

Early Learning Board Meeting 10/28/25

Attendance: Nikki Sliger, Kenzie Jennings, Brian Hall, Shea Tibbett, Karen Wiggins, Virginia Huycke, Hollie Kessler, Pastor Kurt Freeman, Joey Woodyard, Karen Van Horn, Jessica Gillespie, Dana Blanchard

I. Prayer

- a. Pastor Kurt opened the meeting with prayer.

II. Welcome, Introductions, & Minute Approval

- a. August 2025 meeting minutes were approved as submitted with no corrections.

III. EL Chair Report

- a. No report

IV. Directors' Report

- a. State came last week and we passed...yay! A few minor things to correct, but no major issues
- b. Shared about an incident where 911 had to be called because a student was given the wrong milk and had an allergic reaction. Mom arrived and administered epi-pen. Child returned to school the next day. Classroom procedure and policy regarding dispensing snacks for children with allergies has been revisited and changed to ensure this does not happen again.
- c. Had picture day recently which went well, however received feedback from parents that pricing for picture packages is very expensive, so will be looking at other options for this fundraiser.
- d. Silent auction baskets from Fall Festival raised \$700 and just finished the Butterbraid fundraiser which raised about \$1700. Still trying to get the money from Freddy's from our benefit night there a couple of months ago....Kenzie has contacted several times and is still working on this.

V. Treasurer's Report

- a. Dana will cover in Budget Discussion

VI. Preschool & Childcare Teacher Representatives Report

- a. Shae reported that teachers had heard about the proposed 2% raise for next year and are wondering if that will be merit or years of service based or across the board? And is there anything we can do to perhaps receive larger raises? This topic was discussed and several comments shared:
 - i. Fine line between how much of a raise we can give vs. raising tuition
 - ii. How long do you have to work before eligible for a raise? Right now it is after 90 days.
 - iii. What if we did raises once you have been employed for one year and not across the board at the beginning of every year?
 - iv. What would merit based raises look like? What kind of evaluation? Hard to do because there is so much subjectivity.
 - v. Have we thought any more about a set tuition rate when a family starts that carries with them the whole time they are enrolled regardless of what class they are in?
 - vi. Tabled discussion until we talk about budget
- b. Virginia reported that there were no half-day concerns at this time.

VII. Preschool & Childcare Parent Representatives Report

- a. Joey reported that there were no full-day concerns at this time.
- b. We need a new half-day parent rep and we are working on that.

VIII. Old Business

- a. 2026 Budget
 - i. Dana shared the proposed budget which has a 2% across the board payroll increase plus offering two personal days to employees as well as no tuition increase except for a \$5/week increase for Summer Camp.
 - ii. Took out the Stay and Play since we didn't do that this year; added \$2000 on income side for fundraisers
 - iii. Reduction in custodial cost helped us be able to keep tuition the same
 - iv. Committee discussed at length if we are comfortable not raising tuition or do we need to raise it to ensure we are setting ourselves up for future success? Talked through several scenarios and decided on a hybrid of a small increase for current families while implementing the "keep the same rate" for new families. The current families would see a \$5 increase in tuition for their current class but will continue to decrease by \$5 as they move up to the next class. When new students enroll for the first time, they will be given a rate that will carry with them as they move from class to class. We will communicate to new families that this rate will not decrease, and we will do our best not to increase it; however, if unforeseen circumstances arise, there is the possibility of an increase. Board will also need to evaluate annually what the new incoming rate needs to be; it could stay the same or it could be increased if necessary to keep up with inflation, costs, etc. Also discussed removing the annual registration fee for ongoing full day families; new families will still incur this one-time registration fee. Half-Day and Summer Camp families will continue to pay the registration fee annually. Discussed the possibility of giving bonuses instead of increasing the raise amount if this new structure provides extra income for that. Dana and Hollie will work on a new proposed budget with these tuition changes and email the board for a vote.

IX. New Business

- a. Christmas Gifts for Teachers
 - i. Gift cards (possibly Target or Meijer). Kurt will work on this and Karen VanHorn will help him pass them out to teachers. Gift card amounts will be tiered by years of service and directors will provide Kurt and Hollie with this list:
 - 1. 90 days-2 years
 - 2. 2-5 years
 - 3. 5+ years

X. Will email out the new proposed budget for a vote. Next meeting in 2026.

XI. Town Hall Meeting will be on January 20, 2026 at 6pm to share/communicate tuition plan and answer questions for parents. Kids welcome.

XII. Thank you to Brian who has served as our chair for the past several years...we appreciate your time and dedication!