

L2Q Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

Date and Time:

December 12, 2019, 10:00 a.m.— 3:00 p.m.

Place:

Kansas Association of School Boards 1420 S Arrowhead Rd. Topeka, KS 66604

Present:

Karen Beckerman, Rachel Anno, Nichelle Adams, Meg Roggero, Michelle Allen, Jackie Counts, Rebecca Clancy, Kelly Cain-Swart, Dawn Flores, Patty Peschel, Nis Wilbur, Lisa Jeanneret, Jill Ladd, Deb Crowl, Jevan Bremby, Isabel Johnson, Jenny Welch Buller, Lindsay Sayre

Absent:

Lori Steelman, Tiffani Blevins, Corinne Carr, Heather Staab, Hope Adame, Lori Steelman, Sandra Kimmons, Leadell Ediger, Lisa Chaney, Kristen Heuer, Amy Meek, Kelli Roehr

Welcome and Overview

Rachel welcomed the group, reviewed the agenda, and began the meeting.

Introductions of New Staff Members

Rachel introduced new QRIS staff members:

- DCF has welcomed Michelle Allen to the QRIS Program staff team as the QRIS Supports Manager.
- Child Care Aware has welcomed Rebecca Clancy as the new Links to Quality Program Manager for CCA.

Pilot Update and Highlights

Child Care Aware

Update:

- Providers have finished the Family Partnerships Link.
- In September, CCA convened focus groups in their Learning Communities to gather feedback on the Program Leadership Quality Indicators revisions. They confirmed, overall, that they feel their voices are being heard.
- Pilot providers are now working on Learning & Development, which utilizes the GO NAPSACC self-assessment tool. So far, there has been positive feedback from providers on the experience of working on this link.

GO NAPSACC demonstration:

Kelly gave a demonstration of the online GO NAPSACC self-assessment and planning tool.

- Kelly shared that she and other community consultants have had a very positive experience using this tool. It allows providers to see where they currently fall on the best-practices continuum, offers ideas for how to move forward, and allows customization of recommendations and goals.
- Kelly showed the group an administrator's view; this view allows Kelly to see scores, activities, and goals for all the programs in her Learning Community. The tool also allows administrators to add notes or technical assistance to providers' sites as needed.
- GO NAPSACC offers tips & tricks and trainings for providers, and technical assistance for administrators.

GO NAPSACC Q&A:

Can you run a report on all programs? For example, can you see how many programs have taken each of the self-assessment segments, what goals they are setting, etc.

- Yes. Administrators have access to data either from their Learning Community providers only or from providers state-wide.

Are other providers in Kansas using it, or just L2Q?

- Kelly is not aware of anyone else in Kansas using GO NAPSACC other than our providers.

How much does it cost?

- We have free access right now. Rachel has looked into costs. Statewide access costs about \$25,000 per year with no limits on the number of users.

How long do we have free access?

- One year, beginning October 2019.

Are any other states using this tool?

- Yes, several. No two states appear to be using the tool in exactly the same way.

GO NAPSACC Discussion:

Deb Crowl and others noted that providers like this self-assessment much more than BAS/PAS. One reason is because GO NAPSACC is strengths-based – it highlights the things providers are already doing and shows ways they can improve. Support and appreciative inquiry are infused within the tool.

Kelly's Learning Community suggested that L2Q's website should look and function like GO NAPSACC. They like the suggested goals, the ability to edit or change goals by the user, the space for notes, and the overall look and feel of the website. Jevan noted that throughout the pilot, the ability for providers to customize their experience has been noted by leadership repeatedly as a priority. GO NAPSACC is a useful model for how this can be done.

Learning Tree Institute

Update:

LTI recently conducted the Family Partnerships end-of-link survey.

- They also took the opportunity to survey providers regarding the portfolio review process and how they feel about the feedback they have received so far.
- Feedback on the Quality Improvement Plans and Community Consultant support was very positive.
- Trending concerns were related to the required number and cost of events.
- Providers appreciated the strengths-based approach to getting feedback, although some providers would have preferred more specific directional feedback.

