Special Meeting Agenda

Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District

A special meeting of the board of directors of the Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District will be held on Microsoft Teams on the following date: March 3, 2026, at 1:00 PM.

Virtual Participation via Microsoft Teams:
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/27284284597010?p=IevnMxAVv3CpMAWgFw

OR

Meeting ID: 272 842 845 970 10
Passcode: hS62XD3x

1. **Call to order**
2. **Roll call**
3. **Public comment on matters that are not on the agenda (limited to 3 minutes each)**
4. **New business**
    a. Review and discussion of Transitional Executive & Project Management Contractor candidates and interviews.
    b. Executive session pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(e)(I) to determine positions relative to matters that may be subject to negotiations, developing strategy for negotiations, and instructing negotiators relating to a contract with the Transitional Executive & Project Management Contractor.
    c. Direction and/or selection of Transitional Executive & Project Management Contractor.
    d. Discussion/direction on Aspen Community Foundation Grant
5. **Future business**
6. **Adjournment**

Karp.Neu.Hanlon PC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

WWW.MOUNTAINLAWFIRM.COM

Mail to:

Glenwood Springs
201 14th Street
Suite 200
Glenwood Springs, CO 81602

Aspen
0133 Prospector Road
Suite 4102-J
Aspen, CO 81611

Basalt
200 Basalt Center
Suite 200
Basalt, CO 81621

Ridgway
565 Sherman Street
Suite 6
Ridgway, CO 81432

DATE: March 2, 2026

TO: Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District

FROM: Karp Neu Hanlon, P.C.

RE: Selection of and Letters of Support for Transitional Executive & Project Management Contractor

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At the March 3, 2026 Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District Board Meeting there will be a review of the two candidates for the Transitional Executive & Project Management Contractor.

Candidate materials are included in the February 23, 2026 packet here: https://confluencedistrict.org/2026/02/20/special-meeting-agenda-february-23-2026/

The Board conducted interviews with the candidates, which can be viewed here: https://confluencedistrict.org/2026/02/27/meeting-recording-february-23-2026/

The District has received additional public comment, which is included in this packet.

February 22, 2026

Dear Members of the Confluence Board of Directors,

It is my honor to offer the following letter of recommendation for the Cause and Effect Team's start up proposal for the confluence early childhood service district led by Rob Stein. For the purpose of this recommendation, I will focus my comments on Rob Stein given the lead role he will play on the team. Having said that, I am aware of the outstanding knowledge, skills, and impactful work of all members of the Cause and Effect Team as highlighted in their resumes.

As the Executive Director of Valley Settlement, a non-profit organization dedicated to working with Latina/o/x families to co-create opportunities with families in early childhood education, I have had the opportunity to work closely with Rob in multiple roles: In his leadership role as superintendent of the Roaring Fork School District, as a board member of Valley Settlement and Mountain Family Health Centers, and in his extraordinary leadership and advocacy on the CeCe Coalition (its precursor the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Coalition) and ultimately in seeing him tirelessly work to ensure the passage of 7A. I am convinced we would not have been successful in passing 7A, and therefore establishing the first early childhood special taxing district in the state and even the country, without Rob's determination, spirit of collaboration, curiosity and literally having hundreds, if not thousands, of conversations with community members of the 3 counties from Parachute to Aspen. His commitment and work never faltered. He has championed this work from the very beginning and now I see his passion and commitment to ensure the Board is well positioned, informed, staffed and counseled to ensure its success. That success begins with the choice before you.

Rob is, first, a collaborator. You can see that from the team he has assembled for this proposal. Organizationally, he prioritizes partnerships and recognizes that a special tax district is its own ecosystem with many parts that families, providers, partners, employers, early childhood staff, and advocates will need to connect with and depend on if this venture is to succeed. He embraces community partners (in all their forms) and leans on the wisdom of those most directly impacted by the challenges and opportunities we face in early childhood education.

