

**Service Delivery Area 2  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary May 11, 2021**

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

**1. Call to Order and Meeting Overview**

- a. Kacey Deverell, Chair, 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 systems and procedures.

**2. Introductions**

- a. Members introduced themselves by sharing their name and professional role.
- b. Members who were present included: Kacey Deverell, Brad Hand, Jenna Hicks, Kathryn Ziegler, Natalie McIntire, and Tristen Comegys.

**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 plans for each Service Delivery Area (SDA) on the SPARK website:  
<http://indianaspark.com/regional-advisory-councils/>.
  - ii. Kacey summarized the feedback/recommendations made by the Council in February related to COVID-19, communication efforts, Continuing Education Units (CEUs), and SPARK's swag distribution plan. Mike Bachman, SPARK Project Director, provided updates on related action plans.
  - iii. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
    1. Question: Could SPARK attend and provide swag items at the provider fair that Geminus is holding?
    2. Answer from Mike: Yes, SPARK is happy to provide swag to partners to help distribute and we will follow up with Geminus about attending the provider fair. If you would like SPARK swag, please email [RAC@indianaspark.com](mailto:RAC@indianaspark.com).

**4. New Business**

- a. SPARK Data Updates
  - i. Mike shared updates on user engagement with the following SPARK supports:
    1. My SPARK Learning Lab (MSLL)
    2. Training Live Session Attendance
    3. Asynchronous Training Completions
    4. ILP Resource Downloads
    5. I-SAT Completions
    6. Help Desk Data
  - ii. A detailed breakdown of the data presented can be found on slides 13-20 of the meeting slide deck (<http://indianaspark.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SDA-2-May-2021-RAC-Presentation.pdf>).
  - iii. Questions and comments from RAC members and the public:
    1. Question: Is SPARK happy with the current MSLL engagement?
    2. Answer from Mike: We would like more engagement, but we are happy with these numbers after only five months of implementation.
    3. Question: How do you define "unique users" within MSLL?
    4. Answer from Mike: The number of logins is the number of times the "Start My SPARK Learning Lab" button was clicked. The number of unique users is the

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number of individuals who clicked that button. You will notice that the number of logins is higher because some users returned multiple times.

5. Question: What was the most popular live training session?
  6. Answer from Mike: The spike we saw in February was related to the "What do I apply for?" live webinars, which were held in English and Spanish. Business and fundraising content are getting a lot of traction. Safe sleep is another popular offering.
  7. Question: How many trainings occur each month?
  8. Answer from Mike: We average 30 in person and live webinar trainings each month.
  9. Question: What is the target goal for attendance?
  10. Answer from Mike: We want to continue to provide the same number of trainings, but we would like to see that every one of our offerings has between 15-20 people attending.
  11. Question: Can SPARK promote trainings via text, in addition to the emails and Facebook?
  12. Answer from Mike: We do have access to OECOSL's text messaging service. We could consider sending our training Tuesday messages via text.
  13. Comment: I am hearing in the community about the need to tailor trainings for different provider groups. For example, someone who has worked in the field for 15 years has different training needs than a new staff member.
  14. Response from Mike: We are thinking about what professional development should look like for more experienced teachers and how we can create localized opportunities for peer networking and learning.
  15. Question: Have you gotten feedback from I-SAT users about the user friendliness of the tool?
  16. Answer from Mike: Yes, a lot. We have gone through multiple iterations. We will be launching a new enhancement at the end of May that will allow users to start and stop the assessment as needed and go back to look at previous answers. We also hope to have an enhancement before October that allows users to look at tabs that include the areas they want to focus on. We are also looking at how SPARK can provide technical assistance for programs who need help completing the I-SAT. We have a live webinar that does this, but we have not been able to hold it in person due to COVID.
  17. Comment from RAC member: I have heard from some users that they feel overwhelmed by the I-SAT and that it seems like too much. It would be very helpful to have tabs that look at specific topics.
  18. Question: Is the connection between coaching and completing the assessment clear to programs?
  19. Answer from Mike: We have explained the connection, but there is difference between saying and then actually being able to see the connection when you go into the I-SAT that completing it can help lead to coaching support.
- b. New Discussion Board Feature (Groups)
- i. At the last RAC meeting, SPARK introduced the new Groups feature in My SPARK Learning Lab, which will provide peer-to-peer discussion board opportunities. SPARK invited RAC members to participate in the user testing process in March.
  - ii. Erika Radford, SPARK Deputy Director of Program Support, summarized the feedback SPARK received during user testing.

