

St. Superintendent's Forces for Four-Year-Olds Advisory Committee
Brainstorm Notes

May 31, 2006

Lessons Learned About Wisconsin's Efforts to Build Community Approaches to Four-Year-Old Kindergarten

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| Access | Universal access to 4K is needed for <u>all</u> children. |
| Integrated services | How to better integrate other impacts on children and families into the 4 yr. old programs? (Examples such as access to health care, oral health, economic supports). |
| Support, advocacy/ communication, politics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting more information out on long-term benefits of an investment in early education – to the grassroots level, legislators, and businesses. • Current lack of a cohesive, broad-based grassroots advocacy effort. • Need for continued activism & advocacy on the state & local level. • We need to integrate the diverse stakeholders behind a common agenda. • Increasing public awareness (of available data, etc.). • Political forces. • Politics, politics, politics. |
| Professional development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care providers & teachers need access to credit-based instruction to complete degrees. • Professional development for the child care workforce will require increased compensation & benefits. • Finding a common time for professional development. • Connection of 4K with 5K needs to be strengthened. |
| Decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People on the ground, doing the actual work, should have shared performance expectations and ability to have a voice in the workplace. • State licensing of child care vs. local control/standards of school boards (no common denominator). |
| Funding start-up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher quality care costs more to provide than lower quality care. • Incentives to develop collaborative approaches must include connections to child care programs. • Resources for start-up are limited yet critical component of the quality of resulting services. • Lack of accountability for 4K dollars – where is it spent? How much does 4K cost? • Is there a way to double Jill Haglund's pay or create another person like her? • Funding during first years of the 4K program. • Need for start-up grants. • 4K is seen by some as a funding stream for districts with decreasing enrollment. • There is still uneasiness between the "business" of child care and the placement of 4 yr. olds in public" programs and the desire of families to have funded care. • A force for school districts - in order to receive funding, they must show how they are collaborating with <u>all</u> agencies involved with educating young children and not just choose family child care, group, preschool. • By being forced to collaborate, goals can be set and even weaker programs can learn or be pushed to strive for better. |
| Staffing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the best way to contact 4K educators and include them in the Wisconsin Kindergarten Association? • Would 4K teachers be interested in round table discussions (meeting at a center or school) to share ideas with others? How does the WKA find leaders? • Is there a 4K teacher willing to sit on the WKA Executive Board? • Status of degreed teachers vs. experience and the school of hard knocks. • Misuse of cost-benefit ratio from High Scope – need to be careful in how it is used. • Help create better links with 5K & 4K. • Enough licensed teachers in the state? • Let's make sure the people working with 4 year olds have training, common expectations, and a legislative voice. |

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| <p>Collaborations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of class size, even in a SAGE school. • Fear and mistrust of the unknown. • Turf issues. • Increase business community support of 4K and early childhood. • Funding source/funding formula. • Widespread dissemination of lessons learned from community approaches. • Solid evidence of student achievement gains. • If we want to succeed in approaches agenda, we need to address ways to broaden, deepen and strengthen a politically active coalition. • Is there something more or different that needs to be done to assist Madison, Green Bay, Racine, Kenosha, Appleton and Janesville? • Building trust. • Bring in new partners to the discussion (as develop approaches locally & statewide) – e.g., economic development professionals, business owners. • All segments of the early childhood field need to be involved including family child care as well as all forms of group programs. • Once 4K programs are put in place – need ongoing mechanisms to deal with community & collaborative issues that arise during implementation. • Do we have an ongoing technical assistance system to support established communities? • Schools have to be careful not to “call the shots” in what happens in the collaborations (e.g., give a school board presentation that was prepared by the school staff & presented safely by school staff). • <u>Oversight</u>: the difficulty for schools to oversee childcare facilities to assure success of 4K; i.e., teacher evaluation, how \$ is used by child care environment, resources. • Nothing prevents school boards from ignoring community-based programs – no strong incentives for community approaches. • It is hard to develop collaborative community approaches with programs that have been in existence for a while. • <u>Time</u>: The time it takes to collaborate and the lack of funding for specific personnel to manage the collaboration. • Collaborative approaches difficult in Milwaukee. • Sometimes the collaborations are not all-encompassing or “true” collaborations. • The attitude of community that “we have been doing just fine the way we are” = fear of change. |
| <p>Assessment, standards/ quality</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Space</u>: Our local district does not have room in schools to add 4K – is there enough room in neighboring centers? • Quality assessment linked to service providers (public schools). • How do we assure only quality investments? • What’s happening with report cards & reporting to families? If schools and collaborators use different approaches, is that OK? What promotes an image of quality to families? • Increased incidence of parents holding back 5 yr. old (K-eligible) children to put them in 4K. • Lack of quality standards is a problem. • What about 3 yr. olds/ECSE in 4K? • Process/mechanisms for continued change: noncommunity approaches moving into community approaches, expanding early adopters. • State support: funding, training & technical assistance. • <u>Assessment</u>: How can you assess a play-based learning environment without going right to knowledge of letters and numbers? • No standard curriculum-related evaluation. |