

Stamford School Readiness Council Meeting

Wednesday, June 13, 2012

9:00 a.m.

William Pitt Child Development Center, 195 Hillandale Avenue

Council Members Present:

Brennan, Karen	United Way of Western CT
Burke, Jennienne Peoples	Care to Care (Family Centers)
D'Luc, Imelda	Childcare Learning Centers
Feder, Karen	Abilis
Fico, Karen	William Pitt Child Development Center
Mullett, Alisha	SoundWaters
Rauh, Polly	Board of Education
Reardon, Ellen	Stamford Museum and Nature Center
Sabia, Michele	Stamford Public Schools
Wenz, Karen	First Presbyterian Nursery School

Advisors:

Cammarota, Karen	Grants Department, City of Stamford
Garvin-Kester, Barbara	Childcare Learning Centers
Sargent, Carol	William Pitt Child Development Center
Tarantino, Sherry	Sacred Heart School

Guests:

Warner, Jennifer	Parent
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I. Welcome & Introductions

Jennienne Burke, one of the School Readiness Council's interim chairs, welcomed everyone and thanked William Pitt for hosting today's meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes from May 2012 Meeting

The Council unanimously approved the minutes from the May meeting.

III. Announcements

Various Council members shared news of upcoming events:

- Literacy Volunteers is running a Bridges to Success program from July 9-August 10. Flyers were distributed.
- William Pitt has submitted their candidacy information to NAEYC this month.
- Sherry Tarantino shared that on July 23, Deb Adams will be running a workshop for School Readiness teachers on developing learning experience plans. More information can be found at www.aces.org.

- Karen Brennan distributed the flyers for the Professional Development conference on October 9 and 10. Registration opens to the general public on June 16. Flyers will be sent to the Council with a registration link.

IV. New Business

- The list of 2012-13 meeting dates was circulated. Thanks to all those who signed up to host a meeting. The list will be e-mailed to Council members.

V. Old Business

- The Parent Outreach Committee sponsored two **Family Play and Learn Nights**, one on May 9 at the Ferguson Library and one on June 5 at CLC/Maple Avenue. Approximately 45 families attended the first night; 35 attended the second. Looking towards next year, we will consider holding three nights, assuming we can find money for the materials and for the teacher stipends. In addition, we'll want to see how we can better manage our RSVPs, as we had over 60 confirmed for the June 5 event, but only about half of that number came. The CLC/Maple Avenue space, with cafeteria tables, proved to be terrific, as the children were able to sit and better engage with the materials. We had a large Spanish speaking population that night, but used our translation headsets and have numerous translators on hand.
- The **Early Childhood Fair** in May was a huge success, largely in part to great weather and a fantastic turnout. We could not have run the event without the help of all the Council members who assisted that day, and behind the scenes beforehand. Thank you to all!! The revised table layout and placement of the Born Learning Trail contributed to great participation and interaction for all. In the fall, a small committee will be formed to look at new locations for the Fair, as the parking at Cove Island Park is problematic (beach stickers are now required from May 1-September 30). It was suggested we consider holding the Fair in the fall as parents are looking for preschools at this time and applications are still being processed. While our event offers a great deal of information for many, it also comes after preschools have closed their registrations. Jennienne will contact PLTI and ask about their resource fair in the fall, as there may be ways to partner with them. (It should be noted, however, that Sherry Tarantino got two parents from the Fair to sign their children up at Sacred Heart!)
- We received preliminary feedback from the Graustein Memorial Fund on our **Discovery application**. At this time, the match component of our proposal, while interesting, does not offer us sustainability should funding stop. As many know, we included a letter of support from Anne Farrell describing the in-kind work she is doing for us around professional development this year in the hopes that this would meet our \$10,000 match requirement. Graustein feels that Stamford is a community with ample resources and we need to push our Collaborative partners to step forward and help create a long term plan for maintaining staffing and programs directly connected with the Collaborative. While Anne's project is meaningful and interesting, it will not support the Collaborative long term.
- We submitted a **letter of inquiry to the Grossman Family Foundation** at their request and are awaiting feedback from them on next steps. In brief, the letter of inquiry lays out a significant, multi-year plan to provide for strategic planning for the Collaborative; data identification, collection, and analysis; support for family home day care providers in the form a consultant and technology technical assistance; and seed money for the professional development work Anne Farrell and the

Education Committee are doing. If we do receive funding, we will be working closely with the Board of Education, as Grossman very much is about cradle to career initiatives.

- We shared that Anne Farrell and her graduate students are still in need of participants to help with the **focus group project**. Many programs can provide staff meeting time for this, but not until the fall. If Anne and her students can run the focus groups on site at school locations and provide food, this will help foster participation.
- Karen Cammarota gave a brief update on the **School Readiness Liaison** position. The position title and description still need to be voted on by City of Stamford Personnel Commission, and then the position will be posted. She did have a conversation with Deb Adams from the State Department who stressed that any candidate should have a background in early childhood education. In addition, the State feels that the Liaison position should not be the Council Chair position. This has a significant impact Collaborative and will be folded into our strategic planning. Other cities have the Mayor or Superintendent chair the Council, or their designees. In the past Stamford's Chair have been both the Mayor's designee and Council Chair. In addition, Deb indicated that the State would like to see us looking to increase School Readiness slots and should be looking to capitol expansions. They are hopeful to see more School Readiness slots within the public schools. Both Michele Sabia and Polly Rauh commented on how this is unlikely to happen given the growing need for space for special education students. Jennienne suggested we consider reaching out to the faith based community as possible new locations. But as many directors indicated, the NAEYC Accreditation process is both time consuming and expensive, and difficult for programs with part-time staff.

