



**Service Delivery Area 4  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary, November 17th, 2021**

View the recording of this meeting here: <https://youtu.be/OaL2d5X7gY8>

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

- a. SDA 4 Chair made welcoming remarks orienting attendees 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 the meeting systems and procedures.

**2. Introductions**

- a. Members introduced themselves by sharing their names and professional role.
- b. Members present included: Jennifer Speer, Kristi Burkhart, Barb Newton, Lisa Walter.

**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. Chair and SPARK Project Director, Mike Bachman, summarized the feedback/recommendations made by the Council: annual report, SPARK salesforce data, PTQ cohort, and PTQ incentives. In addition, Mike shared updates related to the action plan identified for each recommendation.
  - ii. 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/>.
  - iii. SPARK encouraged RAC Members to think about ways, tools, or resources to help them be ambassadors for SPARK with their peers.
  - iv. No additional comments or feedback was provided from the RAC Members while reviewing the old business recommendations.
    1. A RAC member requested a social media image with the meeting details to share in newsletters or social media sites.
    2. A RAC member asked if SPARK had a contact list that members could use to invite others.
      - a. SPARK has to be very cautious about how to share contact information. SPARK wants members to lean into their network rather than cold calling.
    3. A RAC member stated they continue to invite SPARK to their community events and conferences. The member said connecting providers to SPARK is a constant effort.
    4. A RAC member asked if RAC meetings could be considered professional development and count towards training hours.
      - a. SPARK stated RAC meetings do not count toward training hours under the current PTQ guidelines. Currently, RAC is considered a meeting because no formal training is provided at the RAC meetings.



**Service Delivery Area 4  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary, November 17th, 2021**

5. A RAC member asked for more information about county-level data.
  - a. SPARK and OECOSL technology doesn't always line up or cross-function. SPARK is working on updating salesforce data.

**4. New Business**

- a. Grant Stabilization Updates and Resources: RAC Members were presented with the following discussion questions around the strengths and weaknesses of the stabilization grant application process.
  - i. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the stabilization grant process up to now?
    1. SPARK provided additional information about the [Build Learn Grow Stabilization](#) grant opportunity.
    2. RAC Members provided the following comments;
      - a. The grant application process was easy.
      - b. The SPARK webinars were extremely helpful—very information for each type of program.
      - c. The technology of the application was superfly, with the automated program information was super helpful.
      - d. A Member asked for SPARK to post the Facebook Lives as a recording on the Learning Lab site.
  - ii. What are the challenges of the stabilization grant process so far?
    1. RAC Members provided the following comments;
      - a. Continuing overcoming the fear and untrusting of the grant program. Some programs thought the grant was too good to be true and could be a scam, so programs are afraid that the grant will obligate them to things they don't want.
      - b. Several child care homes are worried that they filled out the application incorrectly because they have received a lot of money for so many of them. Also, if they receive a message that the application is under review, programs are worried.
  - iii. Grant Resource Information: SPARK Grant Support contact the help desk at 1-800-299-1627, live chat at indianaspark.com, or email at [Help@indianaspark.com](mailto:Help@indianaspark.com).
  - iv. SPARK discussed the following grant support training opportunities:
    1. Option A: Offer in-person regional events that connect grant recipients and financial experts.
      - a. SPARK discussed hosting local/ regional events in the epicenters, where we have seen the most significant number of grant applications submitted.
      - b. These events will be hosted or partnered with local entities such as CCRRs, coalitions, or United Ways in your local community.
      - c. The in-person event goal is to connect local providers and grant recipients with professional experts regarding financial planning, accounting, lawyers, human resources, and other identified experts to answer critical business



**Service Delivery Area 4  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary, November 17th, 2021**

- questions and make strategic recommendations on utilizing these grant dollars.
- d. These are around 2-hour events strategically placed throughout Indiana and the SDA regions.
  - e. SPARK asked for feedback:
    - i. Members agreed these would be super helpful.
    - ii. A RAC member encouraged the peer learning opportunity with providers during these meetings.
    - iii. A RAC Member suggested that SPARK be careful around marketing these events. Programs want the opportunity to learn and not be told what to do. These events need to be a very collaborative approach.
    - iv. A RAC Member highlighted the need for support around record-keeping and documentation.
2. Option B: Require 10 person virtual learning cohorts that leverage peer learning connect grant recipients to experts and business coaches and is segmented by geography, program type, award amount, and chosen expenses.
- a. SPARK stated that one of the requirements for receiving the grant funding is that programs agree to participate in required technical assistance as deemed appropriate by the Office of Early Childhood Education. As a result, this grant requirement will connect programs to coaching with the SPARK Learning Lab for grant implementation and documentation support.
  - b. SPARK has several goals for these learning cohorts. The first is to provide opportunities for providers to leverage industry knowledge and promote peer learning.
  - c. The second is to partner with other experts to build and offer support to providers such as [All Our Kin](#), [First children's Finance](#), and [Indiana CPA Society](#) to support these cohorts.
  - d. SPARK plans to offer these cohorts based on geography, program type, award amount, and various chosen expenses identified at the end of the application.
  - e. These cohorts are looking to start in early January of 2022 potentially. These meetings are about a 3-month time frame and would meet every other week for about an hour.
  - f. SPARK is looking for feedback from RAC members:
    - i. A member stated that the success of this will be on the marketing and communication. Programs are afraid to share personal/ business information. Also, the word "required" could be a huge turn-off for many even though it is true. Overall this option of support will be very helpful.
    - ii. SPARK is working to create documentation resources and tools for programs to use.
    - iii. A RAC member stated that time is a key factor in making these cohorts successful.
    - iv. A RAC member stated how helpful this would be for new programs or new directors.



