



**Early Childhood Family Services Advisory Council Minutes
March 18, 2025**

Minutes

Members present: Laura Bjork, Abby Bross, Megan Bollinger, Adriana de la Cadena, Manuel Diaz, **Jamie Duffey**, **Melissa Dunlay**, Meredith Eilertson Azeem, Jorge González Castro, Dave Kerber, Brianna Riofski, Katie Rudolph, and Sabrina Silver.

Guest: Mark Riofski & Emily Poole

ISD 196 Staff present: Zachary Gonsioroski and Kristi Hanson

Call to Order

Chairperson Melissa Dunlay called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. Introductions were made.

Approval of February 18, 2025 minutes

Chairperson called for motion to approve the minutes from the January 21, 2025 meeting and full council approved.

ECFS Program Overview – Zachary Gonsioroski and Kristi Hanson

Early Childhood Education (ECFE)

- Encouraged sharing of marketing materials (brochures, packets).

Connections Preschool

- 3 new preschool classes added (Red Pine Elementary, Emerald Trail Elementary, Rosemount Elementary).
- 25 applications for new staff positions; offers extended.
- Parent Ed interviews ongoing.
- ~380 4s applicants
- ~350 3s applicants
- Transportation is only available to families who live or their daycare is within attendance areas.
- Efforts underway to build stronger relationships with elementary principals to bridge PreK–5
- New legislature and curriculum changes have given more room to grow. Trying to continue to protect pre-k as play. Teaching assessment (Teaching Strategies Gold) data being integrated with district systems.
- Larger amount of money is coming from “soft money”. Future outlook is not improving financially but they are hopeful and we are in good shape right now. You do have the ability to look at the school board meetings online. Large percentage of funds come from the district.

Liaison Updates

District 196 Legislative Advisory Council – Day at the Capital (Friday, February 28, 2025) – Sabrina and Dave

- Updates shared: Successful Day at the Capitol with strong support and participation. Kids were able to roam freely and a lot of support at the capital.

Superintendent Parent Leader Meeting – (Tuesday, March 4, 2025) – Meredith (a.m.) & Laura (p.m.)

- Updates shared: Updates on high school construction, student achievements, job openings, technology renewals & 1:1 iPad initiative, discussion of AI, levy updates, family media plans.

Community Education Advisory Council – (Tuesday, March 11, 2025) – Melissa

- Updates shared: Superintendent introduction, lifeguard staffing challenges, strategic goals: professional development, early learning, community needs, Legislative Day: March 24 and new Vice Chair appointed.

Committee Updates

Fundraising

Restaurant Fundraisers

- Punch Pizza \$165.00 raised for the Foundation.
- Upcoming: Little Gym
 - Event: Friday, April 25, 2025 from 10-11:30 a.m.
 - Geared for ages 0-3, Registration encouraged.
 - 10% to corporate; remaining proceeds to the Foundation.
 - Flyer coming.

Winter Family Fun Event – February 22, 2025 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.- Update

- **Event Feedback:**
 - Positive: DJ, crafts, QR coupons, auction setup.
 - Improvements: More space for infants/toddlers, better fishing station structure, signage about how funds are used.
 - Suggestion: Split planning between Winter Event and Auction Event committees, sucker tree, t-shirt sales (adults and kids), ECFE teacher in room, craft room pipe cleaner flowers, post-its at auction to write down numbers, Wifi instructions, tv at entrance has the rooms listed, and photo booth near DJ.
- **Auction Results (Laura):**
 - Raised **\$5,608** via Bidding Owl.
 - Bidding Owl Fee: \$280.40
 - Cash Donations: \$177
 - 75 bidders, 36–43 winners (increase from last year).
- **Event Attendance:**
 - 2025: 288 children + 267 adults = 555 total
 - 2024: 328 children + 665 adults = 993 total

Hospitality

Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5-9, 2025)

- Teacher Appreciation Plan:
 - Baskets with useful classroom items.
 - Assembly: May 5 at 5:30 p.m.
 - Delivery: Tuesday, May 6. Volunteers needed.

Education and Planning – Jorge

- Ideas implemented into catalog.
- Exploring affinity groups for minority communities
- Spanish class being considered.
- Collaboration with Dakota County Parks for programming inspiration. WhatsApp and social media noted as outreach tools.

Outdoor Spaces – Katie

- Discussions ongoing. Meeting to be scheduled this spring.

Family School Book Drive – Meredith

- Ages 3–5 targeted.
- No religious, holiday, or foreign language books.
- Book sort dates:
 - First Sort: Tuesday, April 1 at 5:30 p.m.
 - Second Sort: Week of May 5.
- Distribution planned for May 12.

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, May 7, 2025	ECFS Foundation Meeting – Katie and Laura	DVLC	6:00-7:30 p.m.
Tuesday, May 13, 2025	Superintendent Parent Leader Meeting – Meredith (a.m.) & Laura (p.m.)	Zoom	Group 1: 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Group 2: 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 13, 2025	Community Education Advisory Council – Melissa	DVLC	6:00-7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, May 28, 2025	196 Legislative Advisory Council	District Office	6:00-7:30 p.m.

Other Business

Co-Chair Position:

- Jamie announced Melissa’s term is ending. Nominations are open.
- Discussed that there are always two co-chairs.
- Voting to occur in April.

Retirements:

- Melissa has reached out to all members whose three-year terms are ending.

New Membership:

- Jamie shared that membership is rolling. No major recruitment pushes currently, but applications are open.
- Clarification: New members must reside within the district.
- Ideas shared: Hosting a “Meet & Greet” or a playdate to welcome potential members.

New Advisory Council Member –Melissa Dunlay asked the council to vote; the vote amongst the council was unanimously “In Favor.” Mark Riofski and Emily Poole were appointed as new ECFS Advisory Council member starting in March 2025.

Adjournment

There being no further business J Jorge González Castro made a motion to adjourn, Dave Kerber seconded and full council approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Future Meeting Dates

3rd Tuesday, every month - April 15, 2025, and May 20, 2025

Respectfully submitted, Dacia Liszka