



## NEMCSA Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center November 22, 2019



Welcome and Introductions of new and current members were made. Tricia Grifka, Early Childhood Services Director introduced the following staff members that were present at the training: Lisa Bolen, NEMCSA CEO; Rhonda Kuehn, Head Start Assistant Director; Katie Danks, Region 3 Regional Manager; John Head, Region 2 Regional Manager and Pam Badour, Head Start Administrative Assistant.

Tricia reviewed the agenda with members and outlined the goals for the day.

Lisa Bolen explained her position and discussed NEMCSA programs and services. Lisa also distributed the 2018 NEMCSA Annual Report and her Director's Report to the group.

Members viewed a short video "50 Years of Opportunity: Head Start's History".

### **"Get to Know You" Table Activity**

Katie Danks, Region 3 Regional Manager led the activity. Members of each table participated in a game centered around connecting our common experiences. It was a fun activity and a great way for everyone to get acquainted and share a little bit about themselves.

### **Ground Rules**

Tricia explained the importance of established ground rules for Policy Council which helps create a safe place to discuss things related to the program. Tracy Johnson reviewed each of the rules with members and asked if any other rules should be added. Additions to the Ground Rules are: "Take what you learn back to your communities", "What is said here, stays here. But what you have learned here, leaves here" and "Be here and be present".

### **Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Statement**

Members received a copy of the Policy Council Code of Conduct, Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Statement that the group will follow. Renee Miller reviewed it with members. They were asked to initial each item and to sign and turn in the form acknowledging that they understood the importance of each.

### **Orientation and Training**

Aubrey Haskill reviewed the Childcare Voucher & Mileage Reimbursement form with members. Reimbursement for mileage is currently at .46 per mile. Members were also told that odometer readings are necessary on the reimbursement form and that "trip odometer" cannot be used. Childcare reimbursement is currently \$3.00 per hour for 1<sup>st</sup> child and \$1.50 per hour for every child thereafter.

Tracy Johnson reviewed with members the "Blue Sheet" process of facilitating two-way communication between Policy Council and local programs.

Tricia invited current Policy Council members, Tracy Johnson, Renee Miller, Tina Schumacher, Aubrey Haskill and Amanda Kaley to partake in a panel discussion about themselves, their child/children, family and their experience with Head Start/Early Head Start and Policy Council.

### **Agency Overview**

Rhonda Kuehn presented a PowerPoint presentation on NEMCSA programs and services.

### **Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Handbook**

Pam Badour introduced the new Policy Council Handbook to members. This has been an ongoing project. The handbook contains information about what Policy Council is, Policy Council's "Job Description", the Roles and Responsibilities of Policy Council members, Program Governance, Code of Conduct, Confidentiality, Elections and Responsibilities of officers, how to conduct a meeting, and many other topics. The handbook is a reference guide for members to refer to throughout the year.

### **Head Start/Early Head Start Overview**

Tricia provided a PowerPoint Orientation and Training presentation to the group. The presentation included a program overview, funding and eligibility requirements and In-kind.

## **“Switch Sides” Activity**

John Head, Regional Manager for Region 2, led members in a “Switch Sides” activity that began by having everyone stand together on the same side to begin. John started the activity by saying “Switch sides if…” if the statement applied to them. Some of the statements were: “You prefer summer more than winter”, “You have four or more siblings”, “You prefer dogs more than cats” and so on. The activity was a lot of fun and got everyone talking and watching to see who switched sides and who had the same things in common with each other!

## **Introduction to Parent Involvement (In-kind)**

Non-Federal Share (In kind) was explained and discussed. Tricia told members that Head Start is a “no cost” program but not a “free” program. Members partook in a short video exercise, “Non-Federal Match: The Why, What, and How”. The video gave different scenarios of costs that are allowable and not allowable. It also explained the purpose of non-federal match, reviewed the regulations that guide non-federal match costs and explained what costs are allowable.