Dawn invited Advisory Group members to view copies of the reports which she brought with her today.

DCF

Update:

- The PDG continuation grant application was submitted. 23 states will be funded, and results should be back by the end of the year. We requested \$10M per year for 3 years, including specific funds for L2Q to assist this program continuing moving forward.
- Meg's last day is this Friday (12/13), and DCF will work to fill her position soon. There is also an open position with DCF for Kansas Early Head Start.
- Nikki asked Patty Peschel to give an update on the Workforce Development Advisory Group. The next meeting is in January. Patty welcomes anyone who has not attended and who is interested to contact her for more information. They have three main areas of focus for the early childhood workforce: core competencies, career pathways and quality improvement, and a professional development registry. For the latter area of focus, the group is looking into developing a blended database system at the state level, which could potentially integrate the professional development registry with the state's QRIS, CCR&R, and other child care systems.
- Rachel gave a brief update on the future role and purpose of the QRIS Advisory Group and noted that we'll return to this topic at the end of the meeting. See below.

Implementation Planning Update

Rachel introduced Jevan for updates on Implementation Planning so far.

Objectives

Jevan reviewed the objectives we had in mind as we have progressed through the Implementation Planning process so far. He explained that we've focused our planning efforts so far on making decisions for the initial rollout implementation.

Timeline

Jevan presented the working timeline we have established during Implementation Planning.

Patty asked for more information about the transition phase. Jevan shared that our vision for the transition time between the pilot and the initial rollout is to accomplish the following:

- Utilize process evaluation data to revise documents & restructure the data system
- Engage current providers to avoid losing momentum
- Build up the infrastructure, and
- Prepare for initial rollout.

Learning Communities and Community Consultants

Jevan shared that we have been discussing Community Consultant caseload and evolving role. We've identified a need to refine and update the community consultants' role, and this will assist in the caseload decision. Current capacity is low, but there are factors that could have a positive impact on this, which we are continuing to explore.

Eligibility

Jevan reviewed the eligibility requirements in place for the pilot and presented the proposed eligibility requirements for the initial rollout phase. Programs like Head Start will be targeted for later expansion phases.

L2Q Entry

Jevan reviewed the entry process graphic (see the backside of the implementation planning overview handout). Details of what and how are yet to be determined. This is our current proposed roadmap for how programs will enter Links to Quality.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Process

Jevan presented the plans we have for the process of continuous quality improvement of providers.

- He shared that we have considered the possible benefits of prescribing timelines for Link completion as well as allowing programs to set their own timeline in the QIP. This is still being discussed. We hope to make the QIP a living document that is updated continually.

CQI Discussion and Q&A:

Will providers will be required to progress through links in a specific order?

- This has yet to be determined.
- Deb Crowl shared that for her program leaders, the Program Leadership link was a valuable wake up call to the importance of learning and implementing business practices. She suggested that keeping Program Leadership as the first link would be beneficial.
- With a rolling enrollment and loose cohorts, having groups going through the same links at the same time would be helpful.
- Eventually we will have statewide involvement, and keeping loose cohorts on the same track will become impractical. This brought up an important question: How will we facilitate smart growth?

- Jevan noted that we have discussed allowing time for self-study before programs pursue links. This would allow for “membership” in L2Q, including participation in Learning Communities, and would require participants to apply or somehow signal their intent to pursue a link. This could make L2Q more accessible, especially to providers who are unsure if they are ready to pursue links. Isabel noted that both new programs and well-established programs may be surprised to find out how much is involved in the Links to Quality program. Providing time for self-study allows self-paced quality improvement.

How will the initial rollout be promoted?

- Marketing and communication decisions are upcoming, awaiting a few more decisions about the structure and post-pilot model.

What’s next?

