar arrived at 8:09 a.m.; Rob Barron arrived at 8:35 a.m.; Jem Gong-Browne joined via teleconference at 9:07 a.m.; Tabitha Choquette, Suzanne Cohrs, Eva Morales, and Jana Shepherd participated via teleconference.

Voting Members Absent: Kevin Abler, Emily Westergaard, Charles Mercer

Ex-Officio Members Present: None

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aaron Johnson, Barb Merrill

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Leanne Andre, Child Care Consultant Supervisor, Child Care Resource & Referral; Jillian Herink, Executive Director, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children; Heidi LaBounty, ECQuIP Project Manager, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children; Ashley Otte, Director of Workforce Initiatives, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children

Welcome

Board Chair Ahmed Agyeman called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Quorum was met at this time.

Approval August Minutes

Minutes of August 25, 2021 meeting were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the August 2021 minutes was made by Dave Arens and seconded Deanna Bennigsdorf. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Financial Report July 2021

Agyeman reported the Audit Committee met on Monday to review the School Ready and Early Childhood Expenditure reports and prepare the monthly financial report.

Bennigsdorf reported as is typical there were only expenditures was in administrative expenses. At the end of July, no contracts had submitted invoices. This information was presented in a graph. Highlighted were the budget lines non-contracted and planned for applicants for one-time funds through an RFP process.

Included in the meeting materials were the financial statements for July 2021. These statements are a cash presentation of financial transactions which took place through July of fiscal year 2021.

School Ready

- FY22 Polk County ECI School Ready funding is \$2,865,988.⁰⁰
- Carry Forward funds total \$337,907.⁹⁵
- Total School Ready funds in FY22 budget are \$3,203,895.⁹⁵
- Interest accrued through July 2021 totals \$229.⁵⁹
- Expended School Ready funds at end of July 2021 total \$10,954.28
- Expenditures are less than 1% of FY21 School Ready budget.

Early Childhood

- FY22 Polk County ECI Early Childhood funding is \$947,808.⁰⁰
- Carry Forward funds total \$118,891.⁷⁵
- Total Early Childhood funds in FY22 budget are \$1,066,699.⁷⁵
- Interest accrued through July 2021 totals \$80.⁷⁸
- Expended Early Childhood funds at end of July 2021 total \$3,734.⁵⁴
- Expenditures are less than 1% of FY22 Early Childhood budget.

RFP for new Contracts and Process

Agyeman introduced the RFP and the funds set aside by the cabinet in the School Ready and Early Childhood budgets for one-time funding opportunities.

Adam Montufar arrived at 8:09 a.m.

The RFP in will be distributed through a United Way of Central Iowa weekly Friday email blast and the Refugee Alliance weekly email. The cabinet has a total of \$275,000 reserved for new, one-time funding opportunities. School Ready has \$200,000, and Early Childhood has \$75,000. Applicants will apply for one-time grants up to \$50,000. The application will be open from September 24th through October 29th. A subcommittee will be established to review applications in November and present their recommendations to the full board in December. Contracts will start January 1, 2022.

Bryan Huggins volunteered to sit on the review subcommittee.

Members were asked to forward information on any additional agencies/programs who should receive the RFP to Bremner. It is a goal to receive applications from newer, smaller agencies that the board is not currently funding.

FY22 Contract Monitoring Schedule

FY22 Contract Monitoring Schedule was presented. The highlighted programs represent contracts Bremner will meet with. Her goal is to meet with the programs by February and provide updates prior to contract reviews for next fiscal year. The Contract Monitoring Schedule will be submitted to the state by September 30th.

Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children: T.E.A.C.H., WAGES, ECQuIP

Jillian Herink, Executive Director of IAEYC introduced herself and the agency. She reported they will be holding their Fall Early Learning Institute virtually again this year for child care providers.

The Spring Leadership Conference April 2022 is being planned as a two-day, in-person conference to incorporate more family childcare providers.

