

**Arkansas Early Childhood Commission**  
**July 21, 2015**  
**10:00am**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Evelyn Bass, Ava Coleman (by phone), Glenda Ezell, Jackie Govan (by phone), Kaye Murry, Matthew Nix, Shirley Pulliam (by phone), Kelley Smith, Jody Veit-Edrington, Barbara Warren, Deb Tackett,

Members Absent: Amy Denton, Rhonda Ahrent, Michelle Barnes, Diane Green, Nickie Hammontree, Patricia Lucas, Marsha Masters, Kathy Pillow-Price, Chadwick Rogers, Gene Roebuck

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**I. Call to Order**

Jody Veit-Edrington called the AECC Commissioners' Meeting to order on July 21, 2015 at 10:08 a.m. A quorum (of members) was not present. Jody Veit-Edrington read the AECC's mission statement and stated the goals would be addressed later in the meeting.

**II. Approval of Minutes from May 2015**

Jody Veit-Edrington asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the May 19, 2015 meeting. A motion was made by Kelley Smith and seconded by Evelyn Bass. The motion carried.

**III. Old Business**

*1. DCCECE Staff Updates:*

Arlene Rose introduced Beverly Wright as the new staff member in charge of Better Beginnings. Beverly has lots of early childhood experience and had previously worked in the Division as the Professional Development Administrator.

*2. Appeals Panel Application:*

Jennifer Williams passed out a packet which included an application from Susan Erickson to serve on the appeal review panel. The packet also included a list of all the other panel members currently serving on the appeal review panel. Since a quorum was not met, voting on Susan Erickson was tabled until the October meeting.

*3. Better Beginnings/QRIS Update:*

Vicki Mathews handed out packets that included maps of Arkansas and showing the number of Better Beginnings facilities by level and by county.

The goal is to increase Better Beginnings facilities by 10% each year and we are currently at 12%. We are seeing a steady increase and the goal is to have all voucher participants at Better Beginnings Level 1 by 1/1/2016. Vicki Matthews stated that Better Beginnings has a Facebook page that recognizes each facility as they achieve levels.

Beverly Wright passed out a handout related to goal #1 and goal #4. The handout shows the infant and toddler capacities by quality level and participation by license type. The goal is to increase the overall quality of care for all children. Beverly Wright also responded to a question from the last meeting about faith-based facilities and their participation in Better Beginnings. The current capacity is 212 with 38% of that capacity being in a Better Beginnings facility.

4. *Early Head Start Childcare Partnership Grant:*

Brandy Ishmon reported on the Early Head Start Grant. There are three grantees that have been awarded in Arkansas. They are UAPB - Dr. Jefferson (88 slots), CSO- Mary Jean Daniels (208 slots) and AEL- Michael Patterson (80 slots). Brandy Ishmon handed out a packet explaining the partnership grant which also included the information given to the facilities.

Jackie Govan reported on the Kellogg grant, which includes 3 major initiatives: Family Engagement, Early Learning Standards, and the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The family engagement webinar is scheduled for August 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm. During the webinar, information will be shared that outlines the family engagement framework and guide. The webinar link will be sent out to the commissioners. Once the family engagement framework is ready it will be sent out for public comment and review by national experts. Early childhood programs and school districts have received a survey to send out to parents for their input. Information obtained will be used in the family engagement development process. The Early Learning Standards webinar has already been presented and we are in the process of getting ready for the town meetings. Town meetings will be held in August and September for both the new family engagement guide and the revised early learning standards. Finally, we have hired a consultant out of Washington DC to assist with the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. We will begin our KEA work in August.

5. *AECC Goals Updates:*

Tonya Williams stated that the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education's monthly reports now include the progress of the six goals of the AECC. Tonya asked staff to share any updates on the goals.

Paige Cox reported updates on the goals. (Goal 1) She is working with all of the Child Care Aware programs and each one has an Infant Toddler specialist on staff and Brandy Ishmon will be meeting with them. (Goal 2) The State Parent Advisory Council has almost completed the Guide for Promoting Family Engagement. (Goal 3) The Professional Development Registry is still a work in progress due to some technical issues. Testing is going on now and is going rather smoothly. They are working on manuals for the registry and possibly have the registry go live by the end of the calendar year. (Goal 4) A parent meeting was held on June 4<sup>th</sup> explaining the importance of BB. (Goal 5) The State Professional Development Steering Committee has met several times and has about 25 members. The members are a diverse make-up. Paige will provide a list of all current members to the Commission. Arkansas is 1 of 4 states to attend the Peer Partnership Learning Project. This project will help make sure our system integrates all requirements. The Child Care Aware programs received funding for Emergency Preparedness. There is a training in July and it will eventually be statewide.

Susan Underwood reported on the Arkansas Better Chance program. They have had five days of training for ABC Coordinators and have two more days planned for COPA and financial training.

#### **IV. New Business**

*1. Outstanding Early Childhood Professional of the Year Award:*

Paige Cox reported that there were four nominees and all four would receive an award. She hopes to give out the awards at the AECA conference in October. The 4 recipients are:

Paul Lazenby – employed at ASU

Linda Adams – The Hunny Tree

Suzanne Smither – Ozark School District ABC

Pam Scott – Booneville Elementary Pre-K

Paige will send an email with information on each of the recipients. We will schedule a conference call to approve the proposed recipients.

*2. High Quality Preschool Program Grant Applications:*

Tonya Williams and Susan Underwood reported that there are three community targets: School Districts designated as Needs Improvement focus, Needs Improvement Priority or Rural School Districts unserved with four year olds (determined by census and current ABC and Head Start data). The 1<sup>st</sup> group of applicants has been taken to the ADE Board of Education. Round two of reviews are currently under review.

*3. Arkansas Better Chance Grants - Renewals:*

Susan Underwood reported that notifications are going out to the

applicants. There were approximately 400 slots available to award to applicants.

**V. Summary/Announcements**

No announcements.

**VI. Adjournment**

Jody Veit-Edrington asked for a motion to adjourn. Barbara Warren made a motion to adjourn. Glenda Ezell seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 11:20am.

**VII. Next Meeting**

*The next meeting will be held Tuesday, October 20, 2015. The location is to be determined.*