

## Children First Board retreat and meeting minutes

5-23-19

### Keosauqua

At 9:40 am the spring retreat of the Children First board was called to order by board chair, Mark Meek with the following present:

Dave Kirchner, Mike Linnenbrink, Amanda Manning-Maras, Mark Meek, Chad Reckling (left at 2:00 pm just prior to budget recommendations), Kayla Schwartz, Amanda Swan, and Director Ginger Knisley. Meagan Vogel arrived at 10:00 am during the Introductions and Board Report Out

### **Introductions and Board Report Out**

Ginger shared the input from the ECTF meeting earlier in the week. ECTF members shared that they find great value in the CCNC and Dental programs. There have been a few calls requesting preschool scholarships. There is some concern about the quality of the CPR trainings being provided by instructors other than the CCNC. Kayla shared that she is an instructor and perhaps some arrangements could be made through her to supplement the community trainings being offered.

Kayla shared that the Family Connections in Lee County are decorating stepping stones with the children as a family activity at their classes.

Chad led a discussion on the need to shift the public conversation toward viewing early childhood programs as a public utility. Discussion took place about the needed relationships with the business sector such as chambers and economic development. It was discussed if there were ways to access health and safety funding for this. There was discussion of whether this should be tax funded or major business/employer funded. Chad would advocate for full day care at school district sites similar to Danville for the benefit to the families and the districts alike.

Mike shared that the local bishop had conversations with legislators in Des Moines regarding early childhood issues and he found this hopeful that other sectors are showing interest.

There was a discussion of the changes needed in IA code in order to have background checks be portable so the EC workforce can be more flexible and we can explore the options of staff sharing across EC sites.

Dave questioned what the status of immunization rates is in Iowa. Chad shared it is generally good compared to other parts of the country but it was noted that the Amish population and home schooled children are not necessarily included in that data.

A great deal of conversation was centered around Mental Health issues, such as the lack of providers in the area, lack of collaboration across providers, lack of funding to support the mental health system, and the many unknown issues with the newly forming children's mental health system. Meagan shared that there is a severe lack of providers in the area and the main psychiatrist in Keokuk is retiring at the end of May 2019.

### **Community plan review with summary of goals and priorities**

*Under goal one of Promote professional quality child care business*

It was noted that there is still no resolution to the child care issue in Donnellson and investigations are ongoing. There is still a potential for a crisis there and change of some kind is likely. Some of the barriers to goal one include high cost of providing care, low pay and benefits for staff, and lack of portability of background checks.

*Under goal two of Cultivate a local mental health system that is clear and accessible*

Chad noted that this is the one area the board does not directly address or do well at actively supporting. Much discussion took place on this topic. Meagan shared she is doing some consulting with Counseling and Associates to provide training on working with families. Kayla expressed that dementia needs to be addressed as well, as it affects the entire family and the caregivers. Ginger shared that PCAI has now supplied each of our counties with public awareness materials that may help with awareness and bringing the system together in a more collaborative way. Some tele-health services are being utilized for mental health services. Meagan believes families need guidance on what services are available through which providers such as provider A is where you go if you need medications, provider B is where you go for counseling services or therapy, etc. The new children's mental health bill was discussed and the issues around it being an unfunded mandate which does not provide more services but rather a coordination of services. Due to the retirement of Dr Kantamneni in Keokuk there was a brainstorming on other mental health options in that community which include the new Great River clinic, CHC and counseling at the old Planned Parenthood building near the hospital. It was also noted that there are a lot of grandparents bringing children in for mental health counseling.

### **Board Strategic Plan**

Board members reviewed the strategic plan and talked about the gaps in applications for funding. It was discussed that the board may choose to reserve funds to specifically target issues such as mental health through a separate funding process after the fiscal books have been closed on the current year and the actual funds for FY20 are known. Also under strategic plan the board reviewed proposed performance benchmarks for family support programs across the state and they are not in favor of putting restrictions on who the programs serve. They noted that every community and program is so different and that certain populations may not fit into a certain category but still benefit greatly from services. In regards to performance measures for the ECI Directors, board members will think about what role the directors fill in the community and collaborative efforts and email their thoughts to Ginger. Board membership was reviewed and it was agreed that recruitment, especially of male members in Van Buren County is needed in the near future. As of July 1 there will be no Human Services representative on the board and possibly no Education representative as Alka is not here today and has not responded to multiple emails. Kayla is going to visit with YMCA staff, Mandi is going to visit with a retired teacher, and Mike gave Ginger the name and number of a retired teacher.

#### **Application Review and Budget Discussion**

Ginger shared that VB PAT had approximately \$1,400 in surplus funds on their salary line item and would like to use that money for equipment and supplies they cannot normally afford. It was agreed by consensus that they can proceed with those purchases.

