

Policy Council Approval

Chairperson Signature *Amy Gyllenskog*

Date APR 18 2024

**BEAR RIVER HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL  
2023-2024 Meeting Minutes**

<b>Date:</b> Thursday, March 21, 2024	<b>Start Time:</b> 7:00PM <b>End Time:</b> 7:58PM	<b>Location:</b> Dialpad Meetings: 1-888-602-7505		
<b>2023-2024 Policy Council Members' Attendance</b>			<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Rachel Ekman*	Brigham Representative		X	
	Brigham Alternate			
Anna Sherman*	Tremonton Representative		X	
Jessica Flinn*	Tremonton Alternate		X	
Amy Gyllenskog* (Chair & Utah HSAC)	Hyde Park Representative		X	
Alexander Quinn* (Treasurer)	Hyde Park Alternate		X	
Tasneem Mussaji*	Logan Representative			E
Ashley Davis*	Logan Alternate		X	
	Hyrum Representative			
	Hyrum Alternate			
	Smithfield Representative			
	Smithfield Alternate			
	Richmond Representative			
	Richmond Alternate			
Stacey Clark* (Secretary)	Malad Representative			E
Karli Leonardi* (Idaho HSAC)	Malad Alternate		X	
Brittan Johnson* (Vice Chair)	Paris Representative		X	
Whitney Miles*	Paris Alternate			E
Kristin Fellows*	Preston Representative		X	
	Preston Alternate			
Festus Odunuga*	Nest/Koop Representative		X	
Juliane Checketts*	Nest/Koop Alternate			X
	Fishpond Representative			
Kila (Gifford) Carey*	Fishpond Alternate			E
Suzie Yeates	Board Representative		X	
Anna Herrera*	Community Representative		X	
Justin Nuñez	Community Representative			X

**\*Trained Policy Council Members**

<b>Members needed for a Quorum: 6</b>	
Number of Voting Members who attended the meeting: 10	Number of Non-Voting Members who attended the meeting (including the Policy Council Officer conducting the meeting): 2
<b>Do we have a Quorum? YES</b>	
Meeting Called to Order By: Amy Gyllenskog (Policy Council Chairperson) Meeting Facilitated By: Terrah Smith (Administrative Assistant) Additional Staff in Attendance: Sarah Thurgood (Program Director), Kristie Curtis (Family Services Coordinator), Steph Wood (Centerbased Coordinator), ReNae Torbenson (Homebased Coordinator), Cherie Pierce (Health & Wellness Administrator), Debbie Zilles (Fiscal Office Manager)	

<b>1. Vote to approve the hire request of Kylee Davis as the EHS Nest/Koop Infant/Toddler Teacher Assistant – Steph Wood</b>		
Kylee has a seventeen month old. She is a single mom and her son has been attending Bear River Early Head Start for almost a year now. Kylee has been an active parent with that. She has been a reading aide at Millville Elementary and has been working with children ages infant to teenager for about two decades now. Kylee is looking forward to being able to work with the children and families as an Early Head Start Teacher Assistant.		
<b>Motion to approve the hire request of Kylee Davis as the EHS Nest/Koop Infant/Toddler Teacher Assistant</b>		
<b>Motion: Ashley Davis</b>	<b>Seconded: Karli Leonardi</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>

<b>2. Vote to approve the transfer request of Nai Kov from Health Assistant to Health Specialist – Cherie Pierce</b>		
Nai started at Bear River Head Start last year in November as a Health Assistant. She graduated from Utah State University in 2012 with a degree in Sociology. Nai has been working with the Centerbased children to complete health screening requirements such as measuring their height and weight. She has enjoyed it so far and is hoping to transfer into the Health Specialist position.		
<b>Motion to approve the transfer request of Nai Kov from Health Assistant to Health Specialist</b>		
<b>Motion: Ashley Davis</b>	<b>Seconded: Brittan Johnson</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>

<b>3. Vote to approve the transfer request of Afton Bryant from Homebased Family Educator to Health Specialist – Cherie Pierce</b>		
Afton graduated from Utah State University in 2021 with a degree in Human Development and Family Studies and has worked for Bear River Head Start ever since. She has loved it and working with the kids and their families. She is very passionate about families getting the services they need including their health appointments. Afton has experience doing hearing and vision screenings and has also been trained on doing the lead and hemoglobin tests. She has a good time working with the kids and interacting with the parents and is hoping to transfer into the Health Specialist position as well.		
<b>Motion to approve the transfer request of Afton Bryant from Homebased Family Educator to Health Specialist</b>		
<b>Motion: Ashley Davis</b>	<b>Seconded: Kristin Fellows</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>

