

## MEETING NOTES

<b>Date:</b> March 20, 2019	<h3 style="margin: 0;">L2Q Advisory Team Meeting</h3>	<b>Place:</b> Kansas Association of School Boards, 1420 SW Arrowhead Rd, Topeka, KS 66604
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**Present:** Kelly Meigs, Karen Beckerman, Rachel Anno, Jevan Bremby, Isabel Johnson, Dawn Flores, Kristin Heuer, Nichelle Adams, Patty Peschel, Nis Wilbur, Christi Smith, Lisa Jeanneret, Kelli Roehr, Micki Chestnut, Corinne Carr, Jennifer Pishny, Mary Baskett, Janine Hron, Kelly Cain-Swart, Angie Saenger, Susan Pearson, Jackie Counts, Debbie Thomas, Jenny Buller, Megan Smith, Amy Meek

**Absent:** Deb Crowl, Leadell Ediger

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<b>Welcome and Overview</b>	<p>Kelly Meigs welcomed everyone and invited introductions from the attendees. She shared that today's meeting would be unique because Sara O'Keeffe from the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships &amp; Research (CPPR) will graphic record and Mary Baskett and Janine Hron will be helping to facilitate discussions regarding the future of L2Q and the state on behalf of the Early Childhood Systems effort.</p> <p>Karen gave a brief overview of the Early Childhood Systems project and introduced the <i>Our Tomorrows</i> project as one way to get involved. She shared that it is part of the State's overall needs assessment and is an opportunity to look at the overall early childhood system in Kansas as we prepare to request additional federal funding for the identified needs.</p> <p>Mary and Janine passed out <i>Our Tomorrows</i> information cards for all to share. Jackie Counts of CPPR elaborated on the project as an effort to capture child and parent voice, using a new approach to engage voices yet unheard.</p> <p>Kelly shared that L2Q will also be featuring <i>Our Tomorrows</i> in the newsletter to help get the word out.</p>	<p>Karen invited all to contact Sara Gardner for more information on how to get involved with Early Childhood Systems project and Our Tomorrows story collection.</p>
<b>A Look Back: The First Year of the Pilot</b>	<p>(For more detailed information, see the attached PowerPoint.)</p> <p><b><u>Kelly Meigs gave an overview of Links to Quality Pilot purpose, structure, and timeline.</u></b></p> <p>Kelly Meigs reviewed the L2Q vision and mission statements and reminded the group that the R in Kansas' "QRIS" stands for "Recognition" rather than "Rating," as it is in most other states.</p> <p>She reviewed the roles of each L2Q partner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Child Care Aware of Kansas</u> serves as implementation partner;</li> <li>• <u>Learning Tree Institute of Greenbush</u> serves as external</li> </ul>	<p>Kelly encouraged all to sign-up for L2Q newsletter if they haven't already.</p>

evaluator of L2Q processes;

- University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships & Research serves as research and operational support; and
- Kansas Department for Children and Families serves as lead agency.

Kelly shared a brief recap of milestones over the first year of the Pilot:

- April 2018: L2Q Program Staff, Community Consultants, and some Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO) staff were trained on McCormick's Program Administration Scale. All participants eventually became certified assessors.
- October 2018: All Community Consultants were trained on McCormick's Business Administration Scale. All participants eventually became certified assessors.
- March 2019: The first Link (Program Leadership) portfolios were due. The evidence due date established to encourage providers to submit evidence even if it was incomplete.
- March-April 2019: The L2Q Reviewers are currently in the midst of reviewing the Program Leadership Link portfolios.

Kelly shared the Links to Quality newsletter, *L2Q News*, had been a major bright spot from the first year of the pilot.

**Rachel Anno and Jevan Bremby gave a brief overview of how Smartsheet is used throughout the pilot.**

Highlights included:

Jevan Bremby reiterated "The Why" and "The What" of Links to Quality, then introduced Smartsheet as "The How." He explained Smartsheet is the mechanism for how we operationalize Links to Quality's mission and vision.

Rachel Anno detailed how Providers, Community Consultants, Reviewers, and L2Q Program Staff use Smartsheet.

Jevan shared how Smartsheet facilitates continuous quality improvement via the "Questions and Concern Capture (QCC) Form". Community Consultants and L2Q Program Staff use this form to document roadblocks, speedbumps, points of clarification, etc. He shared examples of items captured by the form and shared the largest improvement made in response to feedback captured by the form was a streamlined evidence submission process for Providers: Where Providers were originally tasked with uploading evidence by attaching it to a specific row in a robust spreadsheet, they will now use a simplified survey form.

