

Arkansas Early Childhood Commission
July 16, 2013
10:00am
Minutes

Members Present: Evelyn Bass, Jackie Dedman, Amy Denton, Gene Gregory, Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price, Dr. Chad Rodgers, Jody Veit-Edrington, Dr. Haley Vo, Dr. Jill Fussell, Rhonda Ahrent, Dr. Tracy Tucker, Barbara Warren and Kathi Bergman (on behalf of Rhonda Ahrent)

Members Absent: Marilyn Chambers, Janice Dancer, Missy Duke, Diane Green, Nickie Hammontree, Patricia Lucas, Debbie Malone and Shirley Pulliam

I. Call to Order/Reading of Mission Statement

- a. Jackie Dedman called the meeting to order at 10:10 am on July 16, 2013. She then read the new mission statement in entirety.
- b. A quorum of members was present.

II. Approval of Minutes

- a. Jackie Dedman made a motion to accept the minutes that were taken at the April 16, 2013 AECC Meeting.
- b. The motion was seconded by Gene Gregory. The motion carried.

III. Standing Committees

- a. Jackie Dedman asked if there were any updates from the Finance Committee, Appeal Panel, Nominating Committee and Better Beginnings Appeal Committee
- b. There were no updates given from standing committee during this meeting.

IV. Old Business

- a. **Goals and measurable(s) update.** Jackie Dedman advised that Paige Cox is Chair of this committee. Jackie shared that Paige is working on scheduling a conference call for this committee and will provide an update at the next meeting.
- b. **Policies and Procedures:** Procedures were approved at the last meeting for the finance, appeal panel selection, and the

Better Beginnings appeal review committees. Descriptions for three of the four committees were added to the document and needed approval. Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price moved to approve the write up for all three committees; Dr. Chad Rodgers seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- c. **School Readiness Task Force:** Dr. Tracy Tucker gave an update on the School Readiness Task force. The task force is working on updating the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Checklist to align with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). She advised that the task force work is ongoing. They have partnered with the South Central Comprehensive Center/Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes at Oklahoma University to look at benchmarks. The Comprehensive Center has U.S. Department of Education grant funding. The task force includes early childhood and kindergarten teachers as well as a parent. She also shared a draft of the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators and asked for feedback by around August 1st. Some interesting items that have come out of the task force are:
 - i. The language of K-12 and early childhood is different with regard to school readiness.
 - ii. The task force has spent some time researching expectations for Common Core and Kindergarten. They have identified items that are in the early learning standards/frameworks and made a list of non-negotiable items. Dr. Tucker noted that social emotional was not included and would need to be addressed by the task force.
- d. **ARCECEAM:** Jackie Dedman presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding a formative assessment tool. The ARCECEAM task force goal was to find a statewide early childhood assessment for Arkansas. They researched over 30 assessment tools, narrowed it down to 5, then 3. The task force looked at assessment tools available for Birth-3rd grade and tools that would document children's learning over time with a continuous cycle of assessment. The team also looked at assessment tools that would provide reports to teachers and program level staff as well as state level data to inform policy

and professional development. Jackie Dedman shared some additional recommendations from the task force which included maintaining staff/child ratios with the NAEYC standards and family engagement/home visiting. In discussing the family engagement/home visiting the following items were covered: the definition of family engagement/home visiting, the six dimensions, the five protective factors from Strengthening Families, written family participant agreement, assessing a child in a home-based program and the family communication tools. Other topics covered in the ARCECEAM presentation on the formative assessment included: Collaboration, Transitional Alignment, Special Education/Modifications, Better Beginnings/QRIS, Professional Development and Staff Qualifications. Jackie Dedman advised that the task force will have a complete document regarding their recommendations soon. A final meeting is scheduled on August 28th to complete the work. Jackie Dedman then asked for any feedback/comments/questions.

- i. Kathi Bergman – spoke in support of the recommendations. She said her center uses a formative assessment tool that provides awesome and unique data.
- ii. Micca Burris – spoke to the technology aspects of some of the formative assessment tools
- iii. Dr. Chad Rodgers asked about cost to early childhood education centers. Jackie Dedman shared that the task force did not look at the cost per center but they do have an estimated proposed cost for statewide training. Tonya Williams addressed his question. She indicated that the Race to the Top/Early Learning Challenge grant requires states to have a formative assessment. Tonya advised that DCCECE would utilize the state procurement guidelines. Dr. Rodgers asked about how this would affect smaller centers and if there was going to be push back? Tonya Williams advised there could possibly be push back. She said DCCECE can require publicly funded facilities to use a formative assessment and can offer it as an option to the facilities we do not fund.

- iv. Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price questioned the benefit for home visiting to have this assessment. Tonya Williams advised this is geared more towards center based programs and home visiting programs like HIPPPY might investigate the use of a more appropriate tool.
- v. Michelle Eichler asked if this would take the place of Work Sampling System. Tonya Williams responded that if the state procurement process identified a different formative assessment that it would replace Work Sampling System.
- vi. Dr. Haley Vo asked about the data reporting and information was shared.