<b>4. Vote to approve the transfer request of Jasmine Martinez from EHS Nest/Koop Infant/Toddler Teacher Assistant to EHS Nest/Koop Infant/Toddler Teacher – Steph Wood</b>		
Jasmine has been working with Bear River Early Head Start for two years and just completed her CDA (Child Development Associate). She is requesting to transfer to the Infant/Toddler Teacher position and is excited for this new opportunity.		
<b>Motion to approve the transfer request of Jasmine Martinez from EHS Nest/Koop Infant/Toddler Teacher Assistant to EHS Nest/Koop Infant/Toddler Teacher</b>		
<b>Motion: Brittan Johnson</b>	<b>Seconded: Festus Odunuga</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>

<b>5. Vote to approve the Mid-Year Homebased Child Development Outcomes – ReNae Torbenson</b>		
ReNae is the Homebased Coordinator. Because this is the first time we've reported this year on outcomes with this Policy Council group, ReNae provided a brief explanation of what outcomes are along with Steph Wood who is the Centerbased Coordinator. Head Start Performance		

Standards mandate that we track outcomes on children a minimum of three times per service year. Outcomes is a term used to describe how we track the developmental progress of each child and groups of children. Teachers and Family Educators assess the children at the beginning of the service year to get their baseline and determine where they are developmentally. From this baseline, child goals are set with the parents for each child. Teachers and Educators also have access to create an individual report for each child to determine what areas need growth and to help create the goals with the parents. Individual child reports are given to the parents. The mid-year reports have been completed for this year at this point in time.

A copy of the individual class report and a page describing the widely held expectations is given to each Teacher or Family Educator. They are expected to use that report to determine which areas of development they need to focus more time and effort into within their teaching, either in the classroom or on their Homebased visits. Outcome reports are reviewed after each collection period in the Fall, Winter and Spring. That information is used to identify needed trainings for staff to increase their skills in planning activities across the domain areas. Individual child reports are shared with parents and a new child goal is set to reflect areas that the child needs support in. We also try to tie the Outcome report into staff mentor coaching for those who need specialized support in individualizing for each child. Outcome reports are included in the program's annual Program Improvement Report and we provide an annual report on Child Outcomes to the community on our website.

For Early Head Start Homebased children, as a group they showed growth across all of the domains with the greatest growth in Approaches to Learning, Self-Regulation and Language and Literacy. Overall our Dual Language Learners showed gains on par with children who are not Dual Language Learners with the exception of the Cognitive, Math and Science domain. We looked at the individual child charts and all children did show growth. This can happen sometimes when children drop from the program and are replaced with children whose baseline data is lower which brings the overall group average down a bit. Our children with IFSPs (Individualized Family Services Plans) also had equal growth to children who do not have IFSPs. As has been explained, we provide parents with an individual chart of their child's growth and help them set goals for the next quarter. We also provide trainings and give mentor coaching to the staff who need extra help.

**Motion to approve the Mid-Year Homebased Child Development Outcomes**

<b>Motion: Ashley Davis</b>	<b>Seconded: Brittan Johnson</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**6. Vote to approve the Mid-Year Centerbased Child Development Outcomes – Steph Wood**

We were extremely happy with our progress in both Early Head Start and Preschool Head Start Centerbased Outcomes. We had growth in all areas including for our Dual Language Learners. We saw some great growth there as well as in the other domains.

**Motion to approve the Mid-Year Centerbased Child Development Outcomes**

<b>Motion: Ashley Davis</b>	<b>Seconded: Anna Sherman</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**7. Vote to approve the Mid-Year Family Development Outcomes – Kristie Curtis**

Kristie is the Family Services Coordinator and oversees Family Development, Health and ERSEA. Family Outcome Mid-year Data is similar to Homebased and Centerbased Child Development Mid-year Outcome Data in that we follow Head Start Performance Standards, track Family Outcomes and also collect them three times a year at the beginning, mid and end of year. We also follow the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Framework that supports families working toward positive family outcomes which includes Family Well-being, Positive Parent-Child Relationships, Families as Lifelong Educators, Families as Learners,

Family Engagement in Transitions, Family Connections to Peers and Community and Families as Advocates and Leaders. Family Outcomes is a way to show how much of an impact our program has in working with each family in a Family Engagement Partnership process. We want to know how well Bear River Head Start does at providing quality services for children and families. We also want to look at data to see areas we can improve upon. Staff support families in setting and achieving individualized family goals. They meet each family where they are at. Family Outcomes data can also show gains or needs. This will help us know what additional resources we need to bring in, trainings to provide, or to provide individual meetings or mentoring to staff if there is additional support needed. We use the end-of-year Family Outcomes data for program planning and our Training and Technical Assistance Plans so we know what to look forward to for the upcoming year. The overall goal is for positive child and family outcomes. Some of the outcome topics include housing, safety, health, transportation, family education, school readiness, volunteering and transitions, in addition to others. The Outcome report for the mid-year shows that gains are calculated by comparing to our Beginning of Year Outcomes. We also saw gains across the board.

