

Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees

May 21, 2007

Minutes

The first meeting of the Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees began at 1:30 p.m. on May 21, 2007 at the Nebraska State Office Building, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Members present: Doug Christensen, Mel Clancy, Christine Z. Peterson, Helen Raikes, and Jessie Rasmussen. *Absent:* Beth Schuler

Also in attendance: Marcia Corr, Linda Meyers, and Melody Hobson, Office of Early Childhood, Nebraska Department of Education (NDE); Bob Range and Greg Prochazka, Financial Services, NDE; Carol Fichter and Martha Nash, Early Childhood Training Center; Susan Dahm, NDE, meeting recorder.

AGENDA:

1. Meeting Opening

Marcia Corr welcomed meeting participants and announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act information. Marcia asked meeting participants to pose questions to be answered as they made self introductions.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Overview of the Early Childhood Education Grant Program

Marcia Corr reviewed the 2006 legislation establishing the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Endowment Fund, the process that named the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFE) as the endowment provider, and the Governor's appointment of the ECE Endowment Board of Trustees and the areas they represent as required by the legislation:

- Commissioner, Nebraska Department of Education (NDE): Doug Christensen
- Director, Nebraska Health and Human Services System (HHSS): Christine Z. Peterson
- Recommendation by endowment provider: Jessie Rasmussen
- Recommendation by endowment provider: Helen Raikes
- Urban At-Risk: Mel Clancy
- Rural At-Risk: Beth Schuler

Marcia reviewed the funding parameters setting up the public/private endowment fund. Bob Range, NDE Financial Services, provided a spreadsheet estimating fund activity. He explained the state and private earning streams and the process to estimate next year's revenue. The state manages the investment of the public contribution to the endowment fund. Jessie Rasmussen said that NCFE had chosen Weitz Funds as financial manager for the private contributions. Only the interest earned by the endowment fund may be used for grant awards. Bob said that current projections estimate that \$1.8 million will be available in the first year to issue grant awards. He responded to questions from Board members.

Marcia used a PowerPoint presentation to show how early childhood grants are currently administered. She made note of NDE priorities, expectations, the grant review process, grant

requirements, program design, budget and funding. Board members asked questions during the presentation. Chris Peterson requested a printout of early childhood grants currently funded. Marcia referred to the legislative statute to review the role of the Board concerning the awarding of early childhood grants for programs serving children under the age of three years and noted that control for awarding these grants had shifted to the Board upon their appointment. She also noted that this action has suspended the awarding of these birth to three early childhood grants for the 2007-2008 academic year and that some decision was needed to provide on-going operation for these programs.

Action:

Motion by Jessie Rasmussen, seconded by Doug Christensen: To allow the Nebraska Department of Education to continue to manage the early childhood program grant awards currently in process (i.e., for 2007-2008) that are serving children birth to three years of age.

The Board discussed the intent of the Endowment Fund legislation, the need for immediate action, and clarified that the grant awards in question (birth to three services) would come from existing state funds, not from the ECE Endowment Fund. The motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. There were no abstentions.

4. Organizational Decisions and Planning the Work of the Board of Trustees

- Election of chairperson
Mel Clancy proposed that the Board wait until all Board members were present to elect a chairperson. Doug Christensen suggested that a temporary chair could fill the role until a chair is elected.

Action:

Motion by Helen Raikes, seconded by Mel Clancy: To nominate Jessie Rasmussen as temporary chair of the ECE Endowment Board of Trustees.

The motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. There were no abstentions.

- Board operations
 - Jessie Rasmussen indicated that NCFE had offered to provide administrative support of the Board. There was consensus to accept this offer when Jessie said that NCFE had included staff support in their bid to be endowment provider. Meeting participants discussed the kinds of support needed and agreed that administrative support included preparation of agenda and meeting materials, public meeting notices, managing meeting logistics, minutes, web support and other tasks to be determined. Jessie will confirm NCFE's offer of administrative support and the Board will take formal action at the next Board meeting.
 - The group did not decide whether by-laws were needed but noted that guidance for the Board would be under the Attorney General's Office.
- Administration of the ECE grants for birth-to-3 programs and services
Board members discussed the variety of decisions that would be needed to develop criteria for grant recipients, procedures for awarding grants, and determination of where Board authority begins and ends. The group also discussed resources that could be used for guidance in avoiding potential pitfalls; whether Rule 11 would apply to birth-to-3 programs or whether a new rule, which would harmonize with Rule 11, would be needed; and what timelines would be feasible before grant awards could begin. Marcia Corr said she hoped that the Board would be able to begin issuing grants by January 2008. Jessie Rasmussen proposed that the Board would need some definition of evidence-based practice to inform their discussions and decisions. Helen

Raikes asked that the committee also take into consideration responses to the survey conducted by NDE that gathered input from early childhood stakeholders.

Action:

Motion by Jessie Rasmussen, seconded by Mel Clancy: To form a subcommittee to look at Rule 11 and make recommendations pertaining to programs for birth-to-3, with an option to recommend creation of a new rule and based on the subcommittee's recommendations the Board would decide whether Rule 11 would need to be modified or whether a new rule should be created to harmonize with Rule 11.

The motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. There were no abstentions.

The following Board members volunteered for the subcommittee: Mel Clancy, Chris Peterson, Helen Raikes, and Jessie Rasmussen. Jessie agreed to convene the committee and will also contact Beth Schuler as a potential member of the subcommittee. Volunteers for technical assistance included: Marcia Corr, Carol Fichter, Melody Hobson, Betty Medinger (t.b.d.), Linda Meyers, Martha Nash, and NCFE staff as needed.

