Service Delivery Area 4
Regional Advisory Council
Meeting Summary April 28, 2020

View the recording of this meeting here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Gzr_F_Mmzw

1. **Call to Order and Meeting Overview**
    a. SPARK Project Director, Mike Bachman, made welcoming remarks orienting participants to the virtual platform and purpose of the Regional Advisory Council meeting.
    b. Chairperson Jacqueline Negri called the meeting to order, provided an overview of the agenda items and meeting goals, and discussed meeting/Council systems and procedures.

2. **Introductions**
    a. Members introduced themselves by sharing their name, professional role, and stakeholder type (program, community partner, etc.).
    b. Members who were present included: Jacqueline Negri, Laura Blessing, Jennifer Meyers, Christina McKeehan, Jacqueline Bond, Kristi Burkhart

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 and recommendations for each Service Delivery Area (SDA) on the SPARK website: http://indianaspark.com/regional-advisory-councils/.
    b. Jacqueline summarized the feedback/recommendations made by the Council in February related to the I-SAT, Communication/outreach, and other miscellaneous recommendations.

4. **SPARK Project Highlights**
    a. Each quarter, SPARK staff highlights SPARK features that have been implemented recently or will be launched in the upcoming quarter to gain insight, feedback, concerns, suggestions, and recommendations/agreements from the public and RAC members.
    b. Spotlight: Communication Update
        i.   At previous RAC meetings, SPARK received several recommendations from the Council regarding outreach and communication methods. Mike provided an update on SPARK's communication activities as a follow-up on these recommendations.
        ii. Mike walked through the SPARK Learning Lab Communication Dashboard, which captures website, social media, and email traffic and activity. The data presented included SPARK's reach and activities since the beginning of the 2020 calendar year.
        iii. Highlights from the data presented include:
            1. Website sessions for 2020 have exceeded 5,000. The average duration of sessions (or the length of time that viewers spend on the website) has increased beyond the industry standard. SPARK's website bounce rate is within the industry standard range.
            2. The number of returning visitors to the website has increased over time. The number of new visitors has fluctuated with a slight increase in March.
            3. The dashboard includes a heat map of where website users are geographically located. The top cities included Indianapolis, Chicago, Fort Wayne, Evansville, and Louisville. (Providers in Northwest Indiana may show up as being located in "Chicago" because that is the closest metropolitan area. The same may be true of providers in Southern Indiana showing up under Louisville.)

4. SPARK sends emails to two different distribution lists. Some emails go out to as many as 29,000 users, while a smaller number of individuals who signed up for the SPARK Connect newsletter get additional emails. SPARK is tracking how many people are opening the emails, as well as how many are clicking on links within the email. The unique open percentage (number of individuals who opened the email) has ranged from 37%-56%.
5. Facebook is the social media platform that SPARK has seen the strongest engagement (followers, number of individuals engaging with posts). SPARK is reaching an average of 8,000 people with every Facebook post they make.
6. SPARK also utilizes Instagram and Twitter. SPARK has more followers on Instagram than Twitter, but less engagement. SPARK has comparatively few followers on Twitter, but the posts are reaching more individuals as there are opportunities for followers to retweet.
iv. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
1. RAC members found this data helpful and said other partners would likely find it helpful as well.
2. SPARK asked for feedback as to whether this data should be shared publicly. SPARK is aiming to be transparent and communicate better with both providers and partners.
a. RAC members weren't sure if the general public would be interested in all of this data, but the data could be used to elevate how SPARK is "sparking conversation". Data points could be highlighted in social media posts in a compelling way using storytelling.
v. Upcoming events
1. All in-person non-essential training has been temporarily suspended until at least May 1st. The Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL) will revisit this suspension and determine the timeline for offering in-person trainings soon.
2. During this time, SPARK is holding online trainings and virtual weekly Learning Forums for providers and partners.
c. Spotlight: Business Management Support
i. SPARK's Business Management Specialist, Lisa Mettler, presented on SPARK's business management support.
ii. SPARK chose to create this role because they recognize that programs need business resources and supports to be successful.
iii. In addition to SPARK's business resources and supports, SPARK plans to build relationships with business stakeholders/coaching entities to educate them on the work of early childhood providers, so they have a better idea of how to support them.
iv. SPARK business management supports will fall within four focus areas:
1. Finances
2. Marketing and Communications
3. Internal Systems
4. Human Resources/Workforce
v. RAC members from all SDAs received a Business Needs Assessment survey at the beginning of April. Of the 60 RAC members who work directly for a program, 33 completed the survey. SPARK will use the feedback provided to inform the development of their business management supports.

    vi. SPARK has shared several business resources in Indiana Learning Paths under the resources tab. SPARK has also created a workgroup to identify the resources programs will need to operate or restart during this COVID crisis.

    vii. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:

        1. According to a poll, Human Resources and Workforce was the focus area participants were most excited about. Marketing and Communication was the second area participants were most excited about.

