

STARS Advisory Group Meeting Notes November 16, 2023

Meeting Logistics

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| Facilitator | Maggie Barch |
| Notetaker | Jacek Deptula |
| Date and Time of Meeting | 11/16/2023, 11:00 AM-12:30 PM |
| Advisory Group Participants | Sonja Raymond, Tricia Pawlik, LouAnn Beninati, Amelia Struthers, Nichole Bearor, Meg Baker, Becca Webb, Kimberlie Buxton, Debra Gass, |
| CDD Participants | Dawn Rouse, Maggie Barch, and Jacek Deptula |
| Public/Other Participants | NA |

General Items

| Agenda Items/Topics | |
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| Welcome | Member and attendee introductions (name, role, and organization) |
| STARS Team Progress Report | <p>STARS applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This month STARS has received 7 new applications: 6 NAEYC or Head Start and 1 Registered Family Child Care program. In total, STARS has received 21 applications: 6 Head Start, 5 NAEYC, 3 provisional level 3, and 7 non-affiliated. <p>STARS training updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The STARS team co-presented with the SPARQS team at VTAEYC's annual conference on November 7, 2023. STARS overview and CQI webinar trainings offered on October 13, October 26 and November 8 have received consistent attendance and engagement. The next webinar on CQI planning is scheduled for November 29. More training sessions will be scheduled for late December and January. STARS team presented to Building Bright Futures and Vermont Afterschool Field Forum in October. Upcoming STARS presentations are scheduled for Addison County and Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union. <p>STARS staff updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDD has hired the Child Care Quality Program Administrator (STARS Administrator). Courtney Isham will start on December 18. She is a former County Supervisor for Head Start, CLASS assessor, and most recently served as Associate Director at the Sara Holbrook Community Center. |
| SPARQS Update | Vermont Afterschool, Tricia Pawlik |

| Agenda Items/Topics | |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vermont Afterschool has received 8 requests for assessments, most of them very recently. One assessment is already completed, and the others have been scheduled based on program availability. • Tricia noted that programs may benefit from reminders that assessments should be completed several months before programs' STARS certificates expire in order to demonstrate progress on CQI goals. Jacek confirmed that during the pilot year, programs may not have significant time between receiving assessment and submitting a STARS application and are eligible for a 90-day extension from their assessment date to submit their application. • Tricia and Sonya noted that the Youth Thrive Survey is designed for children aged 12 – 26, older than children in Vermont Afterschool programs. They suggested the survey may be adapted for younger users. Tricia also suggested the DESSA mini tool, citing its use to measure social emotional learning may not be ideal. This item will be added to next month's Advisory agenda. <p>SPARQS, Nichole Bearor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPARQS has received 118 requests for CLASS assessments via their online portal and are assessing and scheduling each based on programs' STARS expiration date and request date. • SPARQS will begin offering CLASS training to programs via Zoom starting in late January. • Nichole reviewed the assessment strategy for multi-age, multi-site programs. • Amelia explained Northern Lights' plans to support Communities of Practice (CoP) for PD credit and to provide technical support to CoP facilitators. <p>Adapting CLASS assessments for short-time programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions from programs that run 5 hours or less prompted STARS to ask Teachstone and SPARQS about adapting CLASS for shorter assessments for these programs. Nichole confirmed that accommodation. |
| Discussion Topics | <p>Regional In-person STARS trainings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDD seeks to schedule regional in-person STARS training sessions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amelia can offer suggestions for the Springfield and Brattleboro areas. Becca offered help with Central VT and Lamoille County. Meg offered help with Addison County and referenced Su White and Linda January as additional resources. Kimberlie volunteered space and support for NEK meetings. |

| Agenda Items/Topics | |
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| | <p>Pilot Year Extension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDD is discussing extending the STARS Pilot Year through December 2024, and anticipates that extension being approved. Advisory Group members generally felt that news would be received positively by the ECE field and ease some concern programs have about learning the new system. <p>Rubrics for Written Reflection Evidence for STARS Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maggie will begin drafting guidelines for written reflections with help from Meg. Once drafted, Maggie will seek further input from STARS staff including the new STARS Program Administrator after her start date and from Advisory Group members. <p>STARS Annual Work Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The January 2024 STARS Advisory Group meeting will be used to set the group’s annual work plan. Members are encouraged to submit ideas for the work plan in advance to Maggie, Jacek or to STARS@vermont.gov. <p>STARS Attrition and “quality vs finance”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory Group members discussed several barriers programs expressed or members identified that may prevent engagement in STARS: Significant level of change ongoing in the field; programs are too understaffed or overwhelmed to embrace the revision, home-based programs are traditionally less likely to engage in QRIS, the revision is complex, and the administrative burden too great. The question of financial incentives is linked to CCFAP reimbursements Attrition can be mitigated with robust and positive outreach, clear communication to programs and families about STARS from CDD and all resources (SPARQS, NL/Resource Advisors, BTAP, ECE Networks). Communications should highlight that STARS is an effective and supported tool for increasing program quality. Improving quality is what programs already do. Reminder that all licensed/regulating programs are STARS participants. Program may engage more fully in STARS whenever they are ready. Resources to support involvement and success are being rolled out. |
| Public Comments | N/A |

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| Agenda Items/Topics | |
| Set New Agenda Items* | Review of Youth Thrive Survey for Afterschool Programs |
| Adjourn | |

Action Items

| Item # | Description | Action |
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| 1 | January 2024 STARS Advisory Group meeting dedicated to annual work plan. | Members to compile work plan suggestions. |
| 2 | Rubric/guidelines for using written narratives for evidence of meeting standards in Afterschool programs. | Maggie will work with Meg Baker to draft. |
| 3 | Doodle Meeting request for next advisory group meeting after December 18. | Maggie to send link to members seeking their availability. |
| 4 | Investigate options for STARS tags on relevant Northern Lights trainings that support standards. | STARS and Northern Lights staff set to meet. |