

**Service Delivery Area 4
Regional Advisory Council
Meeting Summary September 1, 2020**

View the recording of this meeting here: <https://youtu.be/ecO8oimoO54>

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. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson were unable to attend the meeting, so Margaret Smith, RAC Coordinator 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: Jackie Bond, Carol Johnson, Ashley Lenoir, Jennifer Meyers, Christina McKeehan, Kristi Burkhart, and Missy Modesitt

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/>.
 - ii. Margaret summarized the feedback/recommendations made by the Council in April related to communication/outreach, business management support, the PTQ rating procedure, and other miscellaneous recommendations.
- b. Prior to this RAC meeting, members from SDAs across the state requested that the RACs discuss the following pressing issues:
 - i. Mandatory Trainings: The purpose of this agenda item was to give members space to ask questions and provide feedback and suggestions related to mandatory trainings for licensure.
 1. RAC members suggested that the Universal Precautions training be offered as an on demand training, rather than a live webinar. This would allow for staff to take the training at any time, when it was most convenient for them.
 2. Members also raised the question of how SPARK and other system partners can better connect with unlicensed programs that are flying under the radar and operating without these basic trainings. Members have heard about an increased number of unlicensed programs operating since COVID-19 hit. SPARK and other system partners should consider how best to connect to those programs and put them on pathways to compliance.
 - ii. Regulatory Barriers: The purpose of this agenda item was to give members space to provide information about regulatory barriers they are facing during this time and any suggestions they have to address these barriers.
 1. Several RAC members expressed concerns about the fingerprinting process. In some parts of the SDA, providers are waiting several weeks for an appointment. This delays their ability to begin working in the classroom.
 2. Many programs are facing issues with staffing during this time of COVID-19. Some programs have lost staff and others have faced issues when staff have to quarantine due to possible exposure.



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3. Some members reported that programs have found the guidance on masks and other safety regulations to be confusing.
- iii. COVID-19: The purpose of this agenda item was to give members space to discuss concerns related to COVID-19.
 1. Members repeated their concerns about staffing.
 2. The beginning of the school year was stressful for programs because of the uncertainty from school districts about their reopening plans. This caused uncertainty for programs as they planned for the needs of their school-age youth.
 3. As mentioned previously, SDA 4 has seen many unlicensed centers pop up who are operating under the radar.
 4. More parents are working from home, so some programs have seen a drop in enrollment.
 5. The mental and emotional health needs of children are not being met right now. SPARK coaches need to be prepared to help programs with the behavioral needs of students, as these needs may be exacerbated by COVID-19.

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: PTQ Rating Procedure
 - i. Mike provided an update the PTQ Rating Procedure.
 - ii. In mid-May, the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning sent communication to all programs with guidance about the PTQ rating process. This messaging also included information about inactive voluntary status, when that would expire, and what programs will be expected to do when that status expires.
 - iii. SPARK followed up with [additional information](#) in June about the five step PTQ rating process. This messaging was included in the SPARK Connect newsletter, sent via email to all I-LEAD users, and sent via text to all those signed up to receive text messages from OECOSL.
 - iv. This messaging included the reminder that as of July 1st, SPARK would be managing the rating process.
 - v. In their messaging, SPARK included links and visuals, which aligns with recommendations received from the RACs in the spring.
 - vi. SPARK's messaging was also added to the Hoosier Childcare banner.
 - vii. RAC members provided the following feedback on the messaging SPARK sent out:
 1. Members thought it was clear, concise, and very well put together.
 - viii. Any program that was set to expire between July 2020 through March 2021 was sent email communication with next steps.
 1. Members asked for clarification about when the Readiness Checklist was attached to the reminder emails. Answer: 6 months and 3 months. The Confirmation Checklist is included in later messages.
 - ix. SPARK has uploaded nearly 30 PTQ Success Tools in the Resources section of Indiana Learning Paths. These tools include:
 1. The standards and evidence the rater is looking for (Readiness Checklist)
 2. Confirmation Checklist
 3. Peer mentoring agreement (Level 4)