**Service Delivery Area 4**  
**Regional Advisory Council**  
**Meeting Summary, November 17th, 2021**

3. Grant Resource Information and a master list for Key Resource Links:
  - a. Allowable Expense Guide [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
  - b. Grant Worksheet [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
  - c. Grant Guide [English](#) and Spanish is not yet available
  - d. Grant Requirements [English](#) and [Spanish](#)
  
- b. Mental Health Support Initiatives
  - i. SPARK, Mike Bachman, gave a brief update on two upcoming mental health initiatives. Currently, SPARK is working with the Office of Early Childhood out-of-school learning and thinking about how to best support the mental health and wellness of the early childhood community.
    1. Mental Health Support Initiatives
      - a. SPARK wants to partner with educational institutions and provide in-person observations for classrooms and teachers struggling with managing certain behaviors or any kind of special needs children.
      - b. SPARK hopes these agencies will provide screening when screening is necessary and build and implement a behavior support plan with that teacher to help meet the educational outcomes.
      - c. A licensed clinical social worker group of about 10 to 15 of their peers has the space to talk about their struggles. The groups will last about three months and meet every other week for about 60 to 90 minutes.
      - d. The LCSW can also help support or refer any individual who needs additional support than can be provided within the group.
      - e. RAC Member feedback:
        1. A Member stated that so many programs are really on the verge of closing. Programs are also seeing challenging behaviors of students and families. focusing on this is so important at a time like this for many providers.
        2. A RAC member asked if the trends or concerns that come from these groups' ever be communicated to state licensing and PTQ. There is just so much happening and programs are just stressed and there seems to be a disconnect between providers and state regulators.
    - ii. Professional Mental Health Endorsement Opportunities
      1. The mental health endorsement track will be offered to a teacher or a program leader to obtain a nationally-recognized endorsement in either infant and toddler or preschool and PreK. This endorsement is through a process called reflection supervision—infancy Onward, Indiana's Mental Health America chapter, at <https://www.infancyonward.org/i-ecmh-endorsement/> for more information.
      2. SPARK asked for comments and feedback:
        - a. A RAC member stated how great the training was for staff.



**Service Delivery Area 4  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary, November 17th, 2021**

The training brought a lot of positive energy and has impacted those served.

- b. A RAC member asked if this option would be like cohort training? SPARK said it would be like cohort-style training.
- c. SPARK is putting in the effort to make sure the training is worth the time and that individuals are recognized.

iii. Discussion Questions

- 1. What are some of the mental health needs of early childhood and out-of-school time professionals now?

- a. RAC Members provided the following comments:
  - i. Teachers are exhausted and especially with the staffing crisis.
  - ii. More support for the Special Education.
  - iii. Better training and onboarding during the hiring process.
  - iv. More support on challenging behaviors.
  - v. More options and opportunities for benefits.

- 2. If you could have any mental health support service, what would it be?

- a. SPARK will take the feedback from RAC to help create and form resources and tools.
- b. RAC Members provided the following comments:
  - i. Provide stress relief training and tools for teachers
  - ii. A floater staff member to provide breaks
  - iii. Support for children with challenging behavior
  - iv. Encourage efforts to help bring awareness around the issues the ECE community is facing. This is when child care providers need to leverage their community resources.

c. PTQ Feedback Request

- i. OECOSL creates a PTQ Policy Resource document (FAQs) for programs before their rating visit. What are the 1 or two things you wished you had known before your PTQ rating visit?

- 1. RAC Members provided information in the following comments:

- a. A Member took the checklist and reviewed the information with the teachers. Then, they taught staff how the process works. There are observable standards, documentation, and interview questions, so training all staff members on how the visit will be conducted.
  - i. SPARK commented that resources or tools could potentially be created to help leadership understand what an observable standard is, what evidence and documentation are required for those standards—also, helping prepare all staff for what kind of interview questions might be asked. These tools need to be something that can be accessed at all levels of staff throughout the program.
- b. A Member commented that the rater was there to help. The visit is not supposed to be stressful.
- c. A Member commented that information such as an overview of the process, checklist/standards, also- a way



**Service Delivery Area 4  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary, November 17th, 2021**

To determine if a program could “fast track” to a higher level. An example is one of my newer sites received their Level 2, but the coach/rater mentioned that they could have been a level 3. So it would just be nice to have clear, specific guidelines for each level.

- d. A member said that in-person support and coach were very helpful.
  - i. SPARK commented that the process for coaching and PTQ support has changed. First, a provider must complete the ISAT assessment and qualify for the service to access SPARK coaches.
- 2. Members can email [RAC@indianaspark.com](mailto:RAC@indianaspark.com) with additional information.

d. Future Meeting Schedule

- i. Confirm the following meeting dates:
  - 1. February 16th, 2022
  - 2. April 20th, 2022
  - 3. September 21, 2022
- ii. Meetings are held from 6:00 to 8:00 EST.
- iii. Finalize February Meeting Details (in-person/hybrid or virtual)
  - 1. The RAC members are opting for a virtual meeting for February.

**5. Update from the Field**

- a. RAC Members did not have any additional topics to discuss.

**6. Public Comment**

- a. No additional comments were made.

**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. RAC members requested that SPARK provide RAC meeting social media images to post to their communication channels.
  - ii. RAC members requested that SPARK take the recommendation to allow RAC participation count towards training hours to OECOSL for consideration.
  - iii. RAC Members requested that SPARK post the Facebook live webinars be added to the SPARK Learning Lab.
  - iv. RAC Members requested that SPARK share feedback around the communication after a provider submits their stabilization grant application.
  - v. RAC Members want resources and materials to partner with other businesses and organizations within their community to garner support during this critical time.

**8. Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

- a. The RAC members mentioned no agenda items.

**9. Adjournment**