

**Arkansas 21C COORDINATOR AND IMPLEMENTATION STAFF
NETWORK MEETING
OCTOBER 26-27, 2004**

SUMMARY

Tuesday, October 26, 2004

Beth Lapin (Yale's School of the 21st Century) initiated the network meeting with **introductions** of all those in attendance. Twenty-two of the AR21C programs were in attendance (one program had to cancel due to a school emergency).

The first session was a presentation on **Food Programs** by Wanda Shockey (Department of Education) and Curtis Curry (DHS). They described all the options related to reimbursement for feeding for preschool, after-school, and summer programs. They also distributed a number of handouts, including copies of *Nibbles* (for preschoolers) and *Power of Choice* (for youth 11-13 years old). They emphasized the importance of selecting the appropriate program, and charging only once per meal or item. They also noted that after-school programs require an educational component (not team sports) to be eligible for reimbursement.

A panel of seasoned 21C coordinators conducted a discussion on **Blending 21C Components under One Umbrella**. Norma Meek from KY reviewed the 21C components and emphasized the importance of establishing a 21C coordinator. Through the use of a snack display that was improved to include a tray, clothe and lemon wedges, Norma encouraged each person to consider that 21C programs should consider how they are distinctive from other schools. Vicki Shelby (Paragould) challenged everyone to think about what is next, not to just rest in their successes. She also noted that the preschool staff participation in trainings with the other elementary staff solidified the links between several key staff. Marilyn Chambers (Hamburg) shared that her district focuses on programs that relate to school improvement and she has used 21C to help make order out of chaos, and it provides the rationale for what her district was doing. Finally Susan Underwood (Department of Education) described the progress that has been made related to 21C in Arkansas since 1997 and inspired the group to strive for quality.

Dee Cox (Department of Education) introduced a session on **Kindergarten Transition** with a focus on Ready schools, in addition to the concept of children being ready for school. Norma Meek from KY shared that their preschool teachers spend the first three days of the kindergarten year in the K class with their former students to help ease the transition. Gloria Clay (Mississippi County Head Start) described activities in two districts (Blytheville and Osceola) that include participation of Head Start parents in the elementary schools' events, observation of kindergarten classes by Head Start teachers, among other things.

She noted that one kindergarten yearbook devoted a set of pages to the Head Start programs, to foster that sense of inclusion. Martha Ragar (Van Buren, King Elementary) described their transition program that focused on two Saturday programs. As part of this effort, parents were shown activities they could do with their children and were provided with a book with more than 100 other ways they could work with their preschooler. King Elementary also has an open house and allow parents to spend the first half hour with their kindergarteners on the first day of school. Vicki Shelby (Paragould) described their preschool boot camp for children with no preschool experience and emphasizes some learning points she encountered, including placing preschoolers in groups based on elementary school placement and assigning K teachers in the same way. Vicki also described a recent conference in OR that she attended, with the focus on Ready Schools that Dee had mentioned.

After dinner, Rikki Crea (Yale consultant) presented on **outreach strategies**. She emphasized the process: identify your product and its benefits, identify your target audience, identify your message, and develop your vehicle to deliver your message. The message should be appealing, accessible, and timely. The group identified six target audiences and broke into groups to design a project that would promote 21C. Suggestions for selected target audiences included:

- Parents:
 - using food, have a tailgate party at a ballgame with a half time message
 - at Kindergarten roundup, show the 21C video and give door prizes
- Educators:
 - Using daily bulletins, build the excitement of coming to a Friday presentation on the 21C program using the video with games and prizes
 - Set up an all-day retreat in Hot Springs with massages as the venue to share the message
- Community/business leaders:
 - Use the video and brochure in conjunction with Ready fest, business expos, job fairs at college
 - Bus business people to schools and show video during their lunch
 - Ask them to read a book to the children-- "nothing sells the program like the children"
- Administrators:
 - At a lunch catered by the parents, have the superintendent read a story to the children and show the video while the children are napping
- School board:
 - Get on the agenda, bring children and parents, show part of the video and describe how it would increase the value of the district by being on the cutting edge and innovative and that the staff would work hard to make this successful
- Legislators:

- When in session, take parents to do testimonials, invite legislators to breakfast and publicly thank them in the paper, let them know that press will be there

This was followed by a showing of ***Making a Difference: 21C in Arkansas***, the new Arkansas video. It was well received.