Rob is a champion for equity in our broader community. During Covid, Rob found creative solutions to make sure families in need received help when other entities got caught up in bureaucracy or politics -- distributing emergency funds through the Family Resource Center, providing food through our buildings and transportation network, and expanding health services. In his final years as superintendent, he made it his mission to ensure that partnerships were serving all students and made the bold choice to move away from partnerships models that *do for* families, shifting instead to a model where we *do with* families, for lasting change and impact. Finally, in his work on the CeCe coalition he repeatedly addressed issues that came up in discussion that deviated from the guiding principle that whatever we recommend for the service plan must be accessible to all, equitable, and rooted in family choice. That is reflected throughout the service plan.

Board of Directors
Ana Soler, President | Rob Stein, Vice President | Susie Meraz, Treasurer | Claire Noone, Secretary
Jon-Paul Bianchi | Ann Dahmer | Debra Figueroa | Sherri Goodwin
Dr. Doug Jones | Paula Losada Nickell | Patti Stranahan

Rob's radically collaborative style coupled with his humility made him approachable in a way that is rare among leaders. Rob never saw himself as the guy in the room with the best idea: he was always the guy looking for the better idea. This is why he met frequently with leaders of organizations, with families and with potential partners and collaborators always seeking the best solution or opportunity. He listened deeply in English and in Spanish and could synthesize complex conversations and issues with remarkable clarity. He was also always the first person to admit when he did not have the answer or made a mistake, or when his organization had missed the mark. You could share honest feedback with Rob without fear of displeasure because it was clear that Rob genuinely cared and wanted to grow as an individual and as a leader. I believe that is an important asset for the selected consultant to guide the start-up of the special district. Humility matters! At a time when ego too often is what many of us experience under the guise of competence…humility matters.

I have witnessed Rob pushing himself to become fluent in Spanish, the dominant language in the school district he served, eliminating the language barrier that immigrant families would have to speak with him. He made the effort, valuing families' language of their heart and making sure he was approachable. Under his leadership, the Roaring Fork Schools transformed into a truly bilingual organization, hiring the first Bilingual Communication Specialist, naming bilingual communication as a strategic priority, and developing a best practices toolkit for schools to use in their communications. He advocated for and oversaw the creation of a bilingual pay increase–despite pushback within the district–that recognizes bilingualism as an asset and compensates staff accordingly.

Rob lifts people up, acts in solidarity, and selflessly promotes others. Those of us who worked closely with Rob saw him recognize leadership in unlikely places, advocating and supporting numerous individuals whose potential may have otherwise gone unnoticed by more traditional screening processes. So many rising leaders cite Rob as a mentor who has truly made a difference in their careers and lives.

I focused much of my comments on the character and values of Rob as his resume and experience are clear on his knowledge, skills, and impact. What is less knowable through an application process, a review of a resume and even an in-person interview is the character, values, and integrity of a person. I hope I have demonstrated that in my letter of recommendation, if not…I am happy to speak with you further. Rob is a person that is quick to give examples of his work rather than simply talk about "what might be." He has done the work, stuck through a complicated process that took work and years to achieve. Now the reality of implementing the goals of a special tax district for early childhood is before you. I hope you see the value of selecting someone who has put in the time through it all and built a formidable and experienced team.

Respectfully,

Maria Tarajano Rodman

Maria Tarajano Rodman, Executive Director
Cell: 413-313-5193

From:	Carolynne Kraemer, CECDSD Board Chair
To:	Richard J. Peterson-Cremer; Angelique P. Petterson; JJ Carl
Subject:	Fwd: Kathryn Kuhlenberg Letter of Support
Date:	Monday, March 2, 2026 12:58:34 PM

Carly (Carolynne) Kraemer
Chair | Confluence Early Childhood Development Special District

---------- Forwarded message ---------

From: kenny teitler <kennyteitler@gmail.com>
Subject: Kathryn Kuhlenberg Letter of Support
Date: Feb 21 2026, at 3:39 pm
To: seat4 <seat4@confluencedistrict.org>

2/21/2026

Dear Board Members of The Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District,

It gives me great pleasure to be able to write a letter of support for Kathryn Kuhlenberg as Transitional Executive & Project Management Contractor. I can't think of a more qualified individual than Kathryn for this position.