- **Informal Stakeholder Survey**
Melody Hobson, NDE Office of Early Childhood, distributed a synopsis of responses to a survey conducted by NDE that requested input from Nebraska early childhood program and services stakeholders about aspects and issues pertaining to early childhood programs they felt were important for Board members to know about. Melody summarized the findings of the survey and answered questions from Board members.
- **Information and Resources**
Martha Nash gave each Board member a large binder of resources that was compiled by the Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC) to inform Board members about research, policy, and effective practices pertaining to early childhood development and programs.
- **Timelines for Meetings and Work**
There was consensus among Board members present to schedule meetings of the Board from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. on the third Monday of the next four months:
 - June 18, 2007
 - July 16, 2007
 - August 20, 2007.
 - September 17, 2007

The group agreed to hold the meetings at the Nebraska State Office Building (NSOB) or the NCFE conference room. Jessie Rasmussen will work with Susan Dahm to reserve a meeting room for each scheduled meeting and will inform the Board.

- **Board website and public notice**
The Board discussed the need for a website specific to the Endowment Board activities. Jessie agreed to ask NCFE to host this website; NDE and HHSS agreed to put links to the Board website on their respective agency websites.
- **Agenda items for next Board meeting:**
The following items were identified as potential agenda items for the next Board meeting:
 1. Election of a chairperson
 2. Attorney General's office present to respond to questions

3. Rule 11 sub-committee report

At 3:25 p.m. a motion/second to adjourn was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Next meeting: Monday, June 18, 2007, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Room 6B, NSOB.

MEETING HANDOUTS:

- ✓ Meeting Agenda–May 21, 2007
- ✓ Roster: Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees, appointments effective April 2, 2007.
- ✓ Overview: Nebraska Early Childhood Education Endowment for Birth-to 3 Services for At-Risk Children
- ✓ Nebraska Revised Statutes: Sections 79-1101 to 70-1104.05
- ✓ PowerPoint presentation: Early Childhood Education Grant Program
- ✓ Hearing Draft April 5, 2007: Nebraska Department of Education Rule 11: Regulations for Early Childhood Education Programs (Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code, Chapter 11).
- ✓ Spreadsheet: BUDGET\Early Childhood Ed Endowment Estimate, September, 2006
- ✓ Synopsis of responses from early childhood service providers to Birth-3 survey, May 21, 2007.
- ✓ Binder: Birth to Three Resources

Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees

July 16, 2007

Minutes

The second meeting of the Early Childhood Endowment Board of Trustees began at 1:30 p.m. on July 16, 2007 at the Nebraska State Office Building, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Members present: Doug Christensen, Christine Z. Peterson, Helen Raikes, Jessie Rasmussen and Beth Schuler. *Absent:* Mel Clancy.

Also in attendance: Linda Meyers and Melody Hobson, Office of Early Childhood, Nebraska Department of Education (NDE); Barb Schliesser, Office of Special Education, NDE; Martha Nash, Early Childhood Training Center; Sandy Sostad, Legislative Fiscal Office; William Scheideler, Governor's Budget Office; Kelly Medwick and Jen Hernandez, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF); and Becky Veak, NCFF, meeting recorder.

AGENDA:

1. Meeting Opening

- Jessie Rasmussen, Temporary Chair, welcomed meeting participants and announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act information
- Staff members and others who were present made self introductions
- Forms are available for Trustee mileage reimbursement

Action:

Motion by Helen Raikes, seconded by Chris Peterson: *Approve the May 21, 2007 Endowment Board of Trustees minutes.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. One absentee.

2. Public Comment

- There was no public comment

3. Endowment Administration

- The election of a permanent Board of Trustees Chair will be postponed until all members are present
- Jessie Rasmussen proposed adding a Vice-Chair to serve in the event the Chair is absent for any part of Trustee meetings
- Chris Peterson nominated Helen Raikes for Vice-Chair; Jessie indicated a vote for chair, vice-chair will occur at the next meeting

- NCFE, the Endowment Provider, will provide staff support for the Trustee meetings. NDE will remain the administrative home for the Endowment for purposes of managing the Early Childhood Education Endowment Cash Fund

Action:

Motion by Chris Peterson, seconded by Helen Raikes: *NCFE will provide staffing and coordination for the Early Childhood Endowment Board of Trustees.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. One absentee.

- NCFE will develop and manage an independent Endowment website that will link to websites at HHS and NDE
- The purpose of the website will be informational in nature as well as to post activities and progress of the EC Endowment
- NCFE will send a questionnaire to Trustees that will begin to formulate the content of the website
- NCFE will work with a programmer to develop the website
- Timeline for the website to be live is early September 2007

Action:

Motion by Beth Schuler, seconded by Helen Raikes: *NCFE will develop and manage an independent EC Endowment website with links to HHS and NDE.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. One absentee.

- Discussion regarding whether the Board of Trustees should institute by-laws for operation and structure
 - NDE legal staff provided a letter to the Attorney General's (AG) Office outlining their thoughts of why legal advice for the Board of Trustees would fall under the AG's purview and not NDE
 - NDE is still awaiting communication from the AG's office as to legal responsibility for the Endowment Board of Trustees
- Trustees agreed that by-laws were necessary and would offer a framework for operational development and administration of the Endowment and asked staff to prepare draft by-laws for consideration at the next meeting
- Trustees discussed the role of staff and the public at their meetings:
 - Action points and discussion points will be defined on each agenda
 - During discussion points, the agenda will identify time for public comment and staff comment
 - Action points on the agenda will be for Board discussion only
 - All Trustees were asked to invite pertinent staff to attend the meetings

Action:

Motion by Helen Raikes, seconded by Chris Peterson: *Action points and discussion points will be identified on each agenda. Time will be set aside for staff and public input during each discussion period.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. One absentee.

