

Arkansas Early Childhood Commission
April 16, 2013
10:00 am
Minutes

Members Present: Evelyn Bass, Jackie Dedman, Gene Gregory, Nicki Hammontree, Debbie Malone, Dr. Chad Rodgers, Jody Veit-Edrington, Dr. Haley Vo, Rhonda Ahrent, Amy Denton, Shirley Pulliam, Missy Duke, Janice Dancer, Dr. Tracy Tucker, Kathy Pillow-Price, Barbara Warren, and Tracy Streeter (on behalf of Marilyn Chambers).

Members Absent: Patricia Lucas, Diane Green, and Dr. Jill Fussell

I. Call to Order/Reading of Mission Statement

Jackie Dedman recited a quote from President Obama's State of the Union Address. The statement summarized Obama's stance on early childhood. The statement read by Jackie stated: for states that make it a priority to educate our youngest children, studies have shown that students grow up more likely to read and do math at grade level, graduate high school, hold a job, and form more stable families of their own.

Jackie Dedman, acting Chair, called the April 2013 meeting of the AECC to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum of members was present. Jackie Dedman read the mission statement and six goals that were adopted in 1999.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the January meeting were reviewed. Jackie Dedman made a motion to accept the minutes. Gene Gregory seconded the motion. The motion carried.

III. Old Business

Update

Jackie Dedman asked for updates from the following three committees: Nominating, Finance, and Appeal Panel Selection. No updates were given by the commission members.

Jackie noted that three vacancies appointed to the commission for the House, Senate, and Career Ed, are still waiting to be filled.

Introductions of members present were given.

Jackie Dedman stated Tonya Russell regrets she is unable to attend this meeting.

Goals and Measurables Update

Jackie Dedman reported on the Goals and Measurables. A handout with the AECC/Measurable Goals were given to all members of the commission. She discussed that the committee will continue their work in this area. Jackie stated that Tonya would like for a staff member of DCCECE to serve as chair for the committee. Paige Cox accepted the role.

Policies & Procedures/Mission

Jackie Dedman read the AECC's DRAFT Mission Statement from the handout given to all members of the commission. Jackie asked for comments. No comments were made from the commission members.

Jackie Dedman reviewed the changes in bold from the Operational Policies and Procedures: Arkansas Early Childhood Commission Handout given to all members of the commission. She noted from the handout the following underlined words:

-3.0 Composition and Membership of the Commission: The Commission is composed, as prescribed by Act 403 of 2013, of twenty-five (25) members appointed by the Governor.

-3.1 Terms of Membership: 6 members will come off each year. 1/3 will rotate annually.

-3.3 Election of Chairman: A. The Governor initially (July 1, 1989) designated a Commission member to serve a one year term as Chairman.

-3.4 Nomination Procedures: In addition, the nominating committee may choose to submit names for a Vice-Chair person and Secretary.

-5.3 Attendance: AECC members can send a proxy (a person who meets the same criteria with the knowledge and expertise as the Commissioner.) The member will notify the chair that someone is coming to cover for them, if they are absent.

-5.4 Administrative Support B.: The Division staff will continue to staff the AECC's position to fulfill the duties of taking the minutes.

Jackie Dedman asked if the Division would have a rotation for this. Brinda Burr agreed.

-6.0 Standing Committee: The standing committees are: Finance, Appeal Panel Selection, Better Beginnings Appeal Selection and Nominating.

Jackie stated that the underline blank on the back will have today's date written in. She also noted that a description and purpose will be added for the other three Standing Committees.

Shirley Pulliam asked if the proxy would have voting rights. Jackie Dedman said yes they would have voting rights.

Jackie asked for a motion to accept the changes for the Policies & Procedures/Mission Statement. Shirley Pulliam made the motion with the necessary changes. Rhonda Ahrent seconded the motion. The motion carried.

School Readiness Task Force

Tracy Tucker stated that it was evident that people didn't have the same understandings of what it means to have school readiness based on the feedback gathered from the Institute held in November 2012 prior to the Head Start Conference. In February 2013, a taskforce was formed. Tracy noted that other states on are the same journey in determining the appropriate developmental indicators. She addressed that within our state, two documents are circulating. One is considered family friendly and the other one is not. She also stated that K-12 has a different expectation on what school readiness means. Tracy commented that we all must come to a common ground and for the kindergarten indicators of ages 3-5 to become more in line with the common core standards of K-12. Tracy noted that DHS and DCCECE will work together to make the specifics clear and understandable to all. Tracy stated that Laurie Connors Datrost and Sharon Brooks will be at the next School Readiness meeting held at the Head Start office on May 8, 2013. Laurie Connors Datrost works with DCCECE on early childhood issues and facilitated the conversation on the matter. Tracy mentioned that the School Readiness Task Force is a diverse group including counselors, Kindergarten Teachers, Administrators with early childhood programs located inside their buildings, early childhood advocates, and various school districts.