I worked with Kathryn for four years on the Roaring Fork School District Board of Education. During this time I got to see first hand what an incredible leader and visionary that Kathryn is. Kathryn is able to see the big picture from the 30,000 ft. view, but also manage the small details that allow for productive work flow, and smooth transitions. I am impressed by her tenacity, her intelligence, her work ethic, her passion for early childhood education and her ability to bring board members together to work towards common goals.

There are many systems and structures that Kathryn put into place for our Board in her nearly four years as President, such as updating our district's outdated policy manual, creating a board member handbook, implementing a superintendent evaluation process, creating a board member self-evaluation process, and leading multiple superintendent searches. She accomplished this in a way that brought the members of the Board together in a way that valued input, fostered a strong culture of collaboration, and brought the team together around shared goals.

I would like to specifically highlight Kathryn's role in building out our superintendent evaluation. When Kathryn and I started together on the Board in the fall of 2021, our district had a very underdeveloped superintendent evaluation, and it was one that was also very secretive in nature. Only the Board President was allowed to view the final document, and other Board members were left out of the process. Kathryn led the process in redesigning the superintendent evaluation. We hired a former Colorado superintendent of the year to help us

build out the evaluation. We engaged on defining what markers and goals we wanted to be evaluated, and upon defining these outcomes, we then created a rubric and process in which all the Board members had voice and input into the final evaluation.

This superintendent evaluation process I described is indicative of Kathryn's ability to see how systems work, what pieces are missing, and how to improve the operation as a whole. Kathryn's organizational skills, her vision of what needs to be created and updated, and her ability to get work accomplished is nothing short of exceptional. She does all of this work with a positive attitude and in a way that empowers those with whom she works. Kathryn has an innate strategic insight that allows her to anticipate challenges and design thoughtful solutions.

Throughout my four years of working with Kathryn, perhaps nothing stood out more than her passion for educating the youngest of our learners. Kathryn's extensive experience and knowledge in early childhood education makes her a great fit for this job. As a lead teacher, director and owner in the ECE field for more than a decade, Kathryn will be able to understand the complexities of what goes into high quality care, and also how to build out capacity and professional development. In addition, she has extensive experience nurturing relationships with ECE leaders and also advocating on policy efforts for our three counties, and at the state and national levels too.

In my interactions with Kathryn as a leader, I have seen how she brings people and organizations together. Kathryn listens to the community, works collaboratively with her co-workers, and strives to build a stronger system than she started with. Additionally, Kathryn's background in law with a focus on ECE policy would be incredibly helpful to The Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District. Countless times during my four years working with Kathryn, I witnessed her draw on her legal background to anticipate potential obstacles and scenarios that could have set us back, had it not been for her clear understanding of what was permissible from a legal standpoint.

I believe that Kathryn's deep experience in ECE, her strong skills in effective school board governance, her Certificate and experience in Education Finance and her strong interpersonal people skills make her the perfect candidate for this position. It is without any reservation that I strongly recommend Kathryn.

Please feel free to reach out to me if I can answer any questions or concerns for you.

Sincerely,

Kenny Teitler
206 S 3rd St
Carbondale, CO 81623
970-366-7394
kennyteitler@gmail.com

From:	Carolynne Kraemer, CECDSD Board Chair
To:	Richard J. Peterson-Cremer; JJ Carl; Angelique P. Petterson
Subject:	Fwd: Letter of Support for Kathryn Kuhlenberg
Date:	Monday, March 2, 2026 9:37:46 AM

Morning all,
Here's another public comment to add to the packet for tomorrow's meeting.