4. Administrative Rule

- The Rule 11 subcommittee recommends:
- Using the existing *Guidance for Writing Applications* for the Endowment RFP currently being used in the Early Childhood Education Grant Program
 1. This would allow the Endowment to operate within the current guidelines for the grant process during the first Endowment funding cycle and time to review the recent changes made to Rule 11
 2. The subcommittee agreed that recent changes made within Rule 11 may not work for the 0-3 population as it does for 3-4 year olds
- The Trustees asked staff to draft a letter to the AG's office asking if the Endowment needs to establish rules in order to establish the criteria for the distribution of Endowment funds

5. Management of Grant Funds

- The Trustees brainstormed the *desired impact* of Endowment grant funds:
- Serving infants and toddlers at greatest risk
- Promote broader range of risk categorization than for the current 3-4 year olds. Possibly:
 1. prenatal mothers and substance abuse
 2. infants and toddlers mothers who have mental illness
 3. infants and toddlers in poverty that result in domestic violence and child abuse
 4. tiers of risk
- Two components should always be priorities:
 1. Child Development component
 - a. may include parental education on child development
 2. Parental Support
 - a. programs should not pay for parental support only; support must be linked to child development
- The goal is to improve children's development consistent with guidelines for 4-5 year olds in NDE early childhood grants
- Coordination between NDE and HHS:
 1. infants and toddlers at greatest risk may already be in HHS' child welfare system
 2. critical to create synergy between NDE and HHS and to coordinate with existing services received by families
- What is the role of the community?
 1. Legislation requires a 50% local match to encourage community collaboration
 2. Communities should be able to create individualized support systems based on the needs of their community

3. Set clear expectations of how communities can work together
 - Center-based vs. home-visitation
 - Raising the quality in existing programs
 - Use evidence-based research to determine what makes the greatest impact
 - Staff qualifications
 1. Could blend center-based and home-visitation models
 - Program evaluation component
 - Determine what outcomes we want to achieve
 1. Set benchmarks
 2. Set indicators
 - a. Use research to set benchmarks and indicators
 3. What is the measurement of success
 - a. Look at existing programs as models (Educare, Nurse Home Visiting)
 - Programs must demonstrate a transition plan from 0-3, 3-4, 4-5, Kindergarten, Elementary
 - Do we want to create an Early Childhood Education System and think of Endowment funds in this venue
 1. Establish Centers of Excellence statewide
 2. Integrate all Early Childhood Education components systemically

Next Steps:

- Staff will develop a draft RFP from the existing NDE's *Guidance for Writing Applications* and forward to Trustees for input prior to the August 20th meeting
 - Consider identifying "expert" resources and forward RFP to them to help inform our process development and framework for the future
- Staff will draft a letter from the Trustees to the AG's office submitting several legal questions and asking for a determination of legal jurisdiction for the Endowment Trustees
- Staff will develop draft by-laws and forward to the Trustees for input prior to the August 20th meeting
- Discussion regarding funding levels and staff qualifications still need to occur

August 20th Agenda Items:

- Review draft by-laws
- Legal advice determination
- Election of Chair / Vice-Chair
- Review RFP draft

Next meeting: Monday, August 20, 2007; 1:00-3:00 p.m. NCFF Conference Room, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200, Lincoln, NE

At 3:15 p.m. a motion/second to adjourn was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees

August 20, 2007

Minutes

The third meeting of the Early Childhood Endowment Board of Trustees began at 1:00 p.m. on August 20, 2007 at the offices of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200, Lincoln, Nebraska

Members present: Doug Christensen, Mel Clancy, Jessie Rasmussen and Beth Schuler.

Absent: Christine Z. Peterson and Helen Raikes. Helen Raikes arrived at 2:25 p.m.

Also in attendance: Marcia Corr, Linda Meyers and Melody Hobson, Office of Early Childhood, Nebraska Department of Education (NDE); Barb Schliesser, Office of Special Education, NDE; Eleanor Kirkland, Head Start State Collaboration Office, NDE; Martha Nash, Early Childhood Training Center; Sandy Sostad, Legislative Fiscal Office; William Scheideler, Governor's Budget Office; Betty Medinger, Child Care Administrator; Department of Health and Human Services; Kelly Medwick, Mary Colacurci and Jen Hernandez, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF); and Becky Veak, NCFF, meeting recorder.

1. Meeting Opening -

- Jessie Rasmussen, Chair, welcomed meeting participants and announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act information
- Trustees and others who were present made self introductions

2. Endowment Administration -

Update on Endowment Website:

- A questionnaire will be forwarded to the Trustees and other attendees to ask for input that will help construct the Endowment website. The following are content areas for the website:
 - A. Introduction – what is the Endowment
 - B. Goals – who will it help and how will it help
 - C. LB 1256 with information on the funding
 - 1. Link to Rule 11
 - 2. Link to the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for 0-3
 - D. General contact information – who to contact
 - E. Meeting information including:
 - 1. Agendas of Trustee meetings
 - 2. Minutes of Trustee meetings
 - 3. Endowment calendar
 - 4. Endowment activities
 - F. By-Laws Governing the Board of Trustees
 - G. Board of Trustees membership
 - H. Grant information to include
 - 1. RFP application

- 2. Award listing
- 3. Current list of grantees under Rule 11
- I. Link to the Buffett Early Childhood Fund
- J. Link to NCFF, HHS and NDE websites
- K. Link for on-line donation opportunity for the Endowment
- Questionnaires are due back to Becky by September 5th, 2007
- After the information is compiled, Kelly Medwick will load the site on Beta for review at the next meeting

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Action:

Motion by Mel Clancy, seconded by Beth Schuler: *To elect Jessie Rasmussen as Chair and Helen Raikes as Vice-Chair of the Endowment Board of Trustees.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. Two absentees.

