

**RMDC, Inc. Head Start
Policy Council Meeting
April 17, 2008**

PC meeting began at 6:00 p.m. Members Present: Jay Bowen, Patrice Longfellow, Jena Grubb, Sandy Hugus, Sara Terou, Laura Smith (class rep in HS 12) filling in for Andrea Edgar, Dawn Ruiz, Dianne Alvarez, Gina Marker, Jodi Marsh, Bryce Taylor, Crystie Burnette, Dr. Kevin Rencher.

Members Excused: Tom Dwyer, Belinda Shoemaker-Tomlinson, Magalie Belanger, Martha Finley (avail. by phone), Twila Harrington (avail. by phone), Sheryl Eriksen (avail. by phone).

Members Unexcused: Heather Morris

Guests: Patty Dahl, Lynn Guay, Wanda White, and Wendy Studt

Jena Grubb did roll call. A quorum was established after roll call was taken.

Review of Ground Rules/Agenda Review: Tom Dwyer reviewed the ground rules. Luke asked that the MTHSA report be moved to an earlier time as he needed to leave early. Wendy Studt would like to discuss the draft of the MBI (Montana Behavioral Initiative) home matrix – this was on the original agenda but not on the agenda that was sent out. New intermittent hires were added to the agenda.

Approval of last meetings Minutes: There is a correction on the CACFP food numbers in the director's report. Minutes were otherwise approved.

Treasurer's Report: Jena reported - Balance as of Feb was \$53,484.02. A parent fund CD and another CD (the donation sub-account that is now the Eggs sub-account) at MWB matured this month. Our best rate is 2.25 if we are interested in rolling them over. They will mature again in November. Kevin moved to reinvest the CDs and it was approved. Avon Fundraiser-we deposited \$4844, half of which stays with Head Start. Classroom 11 sold the most for the fundraiser and will win the party. Two classrooms did not sell any. There will be a second order for Avon and these should be in by Monday. There was some pricing confusion on the Avon sheets. The 10 Million Penny March – Jena and Bryce sold Avon stuff, note cards, and leftover candles. There was a parade and a group called the "Book Babes" won a \$250 prize and donated it back to Head Start. Rossiter School raised the most for the Pennies for Progress and they won a prize too as did a family with the most literacy spirit (and it was a Head Start family!).

RMDC Policy and Procedures: Gale Anderson, RMDC's Human Resource Officer referred to the memo that was in our packet. We have been notified that we are not going to be Cost of Living money this year. The Board of Directors approved a 3% COLA for all RMDC employees effective 5/1/08. The union has been advised that the Agency wants to give a 3% increase to all employees. Gale then talked about the Target Market Ratio increase and the reason the Agency wants to move forward with it is because they have had to hire some employees above entry level due to wage rises in the rest of the community. The Target Market Ratio would get employees whose wages are considerably lower than other jobs in the community closer to market wages. The Target Market Ratio would not affect all employees- just those whose wages are out of line with the community. It would also not affect the bargaining unit members since their wages are negotiated. Patty suggests holding off on the Target Market Ratio but recommends approving the COLA. The Agency will cover the cost of the COLA. The council voted to approve the COLA and table the Target Market Ratio. Gale went over the Media Relations Policies and Procedures and the Council voted to approve them. There was another request

to change the language around holiday pay to make holiday pay equitable and consistent. PC voted to approve the change the language about holiday pay. It was recommended that Dec. 26, 2008 and January 2, 2009 be a paid holiday (only for this year) due to how it falls. Kevin moved not to approve this and it was voted down. Later in the meeting there was confusion about whether or not there were enough votes (80% consensus required and how is that counted). Kevin made a motion to table the discussion until next meeting when we would have more info and time and all approved.