Carly (Carolynne) Kraemer
Chair | Confluence Early Childhood Development Special District

---------- Forwarded message ---------

From: Alex Sánchez <alex@vocesunidas.org>
Subject: Letter of Support for Kathryn Kuhlenberg
Date: Mar 2 2026, at 8:02 am
To: seat1 <seat1@confluencedistrict.org>, seat2 <seat2@confluencedistrict.org>, seat3 <seat3@confluencedistrict.org>, seat4 <seat4@confluencedistrict.org>, seat5 <seat5@confluencedistrict.org>

Via email

Dear Confluence Early Childhood Development Special District Board of Directors,

I am writing to express my strong support for Kathryn Kuhlenberg as Interim Director of the Confluence Early Childhood Development Special District.

Voces Unidas is the largest Latino organization operating in 15 counties in the Western Slope, with headquarters in Glenwood Springs. We are the product of the Roaring Fork Valley, and we stand with the families and workers whose voices are too often missing from decisions that shape their futures.

We endorsed Kathryn twice for the Roaring Fork Schools Board of Education. I have seen firsthand her work ethic, discipline, and commitment to students and families. While we have not always agreed with the district, Kathryn has remained grounded, willing to listen, and unafraid to engage in difficult conversations to improve student outcomes.

As Board Chair beginning in 2021, Kathryn helped recalibrate RFSD's governance. The board reasserted its oversight role, implemented consistent evaluation of the superintendent, and rebuilt accountability systems that had eroded. In a single term, the district made more measurable progress on governance and equity than had been achieved in

the prior decade. She pairs urgency with discipline and brings experience in law, policy, and systems-level leadership.

From Aspen to Parachute, there are more than 6,000 children under age five. Latino families make up a substantial share of this population, yet many remain outside the traditional childcare model due to cost, language, transportation, and work-schedule barriers. If this new district is serious about long-term impact, reaching the young children who are currently disconnected from formal early learning—many of them Latino—must be central to its design.

This board has an opportunity to build an early childhood system that serves all families from the start. Voces Unidas would rather partner with you now to ensure that happens than attempt to repair inequities later. Kathryn understands accountability, transparency, and how to build systems that include families rather than exclude them.

I recommend her without reservation.

Sincerely,

Alex Sánchez
President and CEO
Voces Unidas

Dear Board Members,

I am pleased to write in strong support of Rob Stein, Maggie Tiscornia, Kelsy Been, Amy Slothower, and Yerania Silva. I deeply appreciate their initiative in forming a team that is both thoughtful and highly capable of carrying out this complex and important work. Together, they represent a powerful coalition of leaders whose diverse strengths, experiences, and perspectives uniquely position them to navigate the challenges ahead with clarity and purpose.

Each individual demonstrated exceptional insight and leadership throughout the interview process. As a member of this community who has had the privilege of working professionally with many of them, I can confidently attest to their integrity, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to addressing one of our valley's most pressing issues: equitable access to and meaningful family choice in early childhood education.

What stands out most is not only their individual qualifications but their collective dedication. This team has invested significant time and effort to ensure this work is approached with intention and grounded in core values. I hope you can see this as an asset. They are guided by a commitment to equity—ensuring that all perspectives are heard, especially those who have been historically not at the table. They are driven by a belief in family choice—working to remove barriers so all families have genuine access and the ability to determine what is best for their children. And they recognize the importance of transparency—understanding that in a time when trust can be fragile, clear and open communication is essential to strengthening our early childhood community.

Their collaborative structure fosters accountability and collective leadership, which will be critical to the success and credibility of this effort. It is this alignment of values, expertise, and integrity that gives me great confidence in their ability to lead responsibly and effectively, ensuring the foundation of this new early childhood special district.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Kenia Pinela

From: Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District
To: Richard J. Peterson-Cremer
Subject: Fwd: Letter of Recommendation
Date: Monday, March 2, 2026 9:16:26 AM

---------- Forwarded message ---------

From: Berman, Hannah <hberman@aspen.com>
Subject: Letter of Recommendation
Date: Feb 27 2026, at 3:52 pm
To: general@confluencedistrict.org
Cc: Rob Stein <robertenango@gmail.com>

Hi all,

Thank you so much for the work and thoughtfulness you're bringing to the creation of the childcare district. After years of community engagement, policy work, and planning, it's reassuring to know this next phase is in capable hands.