Review Draft By-Laws

- A. The Trustees reviewed the draft by-laws and had the following recommendations to be added to the by-laws:
 - 1. An option for the Commissioner of Education and/or the Director of Health and Human Services to send an official designee to represent them at any Trustee meeting by first notifying the Trustees' Chairperson

Action:

Motion by Mel Clancy, seconded by Doug Christensen: *The Commissioner of Education and/or the Director of Health and Human Services may send an "official" designee to any Trustee meeting upon notification to the Chair.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. Two absentees.

- 2. Discussion regarding adding the election of Vice-Chair to the By-Laws.

Action:

Motion by Mel Clancy, seconded by Beth Schuler: *Add language to the by-laws confirming an annual election of a Vice-Chair.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. Two absentees.

- 3. A discussion ensued regarding adding language to the by-laws relating to a quorum necessary for voting purposes. The issue was also raised whether a trustee could vote by proxy or via conference call due to the requirements of the Open Meetings Law.

- a. If a Trustee participates by phone, do we have to provide the ability for public input at that site
- b. Becky will research the Open Meetings Law and report back to the Trustees regarding off-site voting via telephone

Action:

Motion by Mel Clancy, seconded by Doug Christensen: *Add language to the by-laws that reflect four out of six members constitutes a quorum.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. Two absentees.

4. All agreed the by-laws should include language regarding the reimbursement of expenses.

Action:

Motion by Doug Christensen, seconded by Beth Schuler: *Add language in the by-laws: "expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with state guidelines".*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. Two absentees.

Action:

Motion by Mel Clancy, seconded by Doug Christensen: *Add language to the by-laws stating that "Meetings will be governed using Roberts Rules of Order".*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. Two absentees.

Action:

Motion by Doug Christensen, seconded by Beth Schuler: *To accept the by-laws as amended.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call. Two absentees.

Update on Legal Advice

- Pursuant to the August 10, 2007 letter from Jessie Rasmussen to the Attorney General asking for a determination on who provides legal advice:
 - As of the time of the meeting, no response had been received
 - It was recommended that Jessie Rasmussen, Chair, make a personal appointment with Leslie Donley, Attorney General's Office, to inquire on behalf of the Trustees

3. Management of Grant Funds –

Review Draft Request For Proposals (RFP):

- The issue was raised whether an RFP could be released or any distribution of Endowment funds could occur without a Rule to govern the process
 - This question will be asked of the Attorney General's Office and may be taken to the State Board of Education for their opinion

- Discussion occurred regarding whether Educational Service Units (ESU's) could be considered as an eligible applicant in the RFP since they are not defined in the Constitution as a "common school". Public dollars from the Educational Lands & Trust Fund must go to the common school
 - The Trustees agreed that ESU's should not be defined as an "eligible applicant" but could be one of the eligible community partners. ESU's could also provide the management and/or serve as the fiscal agent for the applicant
- The issue of whether the trustees would *require* school districts to collaborate with community partners was discussed
 - Trustees agreed that language in the RFP should *strongly recommend* collaboration and that the amount of collaboration would be addressed in the scoring of applications
- Trustees decided to stay with the same definition of "at-risk" that is currently outlined in the EC Grant Program for 3 and 4 year olds. Applicants can serve other at-risk populations but they must be "in addition to" at least one or more of the existing four at-risk criteria
- Program guidelines were discussed and trustees decided that applications should meet the following criteria:
 - Programs can be either new or existing and do one or more of the following:
 - 1) increase the numbers of children served;
 - 2) enhance the quality of services provided;
 - 3) expand to full day programs
 - Programs can be developed by using either a center or a family care home model or a home visitation model. One or a combination of these may be proposed
 - Applicants choosing either a center-based or a family-care home option must, at a minimum, be licensed by the State
 - Applications will be given priority through the point system

Next Steps:

- Staff will revise the RFP based on comments made at today's meeting
- An RFP workgroup meeting will be held to develop definitions and the scoring criteria for applications. Mel Clancy and Beth Schuler will be invited to attend. This meeting is scheduled for September 6th from 1:30-5:00 p.m. at NCFF
- Jessie Rasmussen will meet with Leslie Donley from the Attorney General's Office to get clarification on legal representation for the Endowment Trustees

Next Meeting:

- Monday, September 17, 2007; 1:00-3:00 p.m. NCFF Conference Room, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200, Lincoln, NE
- Agenda Items: 1) Legal advice determination; 2) review website content; 3) continue to review and refine RFP

By voice vote, at 3:00 p.m., the Endowment Board of Trustees adjourned.

Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees

September 17, 2007

Minutes

The fourth meeting of the Early Childhood Endowment Board of Trustees began at 1:00 p.m. on September 17, 2007 at the offices of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200, Lincoln, Nebraska

Members present: Doug Christensen, Mel Clancy, Jessie Rasmussen and Beth Schuler. Helen Raikes participated by conference call. Christine Z. Peterson arrived at 1:05 p.m.

Also in attendance: Marcia Corr and Linda Meyers, Office of Early Childhood, Nebraska Department of Education (NDE); Martha Nash, Early Childhood Training Center; William Scheideler, Governor's Budget Office; Sandy Sostad, Legislative Fiscal Office; Kelly Medwick and Jen Hernandez, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF); and Becky Veak, NCFF, meeting recorder.

