

Policy Council Minutes

05.06.2021

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Natasha Busch, Sarah Crowley, Kim Dykes, Brandi Galarneau, Keri Kavouras, Miranda Kay, Sherri Lafollette, John Lobato, Lindsey Sellers, Dana Webb-Lewis

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Alaina Ryan, Linda Lorette, Lesa Larson, David Powell, Shanna Rector, Scott Gardner

CALL TO ORDER: David Powell called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: Kim Dykes motioned to approve the agenda as presented. John Lobato seconded the motion and the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS: Brandi Galarneau motioned to approve the Consent Agenda Items as presented. Keri Kavouras seconded the motion and the motion carried.

TRAINING: COVID Spending Discussion

Linda presented a handout containing Round 1 and Round 2 of COVID budget expenditures. Round 1 in the amount of \$419, 191 was used for 2020 summer school and additional teacher assistants, mental health, maintenance, and transportation salaries. It also covered health insurance, FICA, unemployment and Work Comp salary expenses. COVID-19 supplies were purchased and funds also helped with technology support and building utilities. Round 2 funding in the amount of \$143,562 will be used to provide 2021 and 2022 summer school for preschool students.

Heartland received notification of a 3rd round of funding in the amount of \$570,731. This funding is for the next two years. We also received a program instruction (ACF-PI-HS-21-03: FY 2021 American Rescue Plan Funding Increase for Head Start Programs) that was emailed to give members a chance to review it prior to the meeting. The document provides Office of Head Start recommendations for spending COVID funds. The Office of Head Start strongly encourages programs to use funds to provide additional weeks of learning for children, whether providing summer school or extending the school year. Three different categories of how to use the funds were outlined:

1. How to reach more families
2. How to get facilities ready for in-person services
3. How to support Head Start employees

Since this is one-time funding, we must ensure spending will not require future costs once the COVID funding expires. Examples are hiring additional staff, etc.

The non-federal match was waived. We will not need to document in-kind for these funds.

Improvements are being planned for playgrounds to encourage children to spread out as they play and provides for less sharing of items.

Kim Dykes asked if we were able to hire additional staff to help with absences due to illness during COVID-19? Linda said, Heartland hired four new Teacher Assistants to fill in during teacher and TA illnesses this school year.

Kim Dykes asked if we are able to use the funds to help staff with professional development expenses? Linda explained that Heartland already pays for schooling for staff, including CDA expenses and college expenses with training dollars, but we could use these funds to provide additional schooling if needed.

Heartland is required to decide how the money will be spent by May 18th. Lesa said we are considering expanding the kitchen area because it is very close quarters for the kitchen staff. We have also considered providing a sick room for children. We created a temporary sick room this school year.

Lesla asked outlying sites parents to talk to their teachers and think about how we can use funds in our outlying sites to be more effective during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kim Dykes asked if it is possible to provide parents with home-based learning supplies (such as crayons, markers, etc.) for parents to use during home visits? Linda said we are able to provide those supplies.

We currently have four hot-spots that are being used by staff for home visits. We will be adding more for home-visit use when our cell phone contract expires in July.

Keri Kavouras asked if Heartland can use COVID funding to provide team building opportunities for staff? She believes it is good for staff to get away from the building and have opportunities to connect with each other. She also suggested bringing in guest speakers or going off-site to team-build. Lesa said we are able to use funds for staff wellness and development.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Lesla Larson reported Nicole Weigel received the KHS A Head Start Teacher of the Year award. She has also received the Region VII Teacher of the Year award.

In place of our Art Show, we had an Art Walk. It's been fun to see all of the colorful art in the hallways. Outlying sites did some special things. Enterprise shared a video of all of the children outside with their art projects.

