



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

LINKING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES (Early Childhood Iowa Area) Executive Committee met on Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. at Linking Families and Communities conference room at 822 Central Avenue, Suite 300, Fort Dodge.

Members present:

Clarence Siepker
Nick Thackery

Bob Thode

Members absent:

None

Community Members Present

Elizabeth Stanek

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Clarence Siepker at 2:30 p.m. Quorum was met.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Siepker asked if there were any changes to the agenda. No changes were required.

MOTION: Mr. Thackery made the motion to approve the agenda as printed.

SECOND: Mr. Thode

Discussion: None

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

ECI

Ms. Stanek provided an update of current legislation that has passed House and Senate committees. The current bills transfer funds for home visitation back to HHS by July 1, 2027, where HHS will contract directly for home visitation services in order to draw down federal funds. Ms. Stanek reported that this will greatly reduce the allocations to ECI Areas and it will likely force ECI Areas to combine.

Ms. Stanek provided a budget update and reported that HHS has provided guidance in regard to quality improvement funding for child care providers. Ms. Stanek has requested those that had previously submitted a grant application to make adjustments to meet the guidance and resubmit. Applications are due to be resubmitted before the next board meeting.

Motion by Mr. Thode, second by Mr. Thackery, passed unanimously, to make the following recommendations:



RECOMMENDATION 1: For efficiency, request board to approve the Executive Committee to approve applications for quality improvement grants within the budget set by the board.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Direct Ms. Stanek to send out the application again to providers.

BOARD

Ms. Stanek presented revised bylaws for consideration. Committee members held a discussion on a change in operations. No recommendation was made.

The committee held a discussion on the processes of the board and the current state of ECI and potential for changes. Ms. Stanek reported kindergarten literacy data had recently become available and the rates of kindergarten children at benchmark was less than 50% in some districts. The committee agreed that is an area of concern and focus.

Motion by Mr. Thode, second by Mr. Thackery, passed unanimously, to make the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 3: Issue an RFP for ECI funded services for FY27, with a focus on literacy.

General Discussion

Ms. Stanek shared concerns with the committee members regarding future operations with the uncertainty of ECI and other projects. Committee members requested Ms. Stanek to prepare a list of concerns and share with members prior to the next meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Siepker called for a motion to adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Thackery made the motion to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND: Mr. Thode

Discussion: None

ACTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By: Elizabeth Stanek

NEXT MEETING: March 6, 2026