**Motion to approve the Mid-Year Family Development Outcomes**

<b>Motion: Ashley Davis</b>	<b>Seconded: Brittan Johnson</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**8. Vote to approve the Organizational Charts – Sarah Thurgood**

Every year we are required to make sure Policy Council has an opportunity to look at and understand the Organizational Charts. They are developed as an intention to show how everything flows together, what our different program options are, who reports to who and how things work together. We do not include individual names on the charts to account for staff turnover. We do not want to bring them back for approval with each change, therefore, we just list the outline of positions.

**Motion to approve the Organizational Charts**

<b>Motion: Ashley Davis</b>	<b>Seconded: Anna Herrera</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**9. Vote to approve the February 15, 2024 Policy Council Meeting Minutes – Amy Gyllenskog**

Policy Council was asked if anyone had any questions about the Policy Council Meeting Minutes. No questions were asked or changes made to the February 15, 2024 Policy Council Meeting Minutes.

**Motion to approve the February 15, 2024 Policy Council Meeting Minutes**

<b>Motion: Anna Herrera</b>	<b>Seconded: Anna Sherman</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**10. Vote to approve the holding of Interim Policy Council Meetings prior to the next scheduled Policy Council Meeting as needed – Amy Gyllenskog**

Policy Council was asked if there were any questions regarding this agenda item. No questions were asked or discussion held.

**Motion to approve the holding of Interim Policy Council Meetings prior to the next scheduled Policy Council Meeting as needed**

<b>Motion: Ashley Davis</b>	<b>Seconded: Anna Herrera</b>	<b>Approved: Yes</b>
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**11. Mental Health Team Updates – Steph Wood**

This is a report on how our Mental Health team is doing. We also call them the SET team (Social Emotional Team). They are currently doing a fantastic job. They are going into classrooms and helping teachers and children. They mentor Conscious Discipline for our teachers and work with the students.

Our program values children and adult's Mental Health enough that we have staff whose entire responsibility and job is to go into the classroom and work with kids and teachers. They help kids with behaviors and any sort of trauma or Mental Health issues. It is so common now that everybody has Mental Health concerns. Our kids are really important to us. We want to make sure they get the care and attention they need to be prepared and successful in school and learn to correct behaviors and navigate the system. Not every program has this. We specifically assign staff members to do this and have this as their full-time job because we value this enough. Policy Council said thank you as they know that Mental Health is very important to take care of. It's fantastic that this is part of the program.

**12. Approve the Contract from Jones Simkins for Andy Hernandez' services as Fiscal Officer. This item falls under Board responsibility and is listed as information only for Policy Council – Sarah Thurgood**

Andy Hernandez is a past Board Member and is now our Fiscal Officer. He is a CPA (Certified Public Accountant) and works for Jones Simkins. He is very valuable and has a lot of skill and ability. The contract for his services is approved every year. We've been discussing for months that we've renovated the staff within the fiscal office. We pretty much have a whole new fiscal team. Andy is our new Fiscal Officer and we have very competent fiscal staff that we love. It is going well. Andy works well with our management team and staff. We are lucky to have him and all of our staff in the fiscal office.

**13. Approve the Audit Engagement Letter from Rudd & Co. for 2023-24 audit services. This includes audit of both financial and eligibility requirements. This falls under Board responsibility and is listed as information only for Policy Council – Sarah Thurgood**

Rudd & Company is a CPA firm out of Rexburg, Idaho. They have come and done our audit for a few years now. Their rates are very reasonable. Last year when they came, our fiscal office staff were new in their positions. It is the time of year to put out a bid and receive an Audit Engagement Letter to schedule with the company we want to complete our audit. The audit is scheduled for May which is earlier than last year but will put us back on track with our regular schedule for the fiscal audit. In future, we may put this out for bid to other firms but since our staff are still new and have been through one audit cycle with Rudd & Company, we want to stay with the same company this year while we continue get our feet under us in the Fiscal Office.

