

# Policy Council Minutes

## 12.03.2020 via Zoom

**Voting Members Present:** John Lobato, Dana Webb-Lewis, Abigail Stoll, Keri Kavouras, Kim Dykes, Brandi Galarneau, Natasha Busch, Lindsey Sellers, Vicki Geiber, Sarah Crowley, Sherri LaFollette, Jazmine Ukens,

**Non-Voting Present:** Lesa Larson, Linda Lorette, Rachel Haberman, Alaina Ryan, Susan Tucker, Tabitha Morris, Scott Gardner, Rhonda Smith, David Powell, Darcy Pigg

**Call to Order** – David Powell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**Changes & Additions to the Agenda:** The 2021 Recruitment Plan and 2021-2022 Selection Criteria have been tabled until the January meeting. Kim Dykes motioned to approve the updated agenda. Keri Kavouras seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Approval of Consent Agenda Items:** Kim Dykes motioned to approve the Consent Agenda Items as presented. Brandi Galarneau seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**Training:** Home Visitation During a Pandemic

### **0-3 Home-Based Family Consultant, Susan Tucker**

Early Head Start, home-based Family Consultants have been creative in their efforts to continue serving families during the COVID-19 pandemic. Right now, Heartland is providing virtual home visits through January due to the high number of COVID-19 cases in Saline County. During the virtual home visits, they read books to the children, and hand out the book to the families so the parent can provide repetitive book reading opportunities at home. They utilize finger play and puppets because children are more attracted to the movement activities and puppets during virtual home visits. Family Consultants make up packets for the parents to complete with the child each week. They provide flyers, community resources and suggestions. After the family completes the packet, they discuss it during their virtual home visit. The families shares what was difficult and what was fun. This allows the Family Consultant to change up the activities based on the needs of that family. We ask our parents to utilize our website and the Heartland Facebook page. The parents often send pictures to Family Consultants of the child completing the projects at home. Many parents are feeling isolated due to COVID and it has become more difficult for them with a young child at home. Parents are encouraged to call their family consultant if they have questions or need help.

Susan shared that families who struggled with technology in the beginning have been able to receive help from community resources to receive the internet or phone service they need to participate in virtual home visits.

### **0-5 Parents As Teachers Family Consultant, Tabitha Morris**

Parents As Teachers home visitors serve and visit with families who have children prenatal to 5 years of age. They provide many of the same virtual services as the EHS HB program. A majority of visits have been focused on COVID fatigue, adult self-care, community resources, building goals, etc. Family Consultants put together packets with activities the families can enjoy together. The FC drops them off on their front porch each month. Family Consultants take stress off parents by providing well-thought out activities to meet developmental milestones. Salina Parents As Teachers has a new Facebook group for the current PAT families. The group provides an opportunity for conversations, parent-to-parent connections, and support to families during this time.

### **3-5 Preschool Family Consultant, Rachel Haberman**

3-5 Family Consultants provide a monthly virtual visit to the families of children in our preschool classrooms. During a typical home visit they get to know each other, provide classroom information, and resources. Family Consultants are able to put packets and information in the children's backpacks. There are many things the family consultants feel have been positives resulting from the virtual platform. Facebook pages have been created for each classroom. The teachers and Family Consultants share information and pictures on the Facebook pages. This allows the parents to see what's happening in the classroom. It provides a link for them to be involved in their child's classroom since they are not able to be in the school building. A large portion of parents work and the virtual home visits make it easier for them to meet. Zoom meetings allow for others to be involved in the home visit, such as mental health staff, IEP staff, or teachers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused some drawbacks. Family Consultants are finding it a little harder to build relationships with parents because they're not interacting with them in their homes. Technology can be a struggle for families if video or voice is not working, etc. Sometimes it's harder to get the information to the families. Family Consultants are looking at better ways to line that up. It's easier for parents to forget the meetings because someone isn't knocking on their front door.

Heartland staff are looking at the positives and learning as they go. FC's really miss seeing the parents, both in school and in their homes and look forward to doing that again.

Heartland provides remote learning options for families who are worried about their child getting sick at school. Heartland teacher, Madison Cox teaches a remote only classroom and children who are in quarantine receive packets and can participate in video learning.

#### **Director Update:**

Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>, children began wearing masks at Heartland. The Kansas COVID work group recommended 3-4 year olds wear masks. The infants and toddlers are not required to wear masks. Kids are resilient and they are doing well. We are providing kid-sized disposable facemasks. The children are good about wearing them. We give reminders, but do not get in struggles if the child refuses.

Heartland enrollment is currently below normal. The federal government is allowing programs across the US to have lower numbers due to the COVID pandemic. Similar to Head Start programs across the US, Heartland is operating at 75% of funded enrollment. We are continuing to recruit families and are establishing a new recruitment committee. We are excited about the number of Heartland staff who are passionate about recruitment who will be participating as committee members.

The USD 305 School Board provided box lunches from Bravo for all staff on Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>. That was a great surprise. Thank you to the BOE.

Lesia invited Early Education Specialist and Coach, Rhonda Smith to share information on the status of Heartland's new coaching process.

Rhonda shared that Head Start requires programs to have a coaching process. Coaching provides support for teachers and their processes to improve outcomes for children we serve. Rhonda is actively coaching seven teachers. Head Start recommends working with nine to eleven teachers, so at the next committee meeting for coaching, Rhonda will suggest opening it up to Teacher Assistants. Heartland uses a research-based program called Practical Based Coaching. It is a cyclical process where the coach talks with the teacher about areas they would like to improve on and goals are set. Rhonda will observe the teacher in the classroom. After the observation, Rhonda and the teacher reflect feedback is

provided. Rhonda meets with the teachers every week, either for reflection or by providing supporting emails, resources, and trainings. She is intentional about supporting teachers and helping them achieve their goals. Implementing the coaching process has been very challenging due to COVID. Rhonda serves partner classrooms and outlying sites classrooms, as well as the classrooms in Salina. She is utilizing Zoom, email and other alternative options to stay in contact and support teachers. Building trust with teachers is a priority. They have seen great successes and goals achieved. Rhonda is looking forward to seeing how it will look in the future.