1. Meeting Opening –

- Jessie Rasmussen, Chair, welcomed meeting participants and announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act information

2. Endowment Administration –

- Jessie asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 20, 2007 meeting

Action:

Motion by Doug Christensen, seconded by Mel Clancy: *To approve the minutes from the August 20, 2007 Board of Trustees meeting.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote conducted by roll call.

Update of Website Development:

- Kelly Medwick, NCFF, gave an update on development of the Endowment website
- Comments have been received and incorporated into a “draft” website
- A link will be sent to trustees and staff for comment prior to the next meeting
- Placeholders are included on website pages where documents are still under development (i.e., the RFP)
- Please send comments to Becky for final incorporation into the site

Update on Legal Advice:

- The Attorney General's (AG) Office has drafted their Opinion regarding legal advice to the Trustees; it is still in the approval process within the AG's Office
- The AG's Opinion should arrive in the NCFF office later this week

Phone-Conferencing Capability of Meetings

- The question was raised at the August 20, 2007 Trustee meeting whether or not Trustees could participate in meetings via telephone
- A review of the Open Meetings Act reflects nothing preventing a Trustee from participating via telephone or videoconference, but if the intent of the Trustees is to hold a meeting via scattered sites, the following must be addressed to accommodate the public:
 - Reasonable advance publicized notice of given;
 - Reasonable arrangements made to accommodate the public's right to attend, hear, and speak at the meeting;
 - At least one copy of all documents being considered must be available at the site;
 - At least one member of the entity must be present at each site; and
 - No more than one-half of the entity's meetings can be held by videoconference or telephone conference within one year's time.

3. Management of Grant Funds

Review Draft Request for Proposals (RFP):

- The Trustees discussed the current draft of the Endowment RFP and had the following comments:
 - The three rubrics, which were meant to outline levels of quality for center-based, family child care homes and home visitation models, are too complex and will be confusing to applicants; it will also be difficult for applicants to fit neatly into any one category
 - Discussed offering grants that help schools and communities start up new programs, improve the quality of existing programs and increase the numbers of children who are able to receive early care and education services
 - Discussed the potential of grant dollars being used so communities can establish Centers of Excellence across the state and to be "hubs" for providing coaching, mentoring and other methods to help providers increase their capacity and level of quality
 - Discussed educational standards for early childhood care and education staff and how to provide dollars that help them reach those standards
 - Should we require a bachelor's degree, coursework in early childhood development, endorsement in early childhood, infant-toddler coursework
 - Should there be various levels of degrees that meet qualifications
 - Should we grandfather in programs that have staff who are "working toward" requirements
 - Should we provide quality enhancement grants that help programs increase the education of their staff
 - More discussion needs to occur regarding staff qualifications

- Grants should be based on the needs of individual communities and based on research that demonstrate what works
- Recommend not pursuing a home visitation “model” but rather home visits should be based on the needs of the community and who the community is trying to serve
- If we want to require that programs follow evidence-based practices, we need to set some guidelines of what it means to be evidence-based
- Trustees reviewed the RFP timeline and want the Endowment funds to be distributed, preferably, by July 2008
- Trustees asked the staff to finalize the RFP as much as possible for the next meeting

At 3:05 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting: Monday, October 15, 2007, 1:00-3:00 p.m., NCFE Conference Room, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite #200.

Meeting Handouts:

- A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy; Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University
- Early Development Centers PowerPoint; Joan Lombardi, The Children’s Project
- Birth to Five Transforming Parent Support and Child Care into Neighborhood Early Learning and Development Programs; Joan Lombardi

Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees

October 15, 2007

Minutes

The fifth meeting of the Early Childhood Endowment Board of Trustees began at 1:00 p.m. on October 15, 2007 at the offices of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Members present: Doug Christensen, Mel Clancy, Jessie Rasmussen, Beth Schuler. Christine Peterson participated in the first half of the meeting by conference call and arrived for the second half of the meeting around 2:00 p.m. Helen Raikes participated by conference call.

Also in attendance: Marcia Corr, Linda Meyers, and Melody Hobson, Office of Early Childhood, Nebraska Department of Education (NDE); Eleanor Kirkland, Head Start State Collaboration Office, NDE; William Scheideler, Governor's Budget Office; Sandy Sostad, Legislative Fiscal Office; Kelly Medwick, Amanda Prokasky, and Jen Hernandez, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF). Jen Hernandez, meeting recorder.

1. Meeting Opening –

- Jessie Rasmussen, Chair, welcomed meeting participants and announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act information

2. Endowment Administration –

- Jessie asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 17, 2007 meeting

Action:

Motion by Beth Schuler, seconded by Mel Clancy: *To approve the minutes from the September 17, 2007 Board of Trustees meeting.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Visual Tour of the Endowment Website:

- Website address: www.earlychildhoodendowment.org
- Password: ecfund
- Website content came from input from the trustees and staff
- “About the Fund” section:
 - Content from Request for Proposals (RFP)
 - Purpose Statement
 - Whom it helps
 - Grounding Principles (from Neurons to Neighborhoods)

