Service Delivery Area 4
Regional Advisory Council
Meeting Summary November 5, 2020

View the recording of this meeting here: https://youtu.be/ADPz_ovZ4vI

1. **Call to Order and Meeting Overview**
   a. SPARK Project Director, Mike Bachman, made welcoming remarks orienting participants to the purpose of the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meeting.
   b. Margaret Smith, RAC Coordinator, provided a membership update. SPARK onboarded new RAC members over the last two months. A current member list for each SDA can be found on the SPARK website: http://indianaspark.com/regional-advisory-councils/
   c. All members (new and returning) participated in two orientation sessions this fall, during which they selected a Chair and Vice Chair for the coming year.
   d. Margaret introduced SDA 4's new Chair, Jennifer Myers, and Vice Chair, Alisha Savage.
   e. Jennifer 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, professional role, whether they are a new or returning member, and why they wanted to join the RAC.
   b. Members who were present included: Jennifer Myers, Alisha Savage, Ashley Lenoir, Barb Newton, Christina McKeehan, Elaine Brinson, Kristi Burkhart, Jackie Bond, and Stephany Finney.

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. Jennifer summarized the feedback/recommendations made by the Council in September related to mandatory trainings, COVID-19, the Paths to QUALITY™ Rating Procedure, the Help Desk, and the Indiana Self-Assessment Tool (I-SAT).
      iii. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
         1. RAC members were excited to hear that the Universal Precautions training will be offered as an on-demand webinar. This training is in development and SPARK hopes to roll it out during the first quarter of 2021.
         2. The RAC would like to continue to follow-up on and receive progress reports related to how SPARK and partners are connecting with unregulated programs popping up during COVID-19.

4. **SPARK Project Spotlights**
   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: My SPARK Learning Lab
      i. SPARK's Deputy Director of Operations & Strategic Integration, Kim Hodge, provided an overview and demo of My SPARK Learning Lab, which launched at the beginning of November.
      ii. My SPARK Learning Lab is SPARK's new online portal, which can be accessed via I-LEAD.

1. It is the new pathway to complete the Indiana Self-Assessment Tool (I-SAT).
2. My SPARK Learning Lab also provides users with access to SPARK's Knowledge Center, which includes tools, templates, job aids, resources, and more.
3. It provides ways for programs to engage with the SPARK Learning Lab Support team via chat, Help Desk support ticket, phone, or email.

iii. Kim provided an introduction to the I-SAT, which allows programs to assess their own needs for technical assistance support.

1. The I-SAT was launched in April 2020, through a small pilot. The I-SAT went statewide in July.
2. Around 150 providers have completed the I-SAT to date.
3. The I-SAT content has not changed, but My SPARK Learning Lab is the new online portal for program leaders to complete the I-SAT.
4. This program-level assessment comprises seven standards, with a total of 50 quality items, utilizing a rubric-based developmental continuum that offers a roadmap for advancing program quality from "Beginning" to "Excelling".
5. The I-SAT quality continuum includes specific behaviors, benchmarks, and ultimately a scope and sequence programs can utilize to create a plan to improve quality.
6. There are four versions of the I-SAT, one for each program type, with questions tailored for each: Center-Based, Family Child Care Homes, Ministries, and School-Based.
7. Printable I-SATs by program type are available in the Knowledge Center of My SPARK Learning Lab.
8. The I-SAT is designed to support programs along their quality improvement journey, including participation in Paths to QUALITY™ (PTQ).
   a. The I-SAT is NOT intended to replace the PTQ standards.
   b. The I-SAT standards and quality items have been aligned to PTQ standards, as well as accreditation standards. The I-SAT is meant to work alongside these systems.
9. The I-SAT standards are also directly aligned to Indiana's Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKCs) for Early Childhood, School-Age, and Youth Professionals.
   a. The seven CKCs make up the seven program quality standards in the I-SAT.
   b. Each quality standard includes at least one to several quality items.
   c. Each quality item includes a continuum of five benchmarks that stack upon each other, unless otherwise noted.
   d. Each quality item has a continuum of benchmarks grouped into five categories: Beginning, Developing, Emerging, Mastering, or Excelling.

iv. Kim provided an overview of the My SPARK Learning Lab platform.

1. It is available via I-LEAD. There is a button for My SPARK Learning Lab at the top of the page, next to the button for Indiana Learning Paths.
2. Users are taken to the homepage when they enter My SPARK Learning Lab. The homepage provides users options to:
   a. Get started with the I-SAT.
   b. Browse the Knowledge Center's featured topics or search the Knowledge Center.
   c. Connect with SPARK on Social Media.

      d. Sign up for the SPARK Connect newsletter.
      e. View trending articles.
      f. Engage with the SPARK Support Team.
      g. Access links to other SPARK supports.

