

# Arkansas Early Childhood Commission (AECC) Meeting

October 15, 2024

## Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Elizabeth Waldrum (Chair), Deborah (Debbie) Mays, Tyra Greenwood, Leah Henderson, Rep. Denise Garner, Senator Jane English, Dr. Shelli Henehan

Members Absent: Senator Greg Leding

---

### I. Call to Order

Elizabeth Waldrum called the AECC Commissioner's Meeting to order October 15, 2024, at 10:08 a.m. Elizabeth Waldrum read the AECC's mission statement. Elizabeth Waldrum opened the floor for introductions. Dr. Shelli Henehan was introduced as the new commissioner for the Teacher Education – Council of Deans position.

- II. **Approval of Minutes** - A motion was made by Rep. Denise Garner to approve the April 16, 2024 meeting minutes. Senator Jane English seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting minutes were approved.

### III. Old Business

- HSSCO/AHSA Updates: Jackie Govan was unable to attend in person, but provided a copy of the July 16, 2024 EHS, Head Start & EHS-CCPs, HSSCO Quarter Meeting Report.

### IV. New Business

- Family Child Care Network Update: Jackie Couture provided the following updates:
  - The FCCN consists of an eight-person statewide network, including one FCCN State Manager, five part-time staff members providing regional support, and two **Be Well Care Well** (BWCW) coaches.
  - The FCCN offers technical assistance (TA) to Arkansas family child care providers through monthly meetings, regional brunch and learns, TA visits, and training.
  - By providing tailored professional development, coaching, and access to resources, FCCN helps providers enhance their skills, grow their businesses, and deliver high-quality care that enriches our communities.
  - In 2024, provided 2,045 coaching contacts via phone, Zoom, email, or personal visits and sent 17,780 bulk emails.
  - Held 12 monthly meetings in addition to regional "Brunch and Learn" gatherings and other shared services.
  - Met 39 new FCC providers and signed 57 new Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs).
  - Conducted 21 Quality Progress Report (QPR) training sessions on key topics, including business practices, mental health, emergency preparedness planning, infant and toddler care, and family engagement, reaching a total of 477 providers (361 licensed or registered home providers and 116 non-licensed or registered home providers).
  - The PDG Grant Funded FCCN Work:
    - Expand the Family Child Care and Home Visitation Pilot
    - Support Developmental Screening for All Children
    - Support Teachers, Programs, and Administrators in Trauma-Informed (TI) Practice

- The Home Grown Building Comprehensive Networks Initiative has awarded the Family Child Care Network (FCCN) \$170,000 over two years to enhance support for family child care providers in Arkansas by learning from successful models in other states.
- CCDF State Plan: Brandy Ishmon provided the following updates:
  - School Readiness Assistance changes will be updated by October 2024:
    - In July 2024, there were changes to Income Eligibility Scale, required work hours and co-pay percentage.
    - The October changes include: Coordinating eligibility, payment rate increase, presumptive eligibility and initial job search.
  - Children and Families Served:
    - Children: 2,417
    - Families: 1,540
- CLASS Update: Lori Bridges provided the following updates:
  - LEARNS calls for a “simple, clear, and understandable uniform accountability system... that includes a rating indicative of child outcomes.”
  - FOCUS:
    - CLASS Primer for Leaders – 94 users
    - CLASS Primer for Teachers – 305 users
    - Intro to Interactions – 152 users
    - CLASS Dimensions Guides - 500
  - MEASURE - Partners:
    - Certified Observers – 75
    - AR Affiliate Trainers – 28
    - Phase 1 Counties – 27
    - Phase 1 Programs – 164
  - MEASURE – Phase 1 Classroom Bands:
    - Total Phase 1 Classrooms – 570
    - Infant Classrooms – 63
    - Toddler Classrooms – 84
    - PreK Classrooms - 423
- Licensing Update: Dawn Jeffrey provided the following updates:
  - Within the state, there are 191,469 allowed capacity of children available across the state.
  - There are 39,440 infant and toddlers, 90,242 preschool and 59,170 allowed capacity across the state.
  - In the month of August, licensing staff approved 20 applications, with a capacity of 1,450 children.
  - In the month of August, 6 child care programs closed, with a capacity of one hundred children.
- Local Leads Plan: Jennifer Douglas provided the following updates:
  - 100% of the counties now have local lead agencies.
  - These local lead organizations will be charged to:
    - Support access to early childhood programs
    - Identify gaps in services
    - Foster local partnerships

- Create alignment among public and private providers and agencies within the community
- Establish a comprehensive, locally supported plan for providing early childhood programs and services
- Conduct count of children age birth to five being served across all early care and education programs by age, economic background, and geography

● **Strategic Plan Update:** Tonya Williams provided the following updates from the Arkansas Office of Early Childhood Strategic Plan:

- Vision
- Mission
- Arkansas Kindergarten Readiness
- Purpose and Key Components
  - Objectives
  - Strategies
  - Activities

● **Attendance & 2025 Meeting Updates:** Elizabeth Waldrum provided the following updates:

- Attendance: If Commissioners are unable to attend a meeting, they may send a proxy in their place. Please let Elizabeth Waldrum or Keeler Bryson know, should you need to send a proxy.
- All absences are required to be reported to the Governor's office.
- AECC 2025 Meeting Dates:
  - January 21, 2025
  - April 15, 2025
  - July 15, 2025
  - October 21, 2025
- AECC By-Laws need updating – A draft can be composed to include edits in alignment with current law. Tonya Williams agreed to assist with updates.
  - **ACTION ITEM** – Elizabeth Waldrum and Tonya Williams will draft up updated AECC By-laws and share with AECC Commissioners for input/feedback.

**V. Summary/Announcements/Public Comments**

- November 13, 2024 - Excel By Eight 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Summit, 9:00am, Hilton Garden Inn West Little Rock

**VI. Next Meeting**

- The next meeting will be held on January 21, 2025, in the ADE Board Room #201A.

**VII. Adjournment**

Rep. Denise Garner made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Senator Jane English. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:39 a.m.