

SICC MEETING MINUTES

Truman Building, Room 400

April 3, 2009

Members Present

Pam Thomas

Melinda Sanders

Tec Chapman

Molly White

Cori Tharp

Wendy Witcig

Joyce Sims

Leslie Elpers

Becky Houf

Kathy Fuger

Amy Kessel

Melissa DeStefano

Kathy Daulton

Carolyn Stemmons

Members Not Present

John Heskett

Kathy Quick

Donna Cash

Carissa Mattern

DESE Staff Present

CJ Hubbard

Michele Schall

Stacey Ismail

Tina Lawson

Charla Myers

Marcy Morrison

Judy Goans

To review copies of handouts referenced in the minutes below, go to the following website:

<http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/SICCpage.html> and click on “Handouts” for the April 3, 2009 meeting.

Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions – Wendy Witcig brought the meeting to order at 8:40 and introductions were made.

First Steps Updates:

Financial Report – CJ Hubbard presented the financial report in Dale Carlson’s absence. The “A” report shows that First Steps remains in good financial health thanks to the financial support of the legislature (see Report ‘A’). DESE did draw down family fees and private insurance reimbursement the middle of January. The December 1 child count increased from 3,450 in 2008 to 3,784 in 2009, which is a 9.68% increase, so some increase in direct services is expected. A review of the “B” report (see Report ‘B’).

The preliminary FY2010 budget information shows that the House has perfected the Budget House Bill 2, but nothing is final from the Senate at this point. HB 2 provides for all core budget requests as we asked for them. First Steps asked for an increase to the core in the amount of \$2,500,000 for FY 2010. The House reduced that increase request to \$1,150,000 which will come from a new fund called the “School First Elementary and Secondary Improvement Fund”. (Prop. A gaming funds) In addition, HB 2 reflects

\$7,790,925 in “federal stimulus funds” to be expended over two years. Half of this amount (\$3,895,462) is reflected in the FY2010 First Steps budget. The planned FY2010 First Steps budget amount of \$33,719,769 reflects a 10.2% increase over the FY2009 budget. First Steps funding for FY2010 appears to be fairly solid at this point barring any reductions from the Senate. We do not anticipate the Senate reducing First Steps funding. A question was asked regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds and if DESE receives half now and half later how do we plan to utilize the additional \$8 million dollars and how will that money will be used. DESE has been receiving clarification and guidance from OSEP as to how the money can be used and the guidelines. DESE will have more information and details at the July SICC meeting.

Compliance Update - CJ Hubbard discussed the *Memorandum of Understanding Between Early Head Start/Head Start and System Points of Entry/Local Educational Agencies*. DESE sent two Listserv messages out in March regarding the Memorandum. The first message was from CJ notifying everyone that the memo was ready and explaining how it was developed. Within 10 days after the first Listserv another Listserve message was sent out from Heidi Atkins Lieberman in which she indicated that 10% of children enrolled in Early Head Start need to be children with disabilities. There are a total of 13 Early Head Start programs across the state of Missouri. Both of these messages are posted on the DESE website.

Part C State Annual Performance Report (APR) for 2007-08 – CJ presented a PowerPoint presentation on Indicator 8. DESE developed a document to share with the SICC today regarding Indicator 8B. State regulations say that in Missouri, unless a First Steps parent gives written consent, we do not give the Local Education Agency (LEA) any information on that child. At age 2½ the service coordinator will ask the parent for their permission for the LEA to be involved. If the parent gives their permission, the LEA is invited to the transition meeting as long as there is a release of information. First Steps can then provide information from the child’s educational file.

