



ARKANSAS 21C SUPERINTENDENTS MEETING

RED APPLE INN, HEBER SPRINGS

MARCH 14-15, 2006

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March 14, Tuesday

Beth Lapin began the meeting by starting introductions; each AR21C representative provided one highlight of their 21C program, in addition to introducing themselves.

Alice Barnes, Deputy Superintendent from Forrest City, assumed the facilitator role for the remainder of the afternoon. She introduced ***Arkansas Organizations: Updates***

- Rich Huddleston, executive Director of Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families gave an overview of his organization and their role in various early childhood projects. He highlighted the following issues to address: adequate funds to address inflation; coordinated school health; ensuring quality; focus on 3 year olds; greater collaboration with providers (sharing P-4 teachers as mentors); immigrant children and access to preK;. Future directions could include birth to three years; UPK, and/or K-3 programs. He appealed to the attendees to talk with their local representatives to gain their support for preK programs.
- Tom Kimbrell, executive director from the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, noted that his organization had preK as one of the five key goals for the coming years. He also mentioned that AR is one of five states included in a grant to promote UPK by the National Association of Elementary School Principals. They are looking for a part-time legislative liaison who will develop tools to help principals lobby for UPK. Tom urged the attendees to invite their state representatives to visit their preK programs to help them see the importance of additional funding. He noted that an additional issue is the need for funds for facilities for quality preK. He also reminded attendees that NSLA funds can be used for preK. Tom described the association's interest in working with the Department of Health/physical education for increased school health. He also mentioned that there is discussion of adding a constituent group to AAEA to cover early childhood. Again, he encouraged local educators – principals and teachers – to email or call their legislators and emphasized the power that they held.

We broke for dinner, which lasted late into the evening. Patty Schumacher offered to blend her evening and next day presentation into one, to which the group agreed.

March 15, Wednesday

After breakfast, the group convened under the facilitation of Tommy Tyler, assistant superintendent from Monticello. He introduced ***AR21C Announcements and Update***, with Beth Lapin, Yale 21C Senior Associate/21C Direct Services. Beth provided a description of several new 21C initiatives, namely Regional training sites, Arkansas Peer trainers and the outreach project (*Get the Word Out*). Patty Schumacher provided

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an overview of the upcoming summer institute; Beth highlighted the 2007 National 21C conference in Little Rock and encouraged all to be thinking about the content and their participation. Beth invited Tommy Tyler and Alice Barnes to join her in an overview of 21C and its growth in Arkansas. Beth also mentioned that the Southern Education Foundation will be releasing a report March 23 on preK programs in Arkansas.

The next session was ***Arkansas State Government Updates***

- Terri Hardy, the Governor's education liaison, discussed relevant topics. She noted that some are still hopeful for a special session by the end of March, but several criteria are required by the Governor, namely: studies on facilities and adequacy, teacher input, and legislative consensus on the bills that would be presented. All but the latter have been reached; if consensus is reached, the session could potentially begin on Monday and end on Friday of the same week.

Terri also noted there are several bills to be brought forth from the Department of Education. These are:

- academic facilities and appropriations
 - COLA
 - appropriations for COLA
 - a year of sabbatical for "Teachers of the Year" that would allow them to provide more services and impact the district less
- Tonya Russell, Director of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education provided an update on the status and funding of preschools related to 21C. Tonya highlighted several points:
 - consider focusing now on 3 year olds; studies show the benefits of two years of preK
 - transportation: they are going to be looking at this, because providers have felt school variances have been unfair
 - assessment that they use is Work Sampling, a research-based national tool. It has shown the need for professional development in literacy and math, which they will be addressing through trainings
 - private providers: continuing to work with them
 - 5000 children are in full-day voucher care. They are looking at tiered reimbursement tied to quality, which could also be used for extended day slots with ABC
 - the salary matrix will be set for AA, based on Head Start guidelines
 - RFP for renewals will be coming out in two weeks – check the web site. There are no new funds at this time.
 - building funds – Arkansas Department of Economic Development – are funded through the feds who have cut the program by about 25%.

Qualities of Successful Superintendent/21C Coordinator Interactions was a panel presentation which included Vicki Shelby (21C Coordinator, Paragould), June Elliott (21C Coordinator, Cabot), Billy Jackson (Superintendent, SouthSide, Bee Branch), and Ted Hall (Superintendent, Batesville). The coordinators noted that the superintendents who are most successful are: proactive; aware of funding sources; familiar with the importance of quality; include the coordinator as part of the administrative team; keep

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communication open; provide seamless programs that transition preK and others; and provide release time to the 21C Coordinators (whose jobs entail many different functions).

