

**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, April 22, 2026

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

- I. The meeting was called to order by Hinrichs, Chair, at 5:30pm.
- II. Roll Call: JMP board members present include Bontrager, Hinrichs, Lindberg, Schnathorst, Smith, and Wendl. A quorum was present.
- III. Public Comment: Paar reported they have lost several families and they are down to 15. Nahmi is recruiting door-to-door and in the Headstart classroom. Sullivan reported Short Years has completed 610, 355 in Jasper. Program will host graduation at the Zoo again this year with 150 tickets donated by the zoo. Families with children “graduating” from PAT to enter kindergarten are invited to a family celebration in the park and a zoo visit.
- IV. **Motion** to approve minutes of February 25, 2026, board meeting by Lindberg. **Seconded** by Bontrager. Motion passed unanimously.
- V. Executive and Committee Reports
 - a. Treasurer’s Report: Report current through April 20 was included in board packet. Lindberg noted spending is on track and we are projected to carry-forward \$93,000. Report was filed for audit.
 - b. Preschool Scholarship Report: Blanchard noted JMP enrolled two students at Twin Cedars that will assist with costs dating to September. New language to be adopted by the State ECI board entails all families MUST apply for CCA regardless if families’ program of choice does not or cannot accept CCA.
 - c. Director’s Report: Blanchard noted that any update is old news by the time it is shared as things are moving that quickly at the State level. Blanchard is redirecting her attention to site visits, FY27 contracts, and planning for FY27. Budgets are due in Iowa grants by June 1. Things will have to progress quickly to meet the deadlines.
- VI. Old Business:

- a. HHS Early Childhood and Family Services Plan-New version of the bill (Monday afternoon) incorporates the ECI study language the AECIABA was advocating for. Blanchard guessed at different outcomes if bill passes or fails. HHS released an intent to release an RFP for lead public health agencies in the behavioral health districts. Current version of the bill shifts home visiting oversight to HHS no later than January 2028 and allows reinvestment of federal funds back into ECI on a sliding basis. Association registered in favor of the bill. Senate and House will vote at some point. The Senate blocked the Governor's nomination of current acting HHS Director, Larry Johnson. Legislative session went into overtime as of April 22.

VII. New Business

- a. WAGE\$ Contract: The JMP service area has 7 child care providers on a waiting list to receive WAGE\$ supplements, some for up to a year. **Motion** to approve a \$25,000 contract with Iowa AEYC WAGE\$ to serve child care providers serving in JMP-area child care centers/homes by Wendl. **Seconded** by Lindberg. Motion passed unanimously.
- b. FY27 Funding: The JMP board will likely be granted status quo funding for FY27 at approximately \$671,000. We may need to seek new contract services in order to spend appropriately. JMP is 12th of 30 ECI areas in total amount of funding statewide.
- c. FY26 Carry-forward projection: JMP approximates \$93,000 will carry forward into FY27. Blanchard reminded the board we reserved space in the FY26 budget to administratively close out JMP, which we fully expected we had to do as of last October. Maximum carry-forward is \$134,000
- d. Districting Outlook: Still unclear. There will likely be a merge in District 6 among two areas accounting for 7 counties.
- e. Contracting for FY27: Blanchard expects to renew contracts with Short Years and MICA Family Connections for home visiting services and GCELC for the sliding fee scale. Postpartum visits are yet to be determined. Blanchard will share budget template with programs for renewals.
- f. Board Membership: Board reviewed current succession calendar and discussed filling the vacant Marion County seat and releasing several board members that graciously agreed to serve beyond their expected terms through the ECI death spiral that began more than three years ago. Wendl and Schnathorst verbally agreed to stay on for another year. Lindberg would also be willing to serve if need be. Cameron has served the longest and should be granted a reprieve.

VIII. Other:

- IX. Adjournment: Motion by Bontrager to adjourn. Seconded by everyone. Per board discussion and impending deadlines with HHS, next meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2026 via Zoom at 5:30 pm. Meeting adjourned at 6:26 pm.