OSEP interprets the federal regulations that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows for basic contact information be provided to the LEA, with or without parent consent. Therefore, OSEP says our state needs to provide that information to every LEA regardless of whether the child is going to transfer to Part B services. DESE requested some advice from the SICC on the subject of whether we should have an “opt out” policy or if we should provide this information regardless. Contact information such as the child’s name, date of birth, and the parent contact information will be provided to their LEA. In our most recent data sent to OSEP 71 out of 75 parents gave their consent to release their child’s information. Only 4 parents did not want the school district to be notified that their child was exiting Part C services. DESE believed that we were in compliance 100% because our state regulations show that we only send the information if the parent consents. A state regulation change will need to occur to make this change. The majority of states automatically release the information on the child’s name, date of birth, and parent contact information, yet there are few states that are implementing an “opt out” policy. Our state regulations currently assume that families don’t want their information sent to the district unless the parent requests that the information be sent. OSEP and FERPA say that the assumption is they do want the information to go to the district unless they “opt out” and say they don’t want the information shared. The question to the council is: should we automatically send directory information to

the school district, or allow parents to “opt out” of providing directory information to the school district? After a discussion the SICC recommended to DESE that they would choose the “opt out” policy.

Kathy Fuger, Director of Early Childhood and Youth Programs with the Institute for Human Development at the University of Missouri Kansas City, distributed folders with disability resource information printed on them to the group. Kathy stated that the folders are free and there is no limit on the number you can request. They can be used for conferences and you can insert your own information into the folders also.

SpecialQuest – CJ reported on the program SpecialQuest and presented a DVD. State and local communities, including Early Head Start and Head Start programs and their community partners, collaborate to provide high-quality, inclusive services for young children with disabilities and their families. This work is supported by embedding the SpecialQuest approach, materials, and resources into professional development and service systems. Missouri was one of several states selected to have a SpecialQuest leadership team. Several members of the SICC are part of SpecialQuest. SpecialQuest has an extensive training library and will share the materials that they have developed. These training modules are free on their website and can be downloaded. Any community could use them to have a meeting with people within their community who serve children age birth to 5. At the state level the program is in need of parent participation. The Missouri group would like the SICC to endorse their definition of inclusion which is as follows: *Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services include (1) access, (2) participation, and (3) supports.* Wendy asked for a motion to endorse this definition of inclusion. Kathy Fuger moved to endorse this definition by the Missouri Special Quest leadership team. Becky Houf seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DAYC PowerPoint presentation - Stacey Ismail and Michele Schall

Each SPOE office was asked to report on the use of the DAYC in their region.

- Region 10 reported that they are using the DAYC for all children referred for developmental delay. They indicated that most providers like it and express that it is faster to determine eligibility. The barriers they have encountered have been in receiving the protocols back after they receive the actual report. Sometimes the reports don't make sense until they receive the protocol. School districts are concerned that they don't get the standardized score.
- Region 9 reported no barriers. Training has improved their consistency in administering the DAYC. The DAYC does seem to help children who might have otherwise slipped through the cracks.

- Region 8 reported that it is working well and all their teams are trained to administer the DAYC. It seems to be easier to get reports back using the DAYC. Sometimes the provider will go to the initial evaluation and have a PT or OT give their input for eligibility.
- Region 7 has recently completed the DAYC training and they are still in practice mode. All the providers seem to like it and a variety of disciplines use it and can determine eligibility quickly.
- Region 6 has been using it for a while and evaluators are happy with it. They find that children are qualifying in areas that we haven't seen as much, such as social/emotional. One of the challenges in using the DAYC is how to interpret it with very young children.
- Region 5 – no one to report
- Region 4 stated that they have been using it in the Northwest part of their region for quite a while. They have a group of providers who have embraced it and a group who don't feel comfortable in doing all domain areas. The quality of the right up varies, which is a training issue. Some of the providers feel that they are spending enormous amounts of time writing up all 5 domains but they are not being reimbursed for their time to write the report. A suggestion that some providers have had would be a flat fee for the DAYC, not per hour but a fee that would cover being in the home and writing it up. Most of the providers and school districts like having the DAYC.
- Region 3 stated the number of people trained to administer the DAYC has increased so the service coordinator has more evaluators to choose from. One of the issues they have encountered is some of the providers were administering the tool in a more structured manner than in a natural manner.
- Region 2 reported they have been using it since October and it has been well received. They have had an issue with scoring and it affected one child that had to be removed from the program because they were no longer eligible for First Steps.
- Region 1 stated that they began using it early on and the service coordinators like the speed of results and being able to report quickly on eligibility. If the child is found not eligible they are able to quickly find the family some community resources. Some of the negatives encountered were the results reporting narrative write up is not as high of quality in the write ups as they used to see. Some providers have complained that they have not been adequately compensated for a quality evaluation summary (time spent). It was recommended that there be some type of infrastructure for ongoing training for providers.