        2. Marketing and Communication may be especially important as programs look at reopening centers amidst the COVID-19 crisis.

        3. Programs need more support regarding recovery and restart.

           a. Response from Mike: SPARK is hosting Learning Forums to address these issues, but we will continue to explore how to best support programs during this time.

        4. Programs need guidance on rethinking business models that include serving school age children (if they are not already doing so), as schools are closed.

  d. Spotlight: PTQ Rating Procedure Update

    i. INAECY is currently conducting ratings. They can be contacted at PTQ@inaeyc.org. SPARK will take over ratings after July.

    ii. The Paths to Quality™ rating procedure SPARK will use is very similar to the current process INAEYC is using. SPARK's procedure will follow a 5 step process:

        1. SPARK sends Readiness Checklist (via email)

           a. Programs will receive an email 4-6 months prior to their expiration. They will receive another follow-up email 3 months prior to expiration.

           b. These two initial emails will include standards contained in a set of documents called the Readiness Checklist. There is a Readiness Checklist for each program type (Centers, Homes, Ministries, Schools) and PTQ level. The standards are then divided again by age group and administrative/documentation. Programs will receive the appropriate set of standards 4-6 months and 3 months prior to expiration.

           c. SPARK will send the readiness checklist within these emails. There are checklists for each program type (Centers, Homes, Ministry, Schools), PTQ level, age group, documentation (training certificate, education, etc.).

           d. The checklists include the standard, guidance for understanding, required documentation, and examples.

        2. Program assesses

           a. Programs will use the standards included in the Readiness Checklist to assess their readiness.

           b. If programs need help during this process, they can reach out to SPARK by email (PTQ@indianaspark.com) or phone (via the Help Desk: 1-800-299-1627)

        3. SPARK sends Confirmation Checklist:

           a. SPARK will send a third email, with the Confirmation Checklist, 45-60 days prior to expiration.

        4. Program returns Confirmation Checklist:

           a. Programs are asked to return the Confirmation Checklist at least 31 days prior to expiration.

           b. In returning the Confirmation Checklist to SPARK, a program is saying that they are ready for their rating visit. A completed checklist will provide

SPARK with necessary information the rater will need to complete a rating visit (program's staff roster, education, and training).

5. SPARK requests the rating
   a. Once SPARK receives the Confirmation Checklist, SPARK will review and make the rating request.
   b. A rater will contact programs within two business days to schedule the rating visit.

iii. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
1. Question: If a provider doesn't have a rating for PTQ, but are interested in the process, is there a way to see the requirements and Readiness Checklists before starting the process?
   a. Answer from Mike: We plan to make the Readiness Checklists available on Indiana Learning Paths sometime in May. In the meantime, programs can request these documents by reaching out to PTQ@indianaspark.com.
2. Question: Some providers' ratings are expiring this summer, but have not received communication yet.
   a. Answer from Mike: Programs can reach out to PTQ@indianaspark.com or PTQ@inaeyc.org with questions about their rating.
3. Question: If you are moving to a new site, do you need to start over and be considered a new center?
   a. Answer from Mike: PTQ policy states that if you get a new license number (which is associated with an address) you need to start the process over again, but some standards can be waved, based on your previous quality level or accreditation status.
4. Members suggested that SPARK attach a tab in the Readiness Checklist with the prorated hours for PTQ levels 2 and 3.
5. Members would like to revisit this procedure and provide additional feedback next quarter. Members would like to see data around the number the rating requests made and other relevant data.

