



**POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING**  
**Connigo Early Education Center**  
**828 Scott Ave, DSM**  
**September 25, 2024**

**Voting Members Present:** Suzanne Cohrs, Kevin Abler, Dave Arens, Rob Barron, Jessica Bruning, Sam Early, Matthew Klemme, Josh Laraby, Eva Morales, Shay Scholtes, Megan Schultheis, Stephen White; Alicia Chilton arrived at 8:06 a.m.; Stephanie Giusto arrived at 8:12 a.m.

**Voting Members Absent:** Tabitha Choquette, Adam Montufar, Christian Ramirez, Eric Tubbs, Emily Westergaard

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Aaron Johnson

**Ex-Officio Members Absent:** Brook Rosenberg

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

**Guests Present:** Leann Andre, Child Care Consultant Supervisor, Child Care Resource & Referral; Tammy Engebretson, Director of Quality Initiatives, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children; Kay Strahorn, Executive Director, Connigo Early Education Center

**Welcome**

Board Chair Suzanne Cohrs welcomed members and called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Guest introductions were made.

**Approval August Minutes**

Minutes of board meeting August 28, 2024, were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

*A motion to approve the August 2024 minutes was made by Sam Early and seconded by Kevin Abler. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

**July/August FY25 Financial Report**

Bremner presented the July/August FY25 financial report. End of August is 17% through the fiscal year. Expenditures are tracking with historical data. Bremner has been working with new partners on invoicing.

Alicia Chilton arrived at 8:06 a.m.

Audit committee: Chilton, Klemme, and Ramirez. Committee meets monthly to review School Ready and Early Childhood expenditure reports and use this information to create the

presentation via PowerPoint. These documents are included each month in board meeting materials.

### **School Ready**

- FY25 School Ready funding is \$2,975,693
- Carry Forward funds total \$289,442.42
- FY25 Total School Ready funds \$3,265,135.41
- Interest accrued through August 2024 totals \$1,573.23
- Expended School Ready funds end of August 2024 total \$145,938.28
- At the end of August 2024 5% of School Ready had been expended. End of previous August 2023 5% of funds had been expended.

### **Early Childhood**

- FY25 Early Childhood funding is \$973,992
- Carry Forward funds total \$154,722.63
- FY25 Total Early Childhood funds \$1,128,714.63
- Interest accrued through August 2024 totals \$848.67
- Expended Early Childhood funds at end of August 2024 total \$52,162.53
- At end of August 2024 5% of Early Childhood had been expended. End of previous August 2023 3% of funds had been expended.

*A motion to approve the July/August FY25 Financial Report was made by Kevin Abler and seconded by Eva Morales. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

### **ECI State Board – Letter of Support Emily Westergaard**

The ECI State Board has six vacancies, two are in Congressional District 3. Emily Westergaard would like to apply for one of the open seats. She will complete her 2<sup>nd</sup> term on the Polk County ECI Board June 30, 2025. Applicants are required to submit a letter of support from their local board. Bremner is asking for the board's vote of support for Westergaard's application and submission of a letter of support for Westergaard. Individuals are appointed to the board by the Governor.

*A motion to approve submitting a Letter of Support for Emily Westergaard was made Jessica Bruning and seconded by Alicia Chilton. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

### **Administrative Report**

Bremner's Administrative Report was included with today's materials.

- Attended the September 6<sup>th</sup> State ECI Board meeting. The board reviewed current By-laws and provided recommended changes. They also discussed merging the Muscatine board with another area ECI.

Stephanie Giusto arrived at 8:12 a.m.

- The State ECI office is working with ISU to create a new data collection system for directors to enter program data and financial information. This new system is expected to be ready for February 2025 data submissions.
- Effective July 1, 2024, the Iowa Public Information Board made changes to public meeting laws. Government bodies are now required to provide electronic access to meetings upon members' request. Polk County ECI currently provides electronic meeting options for its members.
- Bremner thanked those who were able to attend the September 11<sup>th</sup> Community Partner meeting. Members appreciated the opportunity to get to hear and learn more about the agencies and programs the board funds and learn about additional community resources. Partners were able to make meaningful connections.
- Bremner included a link to Eva Morales' essay recently published in *The Business Record*.
- Bremner included an NPR story on a Wisconsin employer's perspective on employees child care issues.

### **Old Business**

- Early shared he is organizing the Child Care Committee. This committee will be reviewing the Child Care Pilot/Stay Bonus program, and the Center Operational grants. Schultheis and Bruning volunteered to serve on the committee.

### **New Business**

- None.

### **Public Comment**

- None

### **Adjournment**

*Chilton made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Abler seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

Cohrs adjourned the meeting at 8:23 a.m.

Following adjournment, Kay Strahorn, Executive Director of Conmigo shared an overview of the center background, staffing, family demographics, and programming. Strahorn and Tammy Engebretson then led members on tours of the classrooms.