



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING
United Way of Central Iowa
Leadership Room
January 22, 2025

Voting Members Present: Kevin Abler, Dave Arens, Alicia Chilton, Sam Early, Matthew Klemme, Christian Ramirez, Shay Scholtes, Megan Schultheis, Emily Westergaard; Stephanie Guisto arrived at 8:05 a.m.; participating via Zoom: Suzanne Cohrs, Rob Barron, Tabitha Choquette, Josh Laraby; Eric Tubbs joined via Zoom at 8:34 a.m.

Voting Members Absent: Jessica Bruning, Adam Montufar, Eva Morales, Stephen White

Ex-Officio Members Present: Aaron Johnson, Brooke Rosenberg

Ex-Officio Members Absent:

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Brianne Emunah, Healthy Start & Empowerment Manager, Cindy Winn, Healthy Start & Empowerment Director, both EveryStep; Kristie Vasey, Child Care Consultant Supervisor Region 4, Child Care Resource & Referral

Welcome

Board Vice Chair Alicia Chilton welcomed members and called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Guest introductions were made.

Approval December Minutes

Minutes of board meeting December 18, 2024, were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the December 2024 minutes was made by Emily Westergaard and seconded by Christian Ramirez. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Stephanie Guisto arrived 8:05 a.m.

Audit Committee: December Financials

Matthew Klemme presented the December FY25 financial report. Expenditures are tracking with historical data to date at 50% of the fiscal year. Bremner will use these figures to submit the required midyear financial report to the state. The Iowa Association for the Education for Young Children requested a termination of their Early Childhood T.E.A.C.H. contract. The \$15,000 allocated for this contract will be moved to the non-contracted line item in Early Childhood budget.

School Ready

- FY25 School Ready funding is \$2,975,693
- Carry Forward funds total \$289,442.42
- FY25 Total School Ready funds \$3,265,135.42
- Interest accrued through December 2024 totals \$13,653.52
- Expended School Ready funds end of December 2024 total \$1,000,389.57
- At the end of December 2024 31% of School Ready had been expended. End of previous December 2023 29% 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 December 2024 totals \$5,041.24
- Expended Early Childhood funds at end of December 2024 total \$364,660.96
- At end of December 2024 21% of Early Childhood had been expended. End of previous December 2023 32% of funds had been expended.

A motion to approve the December FY25 Financial Report was made by Dave Arens and seconded by Emily Westergaard. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

T.E.A.C.H. Contract Termination

The Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC) receives statewide funding through HHS for the T.E.A.C.H. program. IAEYC applied for funding from Polk County ECI during the spring investment cycle for FY25 because they forecast a wait list in Polk County. Being a past funder of the program, the board allocated \$15,000 for the program in the event of a wait list. IAEYC submitted written notice to terminate the contract as they do not anticipate having a wait list.

Bremner reported the funding returned from the contract will be moved to the Early Childhood non-contracted line item which currently has a balance of \$76,387.92. The addition of \$15,000 maintains the non-contracted funds in line with past years.

A motion to accept IAEYC's contract termination was made by Dave Arens and seconded by Emily Westergaard. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Conmigo Request – Interpretation

Bremner received a request from Conmigo's Executive Director Kay Strahorn for interpretation services for bilingual staff to participate in a center-wide Conscious Discipline training led by IAEYC ECQuIP. English is their second language, and interpretation services would allow them to fully participate in the training which addresses challenging classroom behaviors. Interpretation services would be approximately \$1,400.

Bremner recommends reimbursing the center for interpretation services up to \$1,500 using the Early Childhood, Quality Supports Coalition Centers funding.

A motion to approve funding for Conmigo's translation services up to \$1,500 was made by Megan Schultheis and seconded by Kevin Abler. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Governance Document Review Committee (Policy 2.15): Bylaws and Policies & Procedures

Emily Westergaard and Eric Tubbs participated in a review of proposed changes to the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures documents. These changes and updates were proposed due to changes in the Iowa Code removing the requirement for gender-balanced boards and the changes which were made to open public meetings and electronic participation. Westergaard will forward Bremner a high-level summary of the changes and updates to share with the full board.

A motion to accept the Committee's proposed changes to the Bylaws was made by Sam Early and seconded by Matthew Klemme. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

A motion to accept the Committee's proposed changes to the Policies and Procedures was made by Crhistian Ramirez and seconded by Shay Scholtes. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Appoint Nominating Committee (Policy 2.4)

Chilton shared this committee will be responsible for identifying individuals to fill board vacancies. The committee will have four positions to fill for FY26; three members will be rolling off June 30, 2025, and one member has resigned their position. Bremner estimates the time commitment for members to be 2-3 meetings, either in-person or virtual, to meet and identify prospective board members.

Appoint Executive Director Compensation Committee (Policy 3.6)

Chilton shared this committee will be responsible for reviewing the Executive Director's annual performance and recommending a compensation package for FY26. Board Chair Suzanne Cohrs will lead this committee. Early and Klemme volunteered to serve on the committee.

Westergaard volunteered to serve on either the Nominating Committee or Executive Compensation Committee. Members were encouraged to reach out to Bremner if they wish to serve on one of the committees.

Advocacy Committee

Alicia Chilton and Shay Scholtes are on this committee. Members will be emailed with draft language and will be asked to introduce themselves to their legislators and to Polk County ECI. Members were encouraged to sign up for legislators' newsletters.

Bremner reminded members of The Association of Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards and Advocates Day on the Hill scheduled from 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 26th. Members will be asked to reach out to their legislators in advance if they are planning to attend. The Association is working on talking points to share with legislators, Bremner will share with members once finalized.

Arens encouraged members to also feel confident in communicating with committee chairs and sub chairs because these individuals are an important part of the legislative process.

Program Review Process

Bremner anticipates there will be changes to the funding to ECI and to allowable uses for allocated funds. Any changes will impact the budgeting process. The Polk County ECI FY26 application for new funding has been released. Bremner is meeting briefly with applicants. Bremner will email a survey to identify time for committees to hold investment meetings with our funded partners. She has been meeting with agencies requesting new funding to determine if programs are a good fit for Polk County ECI funding and to let them know the uncertainty of funding at this time. Programs receiving funding this current fiscal year must submit program outcomes data and narrative today.

Eric Tubbs joined via Zoom at 8:34 a.m.

Administrative Report

- Bremner's full Administrative Report was included in meeting materials.
- Bremner attended the Governor's State Address Tuesday, January 14th along with 22 area ECI directors.
- Members discussed anticipated changes to ECI's work.

Old Business

- None

New Business

None

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Westergaard made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Klemme seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chilton adjourned the meeting at 8:52 a.m.