Stacey stated that there are still some challenges in using the DAYC but overall things are going well.

Conferences, Miscellaneous –

Marcy Morrison and Charla Myers recently attended the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention conference in Texas which was a mix of state meetings and informational sessions. During the conference they gained a better understanding of early hearing detection as it relates to Part C. During the state team meeting they discussed how First Steps and early hearing detection work in our state. The Missouri Newborn Hearing Screening Program is trying to identify children, through First Steps, who are currently receiving First Steps services. Currently, if a child does not pass the hospital hearing screening they are referred to a pediatric audiologist. If the parent does not follow up with the pediatric audiologist the child is considered lost in the system. The Newborn Hearing Screen Program is trying to locate those

children who may be receiving services from First Steps. If so, the parent is asked to sign a release so the information can be released to the Newborn Screening Program.

MOHEAR is a pilot program in Missouri that works in partnership with the Newborn Screening Program. MOHEAR works with the First Steps service coordinators for the first 45 days to provide available options for a child with hearing loss. Through this program children with hearing loss are identified and their information given to the Newborn Screening Program. They hope to eventually expand the program statewide.

Tina Lawson attended the 4th Annual Autism Intervention Conference in Columbia sponsored by the Thompson Center. Charla Myers and Stacey Ismail, representing First Steps, presented at the conference. The conference included a wide range of sessions with close to 100 presenters. A checklist has been devised by Cardinal Glennon to screen children as young as 6 months for autism. This screening is free and will be offered statewide. It is incorporated into a pilot project that Cardinal Glennon has with the Parents as Teachers program.

Copies of the quarterly Provider Connection for Spring 2009 were distributed to the SICC. The brochure was e-mailed to providers and also posted to the DESE website.

Joicey Hurth and Anne Lucas from the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC) will be coming to Jefferson City in a few weeks to talk about Early Intervention Teams (EIT). The majority of the stakeholders who attended the last stakeholder meeting in 2007 have been invited back for this discussion. State staff has also been invited to the meeting as well as providers who are practicing or piloting the team approach across the state.

Pam distributed a memo that was sent out this week announcing the entities awarded the new SPOE contracts, beginning July 1, 2009. There will be a change in contractors in 4 regions of the state. DESE is working hard to ensure a smooth transition for the families and children involved with no interruption in services as identified in their IFSP. No award was given for the Region 3 contract so the current contractor will continue services on the renewal that is left on their current contract. Region 3 will be re-bid. DESE does not anticipate any problems with the current Region 3 contractor continuing services.

Wendy acknowledged that because of the SPOE re-bids some of the current contractors will not be returning after July. On behalf of the SICC she commended them for their work and commitment to children. This will be a significant change and it is important that accurate information be given to the provider community. Pam stated that DESE will post frequent updates on their message board to keep providers up-to-date.

Member issues – Leslie Elpers stated she has received several complaints from providers regarding the reimbursement received for write-ups and assessments. She has also received criticism regarding the current 60 mile windshield rule. Many providers travel 50 miles on the country roads that take 1½ hours to drive, but they do not receive the extra reimbursement. There also seems to be some confusion regarding the No Provider Available report capturing families that have a provider available but still choose to go to the clinic. When recruiting the special purpose centers seem to throw this data off. DESE will check with the SPOEs regarding the No Provider Available question.