- Resources page
- Board of Trustees page
 - Kelly asked each Board member to verify their information for accuracy
- Bylaws
- Calendar
- Grant information
 - RFP
 - Grant Application
 - Office of Early Childhood, grant program page
- Donate
 - This page currently takes the viewer to the NCFF donation page. This will be revised and direct the viewer to the donation page for the Early Childhood Endowment
 - Gift planning resources for long term gifts
- Inquiries regarding the endowment grants will be directed to Becky Veak
- Questions or Comments
 - Needs a “History of Early Childhood” to connect these grants to the other Early Childhood grants and Rule 11. It is currently under “grant information,” but it will also be listed under “resources.”
 - Include UNL as resource.
 - Revise Beth Schuler’s contact information to read “Child and Family Development Program.”
 - Include the grant programs that are currently serving 0-3
 - Include dates and general timeframe on the RFP process before the site goes “live”
 - Would like to see an “historical timeline” in the calendar section to give people more grounding on the history. Most of these issues are currently listed under “About the Fund” section. Could list “major milestones” (i.e., legislation, constitutional amendment, when Board of Trustees appointed, etc.) in the box to the left of the site. Marcia will send Kelly the electronic file of calendar of events and key milestones. Will also add a short paragraph on what came before the Endowment (early childhood education grants, increase in funding, state aid).
 - Kelly will add information on when to expect the funding, more information will be coming on the history, and then will launch the site. Kelly and Becky will keep the website updated. All agreed.

Update on Legal Advice:

- The trustees received notification from the Attorney General’s (AG’s) office that they will represent the Board of Trustees, even though it is their opinion that NDE Legal can represent the trustees as well
- The trustees agreed they can not use both and need to decide who to seek counsel from

- There could be difficulty with possible inconsistencies in rulemaking if NDE offers advice and the issue is turnaround time with the AG's Office. It was suggested that trustees could obtain rulemaking counsel from the AG's office, and administrative counsel from NDE
- Mel Clancy and Chris Peterson favored legal advice from the AG's office
- Helen Raikes and Beth Schuler did not voice a preference.
- What if there is a contested issue? What if this Board proposals rules for administration of the endowment grants and the State Board of Education won't approve them?
- Understanding is that AG is place to get "legal opinions," and that state govt. legal counsel of NDE gives "legal guidance." Jessie will revisit with Becky.
- A suggestion was made that the Endowment Board of Trustees utilize NDE for normal day-to-day development of rules and legal advice and to utilize the AG's office in the event of a contested case
- Jessie will meet with Leslie Donley from the Ag's Office and Margaret Worth from NDE Legal

3. Management of Grant Funds

Decisions for RFP Parameters and Timeline

- Trustees agreed that the primary purpose of the endowment grants is to address the fact that 30-40% of infants and toddlers in Nebraska at-risk of failing in school because of life circumstances.
 - Need further discussion on prioritization and who is *most at-risk*
 - Clarification will be made in the RFP that there is a *growing number of children at-risk*.
- Jessie cautioned about having the RFP become an RFP about child care, and not about making sure children are ready and successful in school
 - Helen raised questions about licensed-exempt providers, and if child care subsidy can be used for license-exempt care
 - Chris verified that subsidy pays for licensed care and license-exempt care
- Jessie asked for clarification on agreement of four approaches:
 - Brand new program;
 - Existing programs expanding numbers;
 - Existing programs that improve their quality; and
 - Parent coaching services
 - All agreed on these four approaches
 - Later discussion added a fifth approach
 - Existing program expanding hours of operation (full day or year round).
- Services can be delivered to groups of children being served, home visitation or parent coaching, and a combination approach
- Concerns were raised regarding using the QRS pilot criteria in the RFP since the QRS isn't launched yet

- Think about limiting the quality indicators to those that are research-based
- *Should the grant be defined around the QRS tool or what the tool is supposed to reflect?* At a minimum, take out the “QRS” phrasing
- Strong sentiment was voiced that the “4 star” column, which requires only 25% of teachers to have an Associates degree in Early Childhood Education, is too low
- Perhaps there could be two categories: 1) you’re there; and 2) you’re not there but here’s my plan to reach that goal
 - Design a starting place, above licensure, and an end; applicants would then map out their plan to get to quality. Applicants should be able to get base funding
 - When an applicant receives a grant to improve their quality, they should continue to get funding for staying at that high-performing level without adding any new at-risk children
 - Discussion of “center of excellence” so that high-performing providers can continue to receive the grant dollars without adding more at-risk children
 - The majority of funds should go to providers who are already of high quality. Perhaps think about one time mini-grants to fund quality improvement
- A suggestion was made to look at a *dual track*: (1) raising quality; and (2) strengthening high-performing providers
 - They could receive a grant for: (a) being a resource in the community to other providers; (b) offering new services (i.e., Parent Coaching); (c) serving a greater number of at-risk children; (d) serving different at-risk populations; and (e) expanding the hours or months of operation
- The trustees agreed that Parent Coaches should have a bachelor’s degree
- Should risk factors be prioritized or require more than one risk factor?

Definition of factors for being at-risk:

 - Free and reduced price lunch, 185% federal poverty line
 - English as a second language
 - Low birth weight
 - Teen parent or parent not graduated from high school
 - Applicants must meet one of these four base factors to include other risk factors, such as maternal depression, mobility
- It was suggested that funding should go to programs serving poverty as a risk-factor, plus one other risk-factor
- Could start with a stricter standard in the beginning; it’s more difficult to lessen standards once dollars have been distributed
- All agreed that programs must serve a minimum of eight children
- A final draft of the entire RFP will be discussed and approved at the next meeting

Endowment Funds

Marcia Corr distributed and current financial status of the Endowment and gave projections of what will be available at the time of grant awards

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Next meeting: Monday, November 19, 2007, 1:00-3:00 p.m., NCFF Conference Room, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite #200, Lincoln, NE

Handouts:

- Agenda
- Parameters for Endowment Funding
- Pilot QRS Criteria
- Proposed Endowment Application Timeline

Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees

November 19, 2007

Minutes

The sixth meeting of the Early Childhood Endowment Board of Trustees began at 1:00 p.m. on November 19, 2007 at the offices of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Members present: Doug Christensen, Christine Peterson, Helen Raikes, Jessie Rasmussen, Beth Schuler. Mel Clancy joined the meeting at 1:30.