**Christi Smith shared how the Community Consultants have**

**contributed to the pilot.**

Highlights included:

There are five Learning Communities spanning across the state led by Megan Smith, Debbie Thomas, Jen Pishny, Susan Pearson, and Kelly Cain-Swart.

Christi Smith explained the pilot is in a “discovery phase,” shared a word cloud expressing dominant themes pertaining to the Learning Communities. Among the more prominent words were network, share, like-minded, and common goals.

Christi shared a major brightspot over the past year has been the culture of collaboration among the project team. L2Q team listened to community consultants, took values and needs back to office, thought of new idea and responded with new idea. All-Partner meetings reflect appreciative inquiry values with partners all playing to their strengths to make improvements in the pilot.

Christi also shared one of the larger challenges of the pilot: Providers sometimes forget that it’s a discovery phase, they have been reluctant to upload evidence out of a fear of judgment. They have wanted their submissions to be perfect, etc.

Other reflections included:

- Program Leadership was somewhat of an information overload to providers.
- It was to show connected between BAS and PAS and indicators.
- There are opportunities to continue to improve collaboration/systems to meet providers where they are.
- Megan and Jen created a few tools to respond to needs they saw and then shared L2Q team.
- The Community Consultants have also functioned as professional/career coaches, listening and encouraging growth mindset;
- A closed Facebook page was established to help promote networking and collaboration among Providers. Recently, the Facebook group was used to issue a 21-day reading challenge where Providers posted pictures of themselves reading to their children.
- Every Monday, the Community Consultants have a virtual meeting to share ideas and discuss items to add the the QCC form.
- The group was trained and certified in McCormick’s Business Administration Scale (BAS) and Program Administration Scale (PAS). She noted McCormick encouraged L2Q to use the parts that work for state. The group learned a lot about direct and indirect benefits.
- The team has coached Providers to celebrate successes, especially the small ones as small coaching opportunities can create larger change in the pilot.

- With quality in mind, Community Consultants are “seeking (open ended questions, etc.), capturing (paperwork, LTI’s surveys), and acting” upon discoveries to improve the pilot.

**Dawn Flores shared an overview Learning Tree Institute’s evaluation plan and preliminary results.**

Highlights included:

Dawn Flores shared LTI had been tasked with completing a comprehensive process evaluation of the pilot, including:

- The sustainability of statewide implementation
- Recommendations for broader implementation
- Suggestions for modifications for statewide roll-out
- An Evaluation the overall L2Q model and all processes

To date, LTI has surveyed providers on the following topics:

- The L2Q Application Process
- The L2Q Orientation Process
- L2Q Program Staff Site Visits (Site Visit Survey)
- BAS/PAS Online Training
- BAS/PAS Assessment
- First year of the Pilot (End of Year Survey)

Overall, results have been generally positive with high participant response rates. *(For a summary of results please see the attached PowerPoint.)* Dawn shared she would be happy to provide the full results pending Kelly’s approval.

LTI has also conducted exit interviews for the four Providers who have withdrawn from the Pilot. Of those four Providers, three withdrew due to financial hardship that ultimately resulted in the closing of their programs.

**Isabel Johnson shared an overview of how the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships & Research (CPPR) has supported the pilot.**

Highlights included:

CPPR has supported the pilot by providing the research expertise, helping to inform L2Q decisions. Among CPPR’s activities were the creation of Research Briefs which found L2Q’s approach of recognizing and building upon providers’ strengths is both innovative and supported by the latest literature.

CPPR has also completed several crosswalks of the L2Q quality indicators with various national standards such as Headstart, BAS and PAS, and Strengthening Families. The purpose of these crosswalks is to see how L2Q’s benchmarks and general sense of quality align with established nationally-recognized standards.

