

Arkansas Early Childhood Commission Meeting
January 21, 2020
9:30am
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Deborah Mays (substitute chair), Staci Croom-Raley, Cheri Smith, Representative LeAnne Burch

Members Absent: Ryan Clayborn, Kim Whitman, Sarah Langley, Lindsey Jones, Senator Will Bond

I. Call to Order

Deborah Mays called the AECC Commissioners' Meeting to order on January 21, 2020 at 9:58 a.m. Deborah read the AECC's mission statement. All guests attending the meeting introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes

Deborah Mays asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 15, 2019 meeting. A motion was made by Staci Croom-Raley and seconded by Cheri Smith. The motion carried.

III. Old Business

1. Chair Selection Until July 2020: Deborah Mays asked for a motion to approve a chair for the AECC until July 2020. Representative LeAnne Burch made a motion to appoint Deborah Mays and it was seconded by Staci Croom-Raley. The motion carried.
2. Update on the Arkansas T.E.A.C.H Scholarship: Jeff Dyer gave an overview of the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program in Arkansas. The T.E.A.C.H program is a nationally recognized scholarship program for individuals seeking employment and credentialing in the early childhood education field. In Arkansas, the program plans to award up to 60 scholarships in 2020 to early childhood workforce professionals seeking an associate degree relating to early childhood education through an approved 2-year or 4-year institution. Presently, the program has received 20 total applications (19 approved, 1 pending) as a part of it's first year in all regions of Arkansas and has established agreements with 7 accredited community colleges. Once an individual is approved for a T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship they are given a 1-calendar year contract with the purpose of taking 9 hours of college credit while continuing to work a minimum of 30 hours per week (at the end of the 1-year contract participants must re-apply). The T.E.A.C.H program will pay 90% of tuition expenses towards an associate degree.

IV. New Business

1. AECC Goals and Strategic Plan Review:
 - Directives: Be interactive, evaluate and suggest updates to the goals
 - Goal 1: Increase the number of high-quality infant and toddler programs
 - Update goal to reflect an increase of the # of children in high-quality infant/toddler

- programs instead of an increase in the number of high-quality infant/toddler programs
- Strategies added: add strategy to cover reaching unregulated providers of care to infants/toddlers (i.e. non-registered family homes, relative care, etc.) and create a portal or an easier way for them to access resources and information, add strategy on the new infant/toddler participant agreements and slots to be finalized and awarded by the DCCECE
 - Strategies updated: update strategy 3 to include Early Head Start (EHS) programs that are not a part of the DCCECE's EHS-Child Care Partnerships Grant
 - Action Item: Sara Norwood or Rachel Machen will update the numbering under Goal 1
- Goal 2: Engage families in the child's education through research-based programs that enhance child outcomes and success in school
 - Strategies added: add strategy to update marketing to parents/families with messaging similar to the Dolly Parton Imagination Library as a multi-agency effort to ensure consistent messaging, add strategy on information sharing with entities who work directly with Arkansans' including child care aware centers, legislators, family support specialists, etc., add strategy to reflect the intentionality and benefit of adding a parent member to the AECC, add strategy to include eligibility outreach and CCDF parental/family engagement and training activities, add strategy to address working with families of children with disabilities
 - Action Item: Ann Patterson to provide information on working with families of children with disabilities
 - Action Item: Jamie Ward will send information on parental involvement work being done in Michigan to Tonya Williams
 - Strategies updated: update strategy 2 to include Curricula Concepts as a resource
 - Goal 3: Create an integrated system of professional development uniting the early childhood sectors-child care; HS; pre-k; public schools; early intervention and special education services. (Adopted from Workforce Designs National Association for the Education of Young Children)
 - Update goal to include Early Head Start (EHS)
 - Strategies added: add strategy specifically on the T.E.A.C.H program in Arkansas, add strategy to ensure licensure compatibility between the Arkansas Department of Education and the Early Childhood workforce, add strategy to include leadership development and competencies, add strategy to update licensure book and CCDF guidelines to include ethics training to align with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), add strategy to increase number of infant/toddler professional development offerings
 - Strategies updated: update strategy 1 to re-vitalize the state professional development steering committee, update strategy 2 to assess the current professional development opportunities in Arkansas
 - Action Item: Jamie Ward will send Prtizker Grant information to Tonya Williams to disseminate to the AECC

- Goal 4: Support restructuring, expanding and growing Better Beginnings/Quality Rating Improvement System
 - Strategies added: add strategy to address why some programs are not serving families receiving CCDF subsidy (especially the misconception of CCDF agreements and faith-based organizations), add strategy to address the idea of a DCCECE concierge or having child care licensing specialists better trained to be able to recommend resources and professional development, add a strategy to embed “community of practice” on leadership to higher levels of better beginnings, add a strategy to address leadership development amongst early childhood education administrators, add a strategy to address the use of program self-assessment and the analysis of program self-assessments to bring about systemic change
 - Strategies updated: update strategy 1 to include the pilot programs, staff notes, and updates on the better beginnings levels 4 – 6 draft, update strategy 2 to include DHS offices as a resource, update strategy 3 to include the July 2020 rate increase and intentionality around ensuring rate increases are being used to increase instructional staff pay, update strategy 4 to include the streamlined paperwork process for better beginnings.

- Goal 5: Strengthen and expand local and state partnerships with other agencies and organizations for connected action
 - Update goal to include the phrase “likely and unlikely allies”
 - Strategies added: add a strategy to address the infant/toddler/Prtizker work, add a strategy to include AECC members attending local and state partnership meetings, add a strategy to address the work surrounding Safe Babies Court Team (SBCT) through the national Zero-To-Three (ZTT) initiative
 - General Notes: proposed “newsletter” to announce what is happening with the local and state partnerships, ensure representation from ADE is at each AECC Meeting, ask for additional feedback and ideas relating to the “early childhood well-being” monthly meeting proposed to get multiple local and state partnerships together in one room

- Goal 6: Creating awareness of Health and Nutrition Programs and educate parents, children, and child care providers on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.
 - Strategies added: add a strategy addressing the commodities unit as it relates to the DCCECE and Early Childhood Education, add a strategy to address the communications work needed around the importance of healthy food and bodies and meal-time, add a strategy to address Arkansas’ new grant activities around health/wellbeing including the ACOB grant “Better Together” funded by the Nemours Child Health System, add a strategy to address self-care and wellness amongst early childhood education professionals and administrators
- General Note: Include the EC Workforce as a goal or ensure it is intentionally addressed in each section.

2. General Notes:

- The AECC intends to have guest speakers at each of the meetings to speak on the goals.
- The DCCECE will explore the idea of salary requirements for CCDF as a part of the July 2020 rate increase and the new Infant/Toddler agreements and slots.

V. Announcements/Action Items

Action Item: Sara Norwood or Rachel Machen will update the numbering under Goal 1

Action Item: Jamie Ward will send information on parental involvement work being done in Michigan to Tonya Williams

Action Item: Ann Patterson to provide information on working with families of children with disabilities

Action Item: Jamie Ward will send Pritzker Grant information to Tonya Williams to disseminate to the AECC

VI. Adjournment

Deborah Mays asked for a motion to adjourn. Representative LeAnne Burch made a motion to adjourn. Staci Croom-Raley seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held April 21, 2020. The location is 700 Main Street, DCCECE Resource Center.