



## Service Delivery Area 1 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Summary September 1, 2021

View the recording of this meeting here: <https://youtu.be/3da5lmXFybl>

### 1. Call to Order and Meeting Overview

- a. SDA 1 RAC Chair, Jeannine Hornback, 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 names and professional role.
- b. Members who were present included: Jeannine Hornback, Keana Baylis, Binti Shah, Gail Jamora, Linda Curly, Lisa Timmerman, Martha Rae, Paige Gramenz, Sara Miller, and Sherry Searles.

### 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.
  - 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. Jeannine and SPARK Project Director, Mike Bachman, summarized the feedback/recommendations made by the Council in April related to RAC engagement strategies, CCRRSA funding, zoning issues related to family child care homes. In addition, SPARK and RAC shared updates related to the action plan identified for each recommendation.
    1. You can find more information about these recommendations and updates on the [SDA 1 website](#) and in the meeting slide deck.
  - iii. Questions/feedback from RAC members and the public:
    1. Questions RAC members how have you engaged with SPARK since the last meeting, and how have you encouraged others to engage?
      - a. Sherry Searles stated that her primary engagement with SPARK is through communications channels. However, she continues to stay well-versed and updated, especially on training to help others.
      - b. Lisa Timmerman encourages others to participate in the discussion boards. However, she
      - c. Martha Rae uses her training dashboard and the knowledge center. She would like to improve the technical search feature in the knowledge center as it is hard to find specific training. Martha also continues to help explain the role of SPARK within the system and assists others in understanding that change and building relationship takes time.



**Service Delivery Area 1  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary September 1, 2021**

- d. Martha Rae recommends that SPARK continue to do outreach and awareness regarding SPARK's role within the industry.
  - e. Martha Rae clarified for Mike that both search features in Indiana Learning Path and My SPARK Learning Lab could be improved. However, Martha did suggest that Indiana Learning Path would be the first platform to fix the search feature if possible.
  - f. Jeannine also stated that she continues to help clarify the role of SPARK to other programs and industry partners. However, there are still misconceptions and confusion around SPARK.
2. Family Child Care Home Zoning Issues: This discussion item has been shared with OECSOL. RAC members have seen some improvement at the county level and continue to get the right parties at the table to continue addressing this issue.
  3. Old Business Comments or Questions: There were no additional comments or questions.

**4. New Business**

- a. RAC Membership Updates
  - i. SPARK thanked the following outgoing RAC members for their contributions: Linda Curley, Paige Gramenz, Jeannine Hornback, Heather Miller, Sara Miller, Martha Rae, Clarissa Regula, Lisa Timmerman.
  - ii. SPARK also reviewed the current status of RAC members for the coming year.
    1. Membership application was live during June and July
      - a. 72 applications were received from across the state
      - b. 14 were received in SDA 1
    2. New members were notified in mid- August
    3. Virtual orientation sessions for new and returning members will be held in September.
      - a. Thursday 9/16, 2:00-3:00pm ET
      - b. Wednesday 9/22, 2:00-3:00pm ET
    4. RACs will convene again in November
- b. RAC Attendance and Engagement
  - i. SPARK Program Director Mike Bachman reviewed the charts and data compiled for today's discussion.
    1. RAC Member Attendance SDA 1
      - a. SDA 1 both years saw a decline in attendance for RAC members. However, SPARK did clarify the timing Q3, reviewed, and Q4 was the start of the pandemic for year two.



**Service Delivery Area 1  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary September 1, 2021**

- b. SDA 1 has changed its meeting times between the years. Year one meetings were held from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. EST. Year two meetings were held from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. EST.
  2. RAC SDA 1 Public/ Non-member Attendance Year 1 vs. Year 2
    - a. This data presented showed a decrease in public or non-members' attendance between year one and year two. In addition, both years saw a decrease in attendance in quarters three and four, the spring and summer seasons.
  3. RAC SDA 1 Attendees by Stakeholder Type in Year 2
    - a. The pie charts references show the breakdown of the following attendance by stakeholder type: RAC members, SPARK staff, OECOSL/ FSSA Staff, Public Partners.
- ii. Discussion and feedback from RAC Members
1. Members suggested that SPARK should consider conducting exit interviews and hosting focus groups with former RAC members.
  2. Members commented that the data shows the effects of the pandemic on attendance. Quarter 2 (January through March) has the highest number of attendance. However, the spring and summer months have declined and seem to be less participatory.
  3. Members recommend that SPARK should review and assess the communications activities and agenda items surround the meetings.
  4. Members challenge the group to continue to invite the public and non-public members to attend personally.
  5. Continue to help clarify and communicate the role of SPARK versus the other key stakeholders within the industry.
  6. Members discuss the initial communication and the marketing efforts utilized at the begging of SPARK and how that helped RAC engagement in year one (SPARK mailing and all the state listening tours).
  7. Members stated that the RAC meetings are very structured. RAC recommends that the meeting format be reviewed and put the public engagement first in the agenda. Additionally, find ways to have a more interactive and engaging meeting. SPARK is open to changes and meeting the needs of each particular region.



