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, September 30, 2026

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	Carl Meck (business)- Board Treasurer			X		X	
P	Mary Lindberg (citizen)-						
J	Britney Schnathorst (citizen) Board Vice Chair		X				
J	Julie Wendl (health)		X				
M	Michael Kacmarynski- (consumer)		X				
	Amy Blanchard (Director)	X					X
	Keri Garrison (board candidate)	X					X
	Danielle Kenworthy (Short Years Partnership)	X					X
	Nahmi Lasley (MICA Family Connections)	X					X
	Sara Paar (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, Kacmarynski, Lindberg, Schnathorst, Smith, and Wendl. A quorum was present.

III. Public Comment: Sara and Nahmi shared challenges surrounding keeping families enrolled in the program. Current active enrollment is 13 families. Danielle shared that Short Years participated in Pella baby fair in September and hosted a group connection in Newton. Brief discussion about data capturing in Daisey. Both home visiting programs voiced frustration about tracking a "target" child as it undersells the total work done in the home during a visit. Most families have multiple children that are assessed, screened, and supported but Daisey focuses reporting on the target child only.

IV. **Motion** to approve minutes of June 24, 2026, board meeting by Kacmarynski. **Seconded** by Schnathorst. Motion passed unanimously.

V. Executive and Committee Reports

a. Treasurer's Report: Report current through September 25 was included in board packet. Blanchard noted reimbursements are on track for the three JMP contracts. Scholarship reimbursements will begin in October. Report was filed for audit.

b. Preschool Scholarship Report: Preschools have been notified about scholarship recipients. Blanchard noted English Valleys process will differ slightly from other preschools due to their tuition structure for wrap-around care charged per day. Charitable funding will be used if needed to cover the gap between the JMP maximum of $1,800 per child and the actual cost for the 3 year old. Discussion surrounding two applications for support for Pella Christian, which did not move forward as a VPP community partner this year. Two children are technically eligible for kindergarten, but only by a matter of days. JMP has not funded these children in the past. Board concurred we could support these two children.

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c. Director's Report: Blanchard drew attention to the lag time between submitting the Q1 claim and it getting paid by HHS. Blanchard also discussed the Thrive Iowa RFP to serve Jasper and Poweshiek counties that she expects will be released on October 1. Finding a willing entity that can carry the expense of three new FTE's for several months until reimbursements begin might be a challenge. Board brainstormed ideas briefly.

VI. Old Business:

a. ECFS bill/ECI study update- Meetings to inform the study are scheduled for October, with further oversight and finalizing meetings scheduled for November. JMP ECI has not been approached to move its home visiting contracts to HHS control, though the ECFS bill allows for such change.

VII. New Business

a. New JMP Board Member: Keri Garrison introduced herself to the group. She has served at Stepping Stones in Knoxville for 33 years, becoming the director in 2015. She brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and passion to the early childhood board. **Motion** to approve Garrison as a new board member by Bontrager. **Seconded** by Lindberg. Motion passed unanimously.

b. Conflict of Interest Summary FY27: Blanchard included a summary of responses from all board members for review.

c. Association of Early Childhood Area Boards and Advocates Membership and Dues: Discussion about the value of AECIABA advocacy over the past three years was favorable. Blanchard noted the ability to determine the funding split between administrative dollars and charitable dollars, with charitable funding able to support lobbying efforts. **Motion** by Bontrager to elect Blanchard as the JMP representative and split the $585 membership dues evenly between admin and charitable. **Seconded** by Kacmarynski. Motion passed unanimously.

d. FY26 Annual Report Data: Blanchard shared data summaries, cumulative report data, addendum reports, and home visitation information with the board.

e. FY27 Budget Discussion: Blanchard noted the budget submitted to Iowa Grants in June pre-allocated funding into budget lines based on projected carry-forward. No changes need to be made at this time. Blanchard is seeking a new provider for postpartum services and met a doula that offers baby-wearing classes to dads. Pending approval from ECI leadership, Blanchard will work towards a contract for this service. Coordinated intake is also a possibility in Marion County. The Thrive RFP will help inform some decisions.

f. JMP Board Policy Manual crosswalk plan: Blanchard thinks the current plan is to lean on AI to point out deficiencies. Blanchard prefers to defer work on the manual until after the ECI study so as not to put effort into a system that will be dismantled.

VIII. Other:

IX. Adjournment: **Motion** by Wendl to adjourn. Seconded by Bontrager for good measure. Meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm. Next meeting is scheduled for October 28, 2026 via Zoom.

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