

## Service Delivery Area 1 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Summary April 21, 2021

View the recording of this meeting here: <https://youtu.be/udTDyp41CDk>

### 1. Call to Order and Meeting Overview

- a. SDA 1 RAC Chair, Jeannine Hornback, made welcoming remarks orienting participants to the purpose of the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meeting, called the meeting to order, provided an overview of the agenda items and meeting goals, and discussed meeting systems and procedures.

### 2. Introductions

- a. Members introduced themselves by sharing their name and professional role.
- b. Members who were present included: Jeannine Hornback, Keana Baylis, Binti Shah, Lisa Timmerman, Martha Rae, Sara Miller, Shannon Weyer, Clarissa Regula, and Sherry Searles.

### 3. Reviewed Old Business

- a. At the beginning of each Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meeting, the Council reviews action items and recommendations from the previous meeting and discusses progress made.
  - i. You can view past meeting minutes, recommendations and their related action plan for each Service Delivery Area (SDA) on the SPARK website:  
<http://indianaspark.com/regional-advisory-councils/>.
  - ii. Jeannine and SPARK Project Director, Mike Bachman, summarized the feedback/recommendations made by the Council in February related to Help Desk data, COVID, CPR, Groups, Modules 1-4, connecting with other states, PTQ, safe sleep resources, and training. Mike and Kim Hodge, Deputy Director of Operations & Strategic Integration, shared updates related to the action plan identified for each recommendation.
    1. You can find more information about these recommendations and updates on the [SDA 1 website](#) and in the meeting slide deck.
  - iii. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
    1. Question: After Kim presented the Help Desk data update, RAC members asked what SPARK's goal was for the response rate to the Help Desk customer satisfaction survey.
    2. Answer from Kim: A response rate of at least 20% is the industry standard. SPARK is currently at 8.69%.
    3. Question: When does SPARK send the follow-up communication and survey after a call to the Help Desk?
    4. Answer from Kim: At this time, the survey is being sent out via email immediately after we serviced the support case. Up until the beginning of April, we were sending it up to 7 days after the support case was serviced. SPARK has turned this into an automated process so we can send the communication closer to the time of service. We hope that we see an uptick in responses. Initially we waited 2-7 days because we wanted to allow time for the support need to be resolved in the case that we were sending callers to partners. We are also exploring following up in ways beyond email, such as outbound follow up calls.
      - a. Members shared that with similar surveys a common question is "Did the most recent person you talked with satisfy your needs?". This is helpful when the caller may have spoken with several people. Members

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suggested that SPARK think about how to focus in on if SPARK satisfied their need, rather than the partner they might pass them on to.

5. Question about CPR: Members discussed shared service models in the SDA and asked if those models included CPR training.
6. Answer from Sherry: We have not included CPR in our shared service efforts in Kosciusko county because programs reported they were able to obtain that training on their own at this time. This may become more of an issue as more programs work to become CCDF eligible.

### 4. New Business

- a. New Discussion Board Feature (Groups)
  - i. At the last RAC meeting, SPARK introduced the new Groups feature in My SPARK Learning Lab, which will provide peer-to-peer discussion board opportunities. SPARK invited RAC members to participate in the user testing process in March.
  - ii. Kim Hodge, Deputy Director of Operations & Strategic Initiatives, summarized the feedback SPARK received during user testing.
    1. Twenty total RAC members from across the state participated in testing, in addition to SPARK staff members.
    2. All RAC members and SPARK staff reported that Groups is easy and user-friendly.
    3. 60% of RAC members indicated that they were likely to use it over a similar tool, like Facebook, for connecting professionally with peers.
    4. The overall satisfaction rate of participants was 78%, with 100% from RAC members.
    5. When asked if they would recommend Groups to friends/colleagues, there was a net promoter score of 67. SPARK typically aims for anything over 40 or 50.
    6. One of the questions SPARK asked during testing was how they should set up Groups access at initial rollout to users. The majority (71%) indicated that some Groups should be open to all, and some should require users to be invited or meet specific criteria to participate.
    7. Participants also provided feedback on how Groups should be used (i.e. peer mentoring, general updates from SPARK, continued collaboration after professional development etc.)
  - iii. Kim provided an update on the timeline for rolling out Groups:
    1. During the first half of April, SPARK determined the best use of Groups.
    2. During the second half of April, SPARK will design Groups and load them into My SPARK Learning Lab.
    3. Groups will be visible to participants in My SPARK Learning Lab in May.
  - iv. Kim encouraged RAC members to participate in Groups and promote the feature within their networks.
  - v. Questions and comments from RAC members and the public:
    1. RAC members who participated in the user testing shared that Groups was easy to use and that they saw lots of potential for engagement.
    2. Question: When Groups is up and running, is there a way to have marketing at the bottom of new teacher trainings that can connect users to Groups?
    3. Answer from Kim: That is an idea we will take into consideration. We are considering how we can connect Groups to our other SPARK offerings.
- b. Help Desk Data

