

Arkansas Early Childhood Commission
October 20, 2015
10:00am
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Rhonda Ahrent, Ava Coleman, Dr. Glenda Ezell, Jackie Govan (over the phone), Marsha Masters, Kaye Murry, Dr. Matthew Nix, Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price, Kelley Smith, Jody Veit-Edrington, Gene Roebuck

Members Absent: Michelle Barnes, Evelyn Bass, Amy Denton, Dr. Jill Fussell, Diane Green, Nickie Hammontree, Patricia Lucas, Shirley Pulliam, Dr. Chad Rodgers, Debbie Tacket, Barbara Warren

I. Call to Order

Jody Veit-Edrington called the AECC Commissioners' Meeting to order on October 20, 2015 at 10:11 a.m. Ava Coleman 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 July 19, 2015 meeting. A motion was made by Marsha Masters and seconded by Dr. Mathew Nix. The motion carried.

III. Old Business

1. *Better Beginnings/QRIS Update (Goal 4):*

Vicki Mathews handed out packets that included maps of Arkansas and showing the number of Better Beginnings facilities by level and by county. Fulton County has 100% participation in Better Beginnings. Level 1 is the highest level of participation in the state. Level 2 is the lowest participation level but the division has received an increase in applications for level 2. Vicki stated that she thinks that it is due to the incentives. Level 3 is also has a high level of participation. Vicki stated she thinks this is due to the providers who are ABC participants, Head Start and providers who were at the highest level of our old quality rating system.

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. Participation has increased across the participants. There are more providers participating in Better Beginnings in every level.

Beverly Wright stated that the licensing unit had the opportunity to present at the Catholic school professional development day and we met with several of the larger Catholic schools in Arkansas. Beverly stated that the unit is finding that many faith based organizations believe that if they become a part of Better Beginnings then they are unable to do such things as pray before meals and DCCECE will make them change their curriculum. DCCECE is doing our best to educate the providers with the rules and regulations. The licensing unit is meeting directly with contractors to make sure we are providing the right message. Our goal is to make sure their curriculum is appropriate for the age they are serving.

Jody Edrington asked if the jump in participation may be due to the additional Head Start funding. Beverly agreed that it has helped increase participation.

Kathy Pillow-Price offered to provide contact information for the National Service Alliance and stated they were helping with home expansion.

2. *Appeals Panel Application:*

Jennifer Williams provided 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. A motion to approve Susan Erickson to serve on the appeal review panel was made by Rhonda Ahrent and seconded by Gene Roebuck. The motion carried.

3. *Early Head Start Childcare Partnership Grant (Goal 1):*

Jackie Govan reported on the Kellogg grant, which includes 3 major initiatives: Family Engagement, Early Learning Standards, and the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. Jackie stated that a trainer from Dallas conducted training with the partners on the Early Learning Standards. There was also a training provided on Quick Books, accounting software.

4. *Outstanding Early Childhood Professionals of the Year Award:*

Four individuals were selected for the award. Paul Lazenby, Linda Adams, Suzanne Smither and Pam Scott were presented the awards at the Arkansas Early Childhood Association Conference in October 2015.

IV. New Business

1. *AECC Attendance Policy:*

Jody Veit-Edrington handed out the AECC attendance policy. Jody Veit-Edrington and Tonya Williams requested feedback on ways to improve meeting attendance. If a member misses three meetings in a row, the

Governor is notified.

Nina Carter of the Attorney General Civil Department stated that the AECC is required to put their meetings on the public calendar (Arkansas.gov) at least three days in advance. We are currently in compliance because we have standing, quarterly meetings. Members were asked to send any ideas that would increase attendance to Sara Norwood.

2. *NEW DCCECE Staff Updates:*

Arlene Rose introduced Stephanie Stone. Stephanie is new to the DCCECE and holds the position of Preschool Development Grant Specialist. This position is funded through the Preschool Development Grant. The ABC administrator and manager are in the process of hiring for the position to manage the Preschool Development Grant.