VI. Adjourn

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

**The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 12
at the United Way of Western CT, 1150 Summer Street, 2nd Floor.**

Addendum A: Sacred Heart Report, May 2012

Program Utilization:

- School Day – School Year – 49 Students
- Pre – K 3 Class – 17
- Pre – K 4 Class #1-16
- Pre – K 4 Class #2-16
- All 20 School Readiness slots are full.

Program Attendance:

- Children – 98% Many Pre-Kindergarteners are attending their schools Orientations
- Staff – 99% personal emergencies

Staffing:

- No changes during the month of May 2012.

Activities & Events:

- Celebrated Cinco de Mayo with children's families in SHS gym on 5/4. Each classroom helped to create guacamole, salsa and a tropical fruit drink with Mango & Pineapple. The Director made the Cheese Quesadillas! SHS Parents helped to set up, serve the children and clean up!!
- May 11th, SHS children were visited by Jason & animals from Green Meadow Farms. We were able to host this visit outside on this bright sunny day!
- SHS participated in the Early Childhood Fair at Cove Park on Sat., 5/19. We had many of our students come and participate in the many events held at the children's playground. We also had many "future" parents stop by our table to collect information regarding our program. We have had (2) parents tour and register!
- Kindergarten assessments were done for all Pre-K 4 children who will be moving into public school kindergarten in the fall.
- Dental Care Kids of Stamford visited each classroom to talk about the importance of visiting a dentist office and nutrition for teeth! Each child received a bag with toothbrush, toothpaste, stickers and magnet. It also included a letter regarding the day and offered a discount for parents.
- The Director of SHS was given an i-Pad and participated in 5 hrs of training from the Diocese of Bridgeport. This i-Pad will be used for future Administrator Trainings and Professional Development and communication for the next school year.
- The Director finished a Personal Management course through Charter Oak State College which will extend her Connecticut Directors' Credential from "Initial Level" to "Standard Level".
- Two Asst. Teachers finished their ECE courses at NCC this past spring with A's & B's. Both staff members are currently heading toward a Certificate in ECE and will receive them next spring!

Addendum B: Childcare Learning Centers Report, May 2012

- Program Utilization:
 - a. Authorized Capacity – Full Day – 334; Part Day – 97; Extended Day – 113 = 544
 - b. Ages: 3 year olds – 64; 4 year olds – 337; 5 year olds - 143
 - c. Children with disabilities = 18 with IEP; 2 without IEP
 - d. Notes and Trends: N/A

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

- Staffing
 - a. Open Positions – 1 Teacher- Cluster B, 1 Teacher- Cluster E, and 1 Teacher - Cluster D, 1 Teacher Aide Floater
 - b. Recruitment – ad on-line, local newspapers, postings at NCC, Craig’s list
 - c. Notes and Trends – trying to hire staff with Bachelor’s degree to meet State and NAEYC guidelines for 2015. We are having a difficult time hiring Bachelor degree with 36 credits in ECE. This is a combination of salaries and finding people that meet this criteria.

- Training:
 - a. Bi-weekly meetings occurring on NAEYC Standards – April 5th and 19th.
 - b. Instructional Coordinators meet weekly with each classroom to review Learning Experience Plans
 - c. May 3rd and 17th – Preparing for NAEYC accreditation visit.
 - d. May 2nd - Training Wheels – Administrators meeting

- Special Events/Activities:
 - a. Student Support Team is meeting bi-weekly to discuss any children with concerns.
 - b. Lunch and Learn – “Transitioning to Kindergarten” - Presented by Dori Walker and Dr. Debbie Schreiner.
 - c. Teacher Appreciation Week- May 7th -11th- Parent Advisory Council sponsored a breakfast and gift cards for all teaching staff.
 - d. Week of the Young Child events- Library Card Drive on May 15th, children were led by the Stamford High School band around the track of the High School on May 18th. Many staff participated in the Early Childhood Fair at Cove Island on May 19th.
 - e. Memorial dedication for teacher, Alka Sud was held on May 16th- a Butterfly Tree and plaque was planted in her honor. Children sang several songs. Thank you to the School Readiness Council for purchasing the plaque.
 - f. Cluster B – field trip to Stamford High Preschool Lab- May 4th and 18th.
 - g. Cluster C – field trip to Stamford High Preschool Lab – May 8th and 22nd.
 - h. All Clusters have been taking the children to Stepping Stones, Ferguson Library’s Purple Bus and the Bruce Museum.
 - i. NAEYC Candidacy materials have been submitted- Accreditation visit can occur anytime from June 1- November 30th.