Jackie Dedman stated she would like to inform the local teams at the fall seminar of the upcoming changes and work completed by the School Readiness Task Force.

Barbara Warren asked if a person from Home Visiting was represented in the Task Force. Jody Veit-Edrington stated someone was present on the team for Home Visiting. Jackie Dedman shared that there was also a Head Start representative as well.

ARCECEAM Task Force (Arkansas Comprehensive Early Childhood Education Assessment Model)

Jackie Dedman stated the Task Force has been working for one year. They have been reviewing early childhood assessments for the state. She noted that the research is finalized and they have narrowed the publishing companies down from five to two. Jackie stated next week the two publishing companies will each have a 90 minute interview to determine which will be chosen. The two companies are Curriculum Associates (BRIGANCE) and Teaching Strategies. The role out date to implement

the new state assessment will be July, 2014. Jackie stated that the purpose is to track data. Selection, holding teachers accountable, and professional development are important aspects in this determination.

ASSET Mapping Update

Mark Story stated that a link for the Asset Mapping will be sent out after the commission meeting to all commission members for review. Some issues with the mapping portion were corrected. Jeffrey Joseph, UALR representative, gave a brief demonstration of the project. He covered the two main components of the Map Search and the Community Resource Guide. Parents will be able to search child care facilities by county, city, and/or distance. Visuals and detailed information are given for each facility. Driving directions are also included with the search. Providers will be able to search and refer to parents from a service list in their area in regards to locating counselors, dentists, etc. A video will also be available to demonstrate helpful tips on navigation through the website. The link will also have the opportunity for users to review data over the years. Some examples of the percentages included are teen pregnancy rates and poverty rates.

Mark stated that the ASSET Mapping is a powerful tool. The intent is to update the data quarterly. Mark gave the commission members the opportunity for any feedback they deem necessary to add to the project presently or in the future.

IV. New Business

Child and Adult Care Food Program Procedures

William Lackey stated that two years ago he looked at mapping federal regulations. He then asked himself, "What is our state policy?" It was determined that a policy in writing would need to be created to strengthen and give credibility. William stated he would like approval of the first thirty procedures from the commission members. The Dallas USDA will review the first thirty procedures, as well, and will give their approval of the procedures. Once approval is given by both, it will become USDA CACFP procedures. Shirley Pulliam mentioned her concern on the cost factor. William stated there is no cost increase because the procedures are already being followed. Missy Duke added that it would allow for providers to know what is expected of them as providers. Jackie Dedman asked for a motion. Rhonda Ahrent made the motion to approve the Child and Adult Care Food Program Handbook Policies and Procedures. Dr. Chad Rogers seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Legislative Update

Mark Story discussed the handout given to the commission members on DCCECE Tracked Legislation. Mark stated that we have a team that

monitors legislation. Mark stated that the bills will go in effect after 90 days after session unless the bill has an emergency clause. Mark highlighted the following bills/acts.

-Bill HB1363: To expand the membership of the AR Early Childhood Commission. Note: One member representing the Arkansas Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Council of Deans.

-Bill HB1373: An act for the DHS-DCCECEE-After School Programs Grants General Improvement Appropriation. Note: GIF bill but we have no information at this time. Mark noted this was a Gift Funded Bill.

-Bill HB1492: An act to be known as Carter's Law; To create a comprehensive program of education regarding Shaken Baby Syndrome; and for other purposes. Note: Charges the Department of Health with developing and distributing educational materials regarding Shaken Baby Syndrome. Requires investigative agency to track and report data for children suffering from substantiated head trauma.

-Bill HB1894: To require licensed child care facilities to file a copy of their facilities' floor plans with local offices of emergency management and to allow school districts to file a copy of their floor plans.

-Bill SB210: An act for the DHS-DCCECE appropriation for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. Note: DCCECE budget-passed last Thursday but not yet up on the web.

-Bill SB491: An act to improve the health and stability of AR families; To strengthen voluntary Home Visitation Programs; To amend the powers and duties of the Department of Human Services, and the state child abuse and neglect prevention board; To declare an emergency. Note: "Home Visitation" means voluntary family-focused services that promote appropriate prenatal care to assure healthy births, primarily in the home, to an expectant parent or to a parent with an infant, toddler, or child up to kindergarten entry that address: child development, literacy and school readiness, maternal and child health, positive parenting practices, resource and referral access and safe home environments.

-Bill SB756: An act for the DHS-DCCECE-Pediatric early literacy programs grants general improvement appropriation. Note: GIF appropriation up to \$100,000 for grants to pediatric early literacy programs that partner with doctors to prepare Arkansas' youngest children to succeed in school. Mark noted this was a Gift Funded Bill.

Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional of the Year

-Michelle Eichler, Preschool Teacher (Siloam Springs)

-Darlene Freeman, Director (Springdale)

Jackie Dedman introduced the names for the 2013 Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional of the Year. A handout with brief description of each nominee was given out to all commission members. Jackie Dedman stated the two winners will be asked to join the July commission meeting where they will be honored with an award. Jackie Dedman asked for a motion to approve the two awardees. Chad Rogers

made the motion. Shirley Pulliam seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Prism Award Presentation to Better Beginnings

Deborah Beard honored Micca Burris and Geania Dickey with the Prism Award for the Better Beginnings Progress Report.

Micca Burris encouraged all members to listen to the Better Beginnings ads and suggested feedback from the commission members. Geania Dickey asked for feedback and suggestions as well for the Better Beginnings consumer education piece.

President Obama's Early Learning Plan

Jackie Dedman gave a brief overview of the plan. She stated that \$75 billion over ten years would roll out in 2014. The plan would expand pre-k; funds would be available for the state to support and improve early childhood; it encourages the expansion of a full day for kindergartners; and there would be investments in Head Start as well. The Head Start Partnership Program (0-3) would expand its Home Visiting Program. Jackie also mentioned building success for the Race to the Top and the Early Learning Challenge. The plan would also support the federal child care system.

V. Other Business

Jackie Dedman congratulated Kathy Pillow-Price on her new role as the Home Visiting Network Director. Kathy stated she was thrilled with Obama's plan and has been learning a significant amount within the two weeks she has been the Home Visiting Network Director.

Debbie Malone stated that the National Child Care Aware commends Arkansas, especially the Licensing Unit. Other states license their child care programs but never visit after awarded their initial license.

Geania Dickey urged all commission members present to speak to their State Representatives in regards to reauthorizing CCDF.

Mark Story stated that our ratios are not as strong as some other states because of the cost involved in running a program; however, our licensing unit performs three monitor visits each year. He stated we are far more effective than what national statistics publicize.

VI. Summary/Announcements

- **AR Grantee & Community Roundtable**

Jackie Dedman stated that the first Arkansas roundtable will meet May 29-30, 2013 in Little Rock, AR. She stated the regional office (Dallas, TX) received a TANF grant to work with states on concerns for Strengthening Families. Jackie mentioned that it was not too late to register for the event. Jackie handed out ECE Forum cards to commission members present. She stated the purpose of the ECE Forum is to provide state updates and support between the local and state level. She stated all information approved from the meeting will be posted on the ECE Forum page. The information will also be provided for the webpages of DCCECE and for the Department of Education.

- **AR Grade Level Reading Campaign**

Jackie Dedman stated Head Start State Collaboration Office is working closely with the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, DCCECE, and Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families to launch the AR Grade Level Reading Campaign. The Campaign focuses on School Readiness, Chronic Absentees, Summer Learning Loss, and Parent/Community Engagement. The expectation is for all children to be able to read on grade level by the end of the third grade.

- **AR Mission of Mercy (ARMOM)**

Jackie Dedman gave a brief overview of the program. The program is open to all who do not have dental insurance coverage. Jackie noted that Henderson State University in Arkadelphia will be hosting this event on May 31st and June 1st of this year.

- **Pictures**

Jackie Dedman asked for all commissioners present to take a group photograph after the adjournment of the meeting. She stated that the picture will be posted on the ECE Forum. The picture will inform others on who exactly is advocating and making decisions in the early childhood field for our state.

- Gene Gregory stated that the CB King Program in the Delta had to cancel hospitalization for his staff with Blue Cross/Blue Shield because he could not afford it for his staff. He stated that it is a struggle during these economic times for mom and pop child care programs to lower the ratio. Mark Story said he will have some ideas the next time the commission meets. Mark stated “what does regulation mean with no enforcement”. Debbie Malone stated that Arkansas, according to the Child Care Aware’s report, ranked #1 on oversight. Mark commented that the right picture of Arkansas is not always portrayed correctly. Micca Burris stated that she will be meeting with Grace Reef from Child Care Aware along with David Griffin and Ratha Tracy in regards to working on our state’s education and background checks. Micca mentioned that Child Care Aware knows it is a struggle. Child Care Aware is open for suggestions and would like for us to bring up our standards. Mark stated that care would go underground if the ratios lowered here in Arkansas. He also mentioned looking at targeting specific things like contracting care

with a RFP; however, it could not be enforced because not all children are CCDF.

VII. Next Meeting

-July 16, 2013 at 10:00 a.m.

VIII. Request for Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn by Nickie Hammontree and seconded by Shirley Pulliam. Meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.