Also in attendance: Theresa Hawley, consultant participating by conference call, Brandy Lawrence, Ounce of Prevention participating by conference call, Marcia Corr, Linda Meyers, Melody Hobson and Barb Schleisser; Nebraska Department of Education (NDE); Martha Nash, Early Childhood Training Center; Mary Jo Pankoke, Becky Veak and Jen Hernandez, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCFF). Jen Hernandez, meeting recorder.

1. Meeting Opening –

- Jessie Rasmussen, Chair, welcomed meeting participants and announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act information

2. Endowment Administration –

- Jessie asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 15, 2007 meeting

Action:

Motion by Doug Christensen, seconded by Beth Schuler: *To approve the minutes from the October 15, 2007 Board of Trustees meeting.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Update on Legal Advice:

- Jessie reported on a meeting held with Leslie Donley from the Attorney General's (AG) Office and Margaret Worth from NDE Legal. Both legal staff concurred that this Board can choose legal representation. No conflict of interest or concerns about timing receiving legal advice
- The trustees agreed to utilize NDE legal

Review of Endowment Financial Information

- Marcia Corr reported a balance of \$1,036,103 in the Endowment Fund
- Jessie asked for future reports to include a breakdown of both public and private earnings

3. Decisions for RFP Parameters and Timeline

Theresa Hawley introduced the RFP writing group's recommendations

- Remove all examples of agencies and programs in the RFP so as not to seem as if we are stating preference for certain programs. Trustees agreed it was best to remove examples and instead address those at the Bidder's Conference. Make sure we emphasize the power of partnerships and that the Endowment funding can not supplant existing funding. It is also important to ensure that we avoid duplication of services.
- The trustees agreed that the purpose of the Endowment funding is to serve at-risk children.
- The trustees decided to make it a requirement for applicants to have Early Head Start (EHS) as a member of the Advisory Committee if an EHS program exists in the community.
- The trustees would like more language on the fact that Endowment funding should be used as a supplement and not supplant existing funding; also with the intent to maximize existing resources.
- Trustees agreed that members of the local Advisory Committee should submit a statement of their involvement; a partnership statement of commitment
- The RFP recommends three types of grants:
 - Quality enhancement grants
 - Access expansion grants
 - Innovation grants
- In order to apply for a Quality Enhancement Grant, applicants must meet a minimum level of quality as defined in the RFP and will be able to apply for funding to enhance their quality in several areas
- In order to apply for an Access Expansion Grant, applicants must be at the maximum level of quality as defined in the RFP
 - Access expansion means serving more children, lengthening hours and months of service and/or adding a new service component
- The trustees decided that because this is the first year for Endowment funding that it would be preferable to start off with two types of grants: Quality Enhancement and Access Expansion and to wait until after this first funding cycle to consider offering Innovation Grants
- Grants will be for three years and applicants may apply for more than one grant, but they must submit separate applications
- The trustees discussed whether there was a need to prioritize funding around access or quality enhancement. If there is a limited amount of money, is it better to serve more children or that children receive services in quality environments?
 - The trustees agreed to propose an "invitational" priority to Access Expansion over Quality Enhancement
- Discussion of Attachments A and B
 - Attachment A – Quality Criteria for Providers Serving Groups of Children
 - Staff qualifications: Associates degree, instead of CDA
 - Group size: 8 instead of 6

- Applicants must be in compliance with other standards (i.e., Head Start or Early Childhood Education grants). Those with unresolved areas of noncompliance would not be eligible
 - The trustees asked that the RFP require all partners to submit financial statements
 - Staff qualifications should require a certain number of hours of training in Early Childhood development
- Attachment B – Quality Criteria for Family Engagement Services
 - Staff qualifications: Associates degree in Early Childhood or a related field in Column 1. Include a minimum of 36 hours of training in home visitation in Column 2, in addition to a Bachelor's degree in Column 2
 - Frequency of contact should include visits twice per month in Column 1 and a total of at least 180 minutes in one month in Column 2
 - The trustees decided that the caseload in Column 1 should be no more than 25 and no more than 12-20 in Column 2, depending on the model and the community
- Attachment C - Program Requirements
 - Proposes standards that applicants would need to meet within the first year of the grant for both a quality enhancement grant and an access expansion grant
 - The RFP writing team will spend more time on Attachment C and bring back to the December meeting for approval
- Timeline for finalization of the RFP
 - Release of the RFP is scheduled for January 14, 2008; the trustees will finalize the RFP at the December 17, 2007 meeting

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Next meeting: December 17, 2007, 1:00-3:00 p.m., NCFF Conference Room, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite #200, Lincoln, NE

Handout:

- Letter to the Trustees from the Building Bright Futures Early Childhood Task Force - Access Subgroup (on agenda for discussion at next meeting)

Early Childhood Education Endowment Board of Trustees

December 17, 2007

Minutes

The seventh meeting of the Early Childhood Endowment Board of Trustees began at 1:05 p.m. on December 17, 2007, at the offices of the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite 200, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Members present: Mel Clancy, Doug Christensen, Helen Raikes, Jessie Rasmussen, Beth Schuler. Chris Peterson was absent.

Also in attendance: From NDE: Greg Prochazka, Marcia Corr, Linda Meyers, Melody Hobson, Carol Fichter, Martha Nash and Barb Schleisser. From NCFF: Becky Veak, Jen Hernandez, meeting recorder.