#### **Old Business:**

Lesia Larson shared Heartland's Self-Assessment Plan for 2020-2021.

There are four focus areas included in the plan:

1. Recruitment of Children and Families
2. Improve Communication
3. Improve and increase connections between Heartland and the community
4. Expand Heartland involvement with the issue of food insecurity

Natasha Busch motioned to approve the Self-Assessment Plan for 2021 as presented. Brandi Galarneau seconded the motion. The motion carried.

#### **New Business:**

##### **Outcomes – 1<sup>st</sup> Checkpoint**

The Fall 2020 child assessment scores were provided to the Policy Council for Head Start 3-5 year olds, 3 year olds, 4 year olds, Early Head Start, Integrated Preschool classrooms, and Parents As Teachers. Lesia discussed the baseline findings.

Natasha Busch asked about the low nature and science scores. Lesia explained the assessment was completed at the beginning of the school year, so these are baseline scores. After more discussion, Lesia decided she will provide more information about these areas of assessment and outcomes in an email to the Policy Council in the near future.

Dana Webb-Lewis asked if classrooms are following a STEM or math curriculum? Lesia shared, Heartland uses CORE Curriculum. It provides science and math activities, and it is up to the teachers how they want to present them. Some teachers use their own activities.

John Lobato asked if COVID has affected the assessment scores since children not being in class? Lesia responded that COVID has affected outcomes. Children missed 2 ½ months of school at the end of the school year and had limited summer school access. Our children are attending less hours. Teachers have expressed concern about literacy and language skills because children and staff are wearing masks. Children can't see the expression on a teacher's face when they read to children. We've tried the clear masks, but they fog up and are not effective. Face shields are not considered safe, so a mask has to be worn in addition to the shield. We aren't brushing teeth, we are not doing family-style dining. All of these skills are not being taught this year and we know these things will impact the children and their outcomes as this pandemic continues.

Sarah Crowley said as a teacher in the school district, they are beginning to realize children who are put in quarantine, or are out of school for long periods of time are seeing negative affects. They try hard to make it up, but nothing compares to being in class. It's unfortunate, but it is the reality right now.

### **Policy Update CDE003 Child Care Partner EHS CDA - Vote**

Updated policy CDE003 – Child Care Partner EHS CDA was presented to the Policy Council for approval. Natasha Busch motioned to approve updated policy CDE003 Child Care Partner EHS CDA as presented. Brandi Galarneau seconded the motion. The motion carried.

### **Recruitment Plan – Vote – moved to January**

### **Selection Criteria – Vote – moved to January**

### **Budget Process Discussion**

Linda Lorette opened discussion regarding the budget process for the 2021–2022 school year. Although it seems like it is a long way off, there is a lot of planning that goes into completing the budget. The Policy Council Executive Committee is automatically part of the budget committee. Any Policy Council member is welcome to join the committee. Anyone signed up to be part of the committee will be contacted in the next 45 days to schedule a meeting. The committee will begin discussing the budget. Eighty percent of Heartland’s budget is salary and benefits. The committee will look at the classroom make-up and sizes and how staffing needs to look for next year. The remaining funds will be divided out among the other sections, such as supplies, training, operating expenses, utilities, etc.

### **Parent/Community Member Reports:**

David Powell reported his son loves Ms. Joslyn. Although he struggled in the beginning, he enjoys riding the bus. He is doing well.

Brandi Galarneau reported her son is pulling himself up using furniture and he can say “Da Da.”

Darcy Pigg reported she is excited her daughter Autumn is ready to age up to the transition classroom. She should be starting in January. She has received a lot of compliments saying how smart she is. She is counting to five and beginning her ABC’s. It’s fun to see how quickly she is learning and picking up on everything. They are excited to see how well she does with the transition into the new classroom.

Vickie Gieber with the Quality of Life Coalition shared the Tobacco Quit Line is running a promotion until January 31, 2021. If anyone who is pregnant or has an infant, if they smoke or vape, they are eligible for free resources for themselves or their baby. Call quit line (1-800-QUIT-NOW) for free sessions to create your quit plan. Then call the kids network and you will be eligible for a free portable crib and a wearable blanket. Vickie will send the information to Alaina to share with the group.

Natasha Busch reported both kids had cavities last month. They will have fillings the end of December. Aurora has a surgery coming up at the end of December.

Sarah Crowley reported Keara is in Ms. Callie’s class and they are studying fables. Callie sent home activities to complete at home along with a survey on *The City Mouse and Country Mouse*. Keara can recall the story and discuss it. It’s been interesting with COVID, seeing more resources being sent home and it’s been helpful.

Dana Webb-Lewis reported in Ellsworth, the kids were required to begin wearing masks after the Thanksgiving holiday. Ms. Cindy has done a good job helping the kids transition. Her son has sensory issues and is struggling with it. Cindy and her team are really good about working with him. They sent home information to help the children get comfortable with the mask. It’s still a struggle, but seeing the rest of his peers wearing masks will be a benefit for him and as time goes on. Thank you to Head Start

for all the precautions they are taking to keep everyone safe. It is very calming. Hopefully, next month they can report that he is wearing his mask.

Vickie Gieber motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:07p.m. Keri Kavouras seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for January 7, 2021.

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