

# MEETING NOTES

## Region 26 Action Council Meeting

**Date & Time: April 26, 2023, 6:00pm-7:45pm**

Council Members present: Christy Ackman, Elizabeth Adler, Cara Erude, Micah Garnett, Angela Hale, Paul Larson, Lacie McGraw, Angeal Vera, Sharon Warning

### **Start Time: Welcome & Ice Breaker**

Notes: n/a

Decisions made: n/a

Next Steps: n/a

### **Start Time: Regional Findings**

Notes:

- The Action Council was presented with the findings topics of the Regional Needs Assessment.
  - Travel
    - Action council stated the following based on the findings for the topic of travel.
      - Adams County is right under our county region and has an abundance of home care providers (why don't we)
      - One Action Council Member stated that she lived in Quincy 20 years ago and she had to drop out of college because they couldn't find quality child care, but upon moving to Canton she found quality care quickly.
    - The average travel time for our region is 22 minutes.
      - Action Council stated the following.
        - I thought it would be a lot longer but it makes sense that it is that much considering it takes 20 minutes to travel to the next biggest city.
        - If you work in Peoria you are going to find care in Peoria, (if you travel for work then you are more likely to seek care in that town)
          - Employment and how many jobs are available here compared to more populated cities.
          - Action council members would like the data on How much support we have for the working population in the area (unemployment rates.
    - Lack of Support/Trust.
      - Action Council was presented with evidence from our findings and quotes from interviews, focus groups, and council members. They stated the following
        - I see a lot of people that don't want to use public assistance because there is a "bad stigma" about using it. People don't want

to share their income with PFA programs to see if they meet another qualification.

- There is a lack of knowledge for the parents on what is out there. Program wise
- Sometimes as an educator, we don't even know where to send the parents for the needs that they have.
- One of the issues is the amount of legwork that a parent has to put in to get to where they need to, to receive the care or programs their children need, and most of the time that extra effort it takes might be all they have left in them.
- One member stated they had to look up every resource and it took hours to have them listed and most times the parents didn't even look at them.
- One quote from focus groups was "What we really need is a social worker to have the resources and do the follow-up with parents"
  - Action council stated the following based upon that comment.
    - When you mention Social service or social workers they automatically think of DCFS and the fear associated with that.
    - In your everyday life, you won't have interaction with social workers, so if it is a personal or learned/ heard experience then it can make it a learned negative situation.
    - Social workers are perceived as Reactive not Proactive
    - If you were to change the name of social workers it would attract more people to use that service.
    - One member stated that it is hard enough to get social workers in the area, and wondered if there was a way to get someone that wants to help a job without having a social worker degree.
  - We presented that ROE26 saw the need and is looking to fill that gap
    - Action Council stated the following.
      - How is it being advertised to the community?
      - Do caseworkers know to ask what other needs you have that we can help with or will that family need to see multiple people/agencies to fulfill that need?
  - Special Services
    - Action Council was presented with the findings for Special Services and stated the following.
      - It's hard for parents to get diagnosed with autism.

- There is a year-plus waitlist in the area for diagnosis appointments.
    - Schools can't issue IEPs without diagnoses, but diagnoses are taking a year or + more to obtain, making the gap/need for services a lot longer.
    - Private child care facilities don't have the services they need to properly take care of children with special needs.
  - There is a gap between EI and age 3-5 depending on if you can get into preschool
    - Our area has a long list for Preschools.
- Slot Gap
  - Action council was presented with the findings for the slot gap.
    - We have an adequate number of children, but do we have enough slots for children with special needs?
      - We have so many children with special needs do we have enough slots for those children?
      - For our program, we have a great report with EI and PI and we hold spots for those special needs slots needed.
      - We have over 74 children on our waitlist at all times, and by the time we call them for a slot more times, they have already found another spot.
    - Action council wanted to know the number of IEPs
      - We were able to show the graph with the number of IEPs for ages 3-5 broken out by counties.
- Regulations/Qualifications.
  - Action council was presented with the findings for regulation/qualifications.
    - We stated to the Action Council that we would like some assistance with the findings for Regulation/qualifications and the action council stated the following.
      - What I can tell you is trying to hire someone in the childcare field with a bachelor's degree is confusing because even though they qualify for a subs license with the school and a lead teacher for PFA, they won't qualify for a lead teacher in a child care setting.
      - The Action Council would like the Data on how many Licensed qualified teachers relinquished their licenses in the last 5 years and if we could find out why.
      - We are being beaten out by the school district with more pay for the school district we can't compete with.
      - Someone needs to look at the qualifications and pick one because it is not unified.

