



First Start Partnerships for Children & Families

Policy Council

October 21, 2025

9:00 am

Policy Council Members Present: Ashley Simpson, Bailey Price, Mirtha Marcellus, Brittany Neff

FSP Staff Present: Kim Holtry, Carolyn Clouser, Jennifer Mercer, Diane Hummel, Travis Bitner, Amy Pinkerton

Board Members Present: None

I. Welcome: Bailey welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:11 am.

II. Old Business:

1. June Minutes: Brittany Neff made a motion to approve the June minutes as written. Bailey Price seconded the motion. Motion passed.
2. August and September Financial Reports & Credit Card Expenditures: Jessica Kreigline explained that the August report reflects that the new budget year was just starting. She did note that for the federal grants, 100% of the contracted services budget was spent. She explained that this was due to the fact that most contracts are paid out in August, but the line item will be monitored as the year goes on. For the September report, Jessica reported that the federal budget increased due to the award of the nutrition grant. She also noted that the state grants look low due to the budget impasse. Bailey asked if First Start would be applying for a loan through the state. Jessica shared that they are waiting on notification of the loan availability from the state treasury department at this time and reported that a decision has not been made on whether FSP will apply for the loan. Bailey Price made a motion to approve the August and September Financial Reports and Credit Card Expenditures. Mirtha Marcellus seconded the motion. Motion passed.
3. Nutrition Grant: Jessica Hatch explained the details of the Office of Head Start nutrition grant that FSP wrote for in August and shared that FSP was awarded the full amount that was requested in September. She noted that there were 3 goals of the grant:
 1. Encourage healthy eating and nutrition with children
 2. Provide increased nutrition education to families
 3. Establish community partnerships to support and sustain

Jessica also shared that FSP is seeking additional funding opportunities because this is a one-year grant, and the community data shows that food scarcity and nutrition education is a real issue in the area.

4. NAEYC Update: Jessica Hatch shared that the NAEYC validator was on site in September starting with Lincoln Way ELC. She spent one day at LWELC, then 2 days at Chambersburg ELC, 1 day at the Waynesboro High School hub and 2 days at the Greencastle/Tuscarora hub. Jessica continued to explain that during the visit, the validator spent time completing classroom observations, a program observation and portfolio reviews. She noted that NAEYC will provide the visit results within 3 months.

III. New Business:

1. Staffing Updates: Diane Hummel shared that at Lincoln Way ELC, there were 11 staff laid off. Of those 11 staff, 5 volunteered to fill open positions within the organization, so there are 6 staff not working at this time. Diane also explained that when the currently closed classrooms reopen, there will be 3 Lead Teacher openings, 1 Assistant Teacher opening, and 1 Building Assistant Teacher opening.
Carolyn shared that at Chambersburg ELC, 7 of the 12 classroom sessions have not returned due to the impasse. She further explained that there are two internal candidates who are slated to be hired for current openings. Carolyn also noted that when all the classrooms reopen, there will be 3 Lead Teacher openings, 4 Assistant Teacher openings, and 1 Building Assistant Teacher opening. Carolyn shared that Sherrie Carr moved into the Kitchen Manager position in July.
Jennifer Mercer shared that the Early Head Start vacancy was filled in early September.
Jessica Hatch noted that at future meetings, the Policy Council will vote on staffing updates. Ashley Price went ahead and made a motion to approve the staffing update. Bailey Price seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.
2. Funding Updates: Jessica Hatch noted that there were no state budget updates at the time of the meeting. She also shared that the federal shutdown does not impact FSP unless it would go past July of 2026.
3. Parent Committees: Jennifer Mercer talked about the importance of attending parent committee meetings at the community hubs and connecting with families. She encouraged parents to recruit additional families to become involved with Policy Council.
4. Fall Family Event: Jennifer Mercer explained that the event is being postponed due to the state budget impasse. She said that FSP will want to celebrate when all families can return, and that Policy Council members will be asked to share ideas at a future meeting.

IV. Directors Report:

- **See attached document for directors' report**

V. Member Discussion/Questions/Suggestions: No discussion/questions/suggestions at this time

VI. Policy Council Meeting Schedule: Members discussed the best days and times for future meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for November 4th at 9:00 am. The meeting will be held at Lincoln Way ELC.

VII. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 10:04 am