

Arkansas Early Childhood Commission
January 20, 2015
10:00am
Minutes

Members Present: Evelyn Bass, Ava Coleman, Amy Denton, Glenda Ezell, Jackie Govan, Diane Green, Nicki Hammontree, Kaye Murry, Matthew Nix, Kathy Pillow-Price, Shirley Pulliam, Debbie Tacket, Gene Roebuck, Jill Fussell (by phone), and Michele Barnes

Members Absent: Rhonda Ahrent, Patricia Lucas, Marsha Masters, Chad Rodgers, Kelley Smith, Marylene Tate, Jody Veit-Edrington, Barbara Warren

I. Call to Order

Jackie Govan called the AECC Conference Call to order on January 20, 2015 at 10:03 a.m. A quorum of members were present. Jackie read the AECC's Mission statement and shared some positive quotes to set the stage for the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes from October 2014

Jackie Govan asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2014 meeting. A motion was made by Gene Roebuck and seconded by Glenda Ezell. The motion carried.

III. Old Business.

1. Standing Committees:

There were no reports from the Finance Committee, Better Beginning Appeal Selection, or the Appeal Panel.

2. The Nomination Committee (Nikki Hammontree) brought forth two nominations for offices with a beginning service date of July 2015. Jody Veit-Edrington was nominated for chair and Amy Denton was nominated for Co-Chair. A motion to accept the nominations was made by Gene Roebuck and seconded by Kaye Murry. The motion carried. Nominations were sought for the open Secretary position. Kathy Pillow-Price has been nominated but her term of service concludes this year. No additional nominations were made at this time.

3. Better Beginnings/QRIS:

Vickie Matthews provided a written report (see attachment) showing continued growth for Better Beginnings sites. Vickie also provided a

document showing how many **Better Beginnings** facilities are in each county. Centers continue to be encouraged to move up levels to increase quality care. It was stated that they hope to move to a more seamless system in which entry into licensing will begin at Level 1 in the future.

4. ECE PD Registry Update:

Paige Cox presented provided a handout (see attachment) and gave an update. The launch date keeps moving but they are working on planning for upcoming marketing and training and technical assistance needs. Justin Foster is working on the IT issues replacing Micca Burris who left in December. Hope is for a July 2015 full implementation date.

5. Statewide Fatherhood Initiative:

Jackie Govan provided a handout (see attachment) and update on the Statewide Fatherhood Initiative and announced that former Arkansas Razorback basketball coach, Coach Sidney Moncrief has agreed to do all the statewide trainings. She acknowledged the GIF funding that is helping to make this possible.

6. Early Head Start/Head Start/Kellogg Foundation Update

Jackie provided an update and a handout (see attachment) on the EHS/Head Start programs in Arkansas that listed new goals, plans, and strategic plans. Three strong areas of focus are family engagement, revamping the Arkansas Early Learning and Development Standards, and reviewing the current Arkansas Kindergarten entry assessment.

IV. New Business

1. Designation Renewal EHS/HS Grantees:

Jackie shared that only 1 program is listed on the Designation Renewal list identifying EHS/Head Start programs that will be up for re-competition.

2. Commissioner Term Limits

Jackie Govan reviewed the list of commissioners that will rotate off the commission by completing their terms of service in July.

3. 2015 CCDF Reauthorization

Ivory Daniels stated that we now have more flexibility in designing policies and that effective January 1 each CCDF child will have a one year

authorization and Level 3 facilities will have 2 year authorizations. He reiterated the desire is to place children into quality programs.

4. DCCECE Staff Updates

Arlene Rose updated the Commission on DCCECE staff changes which include the departure of Micca Burris. Justin Foster is serving in Micca's capacity in the interim. Justin has worked for DHS for seven years. In addition, Crystal Jones will change roles and will begin working in the ABC unit in a finance position.

5. Child Care Licensing Revisions

David Griffin gave a comprehensive update on the licensing revisions and reported that no individuals spoke against the recommendations in either committee meeting. He did report that one piece was pulled based on legal advice – the fingerprint requirement. They are looking at an initial enforcement date of May 1 and will do TA before the roll out. He also discussed pending legislation to except programs with Tort Liability community from having to obtain liability insurance.

6. Behavioral Health Plan

Nikki Burrow delivered a presentation and gave a handout (see attachment) on the new state strategic plan for supporting early childhood mental health. Her presentation included an overview of the Executive Summary handed out with reference that this plan is cross discipline, cross agency, and across the state.

7. Legislative Update

Tonya Williams stated that the legislative session is now underway.

8. EHS Child Care Partnership Grant

Tonya Williams announced three organizations out of five are in negotiations with the Feds and is very excited that one is UAPB. The three locations identified for receiving the grant funds include: Jonesboro, Hot Springs, and Pine Bluff.

9. Arkansas Preschool Development – Expansion Grant

Tonya Williams reported about the \$60 million dollar federal Pre-K Expansion grant to expand and improve services to unserved four year old children. Expansion and improvement grants will go to high need areas (see attachment).

Tonya also encouraged everyone to partner with Home Visiting, districts, specialized services and existing ABC programs.

V. Summary/Announcements

Jackie passed out flyers for the 2015 Arkansas Head Start Institute in Celebrating 50 Years of Empowering Children and Families and encouraged everyone to attend on March 17-20, 2015. Dr. Becky Bailey, developer of Conscious Discipline will be a key note speaker. Jackie also shared another flyer for a literacy event: “Little Readers Rock” sponsored by the Collaboration Office and Junior League of Little Rock. It will be held on Saturday, April 11, 2015 at the Hillary Rodham Clinton Children’s Library from 10 am- 2 pm. This event is free for everyone to attend.

Jackie also introduced Victoria Stender as the new State Parent Coordinator.

The Honorable Gene Roebuck passed a handout (see attachment) to encourage Commissioners to become proactive in being involved with legislation. He feels now is the time for everyone to let their Senators and Representatives know just how important early education is for all children and the expenses that are incurred by parents in the state.

VI. Request for Adjournment

Jackie Govan asked for a motion to adjourn. Gene Roebuck made a motion to adjourn. Ava Coleman seconded the motion. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

Next Meeting

- ❖ ***The next meeting will be on Tuesday, May 19, 2015, at Pediatrics Plus. The location is 1900 Aldersgate Road, Little Rock, AR 72205.***