## **Business Meeting**

Vice Chairperson, Tracy Johnson called the business meeting to order at 2:10 pm.

### **Members Present:**

John Acker, Cynthia Frazer (Arnold), Jessica (Jess) Good, Laurie Gotham, Sabrina Griffus, Cassandra (Cassey) Harp, Lara Jankowiak, Jennifer Karas, Kate Miller, Renee Miller, Felicia Navarro, Elizabeth (Liz) Quesenberry, Ryan Rozewski

### **Prior Year Members Present:**

Aubrey Haskill, Tracy Johnson, Tina Schumacher

### **Members Excused:**

Katie DeLyon, Kandy Stahl, Danielle Steinbauer

### **Prior Year Members Excused:**

Rosemary Fields

### **Members Absent:**

Alexandra Berg, Jamie Gray, Shana Hall, Kaitlyn Sell, Christa Sheldon, Jesse Warren

### **Staff Present:**

Tricia Grifka, Rhonda Kuehn, John Head, Katie Danks and Pam Badour

## **Elections**

- **Approval of Community Representatives:** Tracy Johnson, Tina Schumacher and Rosemary Fields (who was unable to attend) were eligible to serve as 2019/2020 Community Representatives. A unanimous ballot was cast. Tracy Johnson, Tina Schumacher and Rosemary Fields will serve as the 2019/2020 Community Representatives.
- **Election of Chairperson:** Nominations: Tracy Johnson and Renee Miller. Nominations closed. Vote was cast by secret ballot. Tracy Johnson was elected 2019/2020 Policy Council Chairperson.
- **Election for Vice-Chairperson:** Nominations: Renee Miller. A unanimous ballot was cast. Renee Miller was elected 2019/2020 Policy Council Vice-Chairperson.
- **Election for Secretary:** Nominations: Jessica Good. A unanimous ballot was cast. Jessica Good was elected 2019/2020 Policy Council Secretary.
- **Election for the NEMCSA Board of Directors:** Tracy Johnson, Chairperson accepted her position on the Board of Directors. Nominations for three more positions: Renee Miller, Tina Schumacher, Ryan Rozewski, John Acker, Jennifer Karas, Elizabeth (Liz) Quesenberry. Nominations closed. Vote was cast by secret ballot. Renee Miller, Tina Schumacher and Elizabeth (Liz) Quesenberry will serve as the 2019/2020 NEMCSA Board Representatives.
- **Executive Committee: Selected by Chairperson:** The Executive Committee consists of five members and is composed of the officers of Policy Council, Tracy Johnson, Renee Miller and Jessica Good and two Policy Council members appointed by the Chairperson. Cynthia Arnold-Frazer and Ryan Rozewski will serve on the Executive Committee and were appointed by the Chairperson.

- **Budget Committee:** John Acker, Rene Miller, Cynthia Frazer (Arnold), Jessica Good and Laurie Gotham will serve as the 2019/2020 Budget Committee.

### **Quorum present**

Tricia thanked returning and non-returning members of last year's Policy Council for their dedication to the group and presented certificates of appreciation.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Members reviewed October's meeting minutes. There were no questions. Cynthia Arnold-Frazer made a motion to approve October's meeting minutes. John Acker seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.

### **NEMCSA Board Report**

The Board meeting was held November 1<sup>st</sup> in West Branch.

Renee Miller and Tina Schumacher were both present at the meeting.

The Program Planning and Evaluation Committee met prior to the regular meeting to review and recommend for approval the submission of the Head Start/Early Head Start Funding Opportunity Grant Application. The submission of the grant application was approved by the full Board.

Francis Whitney, Outreach and Communication Coordinator and Kristina Warner, Operations//Data Quality Analyst presented the final segment of the Bridges Out of Poverty series. Following the presentation, Brenda Danielson, Head Start Family Community Coordinator, shared her success story.