	<p>Additionally, CPPR drafts and improves pilot support materials in response to requests from Community Consultants, Providers, and L2Q Program Staff. Some of these materials include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <u>Pilot Manual</u> detailing the purpose, roles, and processes of the system.</li> <li>• <u>Portfolio review materials</u> used to aid L2Q Reviewers in analyzing portfolio evidence and developing appreciate feedback.</li> <li>• A <u>Best Practices Guide</u> designed to help L2Q Reviewers offer constructive feedback that enables Providers to build upon their strengths. The guide is based on nationally-recognized standards and practices that Kansas values.</li> </ul> <p>Kelly Meigs wrapped-up and emphasized collaborative nature of L2Q partners, sharing a quote from Fred Rogers: “Anyone who does anything to help a child is a hero to me.”</p>	
<p><b>Facilitated Q/A Session/panel</b></p>	<p>Mary Baskett and Janine Hron facilitated a discussion reflecting on the past year more broadly.</p> <p><b><u>What were some of the surprises?</u></b>  The Community Consultants were surprised that Providers did not have basic paperwork, systems, and/or processes. While most providers had processes in place, but many did not have any documentation that reflected those processes. This was noted as a potential cause for low BAS/PAS assessment scores.</p> <p><b><u>As they started to create those systems and start tracking, were there surprises in that?</u></b>  The Community Consultants noted providers were surprised they could track many expenses snacks for taxes, lessons planned, etc. One family child care provider was considering applying to be a center director until she realized, through developing her budget, her income was much higher than she’d thought.</p> <p>Kelly (Meigs) shared she did not realize how big the system would be until she was involved and learning from other states.</p> <p>Megan noted that because each program is so unique, they will experience the system differently, e.g. certain indicators will be easier for some than others.</p> <p>Jen was surprised by Providers’ hesitance to upload evidence.</p> <p><b><u>How did you help providers make shift from perfectionist to learning state?</u></b></p> <p>Christi Smith shared Community Consultants continually reminded Providers that it was ok if evidence was not complete and that L2Q does not expect all evidence to be perfect at this</p>	

	<p>point.</p> <p>Megan shared she has explained to Providers that L2Q is changing based on what works and what does not, and they are helping to inform what the system will be later on. This approach has helped Providers feel more at ease and greater sense of ownership of the pilot.</p> <p>The Community Consultants also had to model flexibility and build relationships and trust with their Providers.</p> <p>Janine noted it seemed the Community Consultants helped participants change from passenger to driver.</p> <p>Susan shared her Learning Community takes the responsibility of giving feedback very seriously.</p> <p><b><i>From the provider's perspective, what worked?</i></b>  The Community Consultants shared the Learning Communities seemed to help Providers feel a sense of belonging, purpose, and value. They also provided emotional and professional support, with Providers developing strong relationships with one another as well as their Community Consultant.</p> <p>Megan noted that BAS and PAS measures include support systems as an indicator of program quality.</p> <p>Jevan shared the Learning Communities also help Providers develop their professional identity. Many of the Providers did not view themselves as service providers or business owners, but the Community Consultants have worked to empower them. He shared the example of a Provider who was reluctant to give herself a raise.</p> <p>Christi shared Susan and Kelly (Cain-Swart) have been exploring opportunities to connect L2Q with funding opportunities and community outreach.</p>	
<b>LUNCH</b>		
<b><i>Hope-o-meter</i></b>	<p>Jackie Counts introduced a new activity tool emerging from the Early Childhood Systems project designed to help with precision facilitation: <i>The hope-o-meter</i>. Jackie invited Angie Saenger to elaborate on the tool: It provides attendees a chance to reflect on a given moment and rate their hopefulness in three areas. The group was given a few moments to complete.</p>	
<b><i>Envisioning Kansas 2027</i></b>	<p><b>Mary Baskett asked the group to imagine it is 2027, and Kansas is being recognized as the best place in the nation to raise a child. She asked the following questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>What would you see in your community?</i></li> </ul>	



- Discover resources for family partnership component.
- Future links and how we can align with other initiatives that are already integrated in the state (i.e. early ed degree or certified Montessori schools).
- Identifying “champions” who can serve as mentors.
- More collaboration across communities (center directors and family providers) across the state.
- respond to the evaluation and start reflection
- Becoming more visible amongst the early childhood community as a leader
- Consider Links to Quality as a continuum. Crucial time now to think about implementation that they still continue to grow and that they don’t plateau.

***What have you learned can help shape early childhood in Kansas?***

- More provider visibility as leaders. The more providers learn, the better they can advocate in their community. They are the ones that can make change.
- Providers finding their voice and their confidence in their voice. Seeing themselves as professionals and community mobilizers.

***How do they share with others in early childhood or even beyond in K-12?***

- They will help transition kids more from EC to K-12 by paying attention to what the kids need, so they can help to identify when children need screenings early.