I see the role of this board and new organization as implementing the vision and values established in the ballot initiative and community process. With that in mind, I'm writing to support the application with Rob Stein and Maggie Tiscornia.

The institutional knowledge that this team would bring is invaluable. Rob and Maggie were influential and impactful leaders in the CECE Childcare Coalition and the campaign team that passed the ballot measure. Their deep understanding of both the policy framework and the community's priorities will be an asset to implementation. In addition, the coalition often looked to models such as the Denver Preschool Program, which Amy Slothower consulted on, so it's great to see her as part of this team.

Maggie is organized and gets things done with a positive attitude and an aptitude for collaboration. She's a good presenter and coalition builder. Rob is smart, strategic, and deeply committed to education in this valley. I've seen his facilitation skills firsthand through his work with the board of Mountain Family Health Centers, which serves approximately 20,000 patients across the Roaring Fork and Eagle River Valleys. During a time of significant transition—welcoming a new executive director and several new board members—Rob guided the board through setting up clear expectations for governance, cultivating healthy board dynamics, strategizing staffing and board makeup, and understanding evaluation and our metrics for success. As a new board member at the time, it gave me confidence in the role and in the organization's transition with new leadership. He's a good facilitator who asks thoughtful questions, listens attentively, and helps groups build cohesive strategies. I've known Rob for more than 20 years, as he was my school principal, and it's been a joy to work with him on childcare, the teacher pay campaign, covid community response, and the Mountain Family board process.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

All the best,

Hannah

HANNAH BERMAN
DIRECTOR, SUSTAINABILITY & PHILANTHROPY
ASPEN ONE
ASPEN.COM

Aspen One

Honorable Board Members:

I am writing this letter in support of the proposal from the Rob Stein team to provide you with start up support for our new childhood special district.

Rob Stein has been involved with CECE since the very beginning of our imagining of a special district. Rob's background as superintendent of RE 1 has given him a deep understanding of the needs in the valley from the perspectives of children, parents, and providers. Rob was a key thought partner for the whole team that worked on building the special district and in the process demonstrated key communication skills working with all points of view. Rob has the equity mindset that is at the core of the original concept behind the special district.

Rob has worked both for a board and on a board. He understands the occasional tensions between volunteer and professional leadership, Rob has done start ups. He has brought together a team of professionals that together have broad experience in board governance, organizational development, communications and community engagement.

Rob and his team have no conflicts of interests with any entity within the special district and have a complete focus on the needs of all that will use the system.

Speaking personally, I have put my heart into the creation of this special district since the beginning and I want to insure its success. I trust Rob and his team to help the board make that success happen.

Rob Pew
Woody Creek
rpew@mac.com
970-309-6223

From:	Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District
To:	Richard J. Peterson-Cremer
Subject:	Fwd: Thank You
Date:	Friday, February 27, 2026 6:07:29 AM

---------- Forwarded message ---------

From: Carolynne Kraemer, CECDSD Board Chair <seat4@confluencedistrict.org>
Subject: Fwd: Thank You
Date: Feb 25 2026, at 6:38 am
To: general <general@confluencedistrict.org>

Carly (Carolynne) Kraemer
Chair | Confluence Early Childhood Development Special District

---------- Forwarded message ---------

From: Miss Kadi <misskadipg@gmail.com>
Subject: Thank You
Date: Feb 23, 2026 at 2:29 PM
To: seat4@confluencedistrict.org, seat1 <seat1@confluencedistrict.org>, seat2 <seat2@confluencedistrict.org>, seat3 <seat3@confluencedistrict.org>, seat5 <seat5@confluencedistrict.org>

Dear Board of Directors,

Thank you for taking the time to review my application materials and interview me today. I am hopeful that we will have the opportunity to work together in the future.

