

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) Meeting
July 30, 2021
9:30 am-12:15 pm

Present	SICC Members	Affiliation	Role
X	Brittany Herrington (C)	Parent (South)	Parent
	Alberstein Pickett	MS Dept. of Mental Health	State Agency
X	Candice Taylor	MS Dept. of Education	State Agency: Education
X	Carlen Henington	Inst. of Higher Learning, MSU	Personnel Preparation
X	Chad Allgood	MS Dept. of Human Services, Div. of Early Childhood Care & Dev.	Personnel Preparation
X	Gwen Woodard	Division of Medicaid	State Agency: Medicaid
	Holly Spivey	Office of Gov., Head Start Collab	Head Start
	Janet Slaughter	Independent Provider (Central)	Provider
X	Julie Parker	Inst. of Higher Learning, MSU	Personnel Preparation
	Julie Waddle	Parent (North)	Parent
X	Kamme Riddle	Independent Provider (North)	Provider
	Kara Butler	UMMC, EI, SI (Central)	Provider
	Kara Driver, MD	UMMC, Pediatrics-Newborn Meds	Provider
	Keishawna Smith*	Parent (Central)	Parent
	Laura Smith	Parent (Central)	Parent
	Linda Shivers	Independent Provider (Central)	Provider
	Lori Rolison	Parent (South)	Parent
	Natasha Bennett	Parent (Central)	Parent
	Nita Thompson	MS Head Start Association	Head Start
X	Ronjanett Taylor	Inst. of Higher Learning	Personnel Preparation
X	Ryan Blakeney	MS Dept. of Insurance	State Agency: Insurance
	Sara Leathers	Parent (North)	Parent
	Shirley Miller	MS Dept. of Mental Health (Ret)	Parent; State Agency

* ex officio

Additional Attendees:

Alyssia Thomas, MSDH, Lead Poisoning Prevention/Healthy Homes
 Anissa Pace, MSDH, EI Southern Region Coordinator
 Claudia Shedd, MSDH, North East LEIP Coordinator
 Danielle Seale, MCH Workforce Development Director
 Donna Sorensen, MSDH, EI Quality Technical Assistant
 Gerri Cannon-Smith, MSDH, Pediatric Consulting Physician
 Gina Smith, MSDH, Coastal Plains LEIP Coordinator
 Jillian Harper-Peavy, MSDH, Perinatal High-Risk Management/Infant Services System
 Jim Lesko, ECPC, Technical Assistant Specialist
 Jimmie Faye McCarty, MSDH, Central East LEIP Coordinator
 LaSondra Jenkins, MSDH, Central LEIP Coordinator
 Lisa Bonds, MSDH, South West LEIP Coordinator
 Melissa Cox, MSDH, EI Northern Region Coordinator
 Michele Masterson, MSDH, North Central LEIP Coordinator
 Miranda Richardson, MSDH, EI Operations Director
 Nicole Graham, MSDH, EI Quality Technical Assistant
 Paulita Childs, MSDH, Central West LEIP Coordinator
 Stacy Callender, MSDH, Part C Coordinator
 Stephanie Corley, MSDH, EI Quality Technical Assistant
 Tamiela Ramsey, MSDH, North West LEIP Coordinator
 Valecia Davis, MSDH, Health Services Operations Dir

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Approved: October 22, 2021

MINUTES

NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, this meeting was held virtually on Zoom. Attendees were able to participate on the phone or online.

Welcome/Introductions (B. Herrington)

B. Herrington opened the meeting at 9:35 am. She welcomed all SICC members and attendees.

Review and Approval of Minutes (B. Herrington)

Minutes from the April 9, 2021, meeting was reviewed by everyone (motion by J. Parker; second by C. Allgood). Minutes were then approved as written.

SICC Business (B. Herrington)

The following business items were discussed:

- **New Funding**

S. Callender announced additional \$1.8 million funding being offered as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP). This additional funding will run concurrent with the FY2021 funding cycle. Current plans for the additional funding include:

- Pay raises to encourage recruitment and retention of Service Coordinators and Coaches
- New Child Find public awareness campaign to address low referral and enrollment rates.
- Credentialing in infant mental health for Service Coordinators and Coaches

S. Callender solicited feedback on these priorities. C. Henington requested clarification on the qualifications of Service Coordinators and the impact of additional funding for families offered by the ARP. J. Parker expressed support for the identified priorities. She further noted a need for collaboration among preservice preparation programs and/or in-service learning opportunities. C. Taylor requested clarification on the timeframe of availability for these additional funds. B. Herrington requested Council members continue to consider other priorities and provide that feedback to the MSFSEIP.

SICC Committee Reports (B. Herrington)

The following updates were provided on the work of the committees:

- **Personnel Preparation Committee:** J. Parker, Chair, introduced Jim Lesko, MS's ECPC Technical Assistant. She noted his work on supporting our subcommittees updating our action plans and moving us forward. The Preservice Subcommittee has completed an environmental scan and developed a survey to be distributed in the fall. Also, two credentials have been completed. The Level I Credential focuses on foundational knowledge for all EI personnel. It is six modules and would take a working professional about a year to complete. The Level II Credential is specifically designed for coaches. It is two additional modules focusing on practices for working with adult learners, both providers and families, to implement evidence-based practices. The two credentials are ready for enrollment in the Fall semester. C. Henington asked if the credentials will offer continuing education credits for others, such as special education teachers. J. Parker noted the content would provide continuing education. S. Callender noted the adoption and publication of the new EI Personnel Standards located in the Provider Enrollment packet available on the MSDH website. B. Henington asked who completed the credentials. J. Parker reported the credentials were developed by MSU Human Sciences, led by her.