**Service Delivery Area 1  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary September 1, 2021**

8. Public Comments:
  - a. The trends for attendance were due to people switching to virtual meetings and a lot of zoom meetings. Individuals were also tired by the end of the day of a late meeting.
  - b. Staffing issues are a concern for attending meetings for those in the trenches. Currently, it would be challenging to participate in meetings now during the day.
  - c. RAC members ask SPARK for more outreach resources to attend local networking meetings and have the information needed to be ambassadors.
  - d. Technology is often overlooked and often not taken into consideration. Individuals in some rural areas do not have quality access to technology. Additionally, many families are all using devices for school and do not have the bandwidth or capacity needed. Sometimes these evening meetings take a backseat to other family priorities.
  - e. The ARP does have technology and broadband internet incorporated into the plan to help address issues related to technology gaps.
- a. PTQ Incentives Update by Krystal Robinson
  - i. Add Memberships as an option: NAEYC, NAFCC, Indiana Afterschool Network(IAN), National Head Start Association (NHSA), Infancy Onward.
  - ii. Add materials and consumables, including SEL.
    1. Lakeshore ideas for PTQ kits: [Materials 1](#)
    2. Lakeshore SEL Products: [Materials 2](#)
  - iii. RAC members feedback and insights:
    1. Krystal noted that another RAC SDA has asked for more advanced materials or tools to help diversity and inclusion.
    2. Members suggested including a lesson plan, one-pager, or tip sheet to go along with the materials or consumables selected to help programs with execution.
    3. Krystal Robinson also commented that the [Department of Education \(DOE\) released a revised Foundation](#) for public comment.
    4. OECSOL sees an opportunity to continue reviewing and going deeper on the DEI lens for materials and items for play.
    5. Krystal Robinson is welcome to feedback and any additional information. Email: [krystal.robinson@fssa.in.gov](mailto:krystal.robinson@fssa.in.gov)
- b. Staffing Issues
  - i. RAC SDA 1 meeting discussed this in the last meeting. Additionally, there has been a lot of discussion surrounding this topic with Indianapolis.
  - ii. Martha provided RAC members with articles about staffing compensation



**Service Delivery Area 1  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary September 1, 2021**

within the ECE workforce.

1. Article Links
  - a. [https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/blog/compensation\\_matters\\_most.pdf](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/blog/compensation_matters_most.pdf)
  - b. <https://earlysuccess.org/child-care-and-pre-k>
  - c. <https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/FINAL-Preschool-for-All-Plan-July-2020.pdf>
  - d. <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/reports/supporting-early-educator-degree-attainment/>
  - e. <https://www.childcareservices.org/wp-content/uploads/Policy-Brief-Retaining-Educated-Early-Childhood-Educators.pdf>
  - f. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/104344/urban-2020-08-sing-contracts-to-support-the-child-care-workforce.pdf>
- iii. Members discussed the issue of insurance benefits are a significant barrier for many programs. For example, school systems or YMCAs can all offer additional benefits. But many programs cannot compete or provide these benefits. And the idea was to start a coalition and use the collective bargaining power of the group to obtain benefits for the larger group.
- iv. Members also noted that even if the insurance is provided, it is still very expensive for the majority until you raise the pay for the role.
- v. Mike discussed the cliff effect where higher wages often force individuals out on a ledge known as the "benefits cliff." This cliff comes into play when higher salaries result in lost benefits that cost more than the original pay increase. He knows a teacher who will not accept a single raise because of the benefits she would lose.
- vi. Members also noted that fast-food restaurants and the manufacturing industry could provide sign-on bonuses and varying incentives.
- vii. SPARK encourages members to invest time in learning about [American Rescue Plan and the Child Stabilization Grants](#) that are being given to states to invest in programs. A lot of information will be coming soon on how to utilize these dollars best.
- viii. An attendee challenged the group to think about a wide range of employees to recruit. Invest in thinking about attracting another group of people or population of people you have not typically considered to attract—thinking about part-time positions and retired individuals who do not want full-time hours or benefits.
- ix. A member asked if there are grants to support insurance and retirement for employees? Yes, both types of expenses have been approved through the stimulus packages from the ARP and child care stabilization grant.
- x. A member asked for resources and guidance around salary ranges. [INAEYC](#) conducts a workforce study and provides some guidance across the state and region around salary trends. There is also national research on salaries through the Office of Child Care.
- xi. There are 10 Workforce Coordinators across the state that are collecting individual data and are creating workforce profiles. Connect with these individuals and share your story about the challenges you are facing surrounding staffing. In addition, coordinators review and assess each