The next Board meeting will be held at Wiltse's Restaurant in Oscoda on Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Information and Discussion Items**

Tricia reviewed the Policy Council Operating Procedures with members. The procedures explain the roles and responsibilities of elected officers. Approval of the Policy Council Operating Procedures appears below under Action Items.

### **Complaint Procedure**

Tricia reviewed the Complaint Procedure with members. Approval appears below under Action items.

### **Board and Policy Council Report**

Tricia reviewed the Monthly Progress Report members. The report contains information on attendance, enrollment, health and meals.

### **Non-Federal (In-kind) Waiver Request**

Tricia informed members that she may need to submit a request to waive the Non-Federal Share for the Supplement to Increase Program Hours. Tricia asked members for their approval to submit the waiver request. Approval appears below under Action Items.

### **Credit Card Expenditure Review – Budget Committee**

At this point a previous member of the Budget Committee met separately with the current Budget Committee members and explained the process and purpose of reviewing credit card expenditures for Head Start and Early Head Start. These expenditures are for Early Childhood Services staff, not staff from other NEMCSA divisions. The committee reviewed Head Start and Early Head Start expenditures for Fifth Third Bank for the month of September in the amount of \$64,688.07 and WexCard fuel expenditures in the amounts of \$820.68 for the month of August and \$4,092.89 for the month of September. Members asked for further clarification on nine (9) charges for Fifth Third Bank. Answers to questions were obtained. Approval of expenditures appears below under Action Items.

## **Action Items:**

### **Approval of the Policy Council Operating Procedures**

Cynthia Frazer (Arnold) made a motion to approve the Policy Council Operating Procedures. John Acker seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.

### **Approval of the Head Start/Early Head Start Complaint Procedure**

Cynthia Frazer (Arnold) made a motion to approve the Head Start/Early Head Start Complaint Procedure. John Acker seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.

### **Non-Federal (In-kind) Waiver Request**

Cynthia Frazer (Arnold) made a motion to approve submission of the request to Waive the Non-Federal Share Supplement to Increase Program Hours. Tina Schumacher seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.

### **Approval of Credit Card Expenditures**

Laurie Gotham made a motion to approve Head Start and Early Head Start expenditures for Fifth Third Bank for the month of September in the amount of \$64,688.07 and WexCard fuel expenditures in the amounts of \$820.68 for the month of August and \$4,092.89 for the month of September. Cynthia Frazer (Arnold) seconded.

### **Approval of New Hires/Terminations**

Tricia explained to members their role in the hiring and termination of Head Start/Early Head Start employees. Tracy Johnson asked if anyone was asked to participate in any interviews. Cassandra (Cassie) Harp and John Acker were both asked and participated in interviews. John Acker made a motion to approve new hire/terminations. Cynthia Frazer (Arnold) seconded. All Ayes. Motion carried.

### **Introduction of the Policy Council Portal**

Tricia and Pam introduced members to the Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Portal that has been created on the NEMCSA Head Start website. The portal will allow members to view documentation that is normally copied and distributed to members at each meeting. The Policy Council Portal tab (PC Portal) is located on the Head Start/Early Head Start website: <https://ecs.nemcsa.org/> Members will be provided more information about the portal at next month's meeting.

### **Other information/Discussion Items/Sharing**

Renee Miller stated that she was recently contacted by her cousin who attends Ferris State University, that the Association of Future Educators are conducting a community service project in the Big Rapids area. The Association is interested in donating some children's books to our programs in Big Rapids. Renee contacted Pam Badour to see how to proceed with the donation. Pam contacted Angie Peters, Area Manager for the Big Rapids programs who contacted Renee's cousin and set up a meeting. Members of the association plan on visiting all the Big Rapids Head Start programs on December 3<sup>rd</sup> to deliver the books. Renee plans on attending the event.