Superintendents noted that they felt success was due to: grants to broaden the base of programs; vision of staff; Kindergarten teachers who total support the preK component; having an open door policy; having good staff and not micromanaging; providing a venue for more helpful parents to be involved; positive personal relationships between 21C Coordinators and the administration; using programs for increased community involvement; active participation of 21C advisory councils; and the fact that 21C is producing viable, exciting programs. Others felt that the networking that results of implementing 21C and its programs leads to many other networking and growth opportunities.

The group broke into three sections, to discuss ***Components of Successful Programs*** with a focus on: working with child care providers; engaging principals; and bringing new staff up to speed. Reports back to the group as a whole indicated the following:

Working with child care providers—the challenges:

- aligning curriculum so private providers are using the same as the school or can choose from several that would work. Help them see the outcomes, kindergarten indicators that show the need for a good curriculum.
- increase transition activities for private providers; them their children to summer programs, provide bus for visits to school, co-sponsor events at school for parents with children in private providers
- develop TRUST – this was key, and everything will follow. Share information and give it time.
- provide flexible professional development that matches their work schedules (that is often during evenings and weekends)
- remember that there is a big difference between profits (them) and non-profits (schools)
- help them develop highly qualified staff, providing the educational background, CDA training
- emphasize the importance of quality and assist to get there and remember it takes time
- provide information and professional development related to discipline
- continue to explore ways to remove competition between private providers and school
- Tommy Tyler reminded everyone to remember that three and four year olds provide a profit for private providers while infants and toddlers can't. Try to remember that we want providers to be successful and provide quality programs – because schools can't do it all.

The group that looked at bringing new staff up-to-date suggested the following:

- include questions in the interview process about the components to screen candidates and alert them to future responsibilities

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- provide preschool coordinator job descriptions to them so they know what everyone's responsibilities are
- have a focus group with parents/workers/decision-makers to provide background and information
- provide an immediate walk-through of preK and other components and continue this
- provide site visit to other locations so they can see what can be done, instead of what is being done

A third group looked at ways to improve principal buy-in into the 21C program. They suggested the following:

- conduct a site visit to see the program in operation and share the long-term vision
- put 21C on the school board agenda and positively promote the principal/school where it is implemented
- regularly circulate brochures, packages, the DVD to keep it in the forefront of everyone's mind
- promote 21C Coordinator awareness in the community: get out and give presentations or invite the advisory committee to do so
- have an Open House (Steak dinner) where you invite principals, teachers, etc
- obtain local publicity – advertise in local paper, etc.

The final session, **21C—A Long-term Commitment**, was a discussion led by veteran, former school administrator from Independence, MO and Yale 21C Senior Associate/Coordinator of 21C Leadership Development. Patty began by showing a short video of 21C in Independence, MO. She briefly highlighted the need for leadership programs, the relationship with NCLB and quality 21C, and the need to go from good to great (Jim Collins).

Patty provided us with the top 12 indicators that 21C is embedded in the school culture: You know 21C is embedded in the school culture...

1. when the data show that kids participating in components of the 21C program academically perform higher than those who are not participants
2. when kids in programs are blended and not segregated by program—the service is brought to the student at the neighborhood school (Head Start, paying kids, etc.)
3. when the fourth superintendent since inception of the 21C program continues to enhance the program
4. when you are still growing and none of the school board members were on the board when the 21C program was implemented
5. when all building administrators but two of the original 21 are new since implementation and the 21C program is still growing
6. when your site coordinators are full-time
7. when preK and after-school staff are included in K-12 professional development
8. when preK and after-school staff sit on the curriculum committee
9. when 21C has a seat at the table that determines salaries and working conditions of employees

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10. when you have to cut \$2M from your budget and 21C isn't on the radar screen for cuts
11. when your enrollment numbers include preK-12
12. when your parents would rather cut the football team than the 21C program

Patty also spoke about braided funding and the need to use and mix: Title I, Even Start, United Way, Family Literacy, PAT, Head Start, early Head Start, parent fees and employee subsidies.

This ended the official sessions and the group broke for lunch.