I wanted to follow up regarding compensation because I failed to address that in my closing. I fully anticipate and expect that I can complete the statement of work well within the allotted monthly budget and I am happy to work out either a fair hourly rate or project based compensation rate.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out to me individually if you need any additional information or have additional questions (just please don’t do it on this thread and create a board conversation subject to CORA).

Kathryn
970-379-4725

From:	Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District
To:	Richard J. Peterson-Cremer
Subject:	Fwd: Interim Executive Director of Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District
Date:	Friday, February 27, 2026 6:07:20 AM

---------- Forwarded message ---------

From: Carolynne Kraemer, CECDSD Board Chair <seat4@confluencedistrict.org>
Subject: Fwd: Interim Executive Director of Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District
Date: Feb 25 2026, at 6:37 am
To: general <general@confluencedistrict.org>

Carly (Carolynne) Kraemer
Chair | Confluence Early Childhood Development Special District

---------- Forwarded message ---------

From: Giora/Rachel hahn <rghahn@comcast.net>
Subject: Interim Executive Director of Confluence Early Childhood Development Service District
Date: Feb 23, 2026 at 5:02 PM
To: seat1 <seat1@confluencedistrict.org>, seat2 <seat2@confluencedistrict.org>, seat3 <seat3@confluencedistrict.org>, seat4@confluencedistrict.org, seat5 <seat5@confluencedistrict.org>

Dear Board Members,

I am writing you because it has come to my attention that Rob Stein is applying for the position of Interim Executive Director and I wanted to express my concern about the possibility of him being hired. I first encountered Rob right after he was hired to lead the school district before his wife had her accident and had to withdraw. At that time Diana Sirko stepped in and then wanted to stay in the position. The way he went about trying to get his job back from Diana was disingenuous at best and not honest. I can go into the details if you would like as I spoke to Diana about it so please reach out to me about that situation. I also served on the Roaring Fork School District Accountability Committee once we were allowed to have one after the school board changed hands. He refused to have one under the school board leadership of Jen Rupert even though it was required by state law. He manipulated it and formed a "family group" which was basically to appease those of us who wanted an actual District Accountability Committee by law and this group was all fluff that did nothing. I attended numerous board meetings while he was the Superintendent and interacted with him frequently. I say all of this to make the point that I have had a lot of experience with him as a citizen with kids in the school district.

I just want to say that if you choose to hire him - you will be making a big mistake. The way he operates is toxic to any organization. He is secretive and forms factions to do his bidding in the community. He is all about loyalty and expects his board members to fall in line to protect him and what he wants to do. If you, as a board member do not fall in line, he will have his minions in the community go out and find

board members who can run that will be loyal to him. Once he has lined up his handpicked board he will then manipulate data to serve his purposes and filter information that goes to the public in an effort to have them not understand what is really going on. He engages in what I came to label as "shock and awe" which is to present really complicated data so it sounds good and unless you are quite astute and take the time to understand what he is presenting you would never how wrong the data is. He is a master manipulator and not a team player unless he perceives you to be loyal to him. And the folks that are loyal are fierce and will circle their wagons to do his bidding. I could go on and on and have the numerous emails as back up with all the duplicitous activities he engages in to get his way. He is not a team player in any way shape or form and absolutely hates being questioned or challenged. I will just say to please think very carefully about hiring him because he does not have the best interest of education for our children at heart - his interest lies in having his ego stroked and doing things his way and will manipulate it so that he does get his way and will reward folks that are loyal to him with paid positions. I will end with saying that I will be very upset if my tax money goes to supporting him and paying his salary should you choose to hire him.

I thank you for your time to read my email and I hope you take the time to understand how he operates. Please reach out anytime for specifics about anything I have mentioned as I am not some crazy mom who has a vendetta against him. I am just a concerned citizen who has had numerous experiences with him as Superintendent and trying to get information from the school district.