3. My SPARK Learning Lab is mobile-friendly.
4. Users can access the I-SAT from the Homepage or the My Profile page.
   a. The My Profile page collects details about the users' program and program type.
   b. An introduction to the I-SAT is available to provide key details before getting started.
   c. Before starting the I-SAT, users are provided with links to the Knowledge Center, where they can access the full I-SAT Guide and printable I-SATs by program type.
   d. The I-SAT Guide provides program leaders with a step-by-step process in preparation for, completion of, and submission of their program's I-SAT.
   e. SPARK has made revisions to the I-SAT Guide to make it more user friendly and helpful to users.
   f. The I-SAT Guide includes a Glossary of Terms and frequently asked questions (FAQs).
5. When users begin to complete the I-SAT, they can choose which sections and quality items they would like to complete. Users are not required to complete all sections.
   a. My SPARK Learning Lab presents each of the seven sections to the user and outlines the relevant quality items. Users are then asked if they want to complete that section. If users indicate "no", they are moved on to the next section.
6. Currently, the I-SAT is intended to be completed in one sitting.
7. Selecting "Submit Self-Assessment" sends responses to SPARK.
8. Once their Self-Assessment is submitted, programs are taken to the "Next Steps" page. There, they can view their Response Summary and Recommended Resources.
   a. The Response Summary is a listing of all their responses and the items they completed.
   b. The Recommended Resources are connected to the quality items they completed.
9. SPARK contacts users within five days of when they submit their I-SAT to discuss the program's goals and customize a support plan.

v. Kim provided an overview of the Knowledge Center within My SPARK Learning Lab.
   1. The Knowledge Center contains resources and training SPARK has developed or identified to support leaders and their program staff in their quality improvement journey.
   2. The Knowledge Center content is mapped to the I-SAT, providing connection with key areas of focus.
   3. The Knowledge Center includes three tabs:
      a. All Content: Includes articles organized by CKCs & I-SAT quality items.
      b. Featured Topics: Includes articles on "hot topics", such as COVID-19.
      c. Spanish Available Content: Includes articles that are either in Spanish or have some type of Spanish translated support.

4. The Knowledge Center includes over 400 articles to date. The creation of the Knowledge Center has allowed for all of these materials to be housed in one place. The Knowledge Center includes resources, training, support articles, and learning forums.
5. When users click on a knowledge article, they can view the item & content type, the item location (how the item can be accessed) and source, related CKCs & quality indicators, and related articles.
6. Users can favorite articles, which saves them for easy access from the My Profile page.

vi. Kim provided an overview of the My Profile page, which includes three tabs:
1. My Profile: Includes key details about the user and program.
2. My Program Assessment: Includes any I-SATs completed in My SPARK Learning Lab.
3. Favorite Articles: Includes articles favorited by the user.

vii. Kim provided an overview of the Support page.
1. The Support page provides users the option to submit a support request, or view the status of a pending request.
2. Users can also upload files and request their PTQ rating using the Support page.
3. The online chat feature is available during Help Desk hours (Monday-Friday 6:00am-7:00pm EST; Saturday 10:00am-2:00pm EST).

viii. Kim provided a brief demo of the My SPARK Learning Lab platform and walked through each of the pages.

ix. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
1. Question: Can you leave the I-SAT and come back to finish it at a later time?
   a. Answer from Mike: At this time, users are not able to leave the I-SAT and resume at a later time. That is a feature SPARK would like to add in the coming months.
2. Question: Are I-LEAD and Indiana Learning Paths mobile-friendly? Members reported issues in accessing these platforms on mobile devices.
   a. Answer from Mike: They are, but they are built on older systems than the one used for My SPARK Learning Lab. There is very little that SPARK has control over related to I-LEAD and Indiana Learning Paths, but members can share feedback and concerns, which SPARK will pass on to partners.
3. Question: Are there links to funding opportunities in the Knowledge Center?
   a. Answer from Mike: Yes, we do have resources and articles related to funding. If members are aware of funding opportunities that are available, please share them with SPARK to make sure they are added to the Knowledge Center and shared with the Help Desk.
4. Question: What is the difference between the SPARK Learning Lab website and My SPARK Learning Lab?
   a. Answer from Mike: The SPARK website provides information about who SPARK Learning Lab is and the services we provide. My SPARK Learning Lab is where those services and resources live.
5. Question: If SPARK updates a document or resource, can users still access the old/original document?
   a. Answer from Mike: SPARK has the discretion to determine if the original file remains available. If SPARK chooses to keep both versions available,

they would each be uploaded as different articles. If SPARK chooses to replace an article, they would update the original file.

