

SICC MEETING MINUTES

Truman Building, Room 400

October 16, 2009

Members Present

Pam Thomas

Melinda Sanders

Molly White

Kathy Quick

Donna Cash

Lisa Robbins

Joyce Sims

Leslie Elpers

Kathy Fuger

Amy Kessel

Cindy Reese

Carolyn Stemmons

Members Not Present

Judith Muck

Tec Chapman

Judy Finnegan

Senator Scott Rupp

Cori Tharp

DESE Staff Present

CJ Hubbard

Dale Carlson

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 October 16, 2009 meeting.

Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions – Kathy Fuger, in Wendy Witcig’s absence, brought the meeting to order at 8:40 and introductions were made.

Approval of the SICC Minutes – Kathy Fuger asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the July meeting, with changes. A motion to accept the minutes, with changes, was made by Molly White and seconded by Melinda Sanders. Motion passed.

First Steps Updates:

Financial Report – Dale Carlson reported on the “A” Report and said that it is early in the year, but there are not a lot of surprises at this point. Data from FY03 has been added to the report, per the request of the SICC, for comparability. The budget for direct services was increased from \$20.4 million in FY 2009

to \$23 million in FY 2010. We have expended 30% of the current direct services budget to date. Comparing 2010 planned revenue to planned expenditure, we would project a \$500,000 shortfall for the year. We are not concerned about this shortfall at this point unless we start to see a significant increase in program expenditures. We do have some carry over Federal Part C dollars available in 2010. These carryover Part C Funds will be expended in 2010.

The "B" report reflects expenditures for direct services by SPOE. Direct service costs are trending upward. Some of this upward trend could be attributed to increased child count as well as increases in provider mileage reimbursement due to higher mileage rates. A question was asked if DESE could find out what treatments (therapies) we are spending our money on. Dale stated that historically, Speech Therapy (ST) is the most commonly used therapy. Occupational Therapy (OT) and Special Instruction (SI) are second. A question was asked if there was a big increase in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services. Dale said that we have not seen a big increase in ABA services to date.

The FY 2011 projected First Steps budget is slightly over \$35 million. Current core appropriation is \$30.3 million. Due to the state revenue/budget situations, the department did not forward a \$5.9 million appropriation request for 2011. This will become an issue in 2011 and will likely require a supplemental funding request for 2011 in the 2012 appropriation/budget process.

Dale distributed an additional report which the SICC requested at a previous meeting regarding the cost involved in building the private insurance and family cost participation collection process and revenues generated by both. DESE spent approximately \$582,438 to build the current system. The Central Finance Office (CFO) handles all the insurance and Family Cost Participation (FCP) monthly billing at a cost of \$8,000 per month (\$96,000 annually). We have seen increasing rates of return in both private insurance and FCP billing from FY07 through FY09. The three year total receipts for insurance/FCP billing is \$4,263,400.

Compliance Update - CJ stated that the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) recently visited Missouri for a verification visit. This was Missouri's first visit from OSEP since December of 2003. In preparation for the OSEP visit, DESE completed a document called the CREAG (Critical Elements Analysis Guide). This document was submitted to OSEP before their verification visit. The visit went very smoothly and OSEP was able to leave the state a day earlier than planned. OSEP complimented the DESE compliance staff on the improvements that had been made to their system since the last OSEP visit in 2003. They stated that Missouri was well prepared and the things that Missouri provided were impressive with a keen sense of program requirements. OSEP was also pleased that DESE partners with Head Start and Department of Mental Health (DMH) and that there is communication between state agencies and local communities through their Regional Interagency Coordinating Councils (RICCs). They felt that the technical assistance provided by the area directors was wonderful and they were impressed with how we utilize feedback from the field when making changes to our system. Some of their concerns had to do with our SICC membership but we will discuss that later in the meeting today. These were all preliminary comments that they made but their concerns could equate to a Corrective Action

Plan (CAP) for Missouri. They were also concerned about our 80% threshold for compliance, which is what we hold SPOE agencies accountable for. They expect 100% compliance but we at the state level believe if SPOE agencies can provide documentation and proof that they are at an 80% level then we don't give them a CAP because we don't believe it is pervasive. Reasons for not meeting 100% compliance could be new personnel or a misunderstanding. Pervasive problems exist if they have less than 80% compliance. Those were their 2 main concerns.

