Service Delivery Area 1
Regional Advisory Council
Meeting Summary February 18, 2020

1. **Call to Order and Meeting Overview**
    a. Chairperson Martha Rae called the meeting to order and provided an overview of the agenda items and meeting goals.
    b. Martha introduced the following public comment procedure:
        i.   After each agenda item is presented, the Chair will invite the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) members to discuss and ask questions.
        ii. After the RAC discussion, the Chair will open it up to public comment.

2. **Introductions**
    a. Members introduced themselves by sharing their name, professional role, and stakeholder type (program, community partner, etc.).
    b. Members present in person: Martha Rae, Clarissa Regula, Jackie Allison, Jennifer Quartucci, Lisa Timmerman, Emily Syslo, Sara Miller, Heather Miller, Ramal Winfield, Kathy Bradley
    c. Members participating via Zoom: Joyce Dix, Linda Curley, Jeannine Hornback

3. **Reviewed Old Business**
    a. At the beginning of each Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meeting, the Council will review action items and recommendations from the previous meeting and discuss progress made. SPARK Leadership will provide updates on actions taken from Council recommendations.
        i.   View past meeting minutes for each Service Delivery Area (SDA) on the SPARK website: http://indianaspark.com/regional-advisory-councils/. These minutes include all recommendations and action steps.
    b. Martha summarized the feedback/recommendations made by the Council in November related to outreach and communication strategies and various implementation activities, such as the I-SAT. SPARK Project Director, Mike Bachman, provided a high level update on actions taken based on recommendations. Specific recommendations highlighted included:
        i.   SPARK will have bilingual supports beginning at launch for many of the services.
        ii. SPARK is archiving all newsletters, which was a recommendation from this Council.

4. **RAC Recommendation Procedure**
    a. SPARK Project Director, Mike Bachman, provided an overview of the RAC recommendation procedure.
    b. Recommendations/agreements made by the Council will be captured within the meeting minutes.
    c. Following each round of quarterly meeting, the RAC Coordinator will compile recommendations from all SDAs into a report to be reviewed by the SPARK Leadership team. The team will then identify appropriate action steps.
    d. Recommendations, action steps, and progress will be reported as Old Business in subsequent RAC meetings.

5. **SPARK Project Highlights**
    a. Each quarter, SPARK Leadership will highlight SPARK features that have been implemented recently or will be launched in the following quarter to gain insight, feedback, concerns, suggestions, and formal recommendations from the public and RAC members.

b. Spotlight: Call Center/Help Desk Supports
   i. The SPARK Learning Lab Help Desk, will be available in the Spring of 2020. The exact date is to be determined.
   ii. At this time, SPARK is planning to have Help Desk representatives available at the following times:
      1. Monday-Friday from 6:00 am–7:00 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST)
      2. Saturdays 10:00 am–2:00 pm EST
      3. The Help Desk will not be open on state holidays
   iii. Trained Help Desk representatives will have general knowledge to answer the questions providers have regarding four main focus areas:
      1. SPARK Learning Lab's trainings and resources
      2. Assistance completing the Indiana Self-Assessment Tool and/or determining results
      3. Paths to QUALITY™ enrollment, maintenance, advancement, questions, concerns, and rating issues
      4. Assistance with understanding and connecting to statewide resources like 211, First Steps, Child Care Search, On My Way Pre-K, and others
   iv. SPARK Learning Lab is also working on transfer agreements with partners so that Help Desk representatives can connect callers to other experts like SPARK Coaches, INAEYC, local CCR&Rs and others.
   v. SPARK is planning to work with Early Learning Indiana (ELI) to create joint marketing resources that explain the different roles of the SPARK Help Desk and ELI's Solutions Center and why programs would call each number.
   vi. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
      1. The times proposed make sense for the needs of providers.
      2. The four focus areas are good, but SPARK might consider an additional focus on health, safety and nutrition.
      3. Are you planning to refer programs to their CCR&R if appropriate?
         a. Answer from Mike: Yes, we will transfer and refer to partners as soon as a question/need extends past our expertise.
      4. Is the Help Desk up and ready yet?
         a. Answer from Mike: No, it will be launched in Spring 2020. We are still negotiating a launch date, but I expect it to be in the next two months.
      5. Will the only option be to call or can programs submit a question via email?
         a. Answer from Mike: You will be able to fill out a form on the SPARK website with your question and a representative will call or email you. We expect to eventually have chat capability, but we won't have that at launch.
      6. Should providers call SPARK with accreditation questions?
         a. Answer from Mike: They can, and we would refer out if it extends past our knowledge base. INAEYC will remain the experts in this area.
      7. Who are providers expected to reach out to about PTQ in the interim?
         a. Answer from Mike: INAEYC is managing PTQ until June 30th. You can reach them at PTQ@inaeyc.org.
      8. Will someone be monitoring the questions received and conversations to identify trends? I would encourage that SPARK Leadership be involved in this process.
         a. Answer from Mike: We have identified key performance indicators that will help us track that data. We will look at what questions are being asked, are callers connecting to our resources/services after the call, are they