3. *The State Professional Development Steering Committee and Subcommittee Update:*

Arlene Rose provided updates for the State Professional Development Steering Committee. Dr. Laura Johns from the National Center on Child Care Quality Improvement visited Arkansas on September 21, 2015, to facilitate the new Professional Standards Committee meeting. The committee will review Arkansas' Workforce Knowledge and standards; and to align it with the state's early development and learning guidelines.

4. *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 1st group of applicants has been taken to the ADE Board of Education. Round two of reviews are currently under review.

5. *CCDF State Plan Status (Goal 1-5):*

Ivory Daniels reported on the CCDF State Plan. The new state plan will be a three year plan, instead of a two year plan. There will be a lot more emphasis on delivering high-quality coordinated early childhood and education services to maximize parent's options. Also emphasis on supporting parents trying to achieve independence from public assistance. Focus on improving the overall quality of care services by implementing more stringent health, safety, licensing and training requirements. Some of the new changes include increasing the number and percentages of low-income children in high-quality child care settings. There is also focus on developing program policies and procedures that will allow protection for the working families which include: 12 month authorizations regardless of a temporary change in parents working, education or job training status.

The target date for review is mid-November. The state plan is due March, 2016. Ivory will be scheduling Regional Meetings soon for the following: Pulaski County, Batesville, Monticello, Washington/Sebastian County area.

6. *Resources available for Pre-K and Early Childhood (Goal 5)*

Marsha Masters, the associate director of Economics Arkansas, presented on resources available for Pre-K and Early Childhood. Marsha has 25 years of experience in early childhood. Marsha provided resources that Economics Arkansas would like to provide across the state for Pre-K. The first is a brochure about the non-profit and resources offered. The brochure provides information on organization information, partners, resources and opportunities. Marsha provided details on the following partners and resources.

- Arkansas Cooperative Extension- provides pre-k lessons on the topic of money
- Beth Anne Rankin- Arkansas 529, hosts parents nights, sharing resources in all 75 counties
- St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank- new curriculum- Kiddyconomics: An Economics Curriculum for Young Learners, will provide a copy in the next meeting, lots of engaging activities
- University of Cambridge, Habit Formation and Learning in Young Children- article provided. By age 7 children are going to have the habit about money.

Jody Veit-Edrington shared that the new early learning standards focus on teaching in the early years with self-regulation and executive function. It has been proven that teaching children to make good decisions at an early age will provide benefits. Getting this information out to providers is very important.

7. *Update on ABC Child Outcomes (Goal 5)*

Sarah Argue, with the Arkansas Research Center, presented on the ABC childhood outcomes data. The Race to the Top grant allowed the Arkansas Research Center to build the statewide longitudinal data system for the state of Arkansas. Sarah stated that the federal government wants to be able to look at the data across the years, statewide.

Sarah presented the data via PowerPoint presentation. Sarah provided information and data about Arkansas children vs ABC children's proficiency in literacy and math. Sarah provided background on the high quality public pre-k access in Arkansas, childhood poverty in Arkansas and Better Beginnings data.

8. *Improving outcomes for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children (Goal 5):*

Janet Dickerson, the superintendent for the Arkansas School for the Deaf, provided

information about resources for deaf and hard of hearing children. Janet encourages improving the process of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Our school has resources to help with deaf education. Janet requested that we encourage parents to contact the school for resources.

Janet provided a PowerPoint presentation (10 Tips for Ensuring Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Succeed) that was presented at the Early Childhood Conference.

V. Summary/Announcements

Jackie Govan requested to add the revised early learning standards and family engagement guide to the agenda for the January 19, 2016 meeting.

Jody Veit-Edrington requested that the commissioners email Sara Norwood to add items to the agenda for the January 19, 2016 meeting.

VI. Adjournment

Jody Veit-Edrington asked for a motion to adjourn. Gene Roebuck made a motion to adjourn. Glenda Ezell seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 11:15am.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, January 19, 2016. The location is 700 Main Street, Conference Room A & B.