

PIECES COLLABORATIVE MEETING MINUTES

August 18, 2003

The meeting of the PIECES Collaboration Committee was held Monday, August 23, 2003, at Marshall COGS/South Charleston, WV. The meeting was called to order by Bill Huebner at 10:00am. Those present were: Dr. Pat J. White, Linda Bond, Sara Monroe, Karen Duckworth, Ann Nutt, Melanie Clark, and Bill Huebner.

Bill opened the meeting by stating the purpose of today's meeting was to review the next county plan format. He went on to give a brief review of county plans from date received on June 27th to current status. Bill added that the PIECES Technical Assistance Steering Team recognized the need to keep this process moving swiftly in order to allow counties adequate time to prepare for the February 27th 2004 timeline.

Bill then asked for an update from those counties represented at today's meeting. Sara Monroe began by stating that her area had been focused on the new child care regulations and felt that most pre-k collaborative teams were awaiting feedback from Department of Ed/Department of DHHR before continuing with their plans. Questions regarding the ECERS-r and ITERS were being fielded by her office and felt that trainings would be a large focus for the upcoming year.

Linda Bond gave a review of her area's county plan status. She emphasized the need to ensure that pre-k special needs staff were aware that Policy 2525 requirements would affect all pre-k classes to include classes with special needs. She felt that public awareness was still an issue. She also added that the funding "formula" as related to counting in the WV Pre-k program could have an impact on many programs. She feels additional clarification may be needed regarding funding.

Dr. Pat White went on to present his county's update. He, too, felt that his county had been in a "holding process" until school resumed. He had contacted Teresa Lawler, DHHR Licensing Representative, to review their pre-k sites in early September and that his county would continue to use the High Scope curriculum for the upcoming school year. Dr. White then addressed the enrollment process as utilized by his county in conjunction with Head Start classes.

Bill stated that grappling with the enrollment procedure was still an issue we had to address for all. His concerns were that the enrollment process must allow for true parental choice along with universality—"How do we modify the process to ensure we are all on the same page?"

Dr. White continued with stating his concerns regarding transportation as a future issue which will need to be addressed in more detail. Food service was another area of concern brought up by Dr. White regarding Head Start policies versus local boards of education policies as well as Health Department rules. Dr. White ended by saying the predominant issue to focus on may very well be that of the No Child Left Behind Act.

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It was his concern that the nature of this issue could in fact act to confuse those working toward universal pre-k and the collaborative nature of those relationships. He stressed the need to focus on ensuring the same level of quality for all pre-k programs no matter where these programs are housed—ensure that barriers do not exist among all community partners to include Head Start, child care centers, and public education.

Bill then led the group into the discussion and review of the draft for the county plan format. Committee members went page-by-page and focused on each section of this document. Committee members worked through lunch as the groups' priority was to ensure this document was completed in a timely manner. Discussion was held on each section as addressed by the format, and changes were made according to the group's consensus. Concerns of each committee member were addressed as needed, and the document was modified to meet any areas of concern with all emphasis on assurance of compliance with Policy 2525.

Upon completion of this lengthy and detailed process, Bill asked for comments especially from those at the county level who would be responsible for utilizing this document for the next plan submission. Comments focused on the benefit of this new format in helping to clarify previous issues and helping to more clearly define policy objectives. Other discussion was held regarding how to incorporate the previous document's goals and objectives section into this newly-designed format. Bill will address these concerns in his revision and will continue to keep all committee members updated on this process.

Bill will contact all committee members regarding the next meeting date—the September meeting was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts among committee members. Meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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