



POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING
United Way of Central Iowa
Leadership Room
March 26, 2025

Voting Members Present: Dave Arens, Suzanne Cohrs, Sam Early, Matthew Klemme, Shay Scholtes, Megan Schultheis, Emily Westergaard; Jessica Bruning, Stephanie Giusto, Josh Laraby, Crhistian Ramirez, Eric Tubbs, Stephen White joined via Zoom; Alicia Chilton arrived at 8:05 a.m.; Rob Barron arrived at 8:50 a.m.

Voting Members Absent: Kevin Abler, Tabitha Choquette, Eva Morales

Ex-Officio Members Present: Brooke Rosenberg

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Aaron Johnson

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Jody Kanne

Guests Present: Tammy Engebretson, Director of Quality Initiatives, Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children; Lal Muani, Early Childhood Parent Navigator Program Manager, EMBARC; Kristie Vasey, Child Care Consultant Supervisor Region 4, Child Care Resource & Referral

Welcome

Board Chair Suzanne Cohrs welcomed members and called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Guest introductions were made.

Approval February Minutes

Minutes of board meeting February 26, 2025, were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the February 2025 minutes was made by Emily Westergaard and seconded by Matthew Klemme. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Audit Committee: February Financials

Matthew Klemme presented the February FY25 financial report. Expenditures are tracking with historical data to date at 67% of the fiscal year.

Crhistian Ramirez joined via Zoom at 8:02 a.m.

Klemme reported Jai Olive has only expended 15% of their contract to date. This is a new School Ready contract. Bremner has been in contact with the organization and expects them to fully expend their contract.

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 February 2025 totals \$22,550.48
- Expended School Ready funds end of February 2025 total \$1,590,898.51
- At the end of February 2025 49% of School Ready had been expended. End of previous February 2024 44% 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 February 2025 totals \$7,928.17
- Expended Early Childhood funds at end of February 2025 total \$581,759.18
- At end of February 2025 52% of Early Childhood had been expended. End of previous February 2024 47% of funds had been expended.

A motion to approve the February FY25 Financial Report was made by Dave Arens and seconded by Sam Early. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Alicia Chilton arrived at 8:05 a.m.

Health & Human Services Update:

Bremner provided an update of meetings with Iowa Health and Human Services, area ECI directors, and legislators since the February board meeting. HF 623 and SF 445 have not been debated by either chamber. As a Governor's bill this legislation is not constrained by the funnel April 4. If not debated, these bills will be moved to "unfinished business" calendars and will remain alive.

Bremner reviewed Health and Human Services document from the March 7th ECI State board meeting which outlines FY26 ECI funding and the Early Childhood Continuum of Care grant program which is proposed be funded through \$11M of current ECI funding. She shared HHS outline of the board member representation for district boards. Bremner presented a scenario of ECI funding based on the "option 1" from the state board meeting. Also reviewed was a comparison of the populations of the proposed seven districts. District 5 will have 30 percent of the under 5 population. Districts 5 and 7 together will be 61 percent of the State's 0-5 population.

Christian Ramirez departed at 8:45 a.m.
Rob Barron arrived at 8:50 am.

Brooke Rosenberg shared he has been communicating his concerns regarding the impacts of the proposed legislation and the implementation timeline with the Governor's office. He has communicated that area ECI boards and directors were not asked for information regarding the new initiative or the timeline for implementation.

Board members discussed addressing a letter to the Governor to express board concerns regarding the implementation timeline and also the impacts of redirecting \$11M of funding to ECI. Members agreed a letter would make sense. Cohrs will write the letter on behalf of the board.

Stephanie Guisto departed at 9:09 a.m.

A motion to write a letter to the Governor on behalf of the Polk County ECI Board was made by Dave Arens and seconded by Emily Westergaard. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dave Arens departed at 9:19 a.m.

Bremner shared information from HHS to date has been that the new District Boards will need to meet in May to issue RFPs for fiscal agents; HHS has said new District Boards will issue contracts beginning July 1 for Family Support services. Representing District 5 Bremner has worked with the included ECI areas to submit to HHS a board roster and also edits to a bylaws template. HHS has said current ECI boards will operate using carry forward funds as we transition to the new board structure.

Stephen White departed at 9:21 a.m.

Westergaard reported the next ECI State board meeting is April 11th. She encouraged members to email any questions to Bremner they would like to have presented to the board at the April meeting.

Old Business

- The second board social is scheduled for 7:30 a.m., Wednesday April 9th at Homegrown.

New Business

- None

Public Comment

- None

Adjournment

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

Cohrs adjourned the meeting at 9:25 a.m.