**14. Approve the 2023-2024 SEP Distribution of up to 15% of wages for eligible staff. Estimated SEP for 2023-2024 fiscal year is 8%-10%. The actual number is dependent upon the completion of the annual financial audit currently scheduled for May 2024. This item falls under Board responsibility and is listed as information only for Policy Council – Sarah Thurgood**

As Andy and the Fiscal Office close out the fiscal year, they determine how much we can put into our SEP distribution. Last fiscal year has ended but we are still finishing the close out process. It takes several months to close out a fiscal year. Bills are always coming in from different vendors or others that need to be paid out. The final piece to close out a fiscal year is the SEP Distribution. Any funding remaining can be put into a SEP account, which is a retirement account, for our employees. We bring this information to both Board and Policy Council so they aware and Board approves the percentage we are looking at putting into our employees' accounts. There is a range listed as we won't know the exact amount until after we finish closing out the year and complete the Fiscal Audit. After Board approval, and closing everything out, Andy, as the Fiscal Officer can move forward with putting this distribution into our staffs' retirement accounts. Policy Council inquired if they need to vote to approve this as

well. This falls under Board responsibility so Policy Council does not need to vote to approve this. It is being shared with Policy Council as information only so they are aware.

#### **15. Program Performance Report – Sarah Thurgood**

ReNae Torbenson develops this report every month. She is our data guru and is very smart. She pulls off a report from ChildPlus that shows all of the areas we're required to report on and how well we are meeting compliance in those areas for Board and Policy Council. We've met all of our milestones and don't have anything out of compliance this month which is the way we like it. Every month, Sarah will report on program performance and hopefully she will always be able to say that we are meeting our milestones and are not out of compliance. This report helps Policy Council and Board to be aware.

#### **16. Budget Committee & Fiscal Report – Alexander Quinn**

Alexander was unable to attend the Budget Committee Meeting but has the notes from the meeting. The 2023-2024 Fiscal Year is 100% complete as of the 31<sup>st</sup> of January. We're still completing the closing process for the year. We will distribute year-end budget reports as soon as they are available, probably around April. To ensure that all of last year's expenses are included in the fiscal year, the month of January is left open longer than the other months. We're continuing with getting all of the in-kind batched and entered. The 2023-2024 SEP distribution is currently estimated between 8-10%. The actual numbers are dependent upon the completion of the 2023-2024 audit. Rudd & Company will be on site for the annual audit in May of 2024. This will include both a financial audit as well as an audit for eligibility (ERSEA) records which is an agreed upon procedures engagement. Engagement letters have been received and will be routed to the Board for approval. The anticipated COLA was discussed for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year. The prior year was 5.6% but we won't know for sure until we receive more information from the Regional Office. We're waiting to hear back from our contact at the Regional Office regarding the desire to trade in the van. We will extend the Bear River Head Start tax return which gives us until December 15, 2024 to file. We will get the return complete and audit complete much more timely in the current year. We are also working on moving our fuel purchases to Maverick instead of Phillips 66 given that Phillips 66 is in the process of moving away from their company fuel program. We're almost done updating the in-kind rates for services, mileage and rent.

#### **17. Director's Report – Sarah Thurgood**

Our Preston classes will remain with the school district with one classroom starting next year. Our two classes will share the classroom because we do have really healthy recruitment and enrollment in that area. We should still be able to serve the same number of kids, we'll just share the classroom and make sure to have two different schedules going. We are going to have a site visit from our Regional Office in April. They usually like to come and visit some classrooms. Sometimes they like to visit with Board or Policy Council Representatives. We're not always aware of what they will do during their visit until they arrive. We will let you know as it gets closer if they'd like to meet with any Policy Council or Board Members. Alexander did a great job with the Fiscal Report again. Way to go! We are in the process of completing our self-assessment where we look at everything, review data and records and make sure that everything we are doing is as it should be. Sarah will be reporting on that in the future as we finish that process up. We got a notification from the Office of Head Start for programs across the nation that if programs want to expand, they do have expansion money that programs can write for. They are competitive grants that can be written for. It doesn't mean a grantee will get the funding to

