

Stamford School Readiness Council Meeting
Wednesday, February 9, 2012
9:00 a.m.
Pitney Bowes, 1 Elmcroft Road

Council Members Present:

Brennan, Karen	Stamford Discovery, United Way of Western CT
Burke, Jennienne Peoples	Care to Care (Family Centers)
Cook, Lucia	Literacy Volunteers of Stamford/Greenwich
D'Luc, Imelda	Stamford Head Start
Feder, Karen	Abilis
Hallssey, Jennifer	United Way of Western CT
Morrow, Polly	Pitney Bowes/Parent Representative
Mullett, Alisha	SoundWaters
Rigano, Sue	Stamford Public Education Foundation
Sabia, Michele	Stamford Public Schools
Sandahl, Margo	Stamford Public Schools
Torres, Dennis	Family Centers
Ward, Caroline	Stamford Public Library
Wenz, Karen	First Presbyterian Nursery School

Advisors:

Ahuja, Sonja	Discovery Community Liaison, Graustein Memorial Fund
Cammorata, Karen	City of Stamford
Garvin-Kester, Barbara	Childcare Learning Centers
Sargent, Carol	Childcare Learning Centers
Tarantino, Sherry	Sacred Heart School

I. Welcome & Introductions

Jennienne Burke, the School Readiness Council's interim chair welcomed everyone and thanked Polly Morrow and Pitney Bowes for hosting today's meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes from January 2012 Meeting

The Council unanimously approved the minutes from the January meeting.

III. Announcements

- Barbara Garvin-Kester shared the good news that Yale University has received two federal grants for 1.4 million dollars to develop and refine an emotional literacy program for preschools. CLC will be the primary research site for the project. If CLC were to run this program themselves, it would cost upwards of 1.2 million dollars. Now all program costs will be in-kind. They will be starting with four classes and growing to 10 over a three year period. A press release will soon be shared.

- Jennienne announced that Family Centers will be hosting a number of trainings for Care to Care providers in the coming month.
- Lucia Cook from Literacy Volunteers distributed flyers for a number of free upcoming classes and encouraged Council members to reach out to Christine Garber Program Director, Connecticut, Reach Out and Read New England, as she will come and speak to your group for free at any time. In brief, Reach Out and Read is a program that prepares children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. With the Reach Out and Read model, pediatric healthcare providers (including pediatricians, family physicians, and nurse practitioners) are trained to 1) speak with parents in the exam room about the importance of reading aloud to their young children every day; 2) give every child six months through 9 years old a new, developmentally-appropriate children's book to take home and keep; and 3) display information and books in literacy-rich waiting rooms. Where possible, volunteer readers engage the children— modeling for parents the joys and techniques of reading aloud. Christine can be reached at christine.garber@reachoutandread.org or 203-980-6430.
- Polly Morrow reported that Pitney Bowes awarded CLC a grant for multi-cultural puzzles, dolls, and books as part of an employee volunteer project Pitney Bowes is undertaking.

IV. Regular Reports

- Reports from Sacred Heart and CLC are included as Addendums to this report.
- The Health and Wellness Committee announced that on Tuesday, February 7, Dr. Donald Case was recognized as the 2012 Stamford Oral Health Champion with a small ceremony in the lobby of Government Center. This is part of the work of the Stamford Oral Health Collaborative, a group the Health and Wellness Committee helped restart in 2011.
- The Education Committee is moving forward with its professional development focus group study work. Facilitator trainings were held in January and February and as soon as the study is approved by the Institutional Review Board, focus groups will begin.
- In response to the Council's request at our last meeting, a Kindergarten Information night is planned for Monday, April 2 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. at the Ferguson Library. Flyers will be sent to the Council electronically and will be available in both English and Spanish.

V. Old Business

- Jennienne and a small group of Council members met with Karen Cammarota in January to discuss data collection. As a next step, the group is reviewing the results statement and indicators currently in the Blueprint and will attempt to identify additional indicators for us to collect data on. In addition, Jennienne will meet with each sub-committee to look at data they are currently collecting and attempt to identify data that can be collected in the future.
- Thanks to our Discovery grant, we were able to purchase 75 lawn signs with information on Kindergarten registration (in English and Spanish). We showed off the signs at the meeting. Michele Sabia and Beryl Williams were nice enough to pick these up and will take responsibility for placing around Stamford in late March.

