



# Montana Early Childhood Account Board

May 21, 2026  
10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

[Zoom](#)

## WELCOME

- Call to Order
  - Meeting called to order by Lisa Malmquist at 10:03 a.m.
- Roll Call
  - Board Members Present:
    - Tory Malek, Caitlin Jensen
    - Jackie Ronning
    - Tracy Moseman
    - Lisa Malmquist
    - Crystal Armstrong
    - Mackenzie Espeland
    - Louisa Libertelli-Dunn
    - Kathy Deserly
  - Absent:
    - Beth Branam
  - ECFSD Staff Present:
    - Michelle Cusey
    - Sally Tilleman
    - James Eastlick
    - Nicole Quirino
    - Shannon Mackey
    - Alex Dahy
- Review and approve prior meeting minutes
  - Tory Malek motions to approve meeting minutes.
  - Jackie Ronning seconds the motion.
  - Minutes are unanimously approved by the board.
  - Motion Passed

## FINANCIAL FRAME AND CONTEXT

### FUNDING OVERVIEW

- Seed Funding Overview
  - \$10 million was the seed amount for this account.
  - There is roughly \$9.9 million remaining.
- Interest Earnings Update



- Interest earnings information was provided by the Governor’s office.
- The interest amount is based on the seed total for the trust. Interest is 20% of this amount. There is a projection of \$2.99 million for SFY 2027, \$3.28 million for SFY 2028, and \$3.48 million for SFY 2029.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

- (~7 minutes each, keep updates concise and focused on key progress)
- Quality Initiatives
  - Update from Chair- Mackenzie Espeland
    - The Quality Initiatives Committee has been meeting and discussing the development of a one-time infant toddler grant program. This can be utilized to add infant toddler spots. The structure of this initiative is still under development, though the committee is hoping to use a competitive grant structure. It could cost up to \$2 million to support this initiative. The committee is asking to develop this initiative further before bringing it back to the board for approval.
- Special Needs Training Implementation
  - Update from Chair- Louisa Libertelli-Dunn
    - There has been revised grant guidance and application documents for this initiative which will need board approval. This grant will only support a defined list of trainings focused on child development.
- Flexible Workforce Support Grant
  - Update from Chair- Crystal Armstrong
    - This initiative would utilize a noncompetitive grant. The current structure built by the committee will use a “first in first out” method for processing applications while utilizing a wait list once funding is exhausted. The committee is hoping for execution of this grant in FY 2027. The committee would then analyze the data and outcomes from FY 2027 implementation. There is a possibility that piloting this initiative would require a full evaluation after the first year. The committee is currently considering what data needs to be collected for this. Implementation of this initiative includes a two-year plan being created to prevent funding cliff.
    - Fiscal will provide projections for FY 2027-2028 for funding of this project at \$2 million, \$2.5 million, and \$3 million to show what amount of funding will be the most sustainable.
- Evaluation
  - Update from Chair- Jackie Ronning



- This committee does not want to repeat errors with unsustainable initiatives. There is a need to consider the state team’s capacity to tackle initiatives.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT AND VOTES**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Two members of the public made comments.

### **VOTES**

- Vote to approve amended language on the Special Needs Grant
  - Crystal Armstrong motions to approve this.
  - Tory Malek seconds the motion.
  - Unanimously approved by the board.
  - Motion passed.
- Vote to employ an internal evaluator at .25 FTE from DPHHS ECFSD
  - Crystal Armstrong motions to approve this.
  - Tory Malek seconds the motion.
  - Tracy Moseman abstains from voting and Louisa Libertelli-Dunn opposes motion.
  - Motion passed

## **STRATEGIC BUDGET AND PROJECT DISCUSSION**

- Lisa Malmquist addresses the board and would like to hear about projected interest deposits for consideration. This is important to know before finalizing funding for initiatives. She urges board to think about intention of the board as well as funding authority. These funds can fluctuate year to year so there is a responsibility to make decisions based on sustainability.

## **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- One member of the public made comment.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

- The next in-person board meeting is being moved to June 18, 2026, in Helena. This will be a hybrid meeting to accommodate board members who are unable to travel.
- Vote to Adjourn
  - Tory Malek motions to adjourn the meeting.
  - Jackie Ronning seconds the motion.
  - Unanimously approved by the board.



- Motion passed.
- Meeting Adjourned at 10:55 a.m.