calling back, and are there gaps in our resources. This could also be analyzed by region/county to identify specific needs. We want to be very responsive to your needs and we are putting structures in place to have consistency and reliability between calls.

9. What will it be like when a non-English speaker calls?
   a. Answer from Mike: We are working with a translation service, so we are confident that we will be able to speak to anyone calling, but those calls will be longer as we will have to work through a translator.

c. Spotlight: Indiana Self-Assessment Tool (I-SAT)
   i. The Indiana Self-Assessment Tool, or I-SAT, will launch in Spring of 2020. The I-SAT is a program level assessment, not a personal or individual assessment.
   ii. There are four I-SATs tailored to each program type: Center, Home, Ministry, and School-Based.
   iii. Prior to the release of the I-SAT, a program assessment training will be available on Indiana Learning Paths and in-person to those interested in completing the I-SAT to orient the program leader to self-assessing their program. This training is a pre-requisite to completing the I-SAT.
   iv. SPARK Learning Lab will provide local opportunities throughout the Spring to meet SPARK Learning Lab Specialists and Coaches in-person, complete the I-SAT, receive results, learn about SPARK Learning Lab trainings, tools, and resources, and work with a Coach to create a Program Development Plan.
   v. The I-SAT is not the only way to access SPARK services, but it is the most efficient method. Partners will be able refer programs to SPARK, but the I-SAT will help SPARK identify the goals, resources and supports that will be most relevant to each program.
   vi. Questions/suggestions from RAC members and the public:
       1. Is it fair to say that the changes in the system are geared towards making providers more independent, while still having access to resources?
          a. Answer from Mike: We are looking to build a program driven system. The supports will be there, but the I-SAT and other tools are not required so it is up to the program to initiate certain supports.
       2. The training will be helpful. The video should be used to direct programs and put them in the right mindset. It will set the tone for the new TA services. This new system can be intimidating for many. The language used in the training and assessment needs to set a positive tone. Suggestions related to language included:
          a. Soften the idea of a self-assessment and explain that it is a gateway to becoming a better professional and accessing supports.
          b. Address fear by inviting providers in a gentle way that focuses on support, progress, and learning.
       3. How do you plan to roll this out to providers, many of whom don't know what SPARK does? How are you going to get them to invest the time needed to take this assessment?
          a. Answer from Mike: We will have a very robust messaging and communication effort around this opportunity. Coaches and experts will be available to help programs through this process and we will work with partners, such as licensing consultants, to get the word out and share marketing materials.

      b. Response from Council: Yes, licensing consultants and PTQ raters need to share this information and use it as a resource and training tool to address insufficiencies or licensing issues.

