

**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, October 15, 2025

| County | Name | Present | | Absent | Excused | Unexcused | Non-Board |
|--------|--|---------|---|--------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| | | IP | V | | | | |
| P | Patricia Hinrichs-(human services)- Board Chair | | X | | | | |
| M | Denise Bontrager (citizen) | | X | | | | |
| M | VACANT (education)- | | | | | | |
| J | Mitzi Smith (faith) | | X | | | | |
| P | Doug Cameron (consumer)- | | X | | | | |
| P | Mary Lindberg (citizen)- Board Treasurer | | X | | | | |
| J | Britney Schnathorst (citizen) | | X | | | | |
| J | Julie Wendl (health) | | X | | | | |
| M | Michael Kacmarynski- (business) Board Vice Chair | | X | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | Amy Blanchard (Director) | X | | | | | X |
| | Sara Paar (MICA Family Connections) | | X | | | | X |
| | Sheena Sullivan (Short Years Partnership) | | X | | | | X |

- I. The meeting was called to order by Hinrichs, Chair, at 5:30pm.
- II. Roll Call: JMP board members present include Bontrager, Cameron, Hinrichs, Kacmarynski, Lindberg, Schnathorst, Smith, and Wendl. A quorum was present.
- III. Public Comment: Paar reported that Alma Silva has left the parent educator role. Sullivan reported briefly about number of visits and number of families being served in Jasper and Marion counties.
- IV. **Motion** to approve minutes of August 27, 2025 board meeting by Kacmarynski. **Seconded** by Bontrager. Motion passed unanimously.
- V. Executive and Committee Reports
 - a. Treasurer’s Report: Report current through October 10 was included in board packet. Lindberg noted that spending was on track. Blanchard apologized for the formatting of the report but the template provided by HHS is not conducive to sharing. The layout is not editable but the amount of time it would take to recreate the report in a reasonable fashion is not worth the reward. Report was filed for audit.
 - b. Preschool Scholarship Report: Blanchard noted our projected spending on scholarships this year will reach \$63,000 pending the carry-forward allocation.
 - c. Director’s Report: Blanchard reported on the ongoing challenges of straddling two districts. She attended the Iowa EAYC Fall Institute and was recognized as the Children’s Champion award recipient thanks to the nomination from Brian Kingrey.
- VI. Old Business:
 - a. MICA Family Connections Curriculum and Staff Update: Per an email received on October 14, the Family Connections affiliate plan has been approved at the state level and was forwarded to the PAT national office. MICA is currently seeking to fill the parent educator position Alma vacated on September 22.

VII. New Business:

- a. FY25 Auditor Report: The independent accountant report was included in the board packet for review. There were no findings. **Motion** by Lindberg to approve the audit report. **Seconded** by Kacmarynski. Motion passed unanimously.
- b. Q1 Family Support Data Review: ECI directors do not have access to Daisey 2.0. Included in the board packet are email summaries of service provided which are difficult to read and comprehend. Shared with the board for full disclosure regarding the challenge facing both the programs and the board regarding oversight.
- c. FY26 Budget Update with Carry Forward: Blanchard highlighted the categories and projects that will be impacted by carry-forward funding including a new Dolly Parton Imagination Library initiative in Marion County, community awareness events in collaboration with local partners, possible health and wellness grants for child care staff in our service area, and retaining some funds to ensure we can successfully close out the board when we shift to districts. **Motion** to approve the carry-forward allocations as presented by Wendl. **Seconded** by Kacmarynski. Motion passed unanimously.
- d. District 6 Letter of Intent to Merge for Poweshiek County: The draft letter seeking the JMP board chair's signature was included in the board packet. Letter utilizes Tool U to seek to join counties identified in the HMA map to align with the behavioral health districts which would split the JMP ECI area into two separate districts. Hinrichs has participated in District 6 board-elect planning meetings for months. Board members discussed the purpose of the letter and inquired about the potential harm it could cause Jasper and Marion counties if Poweshiek County were to merge with District 6 with no plan of action on the table for District 5. Blanchard could not speak to the ramifications for Jasper and Marion if Poweshiek is included in the District 6 merge. Board members indicated they did not want to stand in the way of Poweshiek County's success but they also couldn't agree to relinquishing Poweshiek without a clear understanding of how that would affect Jasper and Marion counties. Blanchard referenced the State ECI board meeting scheduled for October 17 as potentially indicating what direction the State ECI board might take regarding districts. Board discussed a potential email vote to authorize board chair's signature on the District 6 letter pending more information from the State ECI board and HHS. Blanchard indicated a decision must be made by October 27 in order to be included in the letter presented to the State board by Friday, October 31. **Motion** by Kac to table the agenda item until further direction is provided by HHS and the State ECI board. **Seconded** by Bontrager. Motion passed unanimously. Blanchard will notify District 6 lead, Tasha Beghtol, and State ECI board member, Unity Stevens, of the JMP board's decision to delay signing the letter.

VIII. Other::

- IX. Adjournment: **Motion** by Bontrager to adjourn. Next meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2025 via Zoom at 5:30 pm. Meeting adjourned at 7 pm.