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- **Public Awareness Committee:** L. Rolison, Chair, was not available. M. Richardson reported there is a draft of the report that is waiting on data. Once completed, the draft report will be sent to the MSDH Communications Office for final preparation. The completed draft will be presented to the SICC. S. Callender noted the content of the report was different than the traditional Annual Performance Report, as it tells the story of early intervention from family stories and key information about the program.
- **Transition Committee:** C. Henington, Chair, reported the committee has struggled to get a quorum. The committee has discussed the MDE-Part B and MSDH-Part C trainings focusing on communication plans. C. Taylor described the annual joint trainings on transition with S. Callender and V. Davis, focusing on communication, procedural updates, and other relevant topics. Last year was virtual. The trainings include special education directors and Part C personnel. The committee also began putting together a resource book would help families through the transition from Part C to Part B. A pilot was conducted in Panola County under M. Masterson. Upon refinement, the resource book might be provided to families as they exit Part C. It would also be nice to put it on the MSDH First Steps website. V. Davis asked if this was the *First Steps to Next Steps Transition Guide*. C. Henington clarified that it was more locally-focused. M. Masterson noted the support of the Resource & Referral resources. C. Allgood noted it was focused on educating childcare providers.
- **Recruitment/Retention Ad Hoc Committee:** R. Blakeney, Chair, was not available. S. Callender reported an Early Intervention Provider Enrollment packet has been created and posted on the MSDH website. The committee is currently working on reimbursement rates for early intervention services by Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) codes. The committee met with representatives of Medicaid Health Services to assist us with aligning our rates with current Medicaid rates. The proposal will be submitted to the Board of Health for approval. Not only will this help with having more competitive rates but will also allow for the expansion of provider types. The final rates will include a base rate and incentive rates for services provided in natural environments and for professionals who have obtained the Early Intervention credential. It is a rather lengthy process due to the large number of codes; however, this is anticipated to be completed this fiscal year. The MITI data system will allow for the easy implementation of new rates once adopted as the rates can be programmed in. and do not have to revise the agreements for the 300+ early intervention providers. The committee will also focus on identifying opportunities for recruitment/retention grants and is developing a formal recruitment/retention plan.

Program Updates

The following updates were provided by the Program personnel:

- **Staff changes:** S. Callender reported staff changes at the state office, including a resignation by Pamela Kendrick, Monitoring Coordinator, and a promotion of Miranda Richardson to State Operations Director in May 2021. The EI State Office will be seeking a Monitoring Coordinator, Training Coordinator, and Data Manager.
- **Reorganization:** S. Callender reported on reorganization over the past few years. The agency moved from nine districts to three regions in 2017, resulting in different boundaries for the local EI Programs. However, the local EI programs were not very balanced and ranged in enrollment rates from 150 to 600 children and staffing of 3 to 14 Service Coordinators. In July 2021, the boundaries of local EI Programs were redrawn to right-size them with enrollments from 200 to 400 children and staffing from 4 to 10

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Service Coordinators. All Program Coordinator positions have now been filled when Tamiela Ramsey assumed the leadership of Northwest LEIP. At the Regional Offices, there is one vacancy in the Northern Region as Quena Mills left for another MSDH position. Sheila Covington also left the Central Region office; however, Gay Logan will assume this role next month.

- **Annual Determination:** M. Richardson reported Mississippi Part C has received an Annual Determination of *Needs Assistance*. She provided an overview of the compliance and results metrics the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) used to create this rating. M. Richardson did note the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the rating, specifically due to our inability to collect exit scores for many children between March and June 2020. Additional negative impacts include shortages of Service Coordinators and Providers, challenges with supervision of paper records, and longstanding noncompliance in one LEIP. In response, the MSFSEIP is working to increase training, credentialing, and pay/reimbursement rates to improve recruitment and retention of Service Coordinators and Providers. Also, the MITI data system has improved the ability of Program Coordinators to provide timely supervision.
- **Monitoring Update:** M. Richardson reported on monitoring conducted between January 1 and March 31, 2021. As the monitoring data was pulled for the old LEIP configurations, they may not reflect the current configurations. A new monitoring tool has been developed for use in monitoring records in the new data system to help identify issues in a timelier manner. Concerns were expressed about the ongoing impact of the COVID pandemic on data collection and future monitoring.

Update on EI Service Delivery During COVID-19 Pandemic

S. Callender provided clarification on the procedures used for remote access to services. Last quarter, it was thought telehealth would become a voluntary option for service delivery, not a safety necessity. Unfortunately, due to the resurgence with the delta variant, fewer in-person services are being provided and increased use of telehealth, not as a first choice but as a safe choice. The MSFSEIP is trying to ensure any families who need devices or data plans can access them. Our consent form asks families to indicate their request for that support.

Public Comments

No public comments were shared.

Scheduling of Monthly Committee Meetings

- **SICC Personnel Preparation Committee** meets third Thursdays at 1:00 p.m.
- **SICC Public Awareness Committee** meets first Mondays at 3:00 p.m.
- **SICC Transition Committee** meets first Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m.
- **SICC Recruitment/Retention Committee** meets third Thursdays at 9:00 a.m.

The SICC Transition Committee requested additional members. J. Lesko mentioned efforts at MDE on transition from preschool to school age. C. Taylor noted she had not shared this as they were general education focused, but further noted the family engagement resources on the MDE website and through the Help Me Grow resource compilation effort. S. Callender noted the multiagency state effort to compile resources across the state.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

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