1. Meeting Opening –

- Jessie Rasmussen, Chair, welcomed meeting participants and announced the placement of the Open Meetings Act information

2. Endowment Administration –

- Jessie asked for a motion to approve minutes from the November meeting

Action:

Motion by Doug Christensen, seconded by Mel Clancy: *To approve the November 17, 2007 Board of Trustees meeting minutes.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Review of Endowment Financial Information

- Greg Prochazka, NDE, reported a balance of \$1,039,982.75 in the Endowment Cash Fund - if things continue as expected in the market, could anticipate to have \$2,764,049.79 in June 2008
- Jessie remarked that, as required, there are quarterly payments into cash fund; however the fund where the private dollars are invested only distributes dollars on a bi-annual basis. Two of those payments will be \$0. Jessie talked about the need for clean-up legislation to allow deposits of twice a year
- Legislation allows for the Trustees to determine that up to five percent of Endowment funds can be used toward technical assistance and evaluation. The Trustees need to determine what percentage will go toward technical assistance and evaluation for the 0-3 Endowment grantees
- Private endowment dollars are housed through NCFF with Weitz Funds and the public dollars are managed by the State Investment Council
- The Trustees requested a quarterly report from NCFF on the private dollars and the return on investment
- The Trustees had a discussion of appropriations authority. The authority to spend Endowment dollars lies with NDE. The Department will need to

include these dollars in their biennium request for appropriations and request for authority to expend the funds. The Trustees will need to clarify how to expend the cash fund, and any new money not anticipated in the allocation.

Building Bright Futures Subcommittee on Community Access

- The Building Bright Futures Subcommittee on community access submitted a letter to the Trustees indicating the importance of access to early screening and assessment for children birth to age three – they suggest strengthening the Nebraska Child Find model, Part C in order to impact more families
- Mel Clancy pointed out that developmental screening is included on page 15 of the Endowment RFP
- Jen Hernandez will draft a reply letter to the Building Bright Futures subcommittee for Jessie Rasmussen's signature

3. Decisions for RFP Parameters and Timeline

- Based on Trustee approval today, the issuance date of the RFP is scheduled for January 14, 2008
- The Trustees affirmed the stated purpose, eligible applicants, targeted populations, and rationale
- There were slight word and format changes, not significantly changing the content of the RFP. They are as follows:
 - Move “Best Practice” section under “Grant Guidelines”
 - Move “History” section first, followed by purpose, eligible applicants, targeted populations and rationale
 - Make sure the language is clear that we do not want applicants to duplicate existing services TO THE SAME PEOPLE; leave room for expansion or replication, but not duplication
- In “History of Endowment” section, Jessie suggested leaving room for 5% for technical assistance and evaluation
- Trustees discussed whether it might be possible that a community may not have a partner? The Trustees agreed that every community would have some partner, but it will be left up to communities to make that case, if necessary
- The Trustees affirmed that Early Head Start programs in communities, if they exist, must be on the Advisory Committee as a partner
- The Trustees affirmed the language regarding early childhood local advisory committees and for encouraging true partnerships.
- “Grant Guidelines” section:
 - The Trustees clarified they would like proposals ranked for each category (Quality Enhancement and Service Expansion). The technical assistance needs to clarify that there are two ways to get to the ultimate goal of more kids having access to quality
 - The Trustees agreed that no extra points should be awarded for a certain kind of grant (quality or access)
 - The Trustees affirmed the timeframes as suggested in Attachments A & B (i.e., child/staff ratios, staff qualifications) with a preference for not continuing to fund programs in Year 2 that do not meet the Year 1

qualifications in Year 1 (noting appeal process is possible). The Trustees provided guidance to the review/rating team that an improvement plan to meet requirements would need to be designed to show a good faith effort to accomplish in Year 1

- The RFP reflects that grantees can propose offering a new service component either through a “quality enhancement” or an “access expansion” grant. The Trustees affirmed that applicants could do both by applying to add a new service through a Quality Enhancement grant and to increase the access through an Access Expansion grant.
- Trustees affirmed the broad language regarding program evaluation and that evaluation measures will be developed this first year
- Trustees agreed to the range of \$75,000-\$150,000. The Trustees indicated they did not want to limit dollars per grantee, but rather to set a limit of how much an applicant could request per grant
- Trustees agreed that start-up funds for either type of grant would be in addition to the grant award for operations
- The Trustees affirmed the timeline: the RFP release date, the Research Conference, the Bidder’s Conference, Technical Assistance to be provided in different communities, applications due April 15, and notification on June 2
- The Trustees suggested having a press conference announcing the release of the RFP at the Research Conference and another press conference June 2 indicating the grant awardees
- Change the “Start Date” to “Grant Term Begins” on July 1. The Trustees still need to decide if there will be a 30-day or 60-day start-up period allowed.
- Clarification will be sought on whether or not the applicants that are selected will need to be approved by the State Board of Education
- Helen raised a question regarding how to tell if the most at-risk children are being served; not only the most at-risk and unserved in our own community but also the most at-risk in the state. Explain the depth of need and multiple risk factors
- Add that the grantees are expected to cooperate with NDE Results Matter
- The Trustees affirmed Attachments A and B

Action:

Motion by Mel Clancy, seconded by Beth Schuler: *To approve the RFP as suggested by writing team and edited today by this Board.*

Motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

Next meeting: January 28, 2007, 1:00-3:00 p.m., NCFE Conference Room, 215 Centennial Mall South, Suite #200, Lincoln, NE

Handout: Early Childhood Endowment funds spreadsheet