



Policy Council Minutes

Wednesday, August 27, 2025, 5:30 pm

Main Office: 775 Hazen Street, Paw Paw

1. Welcome and Introductions

Policy Council Members in attendance: Haylei Shepard (Niles), Kahli Lorenz (Cass PC Chair), Sydney Whittker (Watervliet Treasurer), Kristin Survoy (New Buffalo), Jenilee Moody (Berrien GSC), Mellody Buzalski (Cass GSC), Sherry Bennett (Van Buren GSC)

Policy Council Members voting via email: Khyra Kimble (Millburg HS), Samantha Litaker (SMC), Kieshazsa Davis (Millburg EHS)

Guests in attendance: Chanda Hillman CEO; Laura Burtis CFO; Kevin Wordelman COO, Maureen Ovington Development Director; Patti Masters EHS Education Director, Laura Brugh Family Advocate, Juanisha Young Family Advocate, Tiffany Perkins Family Advocate, Evelia Alcaraz Family Advocate, Trent Lamonds Family Advocate, Belinda Russell Family Advocate, Ivette Bucio Communications and Engagement Coordinator

Quorum was met

Kahli called meeting to order at 5:41 pm

2. * Approve Minutes – June Meeting
 - a. Mellody motioned; Sydney seconded. Motion carried.
3. * Directors Report – June/July
 - a. Applications open for four tuition-based slots at Millburg
 - b. Grant application submitted for one-time supplemental nutrition funds. We should know if we are approved by the end of September.
 - c. Chanda is mentoring two new Directors through the UCLA Mentorship Program
 - d. Millburg site is certified as a Nature Explore Classroom. Carolyn Hanson will visit the outdoor space tomorrow.
 - e. Full Enrollment Initiative ongoing; program not yet fully enrolled
 - f. Anticipating federal review this year; preparation needed for staff, Policy Council and Board

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- g. HR Dashboard
 - i. 15 staff enrolled in SMC and Michigan Works! Apprenticeship Program (2–3-year completion timeline)
 - h. Family Services Report
 - i. Development Report
 - i. DEC attracting potential volunteers; Rotary Club expressing interest
 - ii. \$1,734 raised by Mo’s family and friends
 - iii. Niles FOF event led to Chamber Buzz presentation and Congressman Walberg’s visit to SMC classroom
 - 1. Walberg indicated potential funding decrease
 - j. Student Outcome Report
 - i. Data shows growth
 - ii. Summer attendance declined among EHS studentsJen motioned; Mellody seconded. Motion carried.
 - 4. * Finance Report – June/July
 - a. Administrative costs are projected to end at 12%
 - b. In-Kind Contributions: \$600,000 YTD; goal is \$1.6 million with six months remaining
 - i. Bangor and New Buffalo centers met August goals; Bangor consistently meets/exceeds monthly goalsJen motioned; Mellody seconded. Motion carried.
 - 5. *Form 990
 - a. Annual tax returnJen motioned; Sherry seconded. Motion carried.
 - 6. * Emergency Preparedness Plan
 - a. Reviewed and edited by two police departments
 - b. Each center to develop action plans for various emergency scenariosMellody motioned; Jen seconded. Motion carried.
 - 7. * Program Information Report (PIR)
 - a. Summary report presentedMellody motioned; Jen seconded. Motion carried.
 - 8. * Teacher Waiver – Janiya Wilson
- Sherry motioned; Mellody seconded. Motion carried.
9. * Data & IT Coordinator Job Description
- Mellody motioned; Sherry seconded. Motion carried.
10. Education
 - a. Brief overview of Robert’s Rules of Order
11. Communications

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- a. State and Federal Updates
 - i. House budget expected September 9
 - ii. Anticipated funding decrease per Walberg
 - b. Facility Update – Cass County
 - i. Cass site expected to reopen next Tuesday following a 3-week electrical issue
 - c. Church in Dowagiac lease in progress; we plan to offer tuition-based slots and reestablish before/after care
 - d. Project T on track for next fall; DEC classrooms to relocate
12. Report from Centers
13. Report from Great Start Collaboratives
- a. Berrien: Oh Baby! event was highly successful
 - b. Cass: Mobile clinic starting October, 17 enrolled in Doula training
 - c. Van Buren: Promoting alternatives to screen time and social-emotional learning initiatives
14. Pleasure of the Floor
15. * Adjournment
- Mellody motioned; Jen seconded. Motion carried.
Kahli adjourned the meeting at 7:25pm.
- *Denotes approval needed

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 22, at 5:30 pm at the Watervliet Campus, 188 Lucinda Lane, Watervliet

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