Jevan shared our areas of focus for upcoming Implementation Planning meetings:

- Quality Improvement Plans
- Program Eligibility (Initial Rollout)
- Engagement (Transition Phase)
- Community Consultant Role
- Required vs. Elective Evidence
- Link Time-Limits
- Portfolio Review Process
- Methods of Recognition

Overall Implementation Planning Discussion:

Jevan opened this presentation up for questions and discussion. Key points and takeaways are summarized below by topic (*italicized*). The Implementation Planning group will refer back to these at future meetings.

Program vs. provider

We’ve been building L2Q on the idea that we will work with and award Links to programs, not individual providers (directors, teachers, etc.). What happens if a center director leaves the center?

- How will renewal work?
 - Suggestion: 3-year renewal *plus* a review if there is a change in program leadership.
- We need a thorough plan for provider turnover.
- Perhaps Links should not be awarded only to programs?
 - Individuals attend Learning Community meetings, create and submit evidence, etc.
 - Suggestion: Hybrid model – recognition goes to both. Which elements stay with the center? Which ones go with the director?
 - Suggestion: L2Q avoids working with a single individual. Instead, L2Q works with board members, multiple individuals (including owners, upcoming directors, lead teachers, etc.).
 - Potential future blended workforce development registry could provide a mechanism for both programs AND individual providers to be recognized.
- Suggestion: Provide an orientation or training for incoming directors to existing L2Q programs.
- Suggestion: Programs revisit Self-Assessments periodically. Only during renewal? After every change in leadership?
- What does a Link really mean?
 - Does the value of the Link disappear when the director changes?
 - Does the Link itself have enough inherent value to offset the restrictions of the L2Q program?
 - The #1 predictor of quality is the adult-child interaction. With turnover, we can’t guarantee quality. We aren’t here to guarantee quality, but to facilitate quality improvement.

Incentives

We have not reached a decision about the specifics of incentives provided to member programs. These must be sustainable, must have value to programs and providers, and must include and add to recognition from L2Q.

- Will they receive incentives for membership, achievement of self-set goals, improved Self-Assessment scores, trainings taken (including L2Q mentorship training?), or only for completing a Link?
- There are costs associated with improving quality. We need to work to avoid passing the cost of high quality child care on to the families.
- DCF hopes to move to a tiered reimbursement system for DCF providers. This would provide an incentive, but exists outside of the L2Q organization itself.
- Inherent incentives include: Learning Communities (peer support; technical assistance from Community Consultants), recognition for earning Link(s), practical achievement in improving the programs, pride and satisfaction in their work.
- Other suggested incentives: Cash, group insurance.
- Suggestion: ask providers what they want. We could survey current L2Q providers for their input.
- What does a Link really signify?

Messaging/Marketing & Communication:

Our marketing and communication strategy needs to remain focused on these goals: to inform/educate the public, and to acknowledge/recognize childcare programs.

- The goal is to inform/educate and acknowledge. Therefore, Marketing & Communications should focus on consumer education and program recognition.
- Warning: Messaging that L2Q recommends or guarantees quality will decrease community understanding about L2Q and will create liability for L2Q. L2Q programs are not “high quality” programs; rather they are programs which “continually pursue quality improvement.”
- Membership in L2Q (prior to earning a link) can demonstrate a program’s commitment to quality improvement.
- Research needed: What do parents say reassures them about the quality of their childcare provider?
- What will a Link mean to the community? To parents? To others in the child care field? How will we communicate this?

National Accreditation:

How does NAEYC fit into our planning process?

- Could provide model for incentives
- Should NAEYC accreditation be somehow recognized in L2Q? Professionals who have worked to become accredited are high quality. Should they receive presumptive links? Should there be a special Link just to recognize accreditation?

Lunch

12:00pm-1:00pm

Indicator Revisions Update & Discussion

Program Leadership End-of-Link Survey: Indicators

Dawn provided a brief review of provider feedback received on the end-of-link survey for Program Leadership:

- Providers had difficulty creating the Business Plan and Handbook evidence, as well as salary evidence.
- There was confusion regarding the center child care and family child care terminology.
- 40% of family child care providers were starting from scratch in creating evidence, and 1/3 of child care centers had to create new evidence for over 70% of their evidence.