VI. New Business

School Readiness Monitoring Tool, Michele Sabia

At the March meeting, Julie Coakley and Paula Nizzardo will present their School Readiness monitoring reports to the group. Based on the reporting tools developed by Deb Adams and her team at the State level, Michele, Julie, and Paula have developed rubrics to clearly examine the criteria they are looking for when assessing classrooms and lesson plans. These more detailed reports allow for immediate feedback to be given to the teachers and technical assistance to then be planned. A sample chart is included here as Addendum C.

Right from the Start Survey Data, Sonja Ahuja

In December, Sonja was asked by the Right from the Start initiative to gather community feedback around the question: If you were to project forward 10 years, where will early education be? Members of the Council were surveyed and the summary of those questions is summarized in Addendum D.

As part of the results discussion, the group discussed having 211 come to one of the Council meetings in order to educate the group on what they do.

Planning for the Early Childhood Fair on May 19

We have submitted our permit to the City and will be convening a meeting of the Fair Committee in March.

School Readiness Application Process, Karen Cammarota

Karen Cammarota from the City's Grants Department shared with the Council that the School Readiness Applications are now available. For those applying for the first time, a full RFP needs to be submitted. For those with SR slots, this is the short application year.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

**The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 14
at the Adult Education Center, 369 Washington Boulevard.**

Addendum A: Sacred Heart Report, February 2012

Program Utilization:

- School Day – School Year – 50 Students
- Pre – K 3 Class – 18
- Pre – K 4 Class #1-16
- Pre – K 4 Class #2-16
- All 20 School Readiness slots are full.

Program Attendance:

- Children – 85% Colds, ear infections, fevers, stomach flu
- Staff – 95% (Colds, personal emergencies)

Staffing:

- No changes during the month of January 2012.

Activities & Events:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration – “Friendship”. Special projects and an all school literacy event, reading the book “Martin Luther King, Jr. – His life as a boy.”
- SHS staff members attended a Staff Development on January 13th, regarding keeping “NAEYC Standards alive within their classrooms”.
- SHS Open House event on Sunday, January 29th for new students and parents. We are currently accepting applications for the 2012 – 2013 school year. We have many group tours scheduled for the next few weeks. Many calls and inquiries for enrollment for next year come in every day.
- 100% of our 3 year old class has re-enrolled for school next year as well as enrollment of several siblings.
- Crazy Hat Day & Pizza luncheon for SHS children & families on Monday, January 30th. Many parents attended and enjoyed eating lunch with their children.
- Best winter ever....lots of outside play for longer periods of time due to great weather.

Addendum B: Childcare Learning Centers Report, February 2012

- Program Utilization:
 - a. Authorized Capacity – Full Day – 334; Part Day – 97; Extended Day – 113 = 544
 - b. Ages: 3 year olds – 136; 4 year olds – 375; 5 year olds - 33
 - c. Children with disabilities = 15 with IEP
3 without IEP

 - d. Notes and Trends: N/A

- Program Attendance:
 - a. 100% Attendance.
 - b. Notes and trends: - none

- Staffing:
 - a. Open Positions – 1 Assistant Teacher in Cluster D
 - b. Recruitment – ad on-line, local newspapers, postings at NCC
 - c. Training:
 - Bi-weekly meetings occurring on NAEYC Standards
 - Instructional Coordinators meet weekly with each classroom to review Learning Experience Plans

