



**POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING**  
**United Way of Central Iowa**  
**Leadership Room**  
**August 27, 2025**

**Voting Members Present:** Alicia Chilton, Kevin Abler, Suzanne Cohrs, Sam Early, Shay Scholtes, Megan Schultheis; Participating via Teams Jake Al-Mazroa, Tabitha Choquette; Stephanie Giusto, Crhistian Ramirez; Dave Arens joined via Teams at 12:08 p.m.

**Voting Members Absent:** Jessica Bruning, Matthew Klemme, Josh Laraby, Eric Tubbs, Stephen White

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Brooke Rosenberg, Emily Westergaard

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

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

**Guests Present:** Ruaa Khaleefa, Child Care Specialist, Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI); attending online: Alyssa Barton, Service Coordinator, (LSI); Liz Crane, Director of Early Childhood Services (LSI)

**Welcome**

Board Chair Alicia Chilton welcomed members and called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 11:33 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Guest and board member introductions were made.

**Approval June Minutes**

Minutes of board meeting June 25, 2025, were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

*A motion to approve the June 2025 minutes was made by Suzanne Cohrs and seconded by Shay Scholtes. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

**Final FY25 Financial Report**

Bremner presented final FY25 financial statements for School Ready and Early Childhood grants. Final expenditure reports were included in meeting materials. These totals were tied to the general ledger for FY25. These numbers were used to complete the required Annual Report Financial Statements which have been reviewed and signed by the fiscal agent.

School Ready Carry Forward was \$85,408.66 plus \$37,223.82 in interest earned. Early Childhood Carry Forward was \$106,422,67 plus \$12,831.43 in interest earned. The total of \$241,886.58 is carry forward in the FY26 budget.

*A motion to approve the Final FY25 Year End Reports was made by Sam Early and seconded by Suzanne Cohrs. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

Bremner presented an investment summary for FY25 which highlights program outcomes and expenditures. She also presented the FY26 budget in the expenditure report format.

### **FY25 Financials for Annual Report (Policy 1.2)**

Bremner reviewed the state-generated financial reports. These reports, a board member matrix, and the final local board expenditure report are required for submission by September 15<sup>th</sup> and will be uploaded via iowagrants.gov. The FY24-25 Early Childhood and School Ready year-end reporting documents tie to the FY25 final expenditure report. Board fiscal agent has reviewed the documents and will sign prior to submission.

*A motion to approve the FY25 Reporting Documents was made by Sam Early and seconded by Kevin Abler. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

Dave Arens joined via Teams at 12:08 p.m.

### **Board Member Job Description and Affirmation (Policy 2.2)**

#### **Member Attendance (Policy 2.10)**

#### **Board Member Conflict of Interest**

Members received the Board Member Job Description and Board Member Attendance documents. Chilton reviewed the documents. Members are asked to contact Bremner if they are not able to attend a meeting.

Members were asked to complete the Affirmation of Willingness to carry out duties of Board Member document and return to staff.

Members were asked to complete the Board Member Conflict of Interest & Annual Disclosure FY26 form if they have not already done so and return to staff.

Christian Ramirez departed the meeting at 12:14 p.m.

### **Gabrielle Brooks Application**

Members received Gabrielle Brooks' board member application. Brooks has experience with policy development and has legislative experience serving as a staffer for Representative Rob Johnson. Bremner has met with Brooks and shared the board member responsibilities and the meeting calendar with her.

*A motion to approve Gabrielle Brooks' board member application was made by Suzanne Cohrs and seconded by Megan Schultheis. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

### **Committees: Audit, Executive**

Chilton reported the board is seeking volunteers to serve on the Audit and Executive (previously the Advocacy Committee) committees. She is seeking volunteers for each committee.

Audit committee reviews monthly financials and examines the expenditure reports closely. The committee meets the week before the monthly board meeting to review the financials and reports to the full board.

The Executive committee will focus on policy and legislative issues and provide strategic planning to respond to developments over this fiscal year. Suzanne Cohrs and Sam Early volunteered.

Members were asked to contact Bremner or Chilton if interested participating on either committee.

#### **FY26 Executive Director Annual Goal (Policy 3.4)**

Bremner reviewed her goals for the year which are submitted annually to the board. These goals will be included in the executive director review which will be conducted by a committee in the spring.

*A motion to approve Bremner's FY26 goals was made by Suzanne Cohrs and seconded by Shay Scholtes. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

#### **Association of Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards and Advocates**

Chilton discussed the work the Association of Early Childhood Iowa Area Boards and Advocates and the critical role they played last fiscal year. The Association hires lobbyists Eide/Walton to represent ECI at the Capitol. ECI area boards are members. Board members are asked to contribute to the annual Association membership fee to ensure the board is not using only grant dollars to fund board membership. Chilton will email members with details on ways to donate. Donations are voluntary, tax-deductible, and anonymous. Goal is 100 percent participation of members with each individual determining the donation they are comfortable with.

Members discussed the Association's approach during the legislative session. Members encouraged Bremner to push for a more proactive and vocal approach this year.

Dave Arens and Brook Rosenberg departed the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

#### **Administrative Report**

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

- The next State board meeting is Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. Bremner will share details. Board members were encouraged to attend and share concerns with the board during the public comment period.

Kevin Abler departed the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

- EMBARC's Parent Navigators have been collaborating with ISU's Small Talk program to learn the importance of communication for babies.
- EveryStep and LSI have been working together well through the Coordinated Intake contract. EveryStep will hold a quarterly stakeholder meeting September 29<sup>th</sup> from 3 – 4 p.m. in the United Way Conference Center. Board members are welcome to attend.

- Foster SQUAD has created a eQuip Hub for families to list needs and community members to donate items or make a donation.
- Healthy Birth Day, Inc. is hosting a community baby shower October 17<sup>th</sup>. Bremner will meet with Rachael Muhs, director of Corporate Partnerships, to see how Polk County ECI can help support the event and how to involve our partners.

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

None

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjournment**

*Sam Early made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Suzanne Cohrs seconded. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.*

Chilton adjourned the meeting at 12:56 p.m.