POLK COUNTY
EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA

POLK COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA BOARD MEETING
United Way of Central Iowa
ICOACH, 4300 Beaver Av, Urbandale, IA 50310
September 23, 2026

Voting Members Present: Shay Scholtes, Jessica Bruning, Andrea Arens, Janelle Carlson, Suzanne Cohrs, Sam Early, Paige Moore, Megan Schultheis, Nalina Thandayuthapany; Participating via Teams Tiara May-Sims joined via Teams at 8.00 am.

Voting Members Absent: Kevin Abler, Gabrielle Brooks, Alicia Chilton, Quinlan Riser, Brooke Rosenberg, Stephen White

Ex-Officio Members Present: Dave Arens

Ex-Officio Members Absent:

Staff Present: Barb Bremner, Nathan Soley

Guests Present: Michael Machnowski, EveryStep Healthy Families America Supervisor; via Teams: Alyssa Barton, LSI Home Visitation, Service Coordinator; Amy McClaughlin, LSI Director of Early Childhood Services

Welcome
Board Chair Shay Scholtes welcomed members and called the Polk County Early Childhood Iowa Board meeting to order at 8:17 a.m. Quorum was met at this time. Guest introductions were made.

Approval August Minutes
Minutes of board meeting August 26, 2026, were presented. There were no comments or corrections.

A motion to approve the August 2026 minutes was made by Sam Early and seconded by Suzanne Cohrs. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Expenditure Report of July and August
Josh Laraby presented the expenditure report for July and August 2026. This report reflects first invoices for many but not all contracts. Column D “Service Type (Tool O) indicates seven contracts which are reporting using a new service type this fiscal year. Row 44 is the budget for the contract work of Nathan Soley to provide administrative assistance. Rows 45 and 46 are non-contracted funds.

A motion to approve the July and August 2026 expenditure report was made by Laraby and seconded by Jessica Bruning. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Contract Monitoring Schedule

All ECI areas are required to submit a contract monitoring schedule to HHS by September 30th. (See contract Amendment A) Barb Bremner reviewed the spreadsheet she will submit and use for monitoring contracts. This document will be uploaded to iowagrants.

Scholtes asked Bremner to clarify that the contract monitoring schedule is the sole document other than monthly fiscal tracking spreadsheet required for submission to HHS on September 30th. Bremner confirmed.

A motion to approve the Contract Monitoring Schedule for fiscal year 2026 was made by Cohrs and seconded by Andrea Arens. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Administrative Report

- Bremner's Administrative Report was included with today's materials.
- Annual report documents were uploaded to IowaGrants on August 27th
- August fiscal tracking spreadsheet was uploaded to IowaGrants on September 4th.
- EveryStep Polk County Area Maternal and Child Health and Home Visitation Stakeholders Meeting will take place September 28th. Quarterly convening of this group is part of the Coordinated Intake contract. The first local coordinated intake meeting was September 15th.
- Association of ECI Area Boards and Advocates convened 12 ECI directors on September 3rd to review Iowa Code 256i which establishes ECI and the ECI state board. This process is to prepare for HHS efforts to modernize 256i. Association members created draft of recommendations for revisions or removal of language. The Association Board of Directors met with HHS September 11th to discuss the process and a desire to cofacilitate a small group to provide input on revisions to code.
- Association Board of Directors met on September 16th.

Laraby asked if there is a deadline for the code revision work. There is not. Miller asked for clarification regarding HHS actions and if this is connected to state-level efforts to improve government efficiency. Miller inquired whether there are any actions board members can take to influence in process of HHS efforts to "modernize" 256i.

- The ECI State Board met on September 11th; Bremner was unable to attend. Board passed a "noncompliance policy" outlining State Board steps and responsibilities for response to local area boards which do not complete compliance-related activities by deadlines. Board approved the merger of Mahaska & Wapello board with the seven counties Lee, Van Buren, Des Moines, Henry, Louisa, Washington, Muscatine.

Early asked if this merger results in the largest board for Iowa. It is the largest geographically but not by child population.

ICOACH

Boaz Nkingi, executive director of Iowa Community Outreach and Center for Healing (ICOACH), discussed his journey to Iowa and to his leadership of ICOACH. He described the creation of

ICOACH during COVID to respond to needs of the community, especially school age students. He described how this led to the organization providing early learning for children to prepare them for success in kindergarten. The preschool program has 3 classrooms with three teachers, three assistants, and 40 students aged 3-5. ICOACH has a Level 1 in Iowa's IQ4K quality initiative, and Nkingi projects they will receive a Level 5 in Iowa's IQ4K in 2-3 years.

Old Business
None

New Business
None

Public Comment
None

Adjournment
A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Cohrs. Moore seconded the motion. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Scholtes adjourned the meeting at 9:13 a.m.

Boaz Nkingi provided a tour of the classrooms followed the meeting.