

Fast 5 Friday

March 2022

March Madness Edition

In all honestly I was completely unaware that the NCAA tournament brackets were announced this past Sunday. In the world of afterschool there is plenty of madness this year everything from: staff shortages, possible new funding opportunities, onsite monitoring is back, continuation reports are coming soon, and did I mention staff shortages?

Like all other facets of the job market it would appear that afterschool professionals and their programs are getting hit especially hard lately. There is a silver lining though, in a round-about sort of way: within the last two months I've had four program directors (who did a really great job) leave the afterschool program for other career opportunities. But wait Jimmy, what's the silver lining to losing four high quality program directors? To me, it shows our professionals value in the open market especially, as most of the outside world thinks we are glorified babysitters. The key word here is value.

Turnover is common in every profession and we in the afterschool world are not immune to it, which is why we have the key staff change form on the afterschool portal. While the form itself is easy to complete and may seem unnecessary it's arguably the most important form in our collection. When a new key staff member is hired they simply complete the form and send it to me but that's not where it ends. I send to Clint at MASN who forwards to the ARE and other stakeholders. By completing this simple form, the new key staff member is now plugged into all things afterschool in Missouri. Most importantly it helps both our office and the ARE with onboarding the new key staff member. In the case of all four of the key staff members we lost, I worked individually with each of their replacements to get them up to speed so there would be no lapse in reporting or programming.

Now with the title of this edition being "March Madness" allow me to touch on the "madness" of what happens when the key staff form is not completed. Literally everything falls behind from reporting, to programming, and everything in between. This means emails and phone calls go unanswered which means myself, Cindy, and the ARE have to play detective to see if the program is operating. As you can guess this is not good! Kids Care Center data won't get entered, payment requests won't be sent, and most importantly there could be delays in programming which effect the children the program serves.

We all know the job market is crazy right now. It's normal to have higher levels of frontline staff. It is refreshing to know that our directors and key staff are recognized for their value and offered new opportunities. It's what happens next that can prevent the program (and me) from descending into madness.

In all honesty I've probably watched less than three minutes of college basketball this year. So for the men's side I'll take Gonzaga to win and on the ladies side South Carolina.