

**JASPER, MARION, AND POWESHIEK (JMP) COUNTIES EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA
BOARD MEETING Minutes**

Foundation Offices at Ahrens Park, 1510 Penrose St. Grinnell, IA 50112
5:30 pm - Wednesday, January 29, 2025

County	Name	Present		Absent	Excused	Unexcused	Non-Board
		IP	V				
P	Patricia Hinrichs-(human services)- Board Chair		X				
M	Denise Bontrager (citizen)			X	X		
M	Brian Kingrey (education)- Board Vice Chair		X				
J	Mitzi Smith (faith)		X				
P	Doug Cameron (consumer)-			X	X		
P	Mary Lindberg (citizen) Board Treasurer		X				
J	Britney Schnathorst (citizen)		X				
J	Julie Wendl (health)		X				
M	Michael Kacmarynski- (business)		X				
	Amy Blanchard (Director)	X					X
	Brenda O'Halloran (CCR&R)		X				X
	Leann Andre (CCR&R)		X				X
	Danielle Kenworthy (Short Years Partnership)		X				X
	Megan Thompson (MICA CCNC)		X				X
	Alma Silva (MICA Family Connections)		X				X
	Julie Meeker (AHFA CCNC)		X				X
	Tracey Boxx (AHFA CCNC)		X				X
	Robyn Belden (MICA Family Connections)		X				X

- I. The meeting was called to order by Hinrichs, Chair, at 5:31pm.
- II. Roll Call: JMP board members present via Zoom include Hinrichs, Kacmarynski, Kingrey, Lindberg, Schnathorst, Smith, and Wendl.
- III. Public Comment: Silva reported on the December collaboration Read2Lead for enrolled families. Still working to recruit families. Belden added that Family Connections will be moving to the Parents as Teachers curriculum soon. O'Halloran reported 2 new IQ4K Level 1 achievements, a preschool and a center, as well as assisting with ERS training and providing fingerprinting services. Meeker and Boxx reported on CCNC services in Marion including a safe sleep referral and mid-year reporting successes. One nurse is on medical leave so only one CCNC is able to serve programs currently. Thompson reported MICA is still seeking a CCNC to fill the open position. Berstler and Heidi are filling gaps in the meantime. She relayed an impact story highlighting improving access to needed medical supplies at a center. Kenworthy reported on building staff capacity as she highlighted mid-year reporting data which included 320 home visits, eight babies born to families served, and 63% of families being at or below 125% FPL, which translates to more families being "high need" clients with higher incidences of domestic violence, homelessness, food insecurity, and new-parent challenges.
- IV. **Motion** to approve minutes of October 30, 2024 board meeting by Lindberg. **Seconded** by Kacmarynski. Kingrey abstained. Motion passed unanimously.
- V. Executive and Committee Reports
 - a. Treasurer's Report: Report current through January 24 was included in the board packet. Lindberg noted budget is 44% spent, which is notable since two programs have been

understaffed for at least 25% of the service year (CCNC and Family Connections). Report was filed for audit.

- b. **Preschool Scholarship Report:** Report was included in the board packet. Blanchard noted the number of children on scholarship is the same as in October. There is potential to add one or two children to the charitable fund support. Board received a draft email to all preschools to notify the potential loss of the scholarship program next year. Board indicated approval of the draft language. Discussion followed about programs that achieved IQ4K ratings in order to ensure continued scholarship support. Blanchard will add an acknowledgement of their effort and resend draft email to board for approval. Kingrey and others noted that budgets for next fiscal year are being prepared soon for school districts and other organizations so notification sooner rather than later is preferred.
- c. **ECI Director Report:** Report was included in the board packet. Blanchard highlighted the visit to the Condition of the State address and frequent meetings with other ECI directors to help smooth the transition from local ECI areas to new "districts". ECI Day on the Hill is slated for February 26 though it seems there is nothing for us to lobby for at this point.

VI. Old Business: None

VII. New Business:

- a. **RFP Schedule for FY26:** Blanchard informed the board of the current state of affairs for the future of ECI and how it affects the Requests for Proposal. Key highlights include:
 - i. The Continuum of Care grants proposed by the Governor will be funded at \$16 million, \$11 million of which will come from the annual ECI appropriation. To accommodate this in the ECI budget, Child Care Resource and Referral and Child Care Nurse Consultants will be funded by a different bureau. No RFP is needed for these programs. Programs have been notified of the change in funding source.
 - ii. Continuum of Care grants will be "reviewed" by ECI but, per the Governor's Vision for Iowa, will be administered in alignment with the Behavioral Health District (BHD) maps. The BHD maps are effective July 1, 2025. JMP ECI is split into two districts. It is unclear what the funding situation for FY26 will be for the districts and how the funding will be implemented. One proposal on the table is to contract with local ECI areas for six months, delaying the switch to the district funding until January 1, 2026. This would allow ECI area boards to spend carry-forward, prepare programs for the funding shift, and close out any open projects.
 - iii. ECI leadership indicated no RFP's should be issued. It may be possible to issue contract extensions for programs for six months instead of issuing new contracts.
 - iv. Priority for FY26 funding will be home visitation and Continuum of Care grants. Looking at current spending for ECI, that leaves very little funding available for other programs. Continuum of Care grants may fill some gaps for preschool scholarships but not to the extent JMP has been supporting families.
 - v. JMP board will take a comprehensive look at the budget and make decisions regarding spending for quality improvement grants and needs going in to the next fiscal year to ensure highest fiscal responsibility for funds allocated to our three counties while we still have decision-making authority.
- b. **Preschool Quality Improvement Grants:** After discussion, board indicated waiting a month or two before launching the application. Ideas to support the grant program include incorporating IQ4K rating as a weight, opening application to a wider audience to include child care centers, targeting

identified needs for grant funds in collaboration with CCR&R, and awarding funding in a competitive grant process. More information to follow pending decisions made by the Governor regarding funding for FY26.

- c. Q2 Daisey Family Support Data: Quarterly reports by county were included in the board packet. Family Connections is up to 17 families for the year, goal is 20.
- d. Behavioral Health District Map Overlay with ECI Areas: Blanchard shared the Behavioral Health District map and the conflicts with ECI areas. The contracts with Short Years and MICA Family Connections will not be adversely affected as their services areas do not cross district lines. It is unclear how ECI governance structure will be affected other than the local areas will be dissolved. New district boards will likely be formed and current JMP board members may elect to serve on the district boards.
- e. JMP Contract Monitoring Visits: Blanchard will confirm visit dates with contractors and still perform site visits.
- f. ECI Continuum of Care Grants: No information is available about the grant parameters yet. JMP board members may be able to play a valuable role in facilitating participation in the grants by school districts, child care centers, and preschools.

VIII. Adjournment: **Motion** by Wendl to adjourn. Next meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2025, at 5:30 pm via Zoom. Meeting adjourned at 6:49 pm.