Herink asked members to continue to support the child care workforce through their messaging and advocacy efforts.

Ashley Otte, Director of Workforce Initiatives, provided an overview of T.E.A.C.H and WAGE\$ and presented program FY20 results.

- WAGE\$ has expanded statewide this year due to federal funding received through DHS. WAGE\$ is a salary supplement program that rewards individuals for continued education in early childhood. Previously the program served 250-275 individuals a year. To date over 1,000 individuals have applied FY22. Staff continues working to recruit more individuals.
- T.E.A.C.H is a scholarship program for individuals who are continuing their early childhood education. Otte reported they are seeing an increase in the program due to the increase in participation in WAGE\$. IAEYC will continue to seek additional funding to keep up with the increased demand.
- How is program information distributed?
 - Mailings were sent out over the summer to all DHS participants
 - CCR&R pushes the information out to their participants
 - Utilize online IPower System
 - Information is sent to area ECI directors to distribute to partners
 - Stakeholders and partners push the information out to their connections
- Do you work with colleges?
 - IAEYC staff works with individual colleges to add information to websites and work with admission officials and counselors
 - IAEYC attend early Childhood College Alliance meetings
- Is there a particular number of annual participants you are trying to connect with?
 - Current T.E.A.C.H. funding will support 375-425 individuals per year. WAGE\$ did a recalibration in 2021 due to the new grant. With the new funding the program could support 3,000+ per year.

Rob Barron Arrived at 8:35 a.m.

- Program participants are surveyed annually. Pay and benefits tend to be the driving force for individuals leaving childcare. Some leave childcare for the K-12 system, which has better pay and benefits.
- IAEYC's national affiliation provides the opportunity to leverage federal dollars which has allowed IAEYC to forgive the employer's portion of scholarship stipends and provide travel and internet stipends to participants.

Heidi LaBounty, ECQuIP Project Manager, presented information on the efforts of the consultant team and participating centers. LaBounty shared many programs have closed classrooms due to staff shortages. Polk County coalition centers currently have an enrollment deficit of 324 children.

- ASQ Developmental screening process. LaBounty shared if a child does not pass their screening, they are rescreened. If they still do not meet developmental expectations, they are referred for services. The screenings are readministered by classroom staff each time a child changes classrooms.

Dave Arens departed at 9:00 a.m.

- Childcare center staff will be attending training the fall and next spring on administering ASQ screenings and proper follow-up.

Jem Gong-Browne arrived at 9:07 a.m.

- Center directors participated in training opportunities over the summer with a focus on social and emotional well-being.
- Networking and adult social/emotional support was very critical this year for center staff.
- Bremner organized monthly meetings beginning April 2020 with CCNCs, CCR&R, IAEYC, Drake Head Start to share information regarding health and safety best practices and resources. This committee continues to meet monthly.

Administrative Report

- Polk County ECI Annual Report has been submitted to the state.
- Bremner continues to meet with programs and United Way to revise measures to align with the updated state required measures and additional measures to best document outcomes.
- Developed the RFP for the upcoming application process.
- Bremner will be attending the Association of Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards & Advocates Annual meeting November 4th. Members are asked to contact her if they would like to attend.

Old Business

- Agyeman reported the board voted to continue to support Polk County ECI's membership in the Association. At last month's meeting we were provided an updated on the work the Association did last legislative session. He will email asking members for donations to help offset membership fees.

New Business

None

Public Comment

- Leanne Andre, Child Care Resource & Referral reported interest in the City of Des Moines grant has been huge. They anticipate all funds being expended by the end of October.
- The new QRS System, IQ4K, is launching April 1, 2022. CCR&R will be working on training of the new system.

Adjournment

Bremner reported next month's meeting will continue to focus on childcare. Leann Andre and Lora Patton with CCR&R will present on Iowa and Polk County trends. DMACC's childcare center director and a DMACC early childhood academic advisor will be joining to discuss career pathways.

Bennigsdorf made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pille seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 a.m.