Dawn brought the report to the meeting today. That is available for anyone who would like to peruse it.

Revisions: Round One

Jevan walked us through the first round of revisions completed this past summer. Both the L2Q staff and the All-Partner group had time with the indicators to improve flow and organization, reduced duplication, and changed the family vs. center child care terminology.

Provider Focus Groups

The Community Consultants conducted focus groups with their Learning Communities in September. Kelly gave a summary of the results. Providers indicated:

- They feel strongly that their voices are being heard in this process.
- The revisions streamlined Program Leadership and made it easier to follow and understand.
- They like the way the revisions presented the evidence in a checklist-like fashion.
- Required and not required elements were still confusing.
- They liked staff vs. no-staff much better than center vs. family child care.
- They knew exactly what was expected from them.
- A strong need for a definition of staff.
- They need more clarification or instruction on certain elements such as benefits.
- The original version was overwhelming; providers felt that the revisions at this point made the link much more approachable.

Overall perception of the link has improved as they have gained experience, learned the process, and observed improvement to the Smartsheet system.

The Indicators

Jevan displayed the original version of the Program leadership indicators and pointed out how much information was included in just a few pages. He then shared the latest version of the indicators (see handout). He reviewed the original Program Leadership Link goal. The group was divided into small groups for discussion, and then reviewed our small group takeaways as a larger group.

Indicator Revisions: Initial Feedback

- Concern over terminology in the original goal indicates we may need to revise this goal for the future Program Leadership indicators.
- Include citations for evidence of indicator validity.
- Does this high-level link overview raise too many questions? Consider formatting and degree of detail.
 - Perhaps an accordion website with collapsible sections where users can get further information
 - A little more detail would improve comprehension
 - The distinction between business practices and administrative practices needs to be clearer
 - Indicators currently under business practices were originally under the business plan; those currently under administrative practices were originally in the handbook
 - We may want to dig deeper into this for clarity.
- Templates and examples are great; definitely include these somewhere.

Indicator Revisions Discussion

Definitions and unified terminology:

- Michelle noted that we have discussed comparing our indicators to the NAEYC accreditation.
- Nis suggested we use the established state definitions. Where can we find these definitions? They are not collected in one place.
- We could use “caring for our children.”
- Jackie suggested that we use the workbook as a place to delve into definitions and bring clarity.

The original Program Leadership Link goal:

- What are the tools mentioned?
- Is our goal that childcare facilities will have the tools to gain the expertise, or is the evidence itself the tools? Is the TA the tool? Is the L2Q program the tool?
- We will consider whether to update the goal.

Concerns around terms “sound” and “effective” practices:

- “Sound” comes from BAS/PAS.
- Change “sound” to “based on best practices”? The group liked this; it implies an ongoing process.
- We will consider what message is being sent by the wording of the indicators.

Community elements:

- The group noted that there is discrepancy between staff and no-staff indicators: one includes community-focused elements, and the other doesn't. There was consensus that centers with staff and no-staff should be involved in the community. We concluded this element was missing and will be added back in.

Next steps:

- Rachel reviewed next steps in the revisions process.
- The lessons we have learned in this first revisions process will expedite our future revision processes, and we hope Family Partnerships revisions will be smoother.

End of Pilot Celebration Planning

Rachel gave an update on the end-of-pilot celebration. Planning for this event is ongoing. We hope to include some continuing education and health & safety training, and we may open this to providers outside the pilot.

QRIS Advisory Discussion

Rachel invited Advisory Group (AG) members to reflect, between now and our next meeting, on the purpose and role of the Advisory Group during the creation of L2Q and the pilot. The future of the Advisory Group will be on the agenda. DCF will be sending out a survey in January for all current AG members to complete to assist us in preparing for this discussion at the March AG meeting.

Rachel suggested a few questions to consider in the meantime: Who isn't here that we should be including? How can we use this group? What other things can we do? What is the role of the Advisory Group in the transition and initial rollout of L2Q?

Next Steps

Next Meeting:

March 2020, date TBD

Minutes taken by:

Lindsay Sayre