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4. Supplemental documentation and guidance
- x. SPARK is also engaged in a calling campaign to all programs with an expired PTQ rating. SPARK coaches are providing information about the PTQ rating process and related supports, as well as other SPARK supports.
 1. As of August 31st, SPARK has successfully contacted over 250 programs with expired ratings to provide guidance and help them through the process.
- xi. Since SPARK took this process over on July 1st, 426 ratings have been approved.
 1. 19% of programs have received insufficiencies during their rating visits. An insufficiency means that, during the rating visit, the rater found that the program was not fully meeting an expected standard. Programs are given 90 days to correct the insufficiency.
 - a. This rate of 19% is similar to the rate in July-August of 2019, which was 16%.
 - b. SPARK will continue to track this data point to assess if this process is working.
- xii. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
 1. RAC members shared that they knew of programs who received Readiness Checklists for age groups that they did not serve. This led to confusion about what was required. The Confirmation Checklist was not attached at the 60 day mark, though it was supposed to be. RAC members suggested that SPARK only send the Readiness Checklists relevant to each individual program.
 - a. SPARK's current practice is to send the Readiness Checklist resource, which includes the checklists for all age groups. SPARK will consider how to better individualize the information they share with each program.
 2. RAC members suggested that coalitions and other community leaders can help SPARK get the word out about this procedure. Some coalition leaders did not receive the communication.
 - a. SPARK will look into how they can better engage these leaders as comprehensively as possible.
 3. Programs still do not understand this process or who to reach out to. They will often reach out to other partners like IN AEYC and CCR&Rs, who have helped to refer programs to SPARK and walk them through the process. Programs need to get used to contacting SPARK.
 4. RAC members asked if SPARK had looked at the types of insufficiencies programs were receiving.
 - a. Most insufficiencies were related to documentation-meaning programs were missing documentation or administrative pieces. SPARK can share a breakdown of this data with the RAC in the future.
- c. Spotlight: Help Desk
 - i. SPARK's Deputy Director of Operations & Strategic Integration, Kim Hodge, presented on the Help Desk. She provided data and implementation updates. Some of the data highlights included:
 1. The Help Desk has served 959 callers since April 1st, with an uptick in calls after July.
 2. The most common support categories for these calls were PTQ Support (55%), Indiana Learning Paths (24%), and I-LEAD (9%).
 3. The Help Desk connected 26% of callers with key partners to meet their support need.

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- a. 229 callers were connected to Early Learning Indiana.
- b. 22 callers were connected to IN AEYC.
- c. 4 callers were connected to their local CCR&R.
- 4. The Help Desk connected 13% of callers with a SPARK coach.
- 5. The Help Desk resolved 61% of the callers' support needs during the first call.
- 6. The Help Desk received most of their calls during weekdays (Monday-Friday) and received two calls on Saturdays.
- 7. The time of day with the highest number of calls was from 10:00am-2:00pm, with a peak in the early afternoon, which aligns with most programs' nap schedule.
- 8. SPARK also launched a Help Desk customer satisfaction process. Approximately 7 days after calling, SPARK sends callers a follow-up email to assess their satisfaction. SPARK plans to send this survey sooner in the future.
 - a. 91% of callers who answered the follow-up survey said SPARK made it easy to find an answer to their question.
 - b. 80% of callers reported that their question or need was resolved.
 - c. 85% overall satisfaction rate.
 - d. The Help Desk currently has a net promoter score of 52. The industry standard is 50.
- ii. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
 - 1. RAC members suggested that Help Desk representatives ask callers during the initial conversation if they'd like SPARK to follow up via email on their issue to make sure it got resolved.
 - 2. RAC members also shared that the sooner SPARK sends the follow-up email the more likely they are to receive a response.
- d. Spotlight: Indiana Self-Assessment Tool (I-SAT).
 - i. The I-SAT is a program-level self-assessment tool, completed by a program leader. It includes seven standard areas with 50 quality indicators. Programs can choose which sections and quality indicators they want to assess and focus on.
 - ii. After completing the I-SAT they connect with a coaching content coordinator, review their results, and discuss the supports available. They can then connect with SPARK's tiered supports as appropriate.
 - iii. The I-SAT was launched in April. As of August 31st, SPARK has received 125 I-SAT submissions, which represent 134 programs.
 - 1. 3% of programs recognized by OECOSL (any program licensed, registered, or CCDF exempt) have submitted the I-SAT.
 - 2. 44% of participants completed the I-SAT through a live session with SPARK. 56% completed it independently using a self-study tool.
 - iv. I-SAT participants also completed a customer satisfaction survey.
 - 1. 75% felt prepared by taking the Preparing for Program Assessment pre-requisite training.
 - 2. 70% felt the I-SAT Guide was helpful.
 - 3. 85% felt SPARK made the experience easy.
 - 4. 82% overall satisfaction rate.
 - 5. 52 Net promoter score.
 - v. SPARK asked for specific feedback from those who have completed the I-SAT on the I-SAT Guide and if it was helpful.
 - 1. No one on the call had completed the I-SAT. Kim shared that the I-SAT Guide provides an overview of the I-SAT as well as in-depth guidance that walks