OSEP was extremely impressed with the DESE Improvement Monitoring, Accountability, and Compliance System (IMACS) and the webSPOE system stating they were both a national model. They indicated that the system produces consistent documents and that the data is used for improvement planning and evaluation of effectiveness. Concerns that they expressed were how quickly the families receive the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) from the time the service coordinator enters the finalized IFSP until it is actually printed and mailed to the parent. CJ noted there is no state or federal regulation to show the timeline for when the parents should receive them. DESE would like to see this done in 10 days, but we are hearing from the field that this may not be enough time to build a quality IFSP.

The last system reviewed by OSEP was our fiscal systems and OSEP indicated the strengths with accountability in the SAM II system for multiple funding streams. The Central Finance Office (CFO) works with DESE to ensure the appropriate use of funds and other funding sources. One of the concerns that OSEP had was the suspension of services if a family does not pay their FCP fee in 90 days. OSEP wanted to know how many families that impacts and are their rights being denied. OSEP had previously signed off on our policy because it was in our state plan. FCP on a national level is not utilized so there is very little federal guidance. OSEP was concerned about what is done to help the families who have financial issues. CJ noted that DESE explained that the First Steps system accommodates those families with hardship requests. The families are informed at the time they sign up for services that if their financial situation changes a request for financial hardship can be made.

DESE will not receive the final report from OSEP for at least 8 weeks.

SPOE Monitoring – Virtually all SPOEs, except one, had one CAP for not meeting 80% on one or more of the standards and indicators. Many of the CAPs have already been accomplished. All of the SPOEs did an excellent job and overall received good reviews. We do anticipate the SPOEs resolving these issues quickly through trainings and with the help of their area director. The information from the monitoring is shared during an exit interview at which time each indicator is examined for the individual SPOE office. DESE is currently looking at the same SPOEs, which are 1, 4, 6, 8, and 9, for monitoring timelines. These reports will go out next week.

Early Intervention Teams (EIT) – Pam Thomas discussed the EIT page on the DESE website and explained where information is housed. DESE is working with Kathy Fuger and her staff at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) to develop 3 or 4 brochures to help explain the EIT model to folks such as one for families, providers, and the medical community. They are working to develop a brochure for families found eligible for First Steps and a public brochure that is similar but more general. These brochures are in addition to the First Steps General Informing brochures.

To accompany this brochure will be a script for the service coordinators to use with families. Once the brochures have been completed they will be printed and shipped to the SPOEs and also posted online under the EIT webpage.

Early Intervention (EI) Examiners – The Early Intervention (EI) Examiners memo dated August 28, 2009 was distributed to the group. This memo explains that providers who have successfully completed a DESE-sponsored training will be enrolled as “EI Examiners” and the amount of their reimbursement will be \$200.00 to administer the DAYC, write a report using the DAYC Evaluation Summary, and submit the report to the SPOE. Pam met with the Board of Healing Arts (BoHA) in March regarding their concerns about authorizing the DAYC as an Occupational Therapy (OT) or Physical Therapy (PT) evaluation. Pam explained that the DAYC is not a discipline specific evaluation. It can be administered by a variety of individuals. The BoHA was pleased with that explanation. Providers who are trained are identified by the SPOEs. When the SPOEs need providers in their area the area directors will travel to their areas for training.