Heartland will be receiving 17 additional surveillance cameras. We have had some vandalism on our playgrounds.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Past Parent Election

David Powell and Sarah Crowley nominated themselves to serve as Past Parents for the 2021-2022 school year. Brandi Galarneau motioned to accept their nomination. Lindsey Sellers seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Virtual Meeting Reflection & Discussion

Fourteen Policy Council members responded to the Policy Council virtual meeting survey sent out in April. The responses to the virtual meetings were positive. Some people miss the opportunity to interact and sometimes technology made Zoom meetings more challenging, but overall, it was a success. Outlying sites members found it especially helpful. They appreciated not having to travel out of town to attend meetings.

The May 6th meeting was the first hybrid meeting held at Heartland this year. Some members attended in person, while others preferred to attend virtually. This was a successful test to see how well this option will work next year.

There was discussion about using COVID funding to purchase updated equipment to improve virtual meetings in the future. It was recommended we keep a hybrid option available for in-person and virtual meeting attendance during the 2021-2022 school year.

Potential Community Representatives

Lindsey Sellers suggested adding someone from Salina Area Tech. They are working on providing an early childhood education degree program. Shana suggested we contact Greg Nichols, who might be interested or would be able to suggest someone.

Brandi Galarneau suggested Dr. Natalie Davis with the Women's Clinic on Santa Fe be added to the list.

Lindsey Sellers motioned to approve the Potential Additional Community Policy Council Community Representatives with the addition of the suggested names. John Lobato seconded the motion. The motion carried.

USD 305 Preschool Report

The USD 305 Preschool report was presented to the Policy Council in the May PC packet. The report included funding information, as well as current enrollment information. Lesa announced, beginning 2021-22, all USD 305 elementary schools will house a USD 305 preschool classroom. Preschool children with an IEP or 4-year olds who meet At-Risk qualifications will qualify for half-day preschool in their home elementary school. The USD 305 Preschool classroom currently housed at Heartland will move to Heusner and the USD 305 Preschool classroom housed at Hageman will move to Meadowlark.

Miranda Kay asked about transportation services for the USD 305 Preschool classrooms. Shanna Rector said transportation is available to special education children if it is determined necessary as a part of their IEP. General education students must live at least 2.5 miles from the school and can only be transported to and from their home.

Parents as Teachers Report

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) report was presented to the Policy Council in the May PC packet. The report provided enrollment information, as well as outcomes for each objective. Lindsey Sellers said, "If anyone wants to receive services for their child, PAT does a good job serving all levels of students. I appreciated having a supportive person I could run things past. It was nice to have a person I could throw ideas at who would offer support." PAT collaborates with Early Head Start, Regional PAT programs and Infant Child Development.

APM Report

Lesa reported last month's APM meeting was held virtually and face-to-face. R7HSA director, Clarence Small, discussed the importance of involving Policy Council members in making decisions about COVID-19 spending. Tonight's COVID-19 spending discussion led by Linda Lorett was important to ensure Policy Council received information and had an opportunity to give feedback and ideas. COVID spending will continue to be a standing item of discussion during future Policy Council meetings to keep parents informed and give them an opportunity to provide as much input as possible.

Tooth brushing in the classrooms was a major topic. Heartland classrooms have not allowed tooth brushing this year due to COVID-19. Starting July 1, 2021, Heartland will begin a dental health campaign for families. Family Consultant Specialist, Sherrie Scott has applied for a Delta Dental grant. We will

begin providing toothbrushes, tooth brushing timers, and other resources to promote dental health. We do not know if students will be able to brush teeth in classrooms next year. We are still waiting for more guidance as it comes available.

Tommy Sheridan with NHTSA talked about specific priorities, including promoting COVID-19 vaccinations and an upcoming update to the Head Start Reauthorization. In 2007, Head Start released a new Reauthorization. The Office of Head Start is beginning the process again, and Eligibility Criteria will be a focus area. Heartland Program Coordinator, Casy Ziegler is currently on the national committee looking at the eligibility portion of the new Head Start reauthorization. Next year we should have more information about the direction they are heading.

Peggy Kelly served as the Executive Director of the Kansas Head Start Association for many years. She will be leaving KHSA to care for her aging parents and is currently serving virtually from Minnesota. KHSA is actively seeking a new director to take her place.

