

# Policy Council Minutes

10.05.23

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:** Udana Arceo, Christine Helvey, Dawne Letorneau, Chelsea Luffman, Brittanie Most, Jacque Peterman, Kelly Mobray, Shelly Peters, Jenny Reyes

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:** Lesa Larson, Linda Lorette, Shanna Rector, Jasmine Corral, Casy Ziegler & Sarah Crowley.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Stephanie Armer, Tricia Fry, Jennifer Svaty and Scott Gardner.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Sarah Crowley called the meeting to order at 5:01pm.

**CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:** There were no changes or additions to the agenda, aside from a spelling correction.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:** Jenny Reyes motioned to approve the Consent Agenda Items as presented. Udana Arceo seconded the motion; motion passed.

**TRAINING: POLICY COUNCIL OVERVIEW:** Lesa Larson first started by giving thanks and appreciation to everyone who attends Policy Council and represents Heartland. Lesa reviewed the Policy Council booklet and briefly explained the background of Heartland and Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), which must be followed. Head Start programs are required to establish and maintain a formal structure for program governance that includes a governing body, policy council and a parent committee. Lesa shared that 10% of our enrollment includes children with special needs. Heartland believes children learn best through play. Our classrooms follow a research based curriculum and assessment. We promote social-emotional learning and focus on the whole child. Linda Lorette oversees Fiscal, Human Resources, Mental Health and Nutrition Department, to name a few; oversee specific areas while making sure we are adhering to HSPPS. Lesa reviewed the Leadership and Governance Wheel, organizational chart and frequently used abbreviations. She explained the Head Start Governing Structure and shared decision making to ensure parents of the children enrolled in our program can participate in policy making and other decisions that impact the program at the local level. This opportunity is supported by a formal structure of shared governance between the USD 305 School Board and Heartland Early Education Policy Council. Lesa expressed that if parents have any questions, to ask. We want our members to know they have a voice regarding decision-making. Lastly, Lesa reviewed the Guidelines for Parent and Community Reports during Policy Council meetings. The Code of Conduct and Confidentiality form was signed by Policy Council members, in attendance.

**DIRECTOR UPDATE:**

Lesla presented a slide show, revealing before and after renovation photos. Renovations are almost complete and include:

- Four new bathrooms in classrooms.
- New flooring throughout the Salina building.
- New adult bathroom in Early Head Start wing.
- Beautiful, expanded kitchen. Lesa shared how flexible and understanding our kitchen team has been during renovations.

Udana Arceo commented that the new renovations look amazing. Jenny Reyes also expressed how she enjoyed the presentation and seeing the before and after photos.

Lesia also informed the council about the potential government shut down and gave assurance that Heartland will be okay because our grant cycle begins July 1 and funds are already secured for this year.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **Federal Review- Hand out**

Lesia reviewed the FY24 Focus Area protocol. There will be a federal review this year and we will receive a letter 45 days in advance. The Focus Area 2 (FA2) is a five-consecutive day review event that will consist of onsite data collection, interviews and observations led by a Review Team Leader and virtual reviewers. Lesia also handed out the Monitoring Event Guide. The Governing Body and Policy Council serve important roles in monitoring and oversight. These groups guide Heartland to make decisions that focus on programmatic goals and meeting the needs of the community. During the Focus Area 2 monitoring event, reviewers will meet with members of the Governing Body and Policy Council for separate interviews. These two discussions will allow reviewers to gain an understanding of the Grant recipient. Lesia will work with Policy Council to prepare for the federal review discussion.

### **Under Enrollment Status**

Lesia reviewed Heartland's under enrollment plan. We are under enrolled because we are under staffed but have this year to achieve our goals. October 15<sup>th</sup> ends our first quarter. This plan impacts Head Start only.

- Goal One: *Fully staff current classrooms.* Since last month, we have offered three positions to Teacher Assistants. We organized two job fairs within the last two months. One was held August 9, the other September 20. In total, 16 people attended and interviewed.
- Goal Two: *Hire staff for two closed classrooms.* The 'Refer a friend' program has been implemented. If a staff person refers a friend and Heartland decides to hire, that employee will receive a bonus. At this time, we don't have plans to open these classrooms in the near future but this remains a goal.
- Goal Three: *Hire staff.* Heartland will provide support and pay for CDA completion. If any staff is interested in getting their BA or AA, Heartland will pay for courses; a perk of Head Start.
- Goal Four: *Purchase a small bus.* We have started this process.

Udana Arceo asked, "What will happen if your quarter ends and goals aren't met?" Lesia responded, "We need to be flexible and reflect on what we can do differently." Lesia also stated that if goals aren't met at the end of the time period, we will look at enrollment numbers more closely. Udana Arceo asked, "How many children will fill up those closed classrooms?" "Sixty four students" Casey Ziegler said. Christina Helvey asked, "Is this just the Salina area needing help?" Lesia responded, "We are needing a Float TA in Ellsworth." Chelsea Luffman asked, "Is the Abilene classrooms closed?" "Yes." Lesia said.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Election of Officers**

Chairperson: Udana Arceo nominated herself for Chairperson. Dawne Letorneau made the motion. Jenny Reyes seconded the motion. After the vote, Udana Arceo was elected for 2023 Policy Council Chairperson.

Vice Chairperson: Udana Arceo nominated Jenny Reyes as the Vice Chairperson. Jenny Reyes accepted the nomination. Kelly Mobray made the motion. Udana Arceo seconded the motion. After the vote, Jenny Reyes was elected for 2023 Policy Council Vice Chairperson.

Secretary: Will be postponed for next month.

### **Parent Committee Sign-up**

Casy mentioned the first meeting of the year for Health Services Advisory Committee will be October 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **Annual Report**

Casy reviewed the annual report and all the different services we offer with the three different counties we serve, (Salina County, Dickinson County & Ellsworth County). Casy explained the effects of COVID-19 continue to suppress enrollment numbers. Lack of staff also kept one Early Head start classroom and most Head Start classrooms below capacity. The closures represented the loss of 72 Head Start and four EHS slots. The Early Head Start program averaged 91% of full enrollment throughout the year. The Head Start program only averaged 75% of full enrollment through the year and only 67% during the nine-month school year.

### **PARENT/COMMUNITY REPORTS:**

- Kelly Mobray's program (Salina Adult Education) is offering courses to the community. People whose first language isn't English or if someone is needing more credits should apply. The start date is November 13. Jenny Reyes asked about dates and times. "For ESL, Monday-Wednesday 8:30am-12pm and Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:30-8:30pm." Kelly said. Their website is [www.305adulthoodeducation.com](http://www.305adulthoodeducation.com).
- Dawne Letorneau shared information that Family Dollar (Abilene) will be having a costume contest and will be offering fun activities such as a bounce house, games, horses & trick or treating. It will be on October 21 2-4:30pm.
- Udana Arceo explained how she picked up a job which requires her to be away from home, which now leaves her husband going to doctor appointments, visitations alone, etc. She expressed how grateful she is for her life outside of her home.
- Shanna Rector expressed her beliefs that no matter what is going on, Heartland always rises to the challenge. She has great confidence in the staff.

Dawne Letorneau motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:16 p.m. Udana Arceo seconded the motion; motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Jasmine Corral, Administrative Assistant