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- i. Members requested an update on the Top 10 Help Desk support topics. Kim shared that the most common support topic is How/when to request a PTQ rating. Other information about the Top 10 topics can be found in the corresponding meeting slide deck.
- ii. Questions and comments from RAC members and the public:
  - iii. Members found it reassuring that most of the questions were related to PTQ, as that shows that there are a lot of programs thinking about advancing through the system.
  - iv. Brighter Futures Indiana says that only one third of programs participate in PTQ. Most of SPARK's call volume is coming from this smaller subset of programs. By connecting with other providers, SPARK could expect to provide this same type of support to the broader provider population.
  - v. Members did question why there was so much uncertainty about the PTQ process and whether there are implications of how the system could be improved.
  - vi. Kim shared that one of SPARK's next steps is to think about how they can provide the information most callers are asking for in a more consumable format. This can help build engagement with SPARK and with the PTQ system. SPARK wants to provide the resources and information in a way that is accessible to all programs in the way/format they would like to consume the information (Help Desk, My SPARK Learning Lab, etc.).
  - vii. During this discussion about Help Desk topics, members discussed the collaboration they see between SPARK and early childhood system partners and they are hopeful about how this collaboration can help improve the system moving forward.
- c. Engagement Strategies
  - i. Jeannine encouraged members to invite at least one person to join the next RAC meeting or share a recording of this meeting with someone.
  - ii. RAC members discussed how they can better connect early childhood education providers to SPARK resources between the quarterly RAC meetings.
  - iii. Suggestions and comments from RAC members and the public:
    - 1. Programs could have staff find one resource in My SPARK Learning Lab that they are interested in. They can then bring that resource to a staff meeting and share with a partner.
    - 2. Have new attendees share what brought them to the RAC meeting and make sure the Council gives them the opportunity to share their perspectives.
    - 3. Some programs are still open when the RAC meetings take place, especially those in Central time zone.
    - 4. Many programs are short staffed right now, which makes it hard to make time to attend meetings.
    - 5. Members could consider inviting others to join any of the RAC meetings in other SDAs to hear what is being discussed across the state.
    - 6. The pace of the RAC meetings (once a quarter) can make it difficult to foster engagement. Groups might help RAC members, and other stakeholders, stay connected and engaged between meetings.
    - 7. The meeting summary and action items could help fuel discussions in between meetings. The RAC could identify a contact person for each agenda topic to keep the item moving forward between meetings.

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8. Attendees pointed out that people have Zoom fatigue right now, which may lead to a decline in the number of participants.
  9. Attendees shared that it is sometimes unclear during the virtual meetings when the public is able to speak.
  10. Members discussed holding some meetings at 6:00-8:00pm EST and some at 6:00-8:00pm CST, so that providers in the SDA who live in different time zones are able to join at least some meetings.
  11. Members also suggested providing a hybrid option that allows attendees to come in person or participate virtually.
- d. Modules 1-4
- i. During the last meeting, the RAC discussed Modules 1-4 and provided feedback and recommendations on the content. RAC members requested time during this meeting share additional concerns and/or feedback, if needed.
  - ii. The RAC members did not have any additional comments about Modules 1-4.
- e. COVID-19
- i. On March 25th, OECOSL presented on Indiana's plan for the use of Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Funds. The [recording](#) of this presentation includes information on increased CACFP reimbursements, waived family co-pays, Child Care Closure Grants worth up to \$40,000 per closure, a workforce recruitment campaign, waived background check fees and hiring stipends for new employees, a timeline for all of these initiatives and so much more!
  - ii. More information and FAQs can be found at [brighterfuturesindiana.org/recovery](https://brighterfuturesindiana.org/recovery).
  - iii. Emergency Relief Grants
    1. Provides a 20% increase for active CCDF vouchers through August 27<sup>th</sup>.
    2. Tracking of attendance began March 28<sup>th</sup>, so the first tracking period was March 28<sup>th</sup>-April 11<sup>th</sup>. Payments are made two weeks after the tracking period, so the first payment will be made April 28<sup>th</sup>.
    3. All active CCDF vouchers, both birth to five and school-age, will begin receiving payments, but as a requirement to receive those payments programs must complete *SPARK! Fundamentals to Business Sustainability Collection* by August 27<sup>th</sup>.
    4. Once a program registers and begins, there is a checklist of items they need to complete the training. The training is worth seven clock hours and attendees will receive a certificate after completion. It includes some on demand training, recorded webinars, and tools. Programs can find this training by searching for the title in Indiana Learning Paths.
  - iv. Essential Frontline Families Scholarships
    1. Beginning in May 2021, scholarships will be available to pay for up to 80% of tuition for families of frontline workers, with family responsibility at 20%, based on program policy. The income eligibility requirement is between 128%-250% of the federal poverty line.
    2. *Frontline* is defined by the Governor's Executive Order. Mike noted that child care workers are considered frontline workers. If program staff who have children enrolled fall within the income requirements, they would be eligible for a scholarship.
    3. The scholarships will be available through at least October 2021.
    4. SPARK, in partnership with Early Learning Indiana, Indiana Afterschool Network, and OECOSL will offer a pre-requisite information session about the

