

**Corner Counties Early Childhood Area and Taylor County Early Childhood Area
Public Forum Notes**

Monday, May 17, 2010 5:00-6:00 PM

Page Room Page County Courthouse Clarinda, IA

Early Childhood Board Members Present: Kim Behrens/Corner Counties Early Childhood Chair; Jayne Wilson/Corner Counties Early Childhood Board member

Early Childhood Staff Present: Pam Herzberg/Corner Counties Early Childhood Director and Jenny Ernst/Taylor County Early Childhood Director

Public Present: Berneeta Wagoner/Southwest Iowa Families, INC. and Heidi Carter/Page County Extension-Growing Strong Families

The purpose of the Public Forum was to inform community partners and members of the general public of the merge process that is taking place between the Corner Counties Early Childhood Area and the Taylor County Early Childhood Area to form a new Early Childhood Area.

After the welcome and introductions were complete the language within Senate File 2088 that identifies the criteria for establishing community early childhood areas (formerly known as empowerment) was reviewed. A chart that contained the 0-5 population statistics for all three counties: Fremont, Page and Taylor was shared with the group in attendance.

Jenny and Pam provided those in attendance with an update in regard to what had been done locally to move toward a merger thus far:

- A Similarities and Dissimilarities Chart was developed last fall.
- The Taylor County Board voted in January 2010 to proceed with merger process with Corner Counties.
- The Corner Counties Board voted in March 2010 to proceed with merger process with Taylor County.
- A joint Board meeting was held on April 29, 2010 to allow both boards an opportunity to discuss the merge process and how to proceed.
- Committees have been identified: Bylaws and Community Plan Committees
- A timeline is in place for items that need to be taken care of in order for the merge to take place on July 1, 2011.
 - By-laws are to be in place by July 1, 2010.
 - Letter of Intent to the Office of Management during the month of July 2010.
 - Community-wide assessment to be dispersed July 2010 through September 30, 2010. The results will be compiled by October 31, 2010. The Early Childhood Committee met on May 4, 2010 and identified questions to be included on this assessment.
 - Community Plan to be in place by January 2011.
 - New Board to be in place by January 2011. The new board will be responsible for processing the proposals and determine award of funds for SFY'12. The current boards will remain intact until July 1, 2011.

Jenny and Pam also informed those in attendance that they had proposed to both Boards to employ both directors at the time of the merge with each working 20 hours per week. Pam explained that each director had different strengths and weaknesses and the two would work together to identify individual job duties.

Kim Behrens and Jayne Wilson shared that after much discussion took place at the April 29, 2010 joint Board meeting, it was evident that once the merge was complete that the Board meetings would more than likely need to be held in Clarinda due to that being the central location for those that would be attending the meetings from the furthest points east and west.

Public comment and questions

- Bernie Wagoner asked Jenny who would be her record of employer once the merger is complete. Jenny responded that the plans are for The Clarinda Foundation to be retained as the record of employer and fiscal agent for the newly formed early childhood area.
- Heidi Carter noted after looking at the Similarities and Dissimilarities Chart that Taylor County does not have the Early Childhood Committee or Preschool Exchange Group in place and wondered if those groups would be retained. Jenny and Pam both stated that it would be in the best interest of the Early Childhood Area to retain these committees as advisory groups to the Board.
- Heidi Carter expressed concerns as to how the RFP process and awarding of funds would work once the merge was complete. Pam stated her hopes were that it would continue in the manner that the Corner Counties Area currently has in place.
- There were concerns from both Bernie and Heidi in regard to funding allocations once the merge was complete as they would both like to be able to operate their current programs at a status quo. Kim Behrens/Chair of the Corner Counties Board stated whether or not Corner Counties merged, chances are there would still be funding cuts to programs for SFY' 12.

Respectfully submitted,

Pam Herzberg
Corner Counties Early Childhood Area Director