



**POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING**  
**United Way of Central Iowa**  
**Leadership Room**  
**June 25, 2025**

**Voting Members Present:** Kevin Abler, Dave Arens, Rob Barron, Jessica Bruning, Alicia Chilton, Suzanne Cohrs, Matthew Klemme, Crhistian Ramirez, Shay Scholtes, Eric Tubbs, Emily Westergaard; Tabitha Choquette participated via Zoom; Josh Laraby arrived at 11:38 a.m.; Stephanie Giusto joined via Zoom at 11:34 a.m.; Eva Morales joined Zoom at 11:42 a.m.

**Voting Members Absent:** Sam Early, Megan Schultheis, Stephen White

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Aaron Johnson, Brook Rosenberg

**Ex-Officio Members Absent:**

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

**Guests Present:** 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 11:32 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Guest introductions were made.

**Approval May Minutes**

Minutes of the May 28, 2025 board meeting were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

*A motion to approve the May 2025 minutes was made by Emily Westergaard and seconded by Alicia Chilton. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

**Audit Committee: May Financials**

Crhistian Ramierz presented the May financial report. Expenditures are tracking with past year financials at end of May which is 92 percent through the fiscal year.

Stephanie Giusto joined via Zoom at 11:34 a.m.

Ramirez reviewed the School Ready and Early Childhood expenditures. Bremner has been in contact with organizations with expenditures lower than the expected percentage. In Early Childhood the IAEYC T.E.A.C.H. contract of \$15,000 was terminated at their request prior to January. These funds were moved to the quality improvement line in the budget for classroom materials at the coalition centers. IAEYC ECQuIP lead consultant, Tammy Engebretsen, identified classroom material needs for several coalition centers to utilize these funds.

Bremner estimates carry forward amounts of approximately \$100,000 for each grant.

### **School Ready**

- FY25 School Ready funding \$2,975,693
- Carry Forward funds total \$289,442.42
- FY25 Total School Ready funds \$3,265,135.42
- Interest accrued through May 2025 totals \$33,989.97
- Expended School Ready funds end of May 2025 total \$2,283,957.90
- At the end of May 2025 70% of School Ready had been expended. End of May 2024 71% of funds had been expended.

### **Early Childhood**

- FY25 Early Childhood funding \$973,992
- Carry Forward funds total \$154,722.63
- FY25 Total Early Childhood funds \$1,128,714.63
- Interest accrued through May 2025 totals \$11,778.45
- Expended Early Childhood funds at end of May 2025 total \$809,231.52
- At end of May 2025 72% of Early Childhood had been expended. End of May 2024 68% of funds had been expended.

*A motion to approve the May FY25 Financial Report was made by Dave Arens and seconded by Jessica Bruning. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

Josh Laraby arrived at 11:38 a.m.

### **Nominations of Officers & New Members (Policy 2.4)**

Bremner shared with Barron, Morales and Westergaard's terms ending, and two member resignations throughout the year, the board has five available spots for two men and three women.

After last month's discussion regarding Jacob Al-Mozroa's letter of recommendation for the State board, Bremner determined there is currently not an open seat in District 3 and invited Al-Mazroa to apply to the Polk County ECI board.

Erin Romar withdrew her application due to prior commitments.

Bremner met with Rep. Rob Johnson regarding joining the board. She has not received his application back at this time. She will set up another meeting with him over the summer.

Eva Morales joined via Zoom at 11:42 a.m.

Bremner presented the recommendations:

One new member:

- Jacob Al-Mazroa

Chair and vice chair:

- Alicia Chilton – Chair
- Shay Scholtes – Vice Chair

Al-Mazroa's nomination brings the board membership to 16 members, which is within the guidelines outlined in the bylaws of membership of 15-20.

*A motion to approve the committee's New Member and Officer recommendations was made by Eric Tubbs and seconded by Matthew Klemme. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

#### **New Policy: Scholarship (Policy 5.11)**

Bremner reviewed the new Scholarship Policy 5.11 which is a requirement from the HHS Early Childhood Iowa regulatory document *Tool O* revision. The Urbandale Community School District contract will fund scholarships. There is \$100,000 for Scholarships as TBD in the FY26 budget. These dollars can be reallocated if the board does not issue any further Scholarship contracts.

*A motion to approve Policy 5.11 as presented was made by Crhistian Ramirez and seconded by Shay Scholtes. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

#### **Conflict of Interest (Policy 2.9)**

Members received the Board Member Conflict of Interest & Annual Disclosure FY26 form. Cohrs asked members to complete the form and return to Kanne after the meeting.

#### **Board Self Evaluation (Policy 2.12)**

Results of the Board Self Evaluation were included in the meeting materials. Bremner reviewed the survey results. Members were asked to email Bremner any additional thoughts or input for Chilton and Scholtes to consider while planning the board's work for next fiscal year.

#### **Administrative Report**

Bremner's administrative report was included in today's packet.

- Bremner thanked ECI State board members for their input and guidance over the last year. Aaron Johnson ends his term as State Board Chair, and Emily Westergaard who will become State Board Chair July 1, 2025.
- HHS will conduct contract reviews in FY26. A new matrix will be utilized to review contracts and invoices. Bremner is confident internal processes meet these new requirements.
- HHS is moving forward with redistricting. HHS has established a workgroup and will be holding six meetings for the group to discuss recommendations. The workgroup will report out to the ECI State Board at their September 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Bremner will receive updates from colleagues on the workgroup's progress.

- The FY26 budget was submitted to the State by the June 1 deadline. Contracts have been issued to funded partners for FY26. One contract is still outstanding (West Des Moines School District), and a placeholder has been added to the budget for Oak Academy's funding. Bremner met with the agency this week and will be meeting with them again soon to review this contract.
- The HHS Continuum of Care grant deadline is today, June 25<sup>th</sup>. The awards will be announced July 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Members were asked to reach out to their legislators thanking them for their service, taking the time to meet and discuss Early Childhood issues this past year, and their continued support of children and families.
- Bremner has met with several of our funded programs to discuss FY26 contract changes.

### **Board Appreciation:**

Bremner thanked Westergaard for her 8 years of service on board, sharing her expertise and serving as Board Chair in FY20; Barron for his 7 years of service and sharing his political and advocacy expertise, and Morales for her 6 years of service on the board, sharing her knowledge and legal expertise and continued daily work with children and families.

Bremner thanked Cohrs for her leadership and guidance over the past year and Chilton for her work as Vice Chair.

### **Old Business**

- None

### **New Business**

- None

### **Public Comment**

- Kristy Vasey with Child Care Resource and Referral thanked the board for their support over the years. Although CCR&R will no longer be receiving funding from Polk County ECI, they will continue to look for ways to collaborate.

### **Adjournment**

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

Cohrs adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.