5. **New Business Highlights from the Field**
    a. Jennifer invited RAC members to share what they are hearing from the field, including issues or concerns members are hearing from providers and programs, feedback related to SPARK services, regional news, successes, or other relevant updates. Updates provided by members included:
        i.   Local programs have seen an increase in COVID cases over the last three weeks. Directors are having to fill in for teachers and other staff.
        ii. Some classrooms can't open because programs don't have the staff available. Staff are not committing to a return to work timeline because their children are e-learning. Programs have the children enrolled/interested, but lack the staff to open rooms.
        iii. Bartholomew county is moving to e-learning, which will affect staff and programs in this area.
        iv. Programs are, for the most part, more prepared than they were last spring to respond as COVID numbers begin to rise.
        v.   Members reminded others that the [Indiana CARES About Child Care](#) grant is available for programs who are struggling.
             1. SPARK has resources and Help Desk representatives are trained to provide assistance related to this opportunity.
        vi. Some programs are struggling to keep up with reporting COVID cases to the health department and other officials. The requirements for school-based and Head Start programs are very involved. Some programs have hired an additional staff member just to keep up with reporting the cases.
        vii. INAEYC is receiving renewed interest in national accreditation, primarily in Monroe county.
             1. Mike shared that SPARK has added accreditation resources to My SPARK Learning Lab over the last few weeks.
        viii. Mike shared that SPARK has continued to have programs enrolling and advancing through PTQ. Approximately ten programs advanced in the month of October.
        ix. Question: Is there a number of times that programs can reschedule a PTQ rating visit due to COVID?
             1. Answer from Mike: Programs can schedule the visit, cancel once and reschedule. Once a program cancels twice, the rating request is terminated and SPARK has to submit a new rating request. The reason for this is because, once the rating is requested, the Consultants Consortium must complete the rating visit within 30 days. Once a program has cancelled and rescheduled multiple times, it is difficult for them to complete the visit within the 30-day window. Terminating the request and submitting a new request triggers a new 30-day period. Cancelling multiple times may lead to some ramifications on the program, depending on the circumstances. The new request date is what is used for the program's training and documentation. However, at this time a program's PTQ level will not be decreased for rescheduling/cancelling.

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. The RAC would like to continue to follow-up on and receive progress reports related to how SPARK and partners are connecting with unregulated programs popping up during COVID-19.
        ii. My SPARK Learning Lab
            1. RAC members suggested that SPARK re-engage partners to provide more information on the Knowledge Center.
                a. Mike shared that SPARK has created a communications toolkit for partners related to My SPARK Learning Lab, which can be accessed here: http://indianaspark.com/my-spark-learning-lab-communications-tool-kit/
                b. RAC members would like SPARK to make engaging partners, beyond providing this toolkit, a priority.
            2. RAC members suggested that SPARK record a short video or share a short testimonial paragraph from programs that have completed the I-SAT explaining how it was beneficial to them.
                a. Kim shared that SPARK has testimonials they can pull from and promote. SPARK will look into this further.

8. **Future Meeting Schedule**
    a. February 2, 6:00-8:00pm EST
    b. May 4, 6:00-8:00pm EST
    c. September 7, 6:00-8:00pm EST

9. **Agenda Items for February**
    a. RAC members would like to take time in February to share what they're hearing from their network about My SPARK Learning Lab. In the meantime, members can send feedback to RAC@indianaspark.com.
    b. In February, RAC members would like to receive data updates on the following topics:
        i. The types of insufficiencies found during PTQ rating visits.
            1. Members would like to see how the insufficiencies compare to those found in previous years and pre-COVID, especially if there has been an increase in insufficiencies related to education and training. This will help SPARK and partners identify support providers may need.
        ii. The level of engagement with the Knowledge Center.
        iii. The number of I-SATs completed.
        iv. The number of COVID-related program closures, within SDA 4.
    c. RAC members would like to discuss opportunities available for regional cohorts, especially those that can assist programs with capacity building.
    d. RAC members would like to discuss the 2019-2020 SPARK Annual Report, which was released in early November and can be found at http://indianaspark.com/spark-annual-report/.

10. **Adjournment**