

Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 23, 2025, 3:00pm
603 Mc Cleary St, Dowagiac

Section #	
1.	<p>Welcome and Preliminaries</p> <p>Board Members in Attendance: Brian Saxton, Michael Mompremier</p> <p>Board Members voting through email: Arthur Havlicek, Linda Tinsley, Danielle Persky, Haylei Shepard, Sara Parkhurst</p> <p>Guests in Attendance: Chanda Hillman CEO; Laura Burtis CFO; Sam Ohland Finance Manager; Kevin Wordelman COO; Marybeth Johnson HR Director; Melanie Bullock Workforce Development Manager; Ivette Bucio Communications & Engagement Coordinator; Patti Masters EHS Education Director</p> <p>Quorum was met.</p> <p>Brian called meeting to order 3:10pm</p>
2.	<p>Approval of Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. * Approval of Excused Absences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Arthur, Danielle, Linda, Kacee, Haylei, Sara b. * Approval of Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Addition: Section 5 item C – Referral Program <p>Brian motioned; Michael seconded. Motion carried.</p>
3.	<p>Consent Agenda Items</p> <p>(A consent agenda allows the board to approve all these items together without discussion or individual motions. Please be sure to review these items prior to the meeting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. * Board Minutes – August Meeting b. * Directors Reports – August/September <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. HR Dashboard: Continued efforts in hiring; retention remains a challenge this year. Apprenticeship program currently has 17 participants, 2 will complete this semester, and 7 are enrolling for next semester. There are 22 open positions, primarily classroom roles requiring certification. Five new hires came from the apprenticeship program. b. Family Services Report: Nothing unusual to report.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Development Report – Continued funding from the foundation that supports the Development Directors position. d. Education Report: Enrolled in Harvard’s Authentic Leadership Program. Teachers are participating in a book study focused on curriculum and Conscious Discipline. Emphasis on maintaining high ratings through Great Start to Quality as this directly affects family tuition rates. Participated in MHSA learning opportunities. <p>Michael motioned; Brian seconded. Motion carried.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Report from the Finance Committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. * Finance Reports – August/September: nothing outstanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. In-Kind: Concern about meeting the annual goal. Laura will submit a waiver; however, we are unsure that it will get approved. b. Bids for Food Transport Vans: Recommendation to purchase the 2025 Ford Transit 250 AWD for \$118,102.20 c. Main Office HVAC System: Replacing one of the AC units, estimated cost \$8,853.24. The furnace will be replaced in the spring. <p>Michael motioned; Brian seconded. Motion carried.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Board Decisions (Motions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. * Policy Council By-laws <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Updated to reflect the organization’s new name, Flowers Early Learning, and revised member composition due to the loss of funding for the Great Start Collaboratives. <p>Brian motioned; Michael seconded. Motion carried.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. * Head Start Continuation Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Year 2 budget narrative. Eliminating a bus route; adjusting some staff schedules to program year instead of full year and to 35-hour work weeks. Anticipating an 18–20% increase in health insurance costs and eliminating the medical opt-out option. b. Training and Technical Assistance and Cost Allocation Plan: reviewed <p>Brian motioned; Michael seconded. Motion carried.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. * Referral Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Temporary initiative aimed at attracting more employees. <p>Michael motioned; Brian seconded. Motion carried.</p>
	<p>Board Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Goals and Strategy: Focus areas include staff wages, service expansion, affordability, workforce strengthening, expanding Board expertise, and strategic growth. b. Millage Research: Discussion about potential for a community millage; exploring available support programs.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Tuition-Based: Beginning enrollment billing with the CDC, which will significantly reduce tuition costs for families. Four tuition slots are available to start in Millburg. We need staff to open the classroom in DEC for 16 total slots there.
6.	<p>Board Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Post-COVID challenges continue in meeting in-kind contribution goals. Waivers are no longer included in grant applications. Laura will still be submitting one, however, we are unsure it will get approved. b. Over a 7-year period, volunteer hours have decreased by 77%, despite only a 10% drop in the number of volunteers. c. Not meeting in-kind requirements can result in loss of funding.
7.	<p>Board Process Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pleasure of the Floor: Discussion on the impact of the federal shutdown if continued through November 1st. Approximately 65,000–70,000 children may be affected, including nine programs in Michigan. b. SNAP benefits and WIC halted.
8.	<p>Executive Session</p>
9.	<p>* Adjournment and Post Meeting Assignments</p> <p>Michael motioned to adjourn; Brian seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned 4:24pm</p>

*Denotes approval needed

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, November 20, 2025 3:00pm, 305 W Douglas St, Bangor