4. INAEYC chapters could be used as training sites to introduce providers to the I-SAT.

5. How do you plan on promoting the I-SAT within Indiana Learning Paths? Could it be under a tab for leadership?
   a. Answer from Mike: We will need to consider this in our communications plan. Each program will decide who takes the assessment. We recommend that the pedagogical leader and/or business leader take it. We will work with Early Learning Indiana and other partners to consider what a "Leadership" tab or page might look like on ILP.

6. The Help Desk could be used to steer providers to the I-SAT. SPARK could highlight different SPARK features at the end of each call.

7. Will the assessment be completed online?
   a. Answer from Mike: In the initial roll out, we are offering in-person opportunities for programs to complete the assessment with access to a coach if they have questions. At those events, programs can complete the assessment online or on paper.

8. Does the prerequisite training expire? Can I take it and then wait 6 months before taking the training?
   a. Answer from Mike: At this time, we are only requiring that the training be taken once by whoever is completing the assessment. The I-SAT is also structured so you can take it at any time and reassess if needed.

9. Is the I-SAT only for licensed providers?
   a. Answer from Mike: You do not have to be licensed to take the I-SAT.

10. Have you considered what would happen if multiple teachers from one site took the assessment?
    a. Answer from Mike: We will set some quality assurances to reach out to those who take the assessment to set up their program development plan. That will help us make sure we are talking to the right leaders and redirect them to make sure they are talking to the right staff.

11. Will these tools be available in multiple languages?
    a. Answer from Mike: It will only be in English during the initial roll out, but we will quickly get it translated to Spanish and other languages, as needed. A Help Desk representative could also help programs take the assessment, with the assistance of a translator.

12. Will the I-SAT need to be completed to receive coaching?
    a. Answer from Mike: No, programs can also be referred to our coaching services by other system partners. But the I-SAT is the most direct and efficient entry point.

13. Will you have stakeholders provide feedback on this tool (via survey or focus group)?
    a. Answer from Mike: We have collected feedback through focus groups. During the initial roll out, we will ask users to complete survey questions.

14. Is the I-SAT a broad test or compartmentalized?
    a. Answer from Mike: There are 50 quality indicators that are grouped in a variety of ways (by standards, age group, etc.)

15. Will this tool run parallel to or replace PTQ?
    a. Answer from Mike: It will run parallel. It includes some components/indicators that are not included in PTQ.

d. Spotlight: Town Square
   i. By opening an account with Town Square, Family Child Care programs can open the door to training, resources, and conversation specific to home education and care. Many of these resources have been translated into Spanish.
   ii. In Town Square, home program staff can discover a wealth of resources divided into 5 categories for easy navigation:
       1. Activities
       2. Home Business
       3. Learning
       4. Perspectives
       5. Wellness
   iii. Town Square offers the opportunity for those working in the home to watch video tutorials created in the unique circumstances of the home early education and care environment to support the learning of the staff.
   iv. Town Square's "Discuss" page provides the opportunity for users to post ideas, questions, suggestions, events, etc. for others to respond. It is important to remember that the "Discuss" page is only as active as the members of the community want to make it.
   v. In one place, anyone that is part of a home program can discover, or rediscover, topics of interest, take part in high-quality, research-based training that is specific to the home early learning and care program, watch video tutorials that demonstrate how others implement these practices in the home environment, then discuss with other home programs their struggles, concerns, and successes.
   vi. Town Square is available NOW at www.townsquareIN.org (with general and Illinois-specific content). More Indiana-specific content coming to Town Square later this Spring.
   vii. Town Square IN and Indiana Learning Paths will be linked to assist in the tracking of training hours.
   viii. Questions/suggestions from RAC members and the public:
        1. It is exciting to have the trainings and discussion boards specific to homes. We are so isolated.
        2. It will be important to make sure the discussion boards stay active. SPARK staff can help with this, by starting and moderating discussions.
        3. Will you be sharing marketing materials with partners?
           a. Answer from Mike: Yes, we will be sharing materials this Spring, hopefully by April.
        4. Consider how SPARK can involve parents with Town Square and the I-SAT.