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- readers through the I-SAT experience. SPARK is hoping to get feedback from participants on how SPARK can improve this resource.
- vi. Mike shared that later this fall, SPARK will be moving the I-SAT to a new user friendly platform. At that time, SPARK will be reaching out to RAC members to participate in focus groups and provide feedback on this new platform.
 - vii. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
 1. RAC members asked about what messaging is shared with programs to encourage them to participate in the I-SAT and help them understand the benefits.
 - a. Kim shared that they have a post card that outlines the benefits of the I-SAT. Further collateral will be shared via social media and with programs. The website also includes graphics about the I-SAT. SPARK is pivoting the messaging to explain how the I-SAT can be more responsive to programs' COVID-19 needs.
 - b. Members recommended that, in the follow-up survey, SPARK ask participants why they felt compelled to complete the I-SAT. This can help SPARK frame messaging around the benefits of the I-SAT.
 2. One of the misconceptions that members have heard is that providers need to complete the I-SAT before getting any support from SPARK. While RAC members and partners are helping to dispel this misconception, it would help to provide partners with an elevator pitch to explain how the I-SAT might be beneficial. The messaging about the benefits needs to be clearer, especially in terms of how it can benefit them right now, during this uncertain time.
 - a. SPARK also shared that the next version of the I-SAT will include some partner engagement. This will be a good time to provide partners with an elevator pitch. SPARK is also focusing on how to make the I-SAT and corresponding resources more user friendly.
 3. There is a concern that this assessment will require programs to make changes and take actions that they are not ready for. That seems overwhelming for programs, especially with COVID-19.

5. RAC Membership Updates

- a. Margaret provided an update on RAC membership transitions.
- b. SPARK thanked the current members for their service and contributions over the last year, especially in helping SPARK establish the RAC structure and get the Councils up and running.
- c. Around half of the current members will be completing their term this quarter and cycling off of the Council.
- d. A membership application for new members was released in July and closed in early August.
- e. New members were notified in early September.
- f. All members will participate in virtual orientation sessions over the next two months to kick off the next year.
- g. The RACs will reconvene with their next public meeting in November.

6. Public Comment

- a. No additional public comments.



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7. Agreements

- 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. Mandatory Trainings
 - 1. RAC members suggested that the Universal Precautions training be offered as an on demand training, rather than a live webinar.
 - 2. SPARK and other system partners should consider how best to connect with unlicensed programs that are popping up during the COVID crisis and how to put them on pathways to compliance.
 - ii. COVID-19
 - 1. SPARK coaches need to be prepared to help programs with the behavioral needs of students, as these needs may be exacerbated by COVID-19.
 - iii. PTQ Rating Procedure Update
 - 1. RAC members suggested that SPARK think about how to individualize the rating reminder emails to provide only the information relevant to each program. An example would be to only send the Readiness Checklists relevant to the individual program, rather than the entire resource.
 - 2. RAC members suggested that coalitions and other community leaders can help SPARK get the word out about this procedure. SPARK should consider how best to engage these partners and keep them up to date.
 - 3. RAC members suggested that SPARK break down the types of insufficiencies seen during rating visits and bring that data to the Council for further reflection.
 - iv. Help Desk
 - 1. RAC members suggested that Help Desk representatives ask callers during the initial conversation if they'd like SPARK to follow up via email on their issue to make sure it got resolved and when they would like that follow-up to happen.
 - 2. RAC members recommended that sending the follow-up customer satisfaction survey sooner would increase the response rate.
 - v. I-SAT
 - 1. Members recommended that, in the follow-up survey, SPARK ask participants why they felt compelled to complete the I-SAT. This can help SPARK frame messaging around the benefits of the I-SAT.
 - 2. Members suggested that SPARK provide partners with an "elevator pitch" to explain how the I-SAT might be beneficial to programs. This will help them better message and promote the tool.

8. Future Meeting Schedule

- a. To be determined, once new members are oriented.

9. Adjournment