expand if they write for it. There are programs across the United States that cannot keep their funding if they are not meeting program requirements, enrollment, etc. When these programs lose their grant, the Office of Head Start wants to give the funding to programs that are doing well so the programs can expand their services if they'd like to. Sarah had a discussion with the management team and we've had a few things recently such as rebuilding the Fiscal Department, coming out of COVID and rebuilding after that. If the timing was different, we would perhaps be more interested in expanding. Sometimes programs can get too big and then cannot continue to provide services well. We are already a big program in the scheme of things and we do have a large geographic service area. Legally, we are providing services from Snowville, Utah over to Montpelier, Idaho. We are all the way from Willard, Utah up to the city limits of Pocatello, Idaho. That is a big service area and we do serve a lot of kids. If we expanded, we'd need more buildings and staff and we would have more money running through the Fiscal Office whose staff are just getting their feet under them. The consensus from the management team is that the timing may not be correct right now. If it was a couple years down the road, then we'd probably be in a better spot. We never want to get to the point where we can't keep doing what we do well. Sarah asked for Policy Council feedback. Policy Council said they trust, and would back, the program's decision. Policy Council feedback is important to us. Policy Council was encouraged to think about this and if they have more thoughts about it to let Kristie Curtis or Terrah Smith know and then we can discuss it further. This same information will also be shared with Board. This is a great Policy Council with great elected officers along with the Board and staff. You guys are awesome!

#### **18. Board Report – Suzie Yeates**

Because we had the combined Policy Council and Board Meeting last month, there isn't anything else to report from Board. From what Suzie has heard while listening during the Policy Council Meeting, everything is going well. The Board and staff have been busy too.

#### **19. Policy Council Concerns & Other Discussion Items – Policy Council Representatives**

Policy Council was asked if they had anything they needed to discuss or bring up. No questions were asked, concerns shared or items brought up for discussion during this agenda item.

#### **20. Community Report – Policy Council Representatives**

- Wednesday, March 20-Saturday, March 23: Divvy Up Consignment Sale at Cache County Fairgrounds Event Center (450 S. 500 W. Logan); general sales 3/20-3/22 from 10am-7pm, ½ price sales 3/23 from 8am-2pm
- Friday, March 22-Saturday, March 23: Cache Valley Home and Garden Show at the Eccles Ice Center (2825 N. 200 E. North Logan); 10am-7pm on the 22<sup>nd</sup>; 9am-6pm on the 23<sup>rd</sup>; Ages 12 and under are free, Ages 13 + \$2.00
- Friday, March 22: Logan City Fire Department Open House at 95 East 200 North, Logan from 10:30am-5pm
- Saturday, March 23: Easter Egg Hunt at Cache Valley Assisted Living and Memory Care (233 N. Main Street, Providence) at 11am
- Saturday, March 23: Under Water Egg Hunt at the Belmont Hot Springs RV park (5600 W. 19200 N., Garland, UT) at 10am; \$20 entrance fee for divers to Belmont Springs; non-divers no charge
- Saturday, March 30: Easter Egg Hunt at Young Automotive Cache Valley (1855 Main Street, Logan) from 10am-3pm
- Lots of Easter Egg Hunt information online
- Thursday, March 28-Saturday, April 6: Baby Animal Days at American West Heritage Center (4025 S. Hwy 89-91 Wellsville); March 28-30: Featuring Utah Petting Zoo Gone Wild from

10am-6pm, \$12; April 1-2: Farm Animal Only Days from 10am-5pm, \$10; April 3-6: Featuring Yellowstone Bear World and Mountain Man Rendezvous from 10am-6pm, \$12; more information on the awhc.com website

**21. Parent Committee Meeting Report – Policy Council Representatives**

The Policy Council Chairperson got to attend the 7:00 Meeting. She loved the rhymes that are part of Conscious Discipline that were talked about. It was really neat to bring that to the life of everyday working. They were amazing!

**22. Calendar Review – Kristie Curtis**

- Monday, April 1-Friday, April 5: Spring Break for Cache, Logan, Box Elder and Paris
- Monday, April 15: Tax Day-Information about BRAG was emailed out in the Policy Council packet. They can help with getting taxes done; reach out to them if you have a need.
- Tuesday, April 16: Budget Committee Meeting at 10am for Policy Council Treasurer to attend
- Thursday, April 18: Policy Council Meeting at 7pm
- Tuesday, April 23: Board Meeting at 5pm for Policy Council Chair to attend
- Tuesday, April 23: Parent Committee Meeting in Spanish
- Wednesday, April 24: Parent Committee Meeting in English at 10am and 7pm

**23. Vote to adjourn the March 21, 2024 Policy Council Meeting – Amy Gyllenskog**

With no other business to conduct, the March 21, 2024 Policy Council Meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.

**Motion to adjourn the March 21, 2024 Policy Council Meeting**

**Motion: Ashley Davis**

**Seconded: Brittan Johnson**

**Approved: Yes**