Wednesday, October 27, 2004

We started the morning with ***Arkansas 21C Topics***, an AR 21C business meeting run by Beth Lapin and Norma Meek.

- Norma presented information about the national award her school received and encouraged Arkansas schools to apply. Check out *Blueribbonsschools.com* [Beth to verify email address].
- We discussed the *book discussion group* to this point; members felt it was going well and enjoyed reading the weekly summary. It was agreed that we would continue this during the spring with a new book. Beth, Norma, and Susan Underwood will select a book for the group; others are welcome to submit suggestions (please!).
- We also established some tentative dates for upcoming AR 21C events. It was agreed that the *21C Awareness Week* would be April 3-9, 2005, to piggy-back on Arkansas Children's Week.
- The Arkansas 21C Spring network meeting will be either Monday, February 28 or Tuesday, March 1; please hold those dates. Members were asked to submit location suggestions on the evaluation sheets.
- Finally, we will organize a site visit to Boyd County, KY in the last week of April. More details will follow.
- Beth requested ideas and suggestions for white papers/policy briefs that Yale will be working on this year.
- Terri Hardy had conveyed to Beth that the governor might be doing a pilot project related to BMI at 100 middle schools. If this happens, Beth will ask for 21C volunteers

Kathy Stegall presented ***News from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education***. She noted that they are working on Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive System Planning, which includes:

- Early care and Education: they are looking at a tiered strategy for quality, with perhaps a four star system, that could affect voucher reimbursements
- Medical home, to expand the number of children aware of ARKids
- Family support that is trying to establish a statewide system of information and referral
- Parent education that is linked to parent centers
- social and emotional support: Ann Patterson (Head Start Collaborative) reported on this effort to increase public awareness, work with care givers on behavioral interventions, and improve family involvement in mental health issues for young children.

Kathy also noted that they are working on:

- Zero to Three programs:
 - Infant and toddler care: increase the number of slots and their quality, possible using home centers as satellites to 21C programs
 - Considering the possibility of reducing the ratio for infants/toddlers and ways to make this cost effective (ECE white paper)
 - Study circles are being used to work with child care providers; if you are interested, call Connie Whitford at 501 371 9678. These will culminate in community plans that will be linked to the comprehensive system planning described above. It was suggested that study circles might work well in 'newly-merged' areas (impacted by consolidation)
- Out-of-school-care
 - A newly established Arkansas Out-of-School Care network has been formed. Kathy would like to invite 21C programs to their meetings. It focuses on K-12. She will check to see if folks want to be added to the list.
- Birth-five licensure: there is some discussion that there might be a new certification for B-5 (similar to P-4, K-6).
- Legislation being considered:
 - Income tax credit—state amount may increase by 20-40%
 - ABC funding; need to find funding for current allotment (\$52K) plus they are recommending \$20K new
 - ABC timeline:
 - Jan and Feb: informational meetings
 - March: RFP out, ID new priority areas, if any
 - May: application due
 - June/July: notification
 - Renewal applications will be due in February
- Work Sampling: 21C programs that aren't ABC will be trained separately at a date to be established. They have been overwhelmed with providing training to 700 ABC classrooms. It will be used for Special Ed programs and Even Start also.

Norma Meek and Susan Simmons (Ashland) provided an overview of **A Frameworks for Understanding Poverty**, the Ruby Payne method. Using a video, the issue was presented. Susan described ways in which their district has changed since using this training. The group participated in a survival check list for different income levels. Many indicated that they would like additional training in this method.

The meeting was closed with a few final details. Participants ate lunch in groups of work-related peers.