- Special Events/Activities:
 - Teachers are preparing lesson plans based on the Preschool Curriculum Standards and the individual needs of the children.
 - Parent Advisory Committee meeting occurred on January 17th.
 - Student Support Team is meeting bi-weekly to discuss any children with concerns.
 - Pitney Bowes grant received for \$6,561.75 for multicultural dolls, multicultural dress up clothing, career puzzles, and life cycle kits. These are requirements for the NAEYC visit. Pitney Bowes volunteers will come to delivered the materials and talk about their careers.
 - Lunch and Learn – “Neighbors Link” presented by Catalina Horak – January 26th.
 - Cluster B – field trip to Stamford High Preschool Lab- January 6th and 20th.
 - Cluster C – field trip to Stamford High Preschool Lab – January 10th and 24th.
 - Kindergarten Night – January 11th...
 - Hearing Screenings have been occurring all month.
 - Captain 5 a Day – Cluster A and D – January 12th.
 - Parents have been coming to share their cultures with the children. We had Russian/Polish dancing and Haitian Art.
 - Notes and trends- N/A

Addendum C: Learning Experience Plan Rubric

Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary	Level
Learning Experiences associated with Preschool Assessment Framework Standards are identified on the plan and implemented in the classroom.	Standard(s) are identified but are not clearly associated to learning experiences.	One or more standards are clearly identified and who connections to learning experiences.	Three standards are clearly identified and experiences are specifically described to align with the standard.	Three standards are clearly identified and show connections to learning experiences. Planned experiences are directly connected to the benchmarks associated with the standard.	
Implementation Notes: 					
Strengths/Next Steps: 					

Addendum D: Right from the Start Survey Data

Stamford School Readiness Council Right from the Start Survey Results February 8, 2012

Imagine it is 10 years from now, it's 2021, and all children, are thriving with opportunities for good health and education. What would that look like for children in your community?

- All children are ready for school—reduce/eliminate disparities, all have access to learning opportunities in school, in extended learning settings and at home with a seamless system of educational support from preschool to college regardless of economic, cultural, language or racial background.
- An ample workforce of highly qualified educators provides developmentally appropriate — educational experiences in accessible well resourced programs.
- Parents are informed and welcomed in all settings by teachers, care givers, health providers and policy makers.
- Parents are knowledgeable about early childhood development, have information on services and have support to advance their own education.
- All expectant mothers receive adequate prenatal care and children receive adequate health care including well child visits, consistent early health screenings and treatment.
- Business and private enterprise contribute to community, regional and state support for early childhood education.

How would adults—parents, doctors, teachers, community centers, pastors, imams, rabbis, politicians, business people, and others—be working together to make this happen?

- Culture shift to knowing that society will thrive when we understand the connection between early childhood development and lifelong success and provide all children with quality education including timely intervention services when needed.
- Two-way communication network ensures that important information is shared and new knowledge developed and best practices proliferated.
- Marketing and awareness campaigns inform the community.
- There is public accountability for the well-being of all children, including children with differing physical and developmental abilities, regardless of economic, cultural, economic or racial background.
- Community leaders champion change and accountability across all sectors .
- Incentives support making the necessary institutional changes necessary.

To get to this future, what values, that is, those things we believe to be most important and true, will need to guide our actions? A “value” is a non-negotiable belief about what is or should be, such as equity, or opportunity for all.

- Education is for all
- Belief in Education
- Long term commitment
- High standards for educators, programs
- Equality in pay for teachers and all educational professionals
- Children are a priority
- Parents are partners; Families are capable decision makers
- Community supports ALL children and families
- Respect
- Honesty
- Appreciation

If you had a chance to talk to the Governor or to the Legislature about what the State needs to do differently, what would you say?

- We need a robust comprehensive and accessible system for early identification and intervention to address developmental needs. Need more of Birth-to-Three.
- Seamless/coordinated and well-informed system with high standards of practice and evidence based models.
- Develop a centralized (statewide) information system with localized (community specific) information for parents, providers and anyone seeking to know more about services to meet their needs—easy to use, easy to access, accurate and up-to-date.
- Provide leadership in creating and maintaining a system of accessible, current, accurate data possibly through public and private universities/research institutions.
- Specify parameters to coordinate the different systems communities are developing to track child level data from preschool through high school. Or lead the design of one uniform system.
- Provide incentives and support for professionals to work together—health care, educators, and private providers.
- Make ECE affordable for all; ECE is cost effective with a high return on investment.