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1. Twenty total RAC members from across the state participated in testing, in addition to SPARK staff members.
2. All RAC members and SPARK staff reported that Groups is easy and user-friendly.
3. 60% of RAC members indicated that they were likely to use it over a similar tool, like Facebook, for connecting professionally with peers.
4. The overall satisfaction rate of participants was 78%, with 100% from RAC members.
5. When asked if they would recommend Groups to friends/colleagues, there was a net promoter score of 67. SPARK typically aims for anything over 40 or 50.
6. One of the questions SPARK asked during testing was how they should set up Groups access at initial rollout to users. The majority (71%) indicated that some Groups should be open to all, and some should require users to be invited or meet specific criteria to participate.
7. Participants also provided feedback on how Groups should be used (i.e. peer mentoring, general updates from SPARK, continued collaboration after professional development etc.).
- iii. Erika provided an update on the timeline for rolling out Groups:
  1. During the first half of April, SPARK determined the best use of Groups.
  2. During the second half of April, SPARK designed Groups and began to load them into My SPARK Learning Lab.
  3. Groups will be visible to participants in My SPARK Learning Lab in May.
- iv. Erika encouraged RAC members to participate in Groups and promote the feature within their networks.
- v. There were no questions or comments from RAC members or the public.
- c. Program Staff Engagement with SPARK
  - i. During the RAC's February meeting, members began to discuss how programs can encourage their staff to engage with SPARK. SPARK requested further feedback from the RACs on this topic, specifically related to professional development. Mike posed the following questions to the RAC for feedback and discussion:
    1. How do you provide professional development on an ad hoc or on-going basis with your staff?
    2. What are the top three professional development needs of your staff?
    3. When does your staff have time for professional development?
  - ii. Comments and feedback from RAC members and the public included:
    1. Comment: We have identified professional development opportunities for our entire staff including monthly book clubs and reflection activities. We are still trying to work through challenges of how to help staff who are behind.
    2. Comment: We try to listen to staff regarding their needs. We then post training opportunities on the bulletin board outside of the break room. Staff sign up for the opportunities they are interested in and our directors schedule them out of the classroom, so they have time to watch it. Our program also holds Saturday trainings twice a year.
    3. The following professional development needs were identified by attendees:
      - a. Challenging behaviors
      - b. Technology use to connect with families
      - c. Finding appropriate technology for young children
      - d. Supporting English language learners
      - e. Peer learning groups/opportunities

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- f. Helping programs cope with low staffing (recruiting, hiring, training of new staff; resiliency and well-being of the leadership/staff who are dealing with the issue of low staffing)
  - g. Curriculum training and how to implement
- d. COVID-19
  - i. On March 25th, OECOSL presented on Indiana's plan for the use of Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Funds. The [recording](#) of this presentation includes information on increased CACFP reimbursements, waived family co-pays, Child Care Closure Grants worth up to \$40,000 per closure, a workforce recruitment campaign, waived background check fees and hiring stipends for new employees, a timeline for all of these initiatives and so much more!
  - ii. These initiatives are branded as Build, Learn, Grow. There is a Facebook page, as well as a website: <https://brighterfuturesindiana.org/build-learn-grow>
  - iii. Build, Learn, Grow Emergency Relief Grants
    - 1. Provides a 20% increase for active CCDF vouchers through August 27<sup>th</sup>.
    - 2. Tracking of attendance began March 28<sup>th</sup>, so the first tracking period was March 28<sup>th</sup>-April 11<sup>th</sup>. Payments are made two weeks after the tracking period, so the first payment was made April 28<sup>th</sup>.
    - 3. All active CCDF vouchers, both birth to five and school-age, will begin receiving payments, but as a requirement to receive those payments programs must complete *SPARK! Fundamentals to Business Sustainability Collection* by August 27<sup>th</sup>.
    - 4. Once a program registers and begins, there is a checklist of items they need to complete the training. The training is worth seven clock hours and attendees will receive a certificate after completion. It includes some on demand training, recorded webinars, and tools. Programs can find this training by searching for the title in Indiana Learning Paths.
    - 5. Question: Who from a program should complete the training? I am taking care of all the business and reporting needs related to COVID for our programs. Would I complete the training, or would the site/program directors need to complete it?
    - 6. Answer from Mike: We recommend the training be completed by the individual who is making business decisions for the program. If you are connected to each program in I-LEAD, we will have record of those completions. Keep your certificate in case there are any questions.
  - iv. Build, Learn, Grow Scholarships
    - 1. Beginning in May 2021, scholarships will be available to pay for up to 80% of tuition for families of frontline workers, with family responsibility at 20%, based on program policy. The income eligibility requirement is between 128%-250% of the federal poverty line.
    - 2. *Frontline* is defined by the Governor's Executive Order. Mike noted that child care workers are considered frontline workers. If program staff who have children enrolled fall within the income requirements, they would be eligible for a scholarship.
    - 3. The scholarships will be available through at least October 2021.
    - 4. SPARK, in partnership with Early Learning Indiana, Indiana Afterschool Network, and OECOSL will offer a pre-requisite information session about the scholarship and requirements. All programs who want to accept this

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scholarship need to watch the information session in Indiana Learning Paths and complete a consent.

5. Question: Are school-based programs eligible?
6. Answer from Mike: No, school-based programs are not eligible for any of the Build, Learn, Grow funding mechanisms. A subset of the CRRSA funding was given to the Department of Education and is flowing through to the local education agencies. It is up to them to determine how they want to support their early learning programs.

**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. SPARK should consider attending and providing swag items at the provider fair that Geminus is holding.
  - ii. New Business
    1. RAC members will help promote engagement with MSLL, Groups, and other SPARK supports within their networks.
    2. SPARK should explore promoting trainings via text, in addition to the emails and Facebook.
    3. The following professional development needs were identified for SPARK to consider:
      - a. Challenging behaviors
      - b. Technology use to connect with families
      - c. Finding appropriate technology for young children
      - d. Supporting English language learners
      - e. Peer learning groups/opportunities
      - f. Helping programs cope with low staffing (recruiting, hiring, training of new staff; resiliency and well-being of the leadership who are dealing with the issue)
      - g. Curriculum training and how to implement
    4. In the future, RAC members would like any SPARK data to be presented at the county, SDA, and state level.

**7. Future Meeting Schedule**

- a. September 14, 6:00-8:00pm EST
  - i. SPARK will send a poll to RAC members in July to assess their preference and comfort level in meeting in-person or virtually.

**8. Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

- a. Overview of what the other SDAs are talking about
- b. Engagement data (at the county, SDA, and state levels)

**9. Adjournment**