Member Issues – The SICC is awaiting approval from the governor’s office on several state agency nominations to the SICC. These positions are required to be filled by our bylaws and OSEP. Due to the resignation of Carissa Mattern, the SICC is down to one parent member. The governor’s office has a possible candidate for a parent position from the St. Louis area. The SICC bylaws only designate a chair and co-chair and don’t designate what to do if those two can’t attend. According to Robert’s Rules, a chair can appoint someone to preside over a meeting in their absence. There is no state or federal requirement for any position except the chair. Additional positions on the council would be up to the SICC to decide. Missouri made the decision that a co-chair was needed and that person needed to be a parent. Pam suggested that the SICC might want to look at the bylaws to expand positions and maybe the council needs to vote who the chair can appoint. It seems that the bigger issue is that we can’t keep parents on the board and also the challenge of minority parent membership on the SICC. Several parent nominations to the governor’s office have been submitted in the past. A suggestion was made that a brochure be developed to explain how the SICC works to families. Molly has started working on this brochure. The brochure could be used during the transition process for families moving from Part C to Part B. The policy subcommittee will look at the recruitment and referral process during their working lunch today. Wendy would like to be part of the chair/co-chair position type discussion in a possible conference call. Lisa, Pam, and Kathy would also like to participate in this call.

The subcommittees broke for their working lunch.

Program subcommittee – Leslie presented to the group on behalf of the program subcommittee. They discussed the First Steps timeline starting with 1998 and where we have come to through 2009 with teaming. A suggestion was made that DESE could celebrate the anniversary of redesign. If anyone would like to help with a brochure or has any pictures or stories from the last 10 years, please send them to Pam.

Policy subcommittee- Molly reported that the policy subcommittee discussed the bylaws with an eye to ensuring that the SICC could increase the number of parent slots on the SICC and the creation of a recruitment tool for parents. Molly distributed a document that she drafted which explains to parents what they can expect as an SICC member and what the parents can expect from the SICC. The document received great feedback from the SICC members and a final draft will be sent to Wendy before the next SICC meeting. The committee discussed the length of the SICC terms and how that could be a detriment to parents who would like to be on the SICC but don't want to commit to 4 years. There is no state or federal rule regarding the required length of the term. It was discussed that if a parent's name is sent to the governor's office for appointment that the parent should be informed throughout the process of the status of their appointment. A question was asked if a parent who was not officially appointed to the SICC could attend the meetings and be reimbursed for their expenses. This may require a change to the SICC bylaws. A suggestion was made to invite Mayme Miller from the governor's office to attend the next SICC meeting. Pam will check on this. A suggestion was made to also invite a parent to come and speak for 5 minutes to the group about being a parent with a child with disabilities. The SICC would like to discuss this with Cori to get her feedback. A question was asked as to what type of conferencing equipment would be available to use for SICC meetings. DESE will check on this.

ARRA Monies – As requested by the SICC at the July meeting, a document was distributed that explained Missouri's plan for the ARRA money. In a year when the state didn't ask for a funding increase for the First Steps program, this money provides a back-up plan to pay for direct services. DESE is planning to use the monies for the activities outlined in the handout. Almost half of the money received is put in place to spend through this next year. DESE did begin funding about 10-12 workshops for providers who are serving children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Those will happen during this fiscal year. It has also been mentioned that this type of workshop could be done for visually impaired children as well. A question was asked if there are trainings taking place could we approach DESE to see if it would be something DESE could pay for from the ARRA funds? Pam asked that this information be sent to her to check on. If there is a particular topic DESE might be able to develop it. We discussed finalizing the IFSP and the DESE will present a sample IFSP at the next SICC meeting. Lisa Robbins volunteered that she could give a 30 minute talk regarding autism for children birth to age 3 during an SICC working lunch. The Thompson Center worked with the area directors to create the initial 3 modules for the autism training series and they are in the process of putting them online with a video feed from Dr. Janet Farmer. DESE will provide an update on the modules at the next SICC meeting in January.

RICC Subcommittee – The RICC subcommittee discussed child find activities.

SPOE Subcommittee – The SPOE subcommittee discussed how they cleaned up their No Provider Available (NPA) report for their areas.

Old Business – The group was asked how they wanted their state agency information on the DESE website. The initial request was to summarize what each agency does for children with disabilities. In addition to the SICC board contact information, this could be distributed as well. It was suggested that a link to each state agency office be included.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Lisa Robbins. Joyce Sims seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:30.