5. **COVID-19 Update from the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning**
   a. Nicole Norvell, Director of OECOSL, provided an update on the COVID-19 crisis.
   b. Providers can stay informed about COVID-19 through the following resources:
      i. The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) website: http://www.in.gov/isdh
      ii. ISDH's 24/7 call center: 317-233-7125 (Monday-Friday from 8:15 am-4:45 pm) or 317-233-1325 (after business hours)
      iii. Email: epiresource@isdh.in.gov
      iv. Provider webcast recording available on the Indiana State Department of Health Video Center: http://videocenter.isdh.in.gov/videos
      v. Sign up for the Indiana Health Alert Network: https://www.in.gov/isdh/25862.htm
   c. Access local supports through local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies. Programs can find and contact their local office at http://brighterfuturesindiana.org/local-help-for-finding-child-care2/ or call 1-800-299-1627.
   d. The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) is introducing a new series of Mental Health Check videos to support families during this crisis. Find the videos at Bewellindiana.com/video-resources/.

e. SPARK Learning Lab, in partnership with FSSA, is offering support and resources. Through Indiana Learning Paths, providers can find resources and trainings, including Discussion Board topics, live webinar Learning Forums, and the Be Well Series.

f. Temporary Assistance Grants: Funding Update
   i. In the first two weeks of the Temporary Assistance Grant, 1,172 programs were funded at a cost of $5,131,752.
   ii. The second two week period had 2,243 programs funded at a cost of $14,262,870
   iii. Total spent to date: $19,394,631 for a 4 week period
   iv. OECOSL received 78 million from the federal government from the CARES funding. They expect to spend half of that by the end of this first six week period.

g. Temporary Assistance Grants: Changes
   i. Maximum rates will be applied and overall caps on total amounts requested.
   ii. Maximum rates:
      1. Rates were calculated by taking all rates that currently exist in the CCDF system and taking the average by age group.
      2. If a program's weekly rate is lower than the maximum rate, that is the rate they will be provided.
      3. Programs may not raise their rate from their last grant submitted and their last application will be checked to ensure consistency.
      4. Overall grant amount caps: For programs that remain open, the overall grant amount requested cannot exceed $20,000 for the two week period. For programs that are closed, the overall grant amount requested cannot exceed $5,000 for the two week period.
   iii. Temporary Assistance Grant: Tips
      1. Check the website for updated links, they are updated every two weeks. Applications through Submitable are the only ones that will be accepted.
      2. Please check your junk email/spam as they may be where communication is going from Submitable.
      3. Applications must be submitted by the deadlines.
      4. CCDF is not allowed to be used to pay a family's co-pay and this grant should not be submitted for that purpose.
      5. Personal days should be used for any child that is being funded through subsidy, these children should not be counted as private pay and submitted with the grant. This grant Is for public pay children.
   iv. OECOSL is sending a survey at the end of April, in partnership with the Indiana Afterschool Network, Early Learning Indiana, and Indiana United Ways. This survey aims to collect feedback from providers on their needs to help them plan on how to support programs and provide resources. This feedback will help inform guidance about summer camp and programming, as well as reopening.

h. Questions/suggestions from RAC members and public:
   i. Question: Is the survey specifically for programs, or are partner agencies encouraged to complete it?
      1. Answer from Nicole: The survey is meant for programs, including early learning education programs, before and after school programs, and summer camps.
   ii. Question: Can coalition leaders and community groups promote this survey to the programs they interact with?
      1. Answer from Nicole: Absolutely, we'll take as much promotion of this survey as possible.

6. **Public Comment**
   a. No additional public comments.

7. **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. Communication Update
         1. SPARK should share the communication data in social media posts to promote how SPARK is "sparking conversation". Use the data to tell a story.
      ii. Business Management Support
         1. There will be a continued need for SPARK to provide resources on recovery and restart.
         2. SPARK may need to provide guidance for childcare programs to rethink their business model to serve school-age children if they do not already.
      iii. PTQ Rating Procedure Update
         1. Members suggested that SPARK attach a tab in the Readiness Checklist with the prorated hours for PTQ levels 2 and 3.
         2. Members would like to revisit this procedure and provide additional feedback next quarter. Members would like to see data around the number the rating requests made and other relevant data.
         3. Members recommend that SPARK connect with Coalition leaders in the fall to see what feedback they are hearing at the local level regarding this procedure.

8. **Future Meeting Schedule**
   a. Tuesday September 1st 6:30pm-8:30pm (Bloomington, Exact location TBD)

9. **Adjournment**