6. **PTQ Enrollment Incentives**
   a. About two years ago, the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL) moved to a system through which programs could access kits when they enrolled in PTQ through Kaplan and Lakeshore portals.
   b. The kits provide a set of materials, along with a User Guide to assist with implementation in the classroom or home setting.
   c. From January-December 2019, 232 total kits were distributed.

d. The most frequently chosen kit is the Older Toddler Kit, followed closely by the 3-5 Years and Multi-Age Kits.

e. Now that these kits have been in use for two years, it is time to evaluate the investment and OECOSL would like RAC and public feedback on the usefulness of these kits and if they are the right tools and resources to meet the needs of programs.

f. Questions/suggestions from RAC members and public:
  i. The current kits are expensive. Consider other companies and suppliers that are more affordable.
  ii. Allow programs to select a la carte items, equaling the same monetary value as the prepackaged kits.
  iii. Provide kit options that are not age specific.
  iv. Provide a gift card option or other forms of incentives.
  v. Consider adjusting the monetary value given based on capacity and seats.
  vi. Consider having an online option to adjust and print materials, as needed.
  vii. Provide lesson plans and templates along with the User Guides.
  viii. Resize the User Guide to more easily fit in the kit box.

7. Public Comment
  a. No additional public comments.

8. Agreements
  a. Based on what has been presented, RAC discussion, and public comment, the RAC brought forth the following recommendations/agreements for SPARK Learning Lab and/or partners to consider:
  i. Help Desk:
    1. The four focus areas are good, but SPARK might consider an additional focus on health, safety and nutrition.
    2. Someone should be monitoring the questions received and conversations to identify trends. SPARK Leadership should be involved in this process.
  ii. I-SAT:
    1. The training will be helpful. The video should be used to direct programs and put them in the right mindset. It will set the tone for the new TA services. This new system can be intimidating for many. The language used in the training and assessment needs to set a positive tone. Suggestions related to language include:
      a. Soften the idea of a self-assessment and explain that it is a gateway to becoming a better professional and accessing supports.
      b. Address fear by inviting providers in a gentle way that focuses on support, progress, and learning.
    2. Work with licensing consultants and PTQ raters to share this information and use it as a resource and training tool to address insufficiencies or licensing issues.
    3. INAEYC chapters could be used as training sites to introduce providers to the I-SAT.
    4. Work with Early Learning Indiana and other partners to consider what a "Leadership" tab or page might look like on ILP.
    5. Help Desk could be used to steer providers to the I-SAT. SPARK could highlight different features at the end of each call.

      iii. Town Square:
1. It will be important to make sure the discussion boards stay active. SPARK staff can help with this, by starting and moderating discussions.
2. Consider how SPARK can involve parents with Town Square and the I-SAT.

      iv. PTQ Enrollment Incentives:
1. The current kits are expensive. Consider other companies and suppliers that are more affordable.
2. Allow programs to select a la carte items, equaling the same monetary value as the prepackaged kits.
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6. Consider having an online option to adjust and print materials, as needed.
7. Provide lesson plans and templates along with the User Guides.
8. Resize the User Guide to more easily fit in the kit box.

9. **Upcoming Community Events for SPARK to Attend**
   a. NAEYC Week of the Young Child, April 11-17
   b. INAEYC State Conference, May 7-9
   c. Ready to Grow St. Joe Community Meeting, March 26th
   d. INAEYC Chapter Celebrating the Profession Event, March 24th
   e. On My Way Pre-K meetings: South Bend (3/2), Lake County (2/25), Elkhart (2/19).

10. **Future Meeting Schedule**
    a. Tuesday April 21st 10:00am-12:00pm (Location TBD)
    b. Wednesday September 16th 6:30pm-8:30pm (Location TBD)
    c. Martha will send out a poll to the Council members to select meeting locations for the next two quarters.

11. **Adjournment**