



How did you engage stakeholders in the process of creating statewide quality standards?

In October 2013, we invited key partners and stakeholders (“lead team”) from the early education field to a dinner meeting to propose a joint venture to create a continuum of program quality standards from zero to age 13. At that time, neither early care nor afterschool had any program standards (practices) in Wyoming. WYAA felt it important enough to establish standards for programs, since we already had adopted the NAA Core Knowledge and Competencies for staff, and this was a missing piece to the system. We also invited NIOST (National Institute on Out-of-School Time) to the meeting since we were contracting with them to facilitate the process and development of the “practices.” As part of the proposal, WYAA offered to pay for Phase 1.

Upon deliberation with the State Advisory Council on Early Education, the “lead team” approved the offer and we began working together in December 2013 with completion of Phase 1 domains and standards in late 2015.



What advice do you have for other states before they start to develop or implement their own quality standards?

We would advise that states have an approved plan and strategy of their own in mind prior to engaging other stakeholders. This puts them in the position of being the lead organization with defined goals and outcomes. Pick stakeholders carefully—those with the same goals and expected outcomes. Define roles within the partnership so that the mission is what drives the process toward collective impact.



What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them?

During the development process, the lead person for the Wyoming Department of Family Services resigned from the agency. It was very difficult after that to maintain organizational management of the project, and communications became confusing. We decided to work more directly with Wyoming Kids First, the nonprofit that was also involved. In addition, the director of Wyoming Kids First is also the chair of the Advisory Council, so she took over as the project lead, and drove the decision making. Luckily, we were very close to completion of Phase 1. However, it became a barrier for Phase 2 (development of the indicators) because we wanted to ensure that we developed and published two companion pieces (graphically and structurally similar) due to lack of funding on their part. Therefore, we went ahead and developed our school-age indicators in 2017 and published them in October 2017. They were launched at the Ninth Annual WYAA Conference with much support and accolades from the field.

We still maintain communication with Wyoming Kids First and the Advisory Council, and it’s my understanding that they are working at it without any state funding. I do believe that ultimately, they will be finished, but we are unsure where funding will come from.



Linda Barton

Director

Please share your thoughts with us via e-mail at SANSupport@air.org. We look forward to hearing from you.



What successes are you most proud of?

The collaborative process that we were able to maintain with all stakeholders from early education and afterschool. This was a grassroots effort by all entities.

There have never been program quality practices in the state of Wyoming. As of October 2017, there now are. In addition, we created a great committee of program directors and leaders in the field who were completely committed to developing the indicators. We met each week by phone to work in collaboration on each domain and standard. Utilizing Google Docs, we worked with Betsy Starr from NIOST (our facilitator) to go through each standard, which took one year. This team developed the indicators and are acknowledged in the publication.

Now, we have contracted with NIOST for Phase 3, which will be to develop a guidebook for providers for continuous program improvement. The guidebook will be cross-walked with the Core Knowledge and Competencies (CKC) for staff, along with the required *Afterschool Program Assessment System (APAS)* consisting of SAYO-S, SAYO-Y, and the APT-O tools. This project will be completed by December 2018. This is a huge accomplishment for the afterschool field in Wyoming.



Who did you work with to create your quality standards?

Our main contractor is the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. We continue to work closely with them as we complete Phase 3.