**Service Delivery Area 1  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary September 1, 2021**

region what initiative they would want to support in each area. For example, insurance is the number benefit for why people are leaving the industry. [Covering Kids and Families](#) is an insurance navigator program to assist with helping the ECE professional and families served to access proper insurance.

- xii. A RAC Member stated the CCDF is a great program, but this program does not help middle-class families. SPARK mentioned the Build, Learn, Grow program does offer assistance to families with higher incomes.
- xiii. Indiana ranks as one of the highest in child care costs. Families spend approximately 20 percent of their income on child care, and most families need it to be around 10%.
- xiv. The ECE industry needs to focus on retention and not just recruitment of staff. Local Workforce Coordinators can help with retention practices.
- xv. Community foundations in a local community establish a fund to provide a scholarship for a scholarship to help pay for child care so they can stay in the industry.
- xvi. TEACH Scholarship components were just updated, and there are a lot of new updates. Contact Lindsay Philpott at [lphilpott@inaeyc.org](mailto:lphilpott@inaeyc.org) for more information.
- xvii. A member stated that many of today's issues are at the policy level, not the people level. There is money available, but it is hard to access the funds. Until Indiana recognizes parity for ECE with K-12, there will be no systemic changes made.
- xviii. Members discussed the CBA program and how the workforce development program gives each person a para test at the end of their program. Individuals take the test and then leave to go work for the school system. Members do not want to be a stepping stone for workforce development. Instead, they want to advocate for their ECE and their program.

**5. Think Tank**

- a. A member commented that there is a cabinet-level position and educator in Dr. Jenner for the first time in Indiana history. Therefore, this member recommends inviting Dr. Jenner as a guest speaker and invite.
- b. Work with Nicole Norvelle and how to utilize the CCDF discretionary funds.
- c. SPARK has initiated
- d. [The Build, Learn, Grow funds](#); however, the funds are temporary. Are programs having issues with facilitating the program? The programs are having issues within the review period getting families approved for the additional funds. The application process, saving the information for potential audits, and the timeframe have been obstacles for some programs.

**6. Public Comment**

- a. No additional public comments.

**7. Agreements and Action Items**



**Service Delivery Area 1  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary September 1, 2021**

- 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. RAC recommends that SPARK look into the functionality of the search feature within the knowledge center.
    - 2. RAC recommends that SPARK continue to do outreach and marketing around the purpose of SPARK.
  - ii. New Business
    - 1. RAC members recommend conducting focus groups and exit interviews with former RAC members about their engagement and attendance.
    - 2. RAC members recommend reviewing the meeting structure for RAC meetings to provide more interactive and engagement opportunities.
    - 3. RAC members asked SPARK to provide additional resources to members to assist them in being Ambassadors for SPARK.
  - iii. Think Tank
    - 1. RAC members recommend that we Invite Dr. Katie Jenner to a RAC meeting.
    - 2. RAC members recommend that we work with Nicole on CCD&F Funds.

**8. Future Meeting Schedule**

- a. To be determined
  - i. Next year's meeting schedule will be determined during the RAC orientation sessions in September.

**9. Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

- a. Members and SPARK want to discuss the American Rescue Plan, which includes the child stabilization grants. SPARK is interested in providing additional business supports to assist programs as they make strategic plans with the additional funding. Also, SPARK would like to receive feedback on the business support training from earlier in the year and other activities that members would like to see, given the diversity of the field and what technical assistance is needed.
- b. Members and SPARK want to discuss mental health and wellness support for staff and families. In addition, SPARK is interested in receiving feedback and information about what members need to support them in this service area, such as assessment tools, screenings, referrals, materials, training.
- c. Members would like an Indiana Early Learning Foundations update.

**10. Adjournment**