

Arkansas Early Childhood Commission Meeting
April 16, 2019
10:00am
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Deborah (Debbie) Mayes, Ryan Clayborn, Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price, Kim Whitman, Lindsey Jones

Members Absent: Jody Veit-Edrington, Dr. Kathy Collins, Sarah Langley, Senator Will Bond

I. Call to Order

Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price called the AECC Commissioners' Meeting to order on April 16, 2019 at 10:12 a.m. Kathy read the AECC's mission statement.

II. Approval of Minutes

Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 15, 2019 meeting. A motion was made by Lindsey Jones and seconded by Kim Whitman. The motion carried.

III. Old Business

1. DCCECE Commissioner Report:

Tonya Williams provided a written report of the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission goals. Tonya stated the division would continue to update the commission on the goals with a written report at each meeting.

Tonya shared information on the new laws created during the 2019 Legislative session. The following Acts listed below have impact on early childhood.

- Act 318: "To Amend Laws regarding criminal background checks and to require criminal background checks on contractors in designated positions or designated financial or information technology positions." The Act requires providers who keep children in residential care facilities to send federal background checks through the division. The act requires promulgation.
- Act 530: "Concerning School Safety" The Act requires that mandated reporters will be required to call the hotline and notify law enforcement.
- Act 131: "To ensure child care facility entrepreneurship in Arkansas; and concerning the duties of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education within the department of Human Services." The Act encourages entrepreneurship in early childhood education. The division has placed an infographic on the website with helpful information and steps on becoming an early childhood education provider. The division will also be required to provide licensing data on early childhood

education in Arkansas compared to best practices.

- Act 796: “An Act to amend the local food, farms, and job act; and for other purposes.” The Act will require food service programs who accept \$25,000 or more in state funding to report information about food purchases to the Department of Agriculture. The focus is to track and report locally grown/packaged products and report to the Department of Agriculture. The Act encourages local farm to school initiative.
- Act 506: “To establish a farm to school and Early Childhood Education Program; and to create the position of a farm to school and Early Childhood Education Program coordination within the Arkansas Agriculture Department. The Act establishes a Farm to School position in Department of Agriculture to encourage school gardens, food, nutrition and agriculture education and assisting in the procurement of local farm products.
- Act 937: “An Act concerning training and educational materials on child trafficking and for other purposes.” The Act ensures the division will provide materials to early childhood education programs creating awareness on human trafficking.
- Act 910: “To create the transformation and efficiencies act of 2019; to establish cabinet-level departments; to transfer state entities; and to declare a emergency.” The Act affects the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program. The division has not been given instruction on next steps. The division and the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) currently operate with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The division will stand ready to work with ADE with next steps. The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) 2019-2020 renewals were approved at the Arkansas Department of Education State Board on April 11, 2019.

Tonya provided information on the transformation and reorganization bill. At this time, DCCECE has not been given any indication as to when the Arkansas Better Chance unit will move to the Department of Education. This transition will not require a law change because the agencies currently operate under a memorandum of understanding.

2. Better Beginnings Update:

Tonya Williams presented documents pertaining to Goal #4, which included maps of Arkansas showing the number of Better Beginnings facilities by level and by county.

Tonya provided information on the planning and timeline for Better Beginnings levels 4, 5 and 6. Dawn Jeffery will be joining the division as the Better Beginnings Program Manager.

ACTION ITEM: Sara Norwood to send out the draft documentation on Better Beginnings Levels 4, 5, and 6.

Tonya mentioned that as of January 1, 2019, all new providers who receive child care assistance vouchers will be required to be Better Beginnings level 2. Existing programs will be provided a timeline. The division staff is currently working on recommendations for this

process and timeline.

3. Preschool Development Grant Birth-5:

Audrey Freshwater presented information on the Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Birth-5 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Ad-Hoc Committee formation.

The Preschool Development (PDG) Birth-5 grant focuses on trauma informed training, practices, and standards to be implemented in Arkansas' Early Childhood Educational settings. The Early Childhood Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Unit requests the formation of an ACEs Ad-Hoc Committee under the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission (AECC). The ACEs Ad-Hoc Committee will act as a guiding force during the execution of the grant. The committee will include 13-15 individuals.

A motion to create a Preschool Development Grant (PDG) Birth-5 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Ad-Hoc Committee was made by Lindsey Jones and seconded by Kim Whitman. The motion carried.

ACTION ITEM: Email Audrey Freshwater (Audrey.freshwater@dhs.arkansas.gov) to volunteer or make recommendations for the committee.

IV. New Business

1. Early Childhood Education Gap:

Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price provided the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership 2018 Closing the Leadership Gap report.

The following levers are used to produce ratings for each state to benchmark progress over time in these areas:

- Administrator Qualification in Child care Licensing
- Administrator Credential
- Principal Licensure
- Administrator Qualifications in QRIS
- Administrator Qualifications in State Pre-K Programs

Arkansas' overall policy lever score for 2018 is a 2 out of 10. Opportunities and strategies were discussed for prioritizing early childhood education professional development.

Tonya Williams recommended the creation of a Professional Development Committee to work with the existing state professional development workgroups to continue discussion of administrative leadership. A motion to create a Professional Development Committee was made by Lindsey Jones and seconded by Kim Whitman. The motion carried.

ACTION ITEM: Email Kathy Pillow-Price (KPillowPrice@edc.org) to volunteer for the committee or make recommendations.

V. Announcements/Action Items

Announcement: Region VI Head Start Association Meeting – January 2019 in Dallas

Announcement: Kenneth (Ken) Gilbert is the new HS Regional Program Manager, Region VI, Dallas.

Announcement: The Pritzker Children’s Initiative announced the winners of the Prenatal-to-Age planning grant. Children’s Hospital was awarded. Jamie Morrison-Ward, Lorraine McKelvey, Anna Strong and Angela Duran wrote the grant.

Announcement: Rachel Machen is the new program manager in the Early Childhood Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Unit working on the Preschool Development Birth-5 Grant.

Announcement: Arkansas Early Childhood Association - October 24-25, Little Rock Focus - Trauma Informed Care

ACTION ITEM: Sara Norwood to send out the draft documentation on Better Beginnings Levels 4, 5 & 6.

ACTION ITEM: Email Audrey Freshwater (Audrey.freshwater@dhs.arkansas.gov) to volunteer or make recommendations for the committee.

ACTION ITEM: Email Kathy Pillow-Price (KPillowPrice@edc.org) to volunteer for the committee or make recommendations.

VI. Adjournment

Dr. Kathy Pillow-Price asked for a motion to adjourn. Kim Whitman made a motion to adjourn. Lindsey Jones seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

VII. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, July 16, 2019. The location is 700 Main Street, DCCECE Resource Center.