Policy Council Meeting Minutes
Mountain States Early Head Start
CDA Center
December 4, 2025 - 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Our Mission:

- Promote healthy pregnancies and healthy babies.
- Enhance the development of very young children.
- Promote healthy families.

Policy Council Member Attendance: PY 2025-2026					
Name & Title	*Center and Representative Type*	*Present*	*Absent*	*# of Absences*	*# of unexcused Absence*
Policy Council Members					
Mandy Milovich, Chairperson	Parent Representative		X	2 (Aug., Dec.)	
Chantel Petschel, Secretary/Treasurer	Parent Representative	X			
Ginger Buckley	Parent Representative	X			
Ashley Miles	Parent Representative	X		1 (Sept.)	
	Parent Representative				
Jasmine Fairbrother	Parent Representative	X			
Savannah Slaughter	Parent Representative	X			
Karen Schmidt	Jannus Board Liaison	X		1 (Sept.)	
Jessica Geiger, NIC Head Start	Community Representative	X		1 (Nov.)	
Nanci Jenkins	Community Representative	X		1 (Oct.)	

Staff Present: Sandra Menegas, Karen Dapron Jennifer Hepinstall, Teresa Rains, Jana Brooks, Catie Kotmel, Aleta Garcia-Clute, Heather Woodie.

Call to order: Ashley called the meeting to order at 10:12am.

Guests: Alissa Rudebaugh

Previous Meeting Minutes: Members reviewed the November meeting minutes.

Chantel motioned to approve the November 2025 meeting minutes; Jessica seconded and the motion for approval carried

Report-Outs / Training

PC Training: In-kind and Home Learning – Catie Kotmel

- 20% of our grant needs to be matched in kind from our families and the community partners. Home learning activities all are counted for in-kind as well. Jana relayed the FC's track and complete the forms for families and gather that information during their visits. Aleta passed out the In-Kind form for everyone to fill out for the meeting today.

Program Design & Management Report Out

Director's Report & Program Updates – Jana Brooks

Jana read our mission statement aloud to the group and reviewed the following topics.

- **Grant Updates/Director's Report -**
  - The government shut down has ended and SNAP has been reinstated. During that time, we were able to get ten Thanksgiving meals to families, we bolstered the snacks that were given to families at playgroups, and we are using donations to help with other food insecurities, including food kits we will be making for families.
  - We are preparing for the 4th year of our 5-year grant cycle. We will have it ready to submit in April. We will be looking at our program goals and updating and evaluating them.

- **FA2 Monitoring Review**
  - Jana and Teresa met with the lead reviewer and learned they will be talking with our parents to see how the program works best for them.
  - The parent interview will be on Thursday, December 18th and we will have childcare available. There will be four reviewers, one fiscal, one ERSEA working through Zoom with Jannus and staff and then two others on site. The Office of Headstart has hired a new company to complete these reviews. Parents are asked to share their experiences and answer all questions to the best of their abilities. Most of our PC parents will be available and this also counts for in-kind. If the weather is bad, we can do it through zoom. Aleta will reach out if there is a change to the meeting.

- **Financial Report for October 2025**
  - Total spending for 2025-2026 year-to-date is: $175,105.
  - Non-Federal Share (In-Kind) must be 20% of total federal dollars awarded, and our current percentage is 19.98%
  - Administrative expenses can be no more than 15% of total federal dollars, and our current percentage is 12.72%

- **Credit Card Report for October 2025 –** The report was reviewed and presented by Chantel today and members voted to approve:

  Ginger motioned to approve the October financials; Jasmine seconded and the motion for approval carried.

  Ginger motioned to approve the October credit cards; Jasmine seconded and the motion for approval carried.

Jannus Board Report/Updates – Karen Schmidt

- It has been quiet and there isn't much to report. Jannus team is updating some policies and procedures but otherwise it has been quiet. There will be a board meeting in January, and it will be virtual. The PC Chair will attend this meeting with Jana and Karen.

Program Services Report: Nutrition Services Update – Irene Dreith

- Irene shared the food landscape in the US and that there is room for improvement. As a program we have rolled out a new nutrition assessment and service guide.
- We have a training coming up on Ellyn Satter's trust approach to feeding children and we have a resource spreadsheet for families too.
- We had our access to healthy food focus group in Oct where Irene met with MSEHS families on what issues they are having with food prices and providing healthy meals.
- We received a donation that will go towards nutrition kits and Irene asked for ideas on what families would like to see in those kits.

Disability Services: Catie Kotmel

- 10% of our slots need to be slotted for children with disabilities. Most of the children with IFSP come from referrals from ITP. Our FC's work in conjunction with ITP at home visits and supporting the children in ITP with their goals.

<u>Report Outs</u>

Enrollment, Community Outreach & Engagement Reports:

- **November 2025 Enrollment Report and Infographic –** Sandra Menegas
  - Enrollment is at 90 and we continue to be fully enrolled with a healthy waitlist.
  - 7 enrollments were completed in November
  - Exits: 7 occurred in November.
  - 17 enrolled children currently have active IFSP's.
  - November referral sources leading to enrollments were varied this month including Kootenai Health, Fostering Idaho, a private counselor, DHW Preservations, family or friend, Internet search and a previously enrolled family.
  - Waitlist information: 2 families currently meet eligibility, and 15 families are over income.
  - We have 6 enrolled pregnancies.
  - 3 exits are forecast for December.

- **Eligibility Percentages:**
  - SNAP / SSI / TANF – 38%
  - Over Income - 2%
  - Income Below 100% -17%
  - Income 100-130% - 9%
  - Foster Care –11%
  - No Permanent Housing – 13%

  County Snapshot:
  - Bonner – 23
  - Kootenai – 55
  - Shoshone – 12

MSEHS Center Updates: Karen Dapron

Upcoming opportunities and center happenings were shared.

- December 15th-19th – Focus Area 2 Review.
- December 11th Parent Connect at CDA.
- December 24th-25th – Centers closed for the holidays.
- Circle of Security - January 2025 at CDA.

Community Happenings

- Kootenai Health Christmas Baskets and Selkirk donations for families.
- Saturday, December 6th at the Fairgrounds, families on SNAP can get $25 to spend at the food booths.
- Head Start still has diapers from a drive, but no size 4's available.
- The library has many activities happening in December and Karen brought a schedule (attached.)

Old Business

- **Vote on Program Self-Assessment from October –** Teresa R.

  Jessica motioned to approve the self-assessment; Jasmine seconded and the motion for approval carried.

New Business

- **Program updates and School Readiness Goals -** Catie and Teresa
  - Aleta will email to everyone and we will vote to approve at the January meeting.

Introduce the PC Parent Project - Aleta

- Every year PC does a project to support our families or our communities. Alissa, our guest, had the suggestion for a kit surrounding mental health and stability. The group can bring some ideas about that subject to our January meeting.

Meeting Wrap-Up – Aleta

Reviewed plan for next meeting.

- ***The meeting was adjourned by Ashley at 11:35, lunch and connection followed***
- Our next Policy Council Meeting will be January 8th from 10:00 am to Noon at the CDA/Zoom.