Thank you for your service and willingness to serve as unpaid board members trying to make the best choices for our kids. It is not an easy position to be in.

Warm Regards,

Rachel Hahn
970-618-3662

From:	Carolynne Kraemer, CECDSD Board Chair
To:	Richard J. Peterson-Cremer
Subject:	Public Comment for Directors
Date:	Thursday, February 26, 2026 10:52:21 AM

Carly (Carolynne) Kraemer
Chair | Confluence Early Childhood Development Special District

---------- Forwarded message ---------

From: Angela Anderson <angela.anderson@basalt.net>
Subject: Interim Director
Date: Feb 26 2026, at 10:50 am
To: seat4@confluencedistrict.org

Dear Carly,

Thanks for offering to share my thoughts with your board on the topic of your interim director.

I want to express my enthusiastic support for Kathryn Kuhlenberg's application for Interim Director of the Confluence Early Childhood Development Specialist District. Her depth of experience in early childcare and with the Roaring Fork School District Board of Education makes her the right candidate to set your organization up for long term success. Having served on Basalt's Early Childcare Coalition myself, I appreciate the operational insight Kathryn has gleaned from running a childcare business and in working directly with kids. There really is no substitute for having actual hands-on experience when it comes to addressing the multifaceted issues of child care accessibility and affordability.

We are so fortunate as a community to have someone with Kathryn's skill set, expertise and vision as an applicant for this position. I hope your board will seize the opportunity to work with her. As always, if I can be of any assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out.

With Gratitude,

Angela Anderson
Basalt Town Council

From:	Richard J. Peterson-Cremer
To:	Richard J. Peterson-Cremer
Subject:	FW: Comment
Date:	Friday, February 27, 2026 6:13:52 AM

From: Carolynne Kraemer, CECDSD Board Chair <seat4@confluencedistrict.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2026 1:53 PM
To: Monica De La Espriella <mdelaespriellamoreno@gmail.com>
Cc: Richard J. Peterson-Cremer <rjp@mountainlawfirm.com>; Adley Larimer <adley.r.kent@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Comment

On Feb 24 2026, at 10:37 am, Monica De La Espriella <mdelaespriellamoreno@gmail.com> wrote:

> **Dear Board Members,**
>
> First, I want to thank you for your time and your willingness to engage in this challenging yet meaningful initiative for our community.
>
> My name is Monica. I have been a full-time resident of this Valley for over 16 years. I am a native Spanish speaker, an immigrant who became a U.S. citizen, and a mother of two young children. During all these years, I have worked in childcare with families from Aspen to Parachute. I have experienced both the joys and the struggles of this work. I have seen firsthand the challenges families face as they try to balance caring for their little ones, and I have also learned that these challenges are not limited to only low-income families. While financial resources matter, they are not the most important factor—the most important element is having caring, trusted adults who are willing and able to build strong relationships and support our children.
>
> I want to respectfully express a few concerns about the proposal you are receiving:
>
> **1. Lack of direct early childhood experience on the proposed leadership team**
>
> The team with the proposal is highly educated and professionally accomplished—there is no question about their qualifications to manage large successful projects. But professionalism alone is not enough. Too often, I see that individuals with advanced degrees can be so disconnected from the real, everyday experiences happening on the ground and more so with this age group. My concern is: Why, after all the time and effort put into this initiative, is there not a single member on the team who has worked directly in early care and education? Early childhood programs should not be seen or treated as school systems. Babies, toddlers, and preschoolers are learning to eat, walk, talk and smile. It is a critical time in life where forming positive relationships with trusted adults can determine later emotional and developmental success. Children need to be supported by trusting and loving adults who understand child development at its earliest stages not as a checklist that needs to be completed but as a process that needs to be adjusted when the need arises using common sense and responding to needs. When the baby cries we immediately check if it is hungry, or too hot or too cold etc. If you are a parent, you know what I am talking about, the book says one thing another whole thing is getting your kids in bed on time. With time, routines and more importantly with love things get better.
> Have any of the proposed leaders ever spent time on an early childhood setting outside of a school district preschool? Do they really support child development and the importance of the trusted

adults around them? Adults making decisions that will impact young children need to care and understand child development, and understand the importance of family in this role. Funds and policy will shape the way children are cared for in our valley, this is why the initiative is not only supporting working parents by watching their children but by continuously understanding all the development that is taking place in those early years.

