



Strong Start Coalition Quarterly Meeting Notes October 8, 2020

Attendees: Perry Papka, Sarah Vanover, Thomas Williams, Amy Neal, Amanda Flannery, June Widman, Amanda Wright, Mike Hammons, Kathy Ruetman, Jaesook Gilbert, Jean Saborwahl, Terry Daniels, Cory Gadansky, Laurie Wolsing, Sandra Woodall, Catherine Lowe, Melanie Llontop, Angela Brandt, Jessica Cain, Dawn Thompson, Nancy Lovett, Patrick Ryan, Eamonn Fitzgerald, Emily Keely, Mary Kay Connolly, Amy Cooley, Bruce Hager, Rebecca Parrish, Jill Jacobi-Vessels, Vicki Yonts, Helen Carroll

New Strong Start Coalition Members Introduced:

- Mary Kay Connelly, Read Ready Covington Early Literacy Initiative, Covington
- Terry Daniels, Executive Director, The Foundry, Bowling Green
- Melanie Llontop, Education Director, The Foundry, Bowling Green
- Vicki Yonts, Program Manager, Strategies Opportunities Advantages and Resources (SOAR) Early Childhood Program, Muhlenberg County
- Thomas Williams, Policy Advisor, Office of Special Education and Early Learning

Strong Start Policy Agenda, 2020 (attached).

- Consistency important – maintain collective voice around elements important to the early childhood system, birth through kindergarten.
- Next year, policy sub-committee to make more substantial adjustments to these priorities.
- More specific thinking around funding levels next year, when pandemic is not raging.

Report from Kentucky Department of Education, Thomas Williams, Policy Advisor, Office of Special Ed/Early Learning:

- KDE is helping districts implement flexible plans for in-person or virtual learning to address student and staff health and safety and quality teaching and learning.
- Please email any COVID-related questions regarding state education guidance and requirements to: COVID19@education.ky.gov

Report from Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Sarah Vanover, Director, Division of Child Care:

- Secretary Friedlander announced another sustainment stipend going out to all registered, licensed, certified childcare programs – these are remaining funds for CARES Act. Programs have to sign contract by December (contact Division of Child Care for capacity/enrollment guidelines for receipt of stipend).
- In addition, a \$2500 stipend is now available for new Family Child Care providers for start-up costs (contact Division of Child Care for requirements to receive stipend).
- One set of regs now in open comment – 922 KAR 2120 – Health and Safety regs. Opened and updated to meet requirements of Senate Bill 45. Open comment until end of December.
- Emergency regs still in place – increased max. group size to 15.

Report from Governor's Office of Early Childhood, Amy Neal, Executive Director:

(See Attached Presentation.)

Key Messages:

- Presentation includes high level information about the \$10 million Preschool Development Birth through Five Grant that led to the creation of a five-year strategic plan. Early Childhood Development Council is using as roadmap to create a united early childhood system for larger and sustainable impact.
- Data sharing partnership with vital statistics to have unique child identifier – will track individual child from birth to kindergarten entry.
- Updated Standards: working on a timeline, attempting to secure funds. There are components that have been updated, waiting on funding for other components (approaches to learning and technology).
- For additional information about the Preschool Development Grant, visit the GOEC website: <https://kyecac.ky.gov>

KET – Amanda Wright: Launching a virtual training series – Thursday afternoons. Technology use in electronic classrooms, resources from Sesame Street, etc. Check KET website for more information and learn at home resources.

Learning Grove – Mike Hammons: Need additional funding to stabilize the system. Kathy Burkhardt, former superintendent of Erlanger-Elsmere schools has joined NaviGo as Executive Director.

Boone County Schools – Kathy Ruetman: Preschool Early Learning Center had to be closed. In that space now – Boone County Preschool Achievement Center. Five classrooms of preschool students. Partnering with Learning Grove to create an Early Learning Center at Ignite Institute.

NKU – Jaesook Gilbert: After Thanksgiving, everything virtual at NKU. Spring Break days will be spread out through the spring semester (no full week). Concerned about long-term impact of current teacher education due to COVID impact.

The Foundry – Terry Daniels: New Executive Director of the Foundry.

4C – Cori Gadansky: Get PPE out to providers, working on FCC project to recruit new providers, 4C is one of the partners with Greater Louisville Head Start, sharing resources, trying to get several programs up and running as Head Start programs.

Childcare Health Consultation – Catherine Lowe: Working with local health departments with COVID response, helping centers with questions.

The Foundry – Melanie Llontop: New Director of Education.

YMCA of Central Kentucky – Angela Brandt: Two childcare programs currently running and multiple NTI programs running.

Appalachian Early Childhood Network – June Widman: Agency transitioning from Eastern Kentucky Childcare Coalition – split off the childcare food program to New Beginnings Child Care Center. June retiring at end of year so in process of hiring new director. Have some strong candidates.

NKY Community Action – Laurie Wolsing: Head Start/Early Head Start - started serving children last week in person. Three options of center-based, home-based and virtually.

ECLearn – Sandra Woodall: ECLearn is the new CCR&R in NKY. Starting first CDA class next week. Partnering with local Workforce Investment Board to help train dislocated employees around childcare. Recruiting family childcare providers and connecting businesses to help them understand how they can be part of the childcare needs solution.

Division of Childcare – Jessica Cain: Expanding High Quality Family Child Care in Kentucky – waiting on recommendations from Louise Stoney, Opportunities Exchange, regarding shared service/network, looking for businesses to participate in pilot for Business Partnership Model, continuing to work with the FCC project regional pilots for some extra funding/mini grants.

Nancy Lovett: Five of the regional training centers working with teachers on virtual and hybrid learning options. Working more with families during COVID – hybrid learning.

Lakeshore Learning – Patrick Ryan: Partnered with GOEC on At-Home Learning Kits. New distribution center in Midway nearing completion – contact Patrick for a tour.

Fayette County Public Schools – Eamonn Fitzgerald: First Five Lex partnering with organizations to support families during COVID.

Department for Public Health – Emily Keely: Revamping training to virtual, launching in January. Those are Connect the Dots, Kentucky Strengthening Families, Parent Cafés, and Family Thrive.

Read Ready Covington – Mary Kay Connolly: Their work includes many community partnerships and focuses on Campaign, Call to Action, and Resources. Building home libraries, given away over 7000 books this year, partnered with lunch program, interactive work during COVID.

Erlanger-Elsmere, Early Childhood Community Collaborative– Amy Cooley: Shout out to Preschool Partnership Grants and partnerships like United Way and Sandy Woodall and Strong Start collaboration for support during COVID.

Public Life Foundation – Bruce Hager: Funding a pilot program called Back on Track, supporting children in first and second grade to keep on track for third grade reading.

Berea College, Partners for Education – Rebecca Parrish: Family engagement focus. Creating “getting ready for kindergarten” kits with local partners for families. Summer activities were virtual. Transition from school-based support to on-line.

University of Louisville – Jill Jacobi-Vessels: Organizational Leadership and Pathways to Degrees in Early Childhood; renewed ability to offer director’s credential at U of L. Grateful for continued focus of Strong Start. Connecting with families still at home.

Next Strong Start Meeting: January 14, 2021