Wendy stated that today during the working lunch the SICC members will break into subcommittee groups. There will be a subcommittee group on program issues and one on policy making and the SICC members are free to join either subcommittee. The RICC members present will meet and discuss effective child find activities and the SPOEs present will discuss barriers to meeting the 45-day timelines.

Subcommittee reports –Policy making - Molly White was asked to represent the policy making group. This group requested that each SICC member bring to the July SICC meeting a brief description of how their office touches the lives of the First Steps kids. They also discussed efforts to recruit parent members to the SICC. A suggestion was made that a routine recruitment piece be added for the service coordinators to present to First Step parents during the transition meeting. The group also discussed the fact that the governor's office did not appoint the parent members that were sent to his office as possible SICC members because of their lack of diversity. Carolyn Stemmons said that Head Start will be holding a meeting next week and she will ask that they add parent participation to the SICC to their agenda. The group also discussed the definition of a parent according to the federal regulations. CJ will e-mail the definition of parent to the group. Pam will check to see if it would be possible to reimburse parents who attend the SICC meetings but are not SICC members.

Subcommittee reports –Program - Cori Tharp spoke representing the program issues. Their group discussed provider reimbursement issues. The group also discussed helping family's transition not only out of First Steps but into First Steps. They discussed ways to network families who have children with similar disabilities.

Subcommittee reports –RICC - The RICC group reported back on effective child find activities. They reported that they are all doing similar things such as working with Parents as Teachers and the community to spread the word about First Steps. They are also reaching out to the medical community and making an effort to return and visit on a regular basis. There was concern expressed for the areas that will see a change in SPOE contractors and how that will affect the child find activities. One group had recently created a postcard flyer that they send out to the community asking if anyone would like them to give a presentation on First Steps. They also discussed how to have successful parent participation on the RICC. One of the groups had a First Steps family night in which they made several personal contacts with various parents at that event. Many people are interested in being involved with the RICC but they don't have available child care or they can't get off work.

Subcommittee reports –SPOE Directors - Niki Clover reported for the SPOE group on the barriers to meeting the 45-day timeline. She responded that the SPOE offices have come a long way in working on meeting the 45-day timeline. Most of the delays that they now encounter are parent delays. They also discussed how to handle problems such as staff illness in meeting the timelines. The SPOE offices are using the service coordinators to fill in for a staff person who is out sick. Niki also stated that provider delays have gone down since they have been getting the DAYC back quickly.

From last SICC meeting - Molly White informed the SICC members that the draft report that the department of insurance prepared for the SICC in January was condensed into a final one page report to the legislature. Some of the ideas that were contained in the original report have not been forgotten but the piece that went to the legislature was basically just the facts. The policy making committee might want to look into changing some of the language in the insurance piece, possibly a topic for the next

subcommittee meeting. The department of insurance is also working on the enforcement of the insurance coverage mandate in the private insurance piece.

DESE has drafted a change to the Parental Rights Statement with the ten rights bulleted at the top of the page. This was discussed at a previous SICC meeting as a way to increase the number of people who respond to the First Steps survey that they have received their Parental Rights. This change would require a change in our state plan. The form would need to be in English as well as other languages.

Other - The SICC orientation was held Thursday 4/1/09 and those who attended expressed that it was very beneficial to SICC members.

Pam Thomas expressed concern regarding the SICC membership and terms ending. DESE wants to make sure that we don't have a large group going off at the same time. Some members are in their first term so they wouldn't necessarily be going off at this time. We would still have two provider openings at one time. Pam stated that she wanted to bring up the topic because we are getting closer to the time frame. DESE will check to see if those whose first terms will be ending will be interested in another term.

The SICC requested that if there are items that will need their advice in the future DESE should note that on the SICC agenda.

Wendy asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Melinda Sanders made a motion to adjourn with Leslie seconding the motion. Meeting adjourned.