Mental Health: Lynn Guay, Early Childhood Development and Health Services Manager, talked about mental health being a requirement of the Performance Standards - we must secure a mental health professional at Head Start and a regular schedule of on-sight mental health consultation involving mental health professionals, program staff, and parents. For the past 5 years, Intermountain Children's Home have observed in classrooms and helped teaching staff develop strategies to deal with behaviors but are now able to provide services as much anymore. AWARE services are available for Head Start. A round table discussion was held to discover what services are available from providers in the community, two of which were CMH and AWARE. A member mentioned that her experience with both of these showed that AWARE was far more effective. CMH indicated that we should go with AWARE if they are willing to do it, which they are. AWARE staffs from Billings came for a meeting and gave a great presentation and are willing to help. They have a successful program for Head Start in Billings. AWARE have strength based plans where the positive things are emphasized. Services provided are case management, classroom support, and therapeutic home service staff. The plan is based on the individual needs of the child and family. They provide screenings for all of the children. Funding for AWARE is mostly Medicaid but \$3000 or \$4000 must come from Head Start to do the screening process. Kevin made a motion to approve AWARE services, all approved.

Lynn also talked about Creative Curriculum and the need to get appropriate materials into classrooms. Three supervisors visited classrooms and it was discovered that there were a lot of outdated materials. Supervisors would like to get rid of some things to make room for new materials. Classrooms will be closed for one day to do this. Some will be closed 4/28, some 5/8, and some 5/15.

MBI (Montana Behavior Initiative) Home Matrix: Wendy Studt, Literacy Specialist and Classroom Supervisor, brought forth a draft of the MBI Home Matrix that was done by Susan Gray, Special Services Coordinator. Wendy said that MBI works on classroom expectations and that we need to teach expectations to kids. The Home Matrix lists activities in different settings. It includes the following topics: Honor Everyone, Academic Achievement, Work Together, Kindness to Others, and Safety First. It was recommended to put this in the parent handbook. **Who moved??** It was moved to support this and all approved. You can email suggestions to wstudt@rmdc.net.

Wendy also wanted to talk about inventory since Lynn had talked about Creative Curriculum and cleaning out classrooms. She said that Head Start has purchased many things over the years but no official inventory has been kept. Some reasons to keep inventory include theft, staff contributing their own things, classroom sharing, etc. She said the program is looking at purchasing an inventory system.

TB Screenings, etc: Wanda White, Health Coordinator, handed out Licensing Requirements for Child Day Care Centers. The state has indicated that TB is almost a non-issue but not eradicated and licensing is no longer requiring it for a site to be licensed. The Health Advisory Committee discussed this issue at their April meeting and recommended that we no longer require TB screening for employees. **Who moved???** PC moved to approve this and all agreed. Patty Dahl handed out an Information Memorandum from Administration for Children and Families about a Partnership with the EPA that talks about reducing environmental problems especially second-hand smoke. The memorandum goes over what they would like Head Start to do. Wanda referred to the program's goals

and that one of them has to do with tobacco use reduction. She handed out the Tobacco Prevention News, a local newsletter, to everyone and said there are many resources in this newsletter for information on smoking. Patty also handed out another Information Memorandum about Lead Screening. EPSDT (Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment) which is an oversight agency for children with Medicaid does require that lead screenings are done for children on Medicaid between 12 and 24 months of age. Wanda handed out a tip sheet for parents about lead screening. They can take it to their doctors and have the screening done. Medicaid can't tell doctors to do lead screenings so screenings may be overlooked because they don't think it's appropriate for everyone. Wanda said that the program will be working on this lead screening issue and a solution will be found that will work for everyone in the future.

RMDC Board Report: Tabled for next meeting due to Twila being gone and Jena had not attended the meeting.

MTHSA (Montana Head Start Association) Report: Luke Wells said he and Patty Dahl attended the Montana Head Start Association meeting in Polson. Ross Weaver, Program Manager for Head Start from the Region Office in Denver, came in with some big points about reauthorization and the new risk management assessment. House and Senate disagreed on parent policy council involvement in decision making and how important it is for parents to educate their representative on the value of parents in decision-making for Head Start. Ross Weaver emphasized that letters from parents to Congress is very important because the Congressmen listen most to parents. Luke talked about the MTHSA \$2 per child enrolled campaign to support, along with three other agencies, a lobbyist for one year that carries forward important issues involving children and families. It has been found to be beneficial to have a lobbyist for these issues. Federal money cannot be spent on a lobbyist; it must come from fundraising money. **Who made the motion???** A motion was made to support the \$2 per child campaign by sending a check to MTHSA for \$500 to continue with the lobbyist and it was approved. Luke said there is a time at the MTHSA meetings where staff and parents meet and some programs have staff invited into policy council meetings and he thought that was good.

