

**Service Delivery Area 5
Regional Advisory Council
Meeting Summary March 16, 2021**

View the recording of this meeting here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EULmvt58CDk>

1. Call to Order and Meeting Overview

- a. SDA 5's Chair and Vice Chair are swapping roles for the remainder of the term. Ann Feldhaus will serve as Chair, and April Pagel will serve as Vice Chair.
- b. SDA 5 Chair, Ann Feldhaus, 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 procedures.

2. Introductions

- a. Members introduced themselves by sharing their name and professional role.
- b. Members who were present included: Ann Feldhaus, April Pagel, Debbie Beeler, Della Micco, Jamie Madigan, Jessie Davis, Michelle Roberts-Schneider, and Terry Green.

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. Ann; SPARK Project Director, Mike Bachman; Kim Hodge, Director of Operations & Strategic Integration; and Erika Radford, Director of Program Support, summarized the feedback/recommendations made by the Council in November related to mandatory trainings in Indiana Learning Paths (ILP) and providing support to programs related to Paths to QUALITY (PTQ).
 - iii. Mandatory trainings in ILP will have subcategories for licensing and PTQ. SPARK hopes that this functionality will be launched by May.
 1. RAC members like this new distinction and believe it will be more user friendly.
 - iv. PTQ Cohorts have launch. More than 80 providers are engaged in cohorts. SPARK will later be adding cohorts for PTQ Level 4 programs and a cohort for VCP ministries.
 1. RAC members stated that it is nice that PTQ Level 4 providers will have this opportunity for support in maintaining their accreditation, maintaining their quality, and going beyond compliance to improve quality even more.

4. SPARK Project Spotlights & New Business

- 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. Kim gave an overview of data from the Help Desk. The 75.5% of calls in the PTQ category includes programs contacting SPARK regarding the regular business of joining, maintaining, and advancing on PTQ, such as submitting checklists. Therefore, not all of those calls represent a question or issue someone has.
 - i. It's nice to see that only 7.3% are Support in Progress and there are no cases that are simply unresolved. It seems like SPARK is providing good support.

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- ii. PTQ program participation continues to increase. SPARK is seeing success with having newly opened programs enroll in PTQ. Most programs that drop out of PTQ are actually programs that are closing.
- iii. Terry shared that their biggest problem is adding staff to I-LEAD and having them have continued access to I-LEAD. Kim stated this problem is known and being worked on.
- iv. The 14.4% in the I-LEAD/ILP category include ILP issues that SPARK typically can solve, as well as I-LEAD issues that SPARK typically has to share with a system partner to solve.
- c. My SPARK Learning Lab (MSLL) launched on 11/2/20. The SPARK website can now be translated. The automatic translation feature is just for the SPARK website. SPARK has begun translating some trainings/modules into Spanish and continues to work on more. Groups in MSLL are now being tested. I-SAT enhancements will launch in April.
 - i. RAC members stated that it is hopeful that there have been about 100 I-SAT submissions—that it improved engagement.
 - ii. RAC members thanked SPARK for providing Spanish content, which some learners need, even though they may also speak English fluently.
 - iii. RAC members shared that testing in Groups has been user-friendly; it is nice that websites and articles can be added easily to conversations.
 - iv. Ann asked the RAC members how much their staff actually gets into MSLL. What are the best ways to get staff to engage with MSLL?
 - 1. Some RAC members are more likely to engage with something once they have received an email that they can click on, rather than simply being told about something.
 - a. Prior to March, in order to receive the SPARK newsletter, you had to subscribe. SPARK just received approval from OECOSL to email newsletters to every program, giving them an unsubscribe option. SPARK will likely soon send out the newsletters to all I-LEAD users.
 - 2. RAC members stated it is frustrating when you can't get access through I-LEAD.
- d. This meeting's slides include an image that describes the collaboration between SPARK and its system partner. RAC members brainstormed ways to make the image clearer and more user friendly.
 - i. See recommendations below in Agreements section.
- e. Mike asked what it is that RAC members need that they're not getting.
 - i. See answers below in Agreements section.
- f. Mike shared that programs will be receiving a magnet that they can put up in their programs and that has a QR code which will take people to the PD calendar online which is up-to-date.

5. Public Comment

- a. No additional public comments.

