



MEETING NOTES

Region 51 Action Council Meeting

Location: Birth to Five Illinois Building

Date & Time: Thursday, March 9th, 2023 from 6-8 pm.

Council Members Present: LeAnn Bell, Apryl Edwards, Jill Larson, Kayla Miller, Laura Pickrell, Laurie Rhodes, Tracie Sampson, Connie Shugart, Lindsay Sleade, Violet Wiker, Savannah Wilken.

Council Members Absent: Mitch Baker, Christine Craddock, Kendra Day, Lori Harrison, Kevi Jackson, Ya'Shika Reed, Jamar Scott, Debbie Tiskos, Doris Turner, Lajewell White, and Wendy Williams.

6:00 pm: Regional Scan Discussion, Community Agreements, Ice breaker, Data Review, Smart Start Statement, and Future Meetings Discussion. (20 minutes)

Data Answer Sheet: What is your best work accomplishment with children ages 0-5?

- *Any time we can connect families with children in that age group to medical resources and community reports.*
- *Being able to offer high-quality child care and education to families in the Lincoln Land region. I've been in my program for 25 years!*
- *I saw an old client who remembered me and because of my support and things, I talked with her about she was able to breastfeed for 6 months, got a house, was employed, and was in school. She felt that because she had the support of someone coming to her home and talking to her during pregnancy that she was able to set those goals and work towards those things and be successful in her parenting journey.*

Notes: As members arrived, Ashley provided them with a copy of the Regional Scan for edits. Questions were asked and answered. Ashley went over the community agreements and asked the icebreaker question. She then invited the council to our Ribbon Cutting! Ashley did a brief overview of publicly funded ECEC Slot gap data and the 100% / 200% Federal Poverty Level that the council requested at the last meeting. She also provided a brief overview of the CCAP data.

- *All families got approved in 2020 for CCAP.*
- *Families weren't getting denied due to being essential workers for CCAP.*
- *I have way more families receiving services now. (regarding CCAP)*

Ashley introduced Smart Start Illinois and explained how it goes hand in hand with the work that Birth to Five Illinois is doing. Discussion around this proposal took place. A member is on one of the state committees and has mentioned a concern stating the Early Childhood Education and Care Programs (License Centers) and



Preschool For All Programs need to work like community collaborations to give families what they need in order to continue work. Ashley went on to say how conversations like these were important to have on the Council in order to communicate these concerns to elected officials and state leaders. Ashley then went over the agenda for future meetings.

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: Regional Scan edits provided by the council

6:20 pm: Needs and Recommendations (20 minutes)

Data Answer Sheet: What additional needs do we have locally or in the state? What additional recommendations do we have locally or in the state?

Notes: Ashley guided the council to their folders which had both the local and state needs and recommendations cheat sheet. She asked them to add to this list on their data answer sheet.

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

6:40 pm: Early Childhood Collaborations, Sangamon Heart/IRIS, and Continuum of Learning (20 minutes)

Data Answer Sheet: Are there areas around the region where there are no community collaborations?

- *Why does Chatham screen their kids? Why do 186 and Head Start screen their kids? Why don't we have just a screening for all pre-k kids to then place that child in the correct ECEC program based on their eligibility to ensure all slots are filled appropriately? Not sure how we do this but other areas in the state are doing this successfully.*
- *When faces change around the table, collaborations change around the table. It's not intentional, rules change, goals change and the collaboration gets lost.*
- *It's still up to us as individuals to build relationships in order to have success in collaborations.*

Notes: Ashley defined Early Childhood Collaboration as organizations, agencies, and individuals who come together to form early childhood community collaborations.

Ashley played a video for a visual on early childhood collaboration. She invited the council to look at Illinois Action for Children's Collaboration Directory when they have time. A council member who is a partner of Sangamon Heart went over what Sangamon Heart/IRIS is. *It's a group that serves our community and operates in a system called IRIS which is Integrated Referral Intake System. It's a quicker way to refer families instead of faxing or waiting for a callback. The long-term goal is to maintain access to IRIS, they've received additional funding for the next 3 years. With this funding, they want it to look like a more centralized intake system - so getting*



referrals and distributing them. Another member asked how they get involved in this. It was stated to contact the local leaders listed. *This is good for organizational communication to find the best referrals for families because they're constantly updating their system.* Ashley introduced The Continuum of Learning. This project focuses on education across the lifespan, from cradle to career. It is currently inactive due to COVID but it did amazing work.

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

7:00 pm: Priority Populations, Refresher on Demographic data, ISBE Homeless, IEP, LEP, Household Language data, Focus Groups Discussion, (40 minutes)

Data Answer Sheet: Are programs in place to support migrant, and immigrant refugee families?

- *In the college world, there are sometimes 8 different languages represented in one classroom. We don't think about diversity when it comes to the University world.*
- *We need to find a bilingual teacher, but how do you find a bilingual teacher that speaks all languages?*

Notes: Ashley introduced priority populations and informed the council about the focus groups within this population that we have had to date. She refreshed the council on demographic data. Ashley went over ISBE's 2020 Kindergarten data on homeless, IEP, LEP, and household language. The members were invited to review their McKinney Vento cheat sheet for further clarification. Ashley explained the homeless count in Menard and Sangamon Counties. Questions were asked and answered. Ashley briefly went over the focus group information gathered from Western Dreamers. This is our welcoming center for families from Guatemala, Venezuela, and any other country. This year already they've touched 23 children and that's a large amount in 2 months. They are seeing more children from Guatemala and it's challenging for them because there are 25 different dialects. Ashley also did an overview of the focus group with Hispanic Women of Springfield and IL Migrant explaining the services they provide. They experience some of the same barriers with their families. Lastly, she went over the information gathered from Early Head Start. They are seeing lots of families experiencing homelessness/unhoused and also serving more Hispanic and African children.

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

7:40 pm: Data Sources Reminder, Foundational Trainings Reminder, Family Council Report, and How to Connect (20 minutes)



Notes: Ashley reminded council members of their access to data sources and also the Foundational Trainings. Amanda gave a brief Family Council report. She shared a recommendation from a Family Council member. They believe it would be beneficial to have in place a resource training/class part of their continuing education curriculum if you're a teacher. It would be mandatory and taken as often as the mandated reporter and shaken baby training.

Decisions made: N/A

Next Steps: Send a reminder email for the next meeting on Thursday, April 13th, 2023.