



MEETING SUMMARY January 27, 2017

An official public *meeting* of the New Jersey State Interagency Coordinating Council was held on Friday, January 27, 2017, at Sunny Days Early Childhood Development Services in Manalapan, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order at 11:02 a.m. by Catherine Colucci, Acting Chair and declared a quorum was present.

ATTENDANCE – Maintained by the SICC

WELCOME – Catherine Colucci, Acting Chair

Ms. Colucci welcomed attendees. At her request, SICC members and public members introduced themselves and identified their connection with early intervention.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of November 18, 2016 was made by Kim Peto and Michelle Christopoulos. Following discussion, the chair suggested the council consider amending the minutes, “to represent the fact that Joyce Salzberg offered to co-chair a potential committee that the SICC is considering forming in response to the sustainability presentation”. Motion was made by Kim Peto and Rosemary Browne. The amended minutes were unanimously approved.

LEAD Agency – New Jersey Department of Health (DOH)

1. Procedural Safeguard Report (PSO)

The PSO received zero (0) formal complaints since the last SICC meeting. The number of SFY 2017 informal requests to date total 3,095. Most of the informal complaints are related to missed services, services not being provided timely or services that were disrupted. A single allegation of Fraud, Waste, Abuse continues to be investigated. Beth Lohne and Barbara Massey King continue to support the efforts of the PSO seeking guidance from Nashon Hornsby, Chief of Operations and Assistant Commissioner Lisa Asare.

2. Central Management Office (CMO)-Request for Proposals (RFP) Update

The RFP was awarded on January 1, 2017 to Public Consulting Group (PCG). The data system will undergo significant changes, additions, and enhancement as a web-based application. It is expected that system design and development will be completed in 8 months which means the revised early intervention management information system should be up and running by the end of September 2017. The SICC will be updated over the months ahead.

3. NJEIS Part C Provider Competency Standards

The standards have received approval from the Commissioner of Health, Cathleen Bennett and will be posted on the DOH website. Dr. Brito, Deputy Commissioner, was also very complementary of the process and plan to use the provider competencies for an EIP competitive request for application.

4. OSEP Federal Application for FFY17

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has issued the Federal application for 2017 which is due April 1, 2017. DOH will announce a sixty-day (60) public comment period during February. No changes in

policy are being proposed so hearings will not be conducted. The Federal budget is operating on a "**continuing resolution**" through April 28 that essentially holds **fiscal year 2017** spending levels at their fiscal 2016 amounts. Therefore, OSEP has instructed states to prepare the FFY 2017 Part C application using the FFY 2016 funding allocation

5. **Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Audit**

The Governor has appointed a special task force within OMB to conduct audits on programs with high and increasing state appropriations. The audit is to identify potential additional revenue and cost saving efficiencies. The audit includes a thorough review of all aspects of NJEIS including Part C regulations and requirements.

6. **State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR)**

A detailed review of the FFY 2015 Annual Performance Report (Indicators 1-10) was presented to the council. Upon motion by Michelle Safrin and Michelle Christopoulos, the Council agreed to accept the DOH report and provided certification for submission to OSEP. Indicator eleven (11), the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) will be submitted by April 3, 2017.

7. **Procedural Safeguards Modules**

NJEIS has recently received requests from early intervention provider administrators to reopen the procedural safeguards modules for specific practitioners. This is unnecessary since the procedural safeguards modules remain available to practitioners after they have successfully completed the modules. Agency administrators can use the modules to facilitate and/or require practitioners to review the modules on a regular basis such as once per year as refresher training. However, the module assessments are not scored after the initial completion but can be used to test or conduct self-assessment of knowledge.

SICC COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. **Early Learning Challenge:** Barbara Tkach, Chair, inquired about scheduling a presentation for the SICC from Early Head Start. The acting chair responded that she has reached out but has not been able to connect with the Head Start contact. It was agreed that a phone conference will be held prior to the next SICC meeting.
2. **Family Support:** Rosemary Browne, Chair, attended the APR steering committee and communicated to the council the positive reaction of the Part C Steering Committee to the family and child outcome documents which were created by the family support committee and are currently distributed to families.
3. **Service Delivery:** Joyce Salzberg, Chair, reviewed minutes of the ongoing committee work toward developing recommendations for an EIP competitive request for application.

Old Business:

1. Follow up of fiscal sustainability presentation: Terry Harrison spoke with the DOH Ethics Officer, Rachel Hammond and shared information regarding potential conflicts of interest that may occur with SICC members representing providers while developing and/or presenting recommendations that may benefit provider agencies. Ms. Hammond reminded Council members that she is also their Ethics Officer and is available to members to discuss potential conflicts of interest. She also provided guidance that the SICC could consider forwarding the presentation and request from the Alliance for the Betterment of Citizens with Disabilities (ABCD), Early Intervention Program Association (EIPA) on to the Commissioner without specifically endorsing the position and/or recommendations of the EIPA.

Discussion: Does SICC want to pass all or some items to the DOH Commissioner or consider the formation of an ad-hoc committee to address the issues? Catherine Colucci stated that she has done some research

since the last SICC meeting and has reflected on the role of the SICC. She proposed that the topic of the role of the SICC may be appropriate to discuss at annual retreat. Question to be considered: Is it the role of the SICC to take on matters such as was requested by ABCD?

A motion was presented by Joyce Salzberg and Michelle Christopoulos to develop a cover letter to accompany the ABCD power point presentation and forward it to the Commissioner which was approved by the council. Catherine Colucci, offered to draft the letter and send it out to the SICC for review and approval. Upon approval, she will forward to the Commissioner.

New Business

1. Joyce Salzberg expressed the need for a communication process among council members. Catherine Colucci, suggested that the topic of developing a formal communication procedure should be discussed during the upcoming retreat on July 21st. Additional agenda items for the retreat will be discussed during the SICC meeting on March 17th. Sharon Ringwalt may be asked to facilitate the retreat as she has expertise in the role of the SICC.
2. Terry Harrison reported that the Administrative Committee will be working with her to identify a temporary support person for the SICC. The committee will work on a job description and share a draft with the council during the March meeting.

Public Comment

1. Ije Okpokwasili, Hudson Milestones EIP inquired as to how families are informed of their rights. Ms. Harrison responded that all early intervention service coordinators and EIP practitioners have ongoing responsibility to inform families of the rights especially as they apply to specific events including evaluation, assessment, IFSP meetings, consents and dispute resolution.
2. David Holmes, commented that the management information system is really needed and it is wonderful to see that move forward. He was also pleased to hear that the Assistant Commissioner and Commissioner office gave favorable responses to the Competencies Standards. He expressed disappointment that the Council is not moving forward with recommendations presented on fiscal sustainability at the previous SICC meeting and reported that ABCD would consider moving forward with contacting the Commissioner.
3. Barbara Carey, TheraCare EIP offered to assist the Council to further their understanding of issues related to the ABCD presentation.
4. Patti Carlesimo, LADACIN EIP reported that all agencies struggle and try to identify ways to increase agency revenues. It is a constant struggle to sustain programs at the current fee for service reimbursement rates. Catherine Colucci encouraged the ABCD group to meet directly with the State.

Adjournment - 1:46 pm

Upon motion to adjourn from Joe Holahan and Michelle Safrin and unanimously carried.

Approved – 3/17/2017