

Policy Council Minutes --- 01.11.2024

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Dawne Letorneau, Chelsea Luffman, Macy Young, Tricia Fry, Kelly Mobray, Shelly Peters, Jennifer Svaty & Sarah Crowley.

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Scott Gardner, Lesa Larson, Linda Lorett, Shanna Rector, Jasmine Corral & Jenny Reyes.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Udana Arceo, Stephanie Armer, Christina Helvey, Brittanie Most, Jacque Peterman & Casy Ziegler.

CALL TO ORDER: Jenny Reyes called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

CHANGES AND ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS: Sarah Crowley motioned to approve the Consent Agenda. Kelly Mobray seconded the motion; motion passed.

TRAINING: Michelle Hellmuth (Education Coordinator) explained that Conscious Discipline is helpful, effective and very different from traditional methods. Conscious Discipline gives children a purpose and makes them feel like they matter. Michelle asked members what they remembered about their classroom when they were a child and what methods were used for classroom discipline. Some responses were, *“losing recess, nose on chalk board, slap of a ruler on my hand, color strips”*. Michelle explained that all the above was never effective and those methods are not used at Heartland. Conscious Discipline helps combat bully prevention. Heartland creates a culture of giving children the big voice to use. Heartland can create that school family and reassure every child matters. Jenny Reyes asked how they implement CD when children are not able to communicate properly. Michelle said, *“you’re saying it for them, same thing with social emotional. Having a conversation with them out loud. Naming the emotions is important.”*

DIRECTOR UPDATE: There has been no update regarding Federal Review. We completed the review a month ago and Lesa is hoping to receive the final letter at the end of January or beginning of February. Once Lesa receives the final letter, she will share it with the Policy Council members. Revisions of the proposed Head Start Program Performance Standards comment period ends January 19th. All programs are encouraged to comment.

OLD BUSINESS:

Under Enrollment status and letter from OHS- Heartland received a letter from the Office of Head Start and, from an excerpt, it reads, *“OHS strongly encourages grant recipients not on track to reaching full enrollment to consider submitting a change-in-scope application to request an enrollment reduction or slot conversion based on community needs.”* Lesa explained that we need to hire staff but if we do, we still have staff leaving because teacher assistant wages are low. Scott Gardner asked how far is Heartland from making this goal? Lesa responded, *“Covid-19 made an impact on Heartland, its still a puzzle for us. Our goal is for assistant wages to start at \$15 and lead teachers at \$18, at a minimum.”* Mr. Gardner shared information about one of his past jobs where wages were paid in such a way that an employee could “max” out in five years which was significant for staff retention.

NEW BUSINESS:

Self-Assessment updates: Lesa reviewed progress made on our annual self-assessment goals.

Budget Committee Meeting: Linda reported Heartland received the annual notification from the Office of Head Start and our Federal grant is due April 1st. If any PC member would like to attend the meeting, it will be held on January 23rd at 5:30pm. The meeting should take one hour and we will provide a boxed lunch and childcare will be available. If you would like to attend the meeting, please let Jasmine or Lesa know. We will send a notice out a week before the meeting.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY REPORTS:

Tricia Fry passed out flyers regarding extra breast-feeding supplies. You can donate new or gently used items to the Saline County Health Department "Bosom Buddies" initiative. Items needed are new or gently used nursing bras and clothing, items for breast care, and unused or reusable nursing pads. Contact Saline County Health Department for questions or information.

Chelsea Luffman motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:58pm, Dawne Letorneau seconded the motion; motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Jasmine Corral, Administrative Assistant