***What would Links to Quality provide for you? (To Corinne Carr)***

- *Answer:* A support system. We are so isolated. The support would be the most beneficial. When Early Headstart comes in, I don’t want them to leave. I can bounce ideas off of them.

***Would the mentoring help?***

- *Answer:* Yes, it would. If Providers had mentors helping them budget, for example, they would be able to sustain their business.

***How can Early Headstart and Montessori schools be a part of this system? How could L2Q help them, and how could they help L2Q?***

- Some of the providers are working with other organizations and making valuable connections.
- Recognizing and highlighting what they are doing as it relates to Links to Quality
- Presumed eligibility for certain early childhood credentials, developing links to recognize previously completed work/achievement.

***Let’s go back to 2027... what does L2Q look like?***

- A lot of Links.
- It is statewide.
- It is *the* place to go for providers and families. Everyone across the state wants to partner with us.
- Families understand Links to Quality. Parents are the drivers, getting what they need and want from their provider. For example, if a child has a special need and a provider has a special education Link, they will know that program could support them.
- Links to Quality is part of the certification process.

***What should a parent know when they move to KS in 2027?***

- What Links to Quality is and how it can support them.
- That the company employing the parents will provide them resource to Links to Quality.
- That you could ask your neighbors or other friends and they would lead you to Links to Quality.
- Commercials could be an option in the future.
- Birthing classes or OBGYN could include information on Links to Quality.
- Child care funding is provided for all families and child care providers are well-paid.
- All programs have operating budgets.

***How could transitions work from early childhood and K-12?***

- Providers could attend kindergarten roundup.
- Continuation between providers and the relationships they built with their families
- The community needs to be ready, with families and providers on the same page.
- If the provider can become a strong advocate for the parents and children, it will help the parent to advocate for their child.

**Highlights from Janine Hron’s small group included:**

***What do we want to bring forward into Year Two of L2Q?***

- First year knowledge and understanding, as well as the confidence that comes with it.

***What’s going to help us keep momentum?***

- Recognizing and lifting up “champions” by sharing the success of the providers, harnessing their energy, and building on the “bring a friend” concept.
- Awareness, Collaboration, and Engagement: Something to help prepare providers for L2Q. There is a fear that once pilot is over, it will be voluntary.

***How can we help, maybe in year two, prepare and get the word out?***

- Write for funds to help prepare people for L2Q.
- More conversations across sectors to expand knowledge beyond early childhood realm to get the word out.

***How can we connect with other programs?***

- Align standards (e.g. breastfeeding designations are aligned with workplace designation).
- Build an advocacy pipeline
- Broaden the definition of stakeholder and making sure everyone knows they are a stakeholder
- Build capacity for the professional identity of providers
- Support providers as they evolve from *Participant* (recognized as professional) → *Champion* (increased responsibility, modeling leadership)
- Create our system with intention to link/align with other systems.
- We also want to make enough time to allow evaluation data to drive decisions.

***What can we keep?***

- Families will learn the resources and supports within their community
- Flexibility and collaboration among partners.
- Continuing to view providers as the user and the people we support; honor, value, support (fairly unique to our state) and engaging them as partners

***What can we change?***

- Streamline our quality indicators to focus on those we know are going to have the greatest impact on quality.

***How do you see L2Q impacting broader Early Childhoods systems and vice versa?***

- Partners continuing to work together at state and local levels
- L2Q can provide voices, representatives, local community input into statewide systems
- Creating a common language across agencies help people outside profession understand.

***How can we articulate the value of links after pilot ends?***

- Work with licensing.
- Emphasize the importance of the link (the why) rather than the requirements (the what).
- Helping to connect kindergarten readiness and early childhood providers.

***Who else, in year two, needs to be connected to the work?***

- KSDE
- DCF
- KDHE
- Tiny-K
- Children's Cabinet

Groups reconvened and shared an overview of the results.

<p><b>Wrap-up</b></p>	<p>Kelly Meigs thanked everyone for participating. She also shared that in addition to working to improve the system in real time, L2Q is actively looking ahead to what the system should look like statewide. Progress will be shared at future advisory group meetings.</p> <p>The next meeting will be scheduled for June 2019.</p>	
<p>Next Meeting:</p>		<p>Minutes taken by:</p>
<p>June 2019</p>		<p>Jenny Welch Buller Ashley LaFond Jevan Bremby</p>