Jackie Dedman made a motion to accept the recommendations from the ARCECEAM task force to approve a formative assessment that met the criteria identified by the task force. The motion was accepted, Dr. Chad Rodgers seconded. The motion carried. It was approved at 11:07 am on 7/16/13.

V. New Business

- a. **Race to the Top:** Tonya Williams gave an update on the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge application process. A team is already in place to begin planning when the application is released. She has taken last year's application and broken it down into sections. The team is looking at each section to update/improve the application from 2011. She also advised that the Rockefeller Foundation has offered to help with support. She shared that their offer to be our external partner would be beneficial to the state of Arkansas. The next team meeting will be August 8th.
- b. **Better Beginnings/QRIS:** Micca Burriss discussed Better Beginnings. She covered the history of the program. Ms. Burriss talked about the data. She discussed family child care homes and the work of a team to look at these issues. Ms. Burriss discussed the possibility of a star rated license that is being utilized in some states. She advised this would still be a voluntary program with all licensees starting at Level 1 with the option to move up. Ms. Burriss advised they were going to the National QRIS Meeting in Washington DC and excited to talk to different states. Dr. Chad Rodgers asked if there is a report that

documents progress over time. Micca Burris advised she could get this data. Tonya Williams suggested that the Division give the commission a report monthly that maps the change over time in regards to Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3.

c. Licensing Rule Revision

- i. David Griffin asked the Commission to extend for another 3 years the terms of the Child Care Review Panel. Members are listed on the Child Care Appeal Review Panel (List of Members Handout). The motion was made by Jody Viet – Edrington and 2nd by Gene Gregory. The motion carried.
- ii. David Griffin started out with an introduction to the rule revision section. He expressed his enthusiasm and the process utilized by the DCCECE. Revisions were made based on recommendations from national organizations whose primary focus is improving the quality of early care and education based on research and evidence, what areas Arkansas could improve based on rankings, and the best ranked states minimum licensing standards. He stated Ratha Tracy would give summary of rule revisions. He said he needed permission from AECC to take the draft of rule revisions to a focus group for review/changes, then progress to promulgation that would include public hearings and lastly it would go to a legislative committee for approval.
- iii. Ratha Tracy began the discussion by thanking the DCCECE Licensing Supervisor Staff for all their hard work. She said each of the supervisor staff took sections that needed to be revised. Mrs. Tracy reviewed all changes that are documented on the Summary of DCCECE Rule Revisions/Promulgation Handout that was given at the meeting.
 1. Amy Denton asked about classroom size changes. Ratha Tracy advised no changes to classroom size.
 2. Gene Gregory talked about decreasing Licensing Specialist caseloads. He also discussed the push back that he feels the Division will receive to the new

staff/child ratios. He suggested that the Division needs to be ready to prove with statistical data that this is going to increase safety standards to children.

3. David Griffin addressed the ratio decrease resistance.

Jackie Dedman made a motion to give permission to the Division – Licensing and Accreditation to form focus groups for review/changes. The motion was made by Gene Gregory and 2nd by Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price. The motion carried.

- d. **Fatherhood Initiative:** Jackie Dedman advised that this topic was discussed at the Grantee Roundtable at Arkansas Children's Hospital on May 29th and 30th. There were speakers at the conference that gave a national perspective on fatherhood. The conference focus was to take a look at strategies and activities that promotes positive fatherhood. It was mentioned that possibly forming a committee to promote the fatherhood initiative would be beneficial to our state. Possible committee members discussed: Mark Story, Ivory Daniels, Gene Gregory, Dr. Chad Rodgers, Nick Long and James Lawson. Dr. Rodgers asked if there could be members outside the group. The answer discussed was, yes. Tonya Williams suggested taking a look at connecting resources, such as the "Watchdog Dads" would be helpful.

VI. Summary/Announcements

- a. **Sequestration** – Jackie Dedman gave a brief overview of how sequestration has affected Head Start. She mentioned that all Head Start programs including her office received a 5.27% budget cut. It was also shared that over 600 children slots were cut, plus there is a tremendous waiting list at all Head Start sites. She shared that Head Start directors are working hard to reduce their budgets to accommodate the sequestration.
- b. **TAPP Registry** – This will be discussed at the next meeting.

- c. **Arkansas Grade Level Reading** – Jackie reminded Commissioners of the GLRC, which states that by 2020 all children will read on grade level by the end of the third grade. Tonya Williams spoke about highlighting programs that have excellent reading programs. She also addressed the issue regarding low income children not having access to reading material. Jackie asked all Commissioners to support these efforts.

VII. Next Meeting: October 15, 2013 at 10:00am

VIII. Motion to Adjourn: A motion was made and 2nd that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried. The meeting ended 12:31pm.