

Lenawee Great Start

EARLY EDUCATION WORK GROUP

DECEMBER 1, 2009

Members Attending: Pat Skaggs, Madison, Lenawee's Child Playgroup  
Kim Scheerer, Tecumseh, Lenawee's Child Coordinator  
Rachel Hague, Madison, GSRP Program  
Holly Bella, Morenci, Kindergarten Teacher  
Cynthia Opelt, Adrian, Retired Elementary Principal

Members Absent: David Bull, Adrian, Director of Head Start  
David Pray, Clinton, Superintendent, Clinton Schools  
Kathy Burke, Adrian, Professor of Early Childhood Education, SHU  
Pam Esterline, Adrian, Director of the Montessori Children's House  
Jody Howard, Adrian, LISD, Principal, Young Children's Services  
Kristen Howard, Adrian Community Preschool, Head Teacher  
Beth Scholtz, Tecumseh, High Scope Foundation Staff

December 1, 2009, 1:00- 3:00 pm, Adrian College Boardroom

Members of the Early Care and Education subcommittee met and began the discussion with the first two objectives from the last meeting:

1. Expand playgroup opportunities throughout the county.
2. Increase the capacity of at-risk preschool programs

It was decided that the first objective should be revised as follows:

1. Expand the playgroup opportunities throughout the county *and continue to fund those programs that are currently strong and effective.*

The ongoing discussion evolved into several points of interest relative to funding and program costs as a roadblock:

- \* This ISD pays 1/4 of the cost and the districts pay 3/4. This districts don't have the funding to support the programs.
- \* Current programs are worried that they will be cut for lack of funding.
- \* Free programs for parents and children do not exist. Some are fee based on income. In other States programs have greater funding resources; it may be worthwhile to investigate further.

The group then decided as it is necessary to seek out funding, what components would be the necessary “marketing strategies” to elicit donors and financial support.

A random list was generated as follows:

- \* Characterize the existing programs as based on “trust” between the parent and the teacher resulting in acceptance and support for the child’s needs.
- \* Determine the cost of existing programs, including all line items.
- \* List or state the outcomes of each program in terms of measurable student success.
- \* Develop a “storyboard” or graphic outline of a student path as they demonstrate need and further support within the programs. Show the progression for students from one program into another.
- \* Recognize the consistency of teachers within the programs and the effect on students, parents and relationships.
- \* Determine the difference in funding for each of the programs and establish a cost.
- \* Develop a history of the effectiveness of each of the programs and how the programs have been “cut back” eliminating key components such as “home visits” which are now done at the school site.
- \* Develop a list of program needs.
- \* Look at each of the programs and define the most critical and valuable components to the success of the program.
- \* Describe the effectiveness of “early intervention” for students with special needs as it relates to the support system within each of the programs. This may already be written as an “early intervention model” as defined by each district.
- \* Research the existence of “Program Quality Assessment” material to establish the viability of those programs currently in place.
- \* Identify parent advocates.
- \* Identify the most vulnerable parts of the programs likely to be eliminated.
- \* Identify the number of students, parents and teachers participating in the programs and the number of students waiting to participate in programs.
- \* Note the identity of those participating in the programs other than parents, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles and caregivers.
- \* Consider establishing several programs at one location to save costs. Consider a college or community college with a pool of supplies and a partnership of two teachers with perhaps the participation of college students.
- \* Determine if two programs could “piggy back” with one another through sharing.
- \* Identify list of students waiting and the turn over of the students in the programs. See if there are multiple lists of students waiting.
- \* Develop a continuum of cost for parents aligned with each of the programs for parents to consider participation.
- \* Align each of the programs with the “ages and stages” of development of the students.
- \* Align each of the programs with necessary training for both the teacher and the parents.
- \* Develop a map of progression of services from ages 0-5.

All of the above random list is clearly too much to consider effectively, but which of those items is specific to the needs of the funding source is key and will focus the work of the group at the next meeting.

My suggestion prior to that meeting would be for Margaret to review the list and relate it to “funding sources” and focus the group by suggesting which goals might be the most fruitful. Committee members might be able to move quickly then to develop the Action Steps and Measurements and complete that component of the plan efficiently.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Opelt