2. Spanish-speaking community representation beyond translation

The proposal repeatedly highlights a commitment to serving the Spanish-speaking community. If that commitment is so important, I am genuinely wondering: Why was a Spanish interpreter added to the team instead of a Spanish-speaking early childhood professional? At least half of the early childhood workforce in our community are native Spanish speakers. Giving people a "voice" means letting them speak for themselves—not having their thoughts filtered or translated by someone else. True representation requires lived experience, not just interpretation.

3. Community feedback must lead to action—not just surveys

For years, I have heard the phrase *"we want to hear from the community."* School districts and non-profits often use this strategy with good intentions, but the follow-through is lacking. People complete surveys, attend meetings, and share feedback—but rarely receive updates, responses, or evidence that their input shaped the outcome.

Families in our region have already made their priorities clear: They want affordability and quality. (quality can look very different for different families) So the essential question becomes: What system will be put in place to ensure families can easily apply for and actually receive these financial benefits? How are they going to ensure state (upk) and federal funding (cccap) are used first to maximize services. And because our region is diverse—with families spread across many towns and programs—it is crucial that the system works equitably for everyone. I am also concerned about any system that could unintentionally punish families who choose higher-quality, and therefore more expensive, programs for their children. I also want to bring to the table the concern that funds should not be provided for programs that do not intend to get licensed as FFN. The main reason is the lack of accountability this program faces. On the order hand programs should receive support to be able to get licensed and then access funds.

Thank you again for listening and for the work you are doing on behalf of children and families in our Valley. I share these concerns not to criticize, but to advocate for a system that truly reflects the community it intends to serve.

Sincerely,

Monica De La Espriella

From:	Richard J. Peterson-Cremer
To:	Richard J. Peterson-Cremer
Subject:	FW: Confluence Interim director
Date:	Friday, February 27, 2026 6:17:41 AM

From: Carolynne Kraemer, CECDSD Board Chair <seat4@confluencedistrict.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2026 1:54 PM
To: Richard J. Peterson-Cremer <rjp@mountainlawfirm.com>; Angelique P. Petterson <app@mountainlawfirm.com>; JJ Carl <jwc@mountainlawfirm.com>
Subject: Fwd: Confluence Interim director

On Feb 21 2026, at 5:32 pm, Traci Turner <tcturner@mail.coloradomtn.edu> wrote:

> To whom it may concern,
>
> I hope your progress has been coming along smoothly. I know I have mixed feelings about the confluence commitment to our community. I have heard that you are holding interviews this Monday for the confluence interim director.
>
> I have been working in the early childhood field for 19 years in this valley. I have had my director qualification for over 11 of those years but I work in the classroom full time since that is my happy place. I recently licensed with the state during 2020 to help support families who needed care. So I have seen changes with policies and funding, some good and some not.
>
> I hope you all stop to think about how someone taking on this role for the Confluence has been; in the classroom before, worked in a school, and worked along side families who have received financial supports. If you didn't get the right applicant now, I wouldn't rush in. We need advocates in this valley who understand children and what families really need, the right one is out there. I hope you find the perfect fit and you are able to support our community accordingly with this interim director. Don't start this program on the wrong foot. Foster relationships with families, don't squash what hope they have for their children with someone who doesn't have a background with both parents and children.
>
> Thank you for getting out there and helping out next generation.
>
> Warmly, Traci