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scholarship and requirements. All programs who want to accept this scholarship need to watch the information session in Indiana Learning Paths and complete a consent. The information session is not yet available, but SPARK will share communication with it is.

- v. Questions and comments from RAC members and the public:
  - 1. Question: I understand that school-based programs will not be receiving the \$400 stipend because schools already receive CCRRSA funding, and they do not want to “double dip”. In many instances, that funding is not actually going to Pre-K. Can you speak to that?
  - 2. Answer from Mike: That’s not something I have heard, but I will follow up with OECOSL for clarification.
  - 3. Question: I heard there was a fast-track for programs who are looking to become eligible for CCDF. Is that correct?
  - 4. Answer from Mike: I don’t have a detailed answer for that at this time, but we are working with OECOSL to determine how we can fast-track both families and programs’ to become eligible.
  - 5. Question: With CACFP reimbursement increasing, are the state and food program sponsors prepared if home programs want to enroll in CACFP?
  - 6. Answer from Mike: Yes, I have a meeting with partners next week to understand the role we can all play in supporting programs.
  - 7. Comment: There is a lot of funding available for programs right now. It is crucial for partners, both early childhood and school-aged, to promote these opportunities.
- vi. Vaccine Policy
  - 1. It is the recommendation of SPARK that any program considering a vaccination policy for their staff, children, or families seek legal guidance.
  - 2. Programs should also consider nationally recognized Human Resources supports such as those provided by the [Society for Human Resource Management \(SHRM\)](#).
- f. Stories of Success During COVID
  - i. Jeannine invited attendees to share stories of success they had experienced during COVID. Examples shared included:
    - 1. Many programs have started to use, or increased their use, of electronic communication with parents (emails, apps, etc.) instead of traditional paper newsletters. Attendees shared that this has helped parents feel more engaged.

### 5. Think Tank

- a. This Think Tank is meant to be a forum to get the Council members’ input on various topics that the RAC may want to put on the agenda in the following quarter.
- b. Employment continues to be an issue as programs struggle to hire and retain staff.
- c. Sherry shared that they are facing zoning issues in Kosciusko county. Some family child care homes (FCCH) have been told by zoning boards that they cannot license the home as a FCCH if they do not reside in it. State regulations are not matching up with licensing requirements. The zoning board has requested information about any other county zoning boards that they can connect with in the SDA.
  - i. Members shared this is an issue in Porter county as well.
  - ii. Martha shared that there are national initiatives focused on addressing zoning issues that are limiting the number of children homes can serve.

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- iii. Mike suggested that programs facing this issue reach out to their local CCR&R, Geminus, who has helped address other business issues. Programs can also connect the zoning board to licensing.

**6. Public Comment**

- a. No additional public comments.

**7. Agreements and Action Items**

- a. Based on what was presented, RAC discussion, and public comment, the RAC brought forth the following recommendations/agreements for SPARK Learning Lab and/or partners to consider:
  - i. Old Business
    - 1. No new recommendations or agreements were made.
  - ii. New Business
    - 1. Members shared several suggestions around how SPARK and the RAC can improve engagement. See the Engagement Strategies section of this summary for more information.
    - 2. SPARK will follow up on the question about school-based programs who are not be receiving the \$400 stipend, but who are also not receiving CCRRSA funding to support Pre-K.
  - iii. Think Tank
    - 1. SPARK will follow up on the zoning concerns and will add the other items to the next agenda for further discussion.

**8. Future Meeting Schedule**

- a. September 1, 6:00-8:00pm **CST**
  - i. This meeting was originally scheduled for 6:00-8:00pm **EST**. Members decided to change it to 6:00-8:00pm **CST**.
  - ii. SPARK will send a poll to RAC members in July to assess their preference and comfort level in meeting in-person or virtually.

**9. Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

- a. See Think Tank discussion.
- b. Further agenda items will be discussed once Groups is launched.

**10. Adjournment**