



Policy Council Meeting Minutes
Cassopolis – 725 Center Street, Cassopolis, MI, 49031
Wednesday, October 23, 2024, 5:30 pm

1. Welcome & Introductions

Policy Council Members Present: Kahli Lorenza (Cassopolis – PC Chair), Sydney Whittker (Watervliet EHS – PC Treasurer), Hailey Marbut (Bangor – EHS – PC Secretary), Kelsey Warner (Dowagiac), Kristen Survoy (New Buffalo EHS), Mellody Buzalski (PC Community Member – Cass GSC)

Policy Council Members attending via Zoom: Mary-alice Wirick (Niles – PC Vice Chair)

Policy Council Members approving via email: Amanda Simpson (New Buffalo HS), Samantha Littker (SMC), Sherry Benett (PC Community Member – Van Buren GSC)

Quorum was met.

Guests: Chanda Hillman (CEO), Laura Burtis (CFO), Cindy Fisher (Cass Director), Mandy Orlando (HS Education Director), Trent LaMonds (Family Advocate), Ivette Bucio (Communications and Engagement Coordinator), Ana Moreno (Family Advocate), Laura Brugh (Family Advocate), Jodi Curran (Family Advocate), Holly Pomranka (Family Services Manager), Tiffany Perkins (Family Advocate), Amanda Vankosky (Conscious Discipline Coach), Eve Alcaraz (Family Advocate), Melanie Bullock (Community Inclusion Manager), Lindsey Coleman (Conscious Discipline Coach), Benny Russell (Family Advocate), Rut Vargas (Enrollment & Recruitment Assistant), Stacey Knuth (ERSEA Manager), Juanisha Young (Family Advocate), Trecia Davis (Family Advocate), Sarah Savage (Family Advocate), Kevin Wordelman (HR Director)

Kahli Lorenz called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM.

2. * Approve Minutes – August

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve, Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion passed.

3. * Directors Report – August/September

- a. HR Dashboard
- b. Family Services Report
- c. Fund Development Report
- d. EHS School Readiness – Marking Period 4

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve, Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion passed.

4. * Finance Report – August/September

- a. In-Kind
 - Sydney Whittker asked about in-kind goals and a potential South Haven LMC site.
 - Laura Burtis said the goal for in-kind was not met, hence the need for a waiver.

- Chanda Hillman said that additional sites through Kidzone would be toured, specifically the South Haven location.

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve, Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion approved.

5. *Grant Approvals

- a. OHS Non-Competitive Baseline Grant 2025-2030
 - i. Non-Federal Waiver asked for with grant in 2025-2026 year.
 - ii. Cost Allocation Plan
 - iii. T/TA

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve. Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion passed.

- b. State Water Filter Grant – to meet new state requirements for filtered water for all children.

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve. Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion passed.

- c. HPS Grant – Refrigerator Millburg

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve. Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion passed.

- d. PNC Grant – EXPO

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve. Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion passed.

6. *SMC Niles Feasibility Study

Kelsey Warner motioned to approve. Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion passed.

7. *Non-Federal Waiver 2024-2025 – waiver for current program year

Kelsey Warner motioned to approve. Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion passed.

8. *Project T (EPA Grant) – Potential project in Benton Harbor and partnership with Habitat for Humanity

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve. Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion passed.

9. *School Readiness Goals – Mandy Orlando, discussed each goal and asked for feedback.

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve. Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion passed.

10. *Teacher Waiver – Heidi Kuelbs

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve. Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion passed.

11. * Policies in response to New Performance Standards

- a. 101.2 Standards of Conduct
- b. 144.3 Individualized Professional Development Plans and Education Compliance Plans
- c. 321.3 Eligibility Determination
- d. 622.2 Family Crisis Intervention
- e. 648.2 Sensory Screenings
- f. 655.2 Zero Expulsion
- g. 658.2 Early Childhood Mental Health and Wellness Promotion

Flowers Early Learning's Mission: *To build a community where children, families, and communities thrive.*

- h. 659.2 Multidisciplinary Team
- i. 660.1 Reporting Child Health and Safety Incidents
- j. 661.1 Parent Permission for Health and Mental Health Services
- k. 662.1 Prenatal Health and Wellness
- l. 809.1 Inspection Requirements
- m. 135.10 Wage Scale

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve. Mary-alice Wirick seconded. Motion approved.

12. Head Start Program Performance Standards: 1302.90(e)Wages

- Working towards livable wages for employees, according to the livable wage data of the area. Pushes the need for fundraising, tuition-based centers.

13. Education – Conscious Discipline

- Amanda Vankosky said the team is implementing conscious discipline book study.
- "Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline" book club meeting in November, December, and in the spring
- 10 module online course for staff
- Parent chat offered each month
- Mellody Buzalski offered alternative online course and reading materials

14. Civic Engagement

- a. Vote
 - Kahli Lorenz said make sure to engage and vote
 - Chanda Hillman spoke about Fall and Spring conferences in Washington D.C. where people can engage with elected officials

15. Report from Centers – Several centers have had successful Family Fun nights and have launched their family committee meetings for the year.

16. Report from Great Start Collaboratives

- a. Cass County – Story Trails coming up along with a community babyshower.

17. Pleasure of the floor

18. Next Meeting Date – **Wednesday, November 20th - Millburg Center, 4821 North Street, Benton Harbor, MI, 49022**

19. * Adjournment

Mellody Buzalski motioned to approve. Sydney Whittker seconded. Motion Passed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:58 PM

*Denotes approval needed

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