6. 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 agreements

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- ii. SPARK can bring data related to the 5 objectives outlined in the SPARK annual report and progress toward objectives, including PTQ data and Help Desk data.
- iii. Suggested Groups:
 - 1. New Directors (divided into homes, ministries, centers, etc.)
 - 2. NAEYC-accredited programs
 - 3. Separate groups for homes, ministries, centers, etc.
 - 4. Affinity groups like Montessori, Reggio, nature-based play
 - 5. School-age support
 - 6. Specific groups like On My Way Pre-K programs in SDA 5
 - 7. Kindergarten Readiness Indicators (KRI)
 - 8. What are the parameters for allowing system partners to join Groups that are intended for providers, so that partners can also benefit from the discussions
 - 9. Allow for new groups to be formed, such as those inspired by conversations happening during professional development (PD)
- iv. Revisions to System Partners image
 - 1. It is hard to read due to the yellow and orange colors, and yellow and orange are associated with warnings, which can be off-putting. Making the letters black could make it easier to read, and making the other colors more friendly could make it more inviting.
 - 2. List other partners beyond CCR&Rs, such as INAEYC and ELI.
 - 3. It's hard to know which circle is SPARK's circle.
 - 4. In the middle, add an outer circle to indicate that SPARK supports programs and does not children and families directly.
 - 5. Add information about what services CCR&Rs provide.
 - 6. The question of which agency does what can be complicated, and it also changes. Think about whether we are wanting this one visual to represent too much information.
 - 7. Give information about who each partner is and what they do within the categories represented by the different circles.
 - 8. Adding "a key would be beneficial, based on what each circle does/ performs/ has available."
 - 9. Describe the difference between technical assistance (TA) and PD.
 - 10. When you have a question and you don't know where to go for an answer, where do you go?
 - a. Friend, colleague, licensing consultant.
 - b. What can we do for those who aren't proactively seeking answers for themselves.
 - c. Jamie has been using the Help Desk as that go-to. SPARK is working on warm handoff procedures to ensure programs get to the agency they need to get to when it's not SPARK.
- v. Mike asked what it is that RAC members need that they're not getting.
 - 1. Staff: teachers and assistants (permanent staff, not subs)
 - 2. Higher level of PD opportunities: related to good pedagogy
 - a. Mike will follow up with Terry to brainstorm ideas related to this
 - 3. PD on challenging behaviors: Easter Seals Milestones gets referrals for kids other programs can't handle due to challenging behaviors
 - a. Mike will follow up with Ann to discuss getting at what are the root causes of challenging behaviors and how to address that

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4. I-LEAD: SPARK can communicate to partners that changes are made in I-LEAD all the time that aren't communicated to programs or even to licensing consultants. One issue is fingerprinting procedures, and one potential solution is that SPARK could send out an email to say it's time to do consent forms and these are the steps for how you do it.
5. I-LEAD: Perhaps SPARK could provide a service where a program calls the Help Desk, gives information over the phone, and a Help Desk rep creates an I-LEAD account for a staff member, in order to cut down on programs having to deal with access issues in I-LEAD.
6. Low pay is a huge problem. How can SPARK support programs in saving on their costs, rather than raising tuition, including exploring shared services.
7. Could all the PD certificates that staff earn outside of I-LEAD be uploaded into I-LEAD so there would be an electronic record of that completed PD.
8. PD regarding how early learning staff can be a professional
 - a. How to speak to parents in person and on the phone;
 - b. Not using Snapchat in the classroom
 - c. Presenting your appearance professionally (not looking like you just rolled out of bed)
 - d. Understanding the line between being a professional and a friend to a parent, including on social media
 - e. How to advocate for yourself as a professional and how to speak about your profession in a way that promotes the cause of valuing early learning
 - f. SPARK is building more advanced PD opportunities using NAEYC's code of ethics and thinking about how it aligns with NAEYC's equity statement.
9. There is a need to advocate for the profession at the state level, including advocating for additional funding. Since SPARK can't do advocacy, SPARK can connect providers who want to advocate to INAEYC and other partners.
10. Ask partner agencies to ask providers what they need and report that back.

7. Future Meeting Schedule

- a. April 20, 4:00-6:00pm EST
- b. August 31, 4:00-6:00pm EST

8. Agenda Items for February

- a. PTQ Cohorts
- b. MSLL and Groups
- c. Open brainstorming session

9. Adjournment