Staff Appreciation: The theme will be Prom. Each will get 2 plaques and a lottery ticket. If they win, they will be asked to return half of the winnings to Head Start. Invitations have been received. We are looking for more people to help out with the event. It will be May 1st, the dinner starts at 6pm. There are 6 ladies from a sorority helping in the kitchen. Waitresses are needed. We still need after dinner entertainment. There will be photos taken but the Head Start camera is broken. Jena suggested getting a new camera and portable printer (\$200-\$300). The camera and printer would be for other events as well. All agreed that research is needed. An executive decision was made to approve gas money for running around, etc. It was a total of \$150. The rest of PC approved. Many of the staff had said they are coming although there isn't an exact number.

Head Start Director's Report (Program Updates, enrollment and attendance, Continuation grant, budget info): Belinda Tomlinson presented Diane Alvarez for substitute as she sat on the interview committee. Dianne is a current Head Start parents, she has a GED, experience with children in babysitting, she has children, volunteers in her son's Head Start classroom, gentle yet firm, good impression, staying power, recommended for hire. Out of state background check needed. Immunizations and referenced done. Licensing approves of her beginning work while the out of state check is done as long as she has constant supervision. **Who moved???** PC approves to hire. Patty Dahl presented Patrice Longfellow for hire as a substitute in Magalie's absence (Magalie sat on the interview committee.) Patrice was a Head Start employee for 12 years. Background check is perfect, her references and immunes are good. She has a CDA and has taken early childhood classes. She was recommended for hire. **Who moved???** PC approves hire.

Patty Dahl reported on the Tri-County School Readiness Team's Reading in the Rotunda event that happened this morning. She showed the book bag that has the Head Start Parent Fund on it as we helped sponsor it. Five Head Start classrooms went to the rotunda. We will be getting a parent satisfaction survey in the next few weeks and Patty asked us to fill it out as it helps the program make changes. John Thomas, our Program Specialist from the Region Office, was here Tuesday and Wednesday. He gave information on the risk management monitoring that for our program will happen in October. Issues will be addressed before grant is due. It will be strength-based. About the one-time program improvement money we had left over, we can't apply for that money for flooring until after July. Next month Patty may address the 5 day/week program - she will probably recommend operating 4 days/week due to the need for time for training as there are so many pieces of the program that need to be integrated and made to be sustained. Patty reported on attendance for March. Overall attendance was 86% for the program. There were six classrooms that didn't meet 85% attendance. It was mostly due to illness. Recruitment is in full swing, current families need to complete re-ups; re-enrollment is not automatic. Pass the word to friends and neighbors. Patty forgot the food reports; she will report one them in May. Patty did not present the monthly budget sheet because it didn't look right when she looked at it but she and Pam Novak in fiscal will finish working on the projection in the next few days. She said it still looks like we will be around \$20,000 over budget. Patty then reported to Policy Council about Gene Leuwer, our Executive Director's son's death. Someone suggested flowers and Patty said that the family wanted any donations to be made to the NAMI. Jena then suggested that we make a donation to NAMI for the amount of what we would have paid for flowers - \$40-\$50. Kevin Rencher then said I think \$100 would be appropriate. The motion was then put to a vote and all members approved.

Meeting Evaluation: Pluses: Good speakers, good food and chocolate, good information. Wishes: Less talking, more attention to speakers, bad time (better time keeping and stay on time), more food (ran out both for adults and childcare).

Next Meeting: May 8, 2008

Jena Grubb, Chairperson

Gina Marker, Secretary