Ginger shared that Lee County Head Start had as much as \$7,000 unspent largely due to not being able to provide transportation in Ft Madison this year. The board has been paying for the Keokuk driver, fuel, some repairs as well as the insurance and repeater expenses for both sites. They would like to bill the remainder of the allocated funds for the bus monitors back to the start of the year. The application for funding showed bus monitor expenses in the budget but the narrative stated Head Start would pay for them. The board agreed by consensus that they are not in favor of back billing or spending the full allocation when services were only provided in one of two sites the entire school year.

With those two decisions made the board reviewed the estimated available funds and the proposed administrative budget for FY20 to determine the funds they had available to award to the FY20 applicants. The administrative budget was accepted as written.

Each application was reviewed and board members led the discussion of what they scored each item on each application. Score sheets were turned in to Ginger at the end of the discussion.

Items of note:

CCNC – Chad feels this should be funded by IDPH instead of local ECI boards

Partners for Success – Chad feels this is duplicative of CCR&R although historically CCR&R has not provided a great deal of services in our area and their consultant is spread out over multiple counties. Chad did recognize that Cheryl has a real talent for hosting conferences and trainings for providers and has long term established relationships with providers and community entities. It was discussed what the actual benefit of the increased funds would be. Ginger shared that this proposal addresses issues of lack of ability to respond to a failing or new center as well as the idea from local advisory committees that there is a need for intense mentoring to avoid crises before they happen. Kayla shared that Cheryl has the ability to see what is not working and help providers to correct it before it becomes a crisis.

VBPAT – There was discussion of why the number of families is going down over time. Ginger shared that there is more focus on intensity and quality of services rather than the number of families served. There was a great deal of discussion of the program not meeting the goal of 2 visits per family per month. Several options were discussed including fiscal disincentives moving forward.

Lee Head Start – The board feels strongly that Lee County Head Start needs to partner with the school districts for transportation. They believe the practice of owning the busses and employing drivers etc is not cost effective. The board is not in favor of awarding more than current levels and don't feel the need is really justified. They note that children seem to make it there with or without transportation.

Sieda – History of the funding was discussed as well as the status of services moving forward with the changes due to district consolidation. It was discussed that this funding was originally intended to assist with the start up of the partnership and was intended to sunset over time.

HOPES – The board is pleased to be told more families are working. Mike has serious concern for program reports that many participants are drug users and he does not feel entirely comfortable supporting the program. He feels this makes it not align with Children First goals or state results. It was noted that participants must qualify as high risk and must be enrolled prenatal or soon after birth.

Dental – The board would like to look at considering expansion into home provider sites. One suggestion to increase consent rates would be to set up at family nights or orientation nights to get the consent forms signed in person.

Chad left the meeting at 2:00 pm.

**Budget recommendations:**

HOPES – requested amount of \$70,345

VBPAT – requested amount of \$137,808.22 with request for one month time study for each person funded by Children First in order to see what the time is being used for other than actual home visits. The board wishes to address the issue of not meeting the goal of 2 visits/family/month and this is a first step.

Dental – requested amount of \$20,207

Lee Head Start – level funding of \$20,000 with the notice the board intends to sunset funding for this program in the next three years at the most

Sieda – requested amount of \$19,812 with the notice the board intends to sunset funding for this program in the next three years at the most

CCNC – requested amount of \$51,117 with the understanding that billing will not take place for months in which there is a gap in CCNC services should that happen

Partners for Success – requested amount of \$39,682

In house – EC Summit - \$2,500

In house – Forums - \$2,000

Balance of EC and SR funds to be set aside for quality improvement efforts and potential new projects to address gaps in the community

**Business meeting called to order at 2:08 pm** by board chair, Mark Meek

There was a **motion** by Mike with a second by Dave to approve today’s agenda with the addition of approving the fiscal agent agreement under item # 4. All voted aye.

There was a **motion** by Kayla with a second by Amanda Manning-Maras to approve the minutes from the last meeting as written. All voted aye.

Ginger gave a brief Director report including updates on board business, legislation, and the statewide directors meeting. She requested that the August meeting of the board and ECTF be moved to August 8<sup>th</sup>. It was agreed by consensus to move the August meeting date.

There was a **motion** by Amanda Manning-Maras and a second by Dave to accept the financial report for April 2019 expenditures. All voted aye.

There was a **motion** by Kayla with a second by Amanda Swan to approve fiscal agent agreement for FY20 between the Children First board and Lee County. All voted aye.

There was a **motion** by Kayla with a second from Amanda Manning-Maras to approve the FY20 budget according to the above recommendations made during the board retreat with noted stipulations. All voted aye.

There was no response to a call for public comment.

There was a **motion** by Mike with a second by Dave to adjourn the meeting at 2:18 pm. All voted aye.

The next meeting of the Children First board will be Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am at a Ft Madison location to be announced. This will be the annual organizational meeting of the board to include officer elections.

gk