Tracy Johnson read several Bluesheets to the group. The first one was from three anonymous parents that stated the following:

**Sharing:** "We love the Head Start program. Our children are learning and growing so much. Teachers and Family Service workers are very nice and helpful. We are very happy to have full day preschool for our kids. It helps us be able to work and not to have to pay for childcare".

**Question:** "Why are Policy Council meetings so far away? Is there any reason that they can not be rotated to different areas? Over 2 hours to drive is impossible for most".

**Response:** Policy Council meetings are held in West Branch because that is the most centralized place for our entire service area.

**Question:** "Do you really think that people who are able to be on Policy Council are accurately representing the majority of parents? We are busy families and the people making these decisions for us don't represent our needs".

**Response:** We have Parent Cafés located across the service area that gather parent input on program decisions. Parents are also encouraged to call or email any Head Start administrator with their input, concerns or questions.

**Concern:** “Way too many home visits for us. Too much paperwork for things we don’t want. Teacher Conferences are fine. We just want our kids in preschool not an endless parade of staff in our homes! It’s very invasive, stressful and time consuming. Send these forms home and give us the option of completing them or not. Please stop, it’s getting ridiculous. We are happy to do physical requirements and teacher conferences”.

**Response:** Tricia stated that staff are not doing these home visits to annoy or judge anyone. We must follow Head Start Program Performance Standards which require 2 home visits a year to build relationships with families and help those who need it most. Tricia agreed there is a lot of paperwork. Head Start is more than just a preschool program and it is a voluntary program. Staff should explain the reasons for the paperwork, and for some forms, parents may be able to opt out of completing.

The next Bluesheet was from a parent in Ubyly that had the following concern: “Excluding holidays for all the counties doesn’t seem fair. If everyone can agree to celebrate, I don’t see why it can’t be class by class”.

**Response:** The following is NEMCSA Head Start/Early Head Start’s Holiday Philosophy/Guidelines for Program Activities that is located on page 7 of the Early Childhood Services Family Handbook. The handbook is given to every family and reviewed with them at the beginning of the program year:

**NEMCSA Head Start/Early Head Start’s Holiday Philosophy/Guidelines for Program Activities**

Families in our programs have many different religions, cultures and beliefs. We believe that holiday traditions are family events which are celebrated differently from home to home.

NEMCSA Early Childhood Services believes the classroom should function as a calming counterpoint to the stress on children and families promoted through commercialization and media pressure to buy gifts, foods, and costumes during the holiday seasons. Therefore, our programs will not celebrate religious, cultural or commercial holidays. We will not design events that exclude any child or family or discriminate against any family’s beliefs, values, or customs. We encourage and support families in celebrating their own holiday and other traditions at home with their children.

Meetings will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month with the exception of December 20<sup>th</sup>, February 21<sup>st</sup>, April 23<sup>rd</sup> (Thursday) and May 15<sup>th</sup>. The meeting calendar noting Policy Council and NEMCSA Board meeting dates is included in the Policy Council Handbook (page 4) that was distributed to members.

Tricia reminded members to review the NEMCSA Employee Handbook (Basic Employment Standards) that was included in their folder as well as The Procedures for Shared Governance that is located on page 35 of the Policy Council Handbook prior to next month’s meeting. Also, please be sure to bring your Policy Council Handbook with you to the next meeting and all future meetings.

**Next meeting will be Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup>** at the Quality Inn Forward Conference Center, 2980 Cook Road in West Branch (Exit 212). The meeting will begin at 10:00 am and end at approximately 2:00 pm. **Quality Inn’s telephone number is 1-989/345-3503. In the event of inclement weather during the winter months it is very important that you call before leaving your house to make sure the meeting has not been cancelled.** You may also contact Pam Badour at 1-989/893-5564 Ext. 401 or [badourp@nemcsa.org](mailto:badourp@nemcsa.org) with questions.

Renee Miller made a motion to adjourn. John Acker seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 4:51 pm.

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_