Self-Assessment Plan Update

The Self-Assessment Plan update was presented. The report listed four areas to strengthen, the plans of action for each area, and the actions taken to strengthen each area.

In light of COVID-19, Heartland came up with creative solutions for recruitment. We revised our recruitment committee and have created recruitment videos for all program options that have been effective for use on social media, etc.

To increase community connections, we have a staff member who is out in the community looking for opportunities to partner and exchange referrals. The group delivered baskets to the medical community to thank them for their support of our program. Each basket contained brochures, applications, etc. to hand out as needed.

In December, Heartland began a quarantine support project for families and staff providing assistance with non-perishable food and household items (laundry detergent, etc.) during quarantine. Heartland staff demonstrated overwhelming support for the project and provided enough items and funding to last through April.

ACF-IM-HS-21-01 Updated COVID-19 Fiscal and Administrative Flexibilities

This information memorandum, released on April 14, 2021, outlines fiscal and administrative flexibilities and waivers due to COVID-19, allowing Head Start Programs to do their jobs more efficiently. It provides flexibility for the SAM registration, no-cost extensions on expiring awards, the allowability of costs not normally charged to awards, extension of single audit submission, flexibility related to physical inventories, and waivers and other flexibilities.

The waivers allowed Heartland to purchase supplies for home visits and work bags and send them home to families. Prior to COVID-19, this was not an allowable expense. Head Start programs were required to keep these items in the building for use in the classrooms.

Prior approval waiver requirements have been increased from \$5,000 to \$25,000 so programs are not required to complete the waiver as often. Heartland used this flexibility to purchase equipment we needed for the Abilene Head Start playground without a waiver.

These flexibilities allow for the waiver of non-federal share requirements.

Thank Outgoing Policy Council Members

Heartland presented outgoing Policy Council Community Representative, John Lobato with a framed art piece from a Heartland preschool student for his five years of service to the Heartland Policy Council.

Lesia thanked all Policy Council members for serving during this difficult year and for their flexibility as we navigated COVID-19. Heartland has actually seen better meeting attendance through virtual meetings, so that was an unexpected bonus this year. We appreciate the time and dedication shown by each Policy Council member.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY REPORTS:

Brandi Galarneau reported her son was diagnosed with epilepsy. They are working with doctors to find a medication that will work for him. He is walking and climbing on things. She attended the Mom's Group meeting last month. During the meeting, moms discussed their desire to get the Dad's Group started again.

David Powell reported Logan is doing well in Head Start. Behaviors stemming from sensory issues due to autism have improved this year. Potty training is still a work in progress.

John Lobato (CKMHC Director of Children Services) reported a dramatic increase in the number of families and children coming in for services the past few months. There are a lot more people reaching out for help as COVID is tapering off. They have received a lot of referrals through the school partnership program. As we see COVID wind down, they are beginning to see the impact the pandemic has had on children and families in terms of mental health issues such as anxiety and mood disorders.

Dana Webb Lewis reported Carson tumbled off his bed last month and broke his elbow. He had surgery, which included an overnight stay in the hospital. Dana said the doctors and nurses were wonderful with both Carson and herself, as this was a major event for all of them. His Head Start teacher, Ms. Cyndi stayed up-to-date with Carson's recovery and sent get well pictures from all of the Head Start students. She was very appreciative of the encouragement. They are looking forward to next week's end-of-year event. It's being held outside and there are many activities planned for students and parents.

Natasha reported her twins attended their Kindergarten Round-up meeting. They will be attending Oakdale in the fall and will be in separate classrooms. They both had their first dance recital and she just received notice her children will be able to attend her graduation from KU Medical. She will take her state test and begin her new job after taking a few weeks off.

This is the final meeting of the 2020-2021 school year. Meetings will resume for the 2021-2022 school year in September.

Brandi Galarneau motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:13 p.m. Keri Kavouras seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Alaina Ryan, Administrative Assistant and Sarah Crowley, Policy Council Secretary