

Stamford School Readiness Council Meeting
Wednesday, February 13, 2013
9:00 a.m.
SoundWaters, 1281 Cove Road, Cove Island Park

Council Members Present:

Burke, Jennienne Peoples	Care to Care (Family Centers)
D’Luc, Imelda	Head Start/Childcare Learning Centers
Feder, Karen	Abilis
Hallisey, Jennifer (Chair)	United Way of Western Connecticut
McAdoo, Sharon	Stamford Public Schools
Morrow, Polly	Pitney Bowes
Mullett, Alisha	SoundWaters
Reardon, Ellen	Stamford Museum and Nature Center
Rigano, Sue	Stamford Public Education Foundation
Sabia, Michele	Stamford Public Schools
Wenz, Karen	First Presbyterian Nursery School

Staff/Advisors:

Arcuri, Donna	School Readiness Liaison, City of Stamford
Brennan, Karen	United Way of Western Connecticut
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:

Lehman, Penny	Childcare Learning Centers
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I. Welcome

Our thanks to Alisha Mullett and SoundWaters for hosting today’s meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes from January 2013 Meeting

The Council unanimously approved the minutes from the January meeting.

III. School Readiness Liaison Update

Donna Arcuri, our new School Readiness Liaison, updated the Council on both the School Readiness grant and the Quality Enhancement grant. Both were just released by the State and Donna and Karen Cammarota will be releasing them shortly to current providers, putting an advertisement in the local papers, and producing a timeline for submission and review.

Programs applying for **School Readiness funding** must complete the full application this year. This is the longer, more comprehensive application. The State is encouraging new programs to apply for funding and Deb Adams will be running a workshop in the coming weeks for interested providers. Bright Horizons on Camp Avenue has expressed some interest. Donna and Karen Cammarota will follow up with Deb on the question of available slots, and if there will be funds for additional slots. There were differing opinions on this—the State has said slots will stay level with what they are today; Barbara has heard there may be additional monies for new slots.

Council will need to decide if the **Quality Enhancement grant** will continue as it is now, or if we will look to other models. At present, the Quality Enhancement money we receive funds Jennienne Burke's position at Family Centers. Her work includes education and training for family home day care providers. She supports them with home visits and numerous trainings throughout the year (e.g., CPR/First Aid, nutrition, technology). The money also funds part of the salary for the nurse practitioner at William Pitt. She provides preventative and sick care for the children and their families at William Pitt, and is now counseling to home day care providers twice a week via phone.

IV. Old Business

A. Bond Grant

At last month's meeting, we approved CLC and Sacred Heart's applications to the State for Bond grant funding. Because this item was added to the agenda last minute and our discussion was brief, we asked Barbara Garvin-Kester and Sherry Tarantino to provide Council members with more detail at this meeting.

Sacred Heart is applying for \$10,000-\$15,000 for monies to improve their new school site, the former Waterside School location. The school was built for school age students and improvements need to be made on the playground for the safety of the younger children (i.e., new or refurbished equipment is needed, new mulch should be bought, and a safety lock needs to be installed on the gate). At present, Sherry's taking counsel with her board, as the Archdiocese does not have an Affirmative Action policy, nor will they create one, and Sherry may need this to apply.

CLC is applying for \$750,000. Funds will be used to help with capital improvements at the Maple Avenue site—consolidating and improving classroom space, and allowing for three additional classroom (for 60 students total) to be added. A general question around staffing came up in response to CLC thinking of adding additional classrooms. CLC has numerous open positions and is trying to hire at present. Staffing is an ongoing challenge. Barbara confirmed that all classrooms will have access to the Domus grassy field space and inside gym space (which CLC has from 9:30-12:00 each day). Council members encouraged CLC to explore a rooftop playground on top of the Domus building and to look for capital funding dollars. Barbara agreed to look into as an option to additional outdoor play space.

B. Kindergarten Information Nights

Michele Sabia and the Instructional Coordinators are to be commended for their hard work throughout the month of January. Multiple Kindergarten Information nights were held for pre-school parents. Our thanks to Caroline Ward for her help arranging the night at the Ferguson Library. We are going to investigate putting Michele's PowerPoint on the web site. Jennienne would like to share with home day care providers. We'll also consider having another community wide night in April in advance of May registrations.

V. New Business

A. Alternate Plan of Care Policy

In advance of the meeting, members were sent a draft of the Council's Alternate Plan of Care Policy (included here as Addendum A). In brief, each School Readiness Council must have an alternate plan of care policy which clearly states how alternative care will be provided, or how families will be reimbursed in the case of emergency closings (such as the one we experienced during Hurricane Sandy). Karen Cammarota and Donna Arcuri have spoken to our State contacts and the Executive Committee recommends we align our policy with the State policy to avoid jeopardizing our grant funding. Once approved, each School Readiness program sub-grantee needs to draft its own policy for consideration by the Council (in our case only CLC has to draft a policy. Because Sacred Heart is on a school day schedule, they have build in extra days into their calendar and will add on days as the school system does.).

A discussion was had around wanting there to be a distinction between alternate planned care versus emergency care. The State does not make a distinction. Because this was a new issue, a vote will be taken next month in order to allow the Council time to digest this information. CLC will write their policy and it will be sent to Council in advance of the March meeting. Both policies will be voted on next month.

B. Proposed Office for Early Childhood

On February 4, the Governor announced plans to create an Office of Early Childhood. The Office of Early Childhood proposes to move early childhood programs from five agencies—the State Department of Education, Department of Social Services, Department of Public Health, Department of Developmental Services, and the Board of Regents—reducing the fragmentation and thereby simplifying the process of insuring that all programs and services are of the highest quality and families have information and access to these services.

A full overview and suggested action steps to help support the legislature (House Bill 6359) were sent to the Council in a follow up e-mail.

VI. Council Announcements

- Sue Rigano reminded the group that Stone Soup will be held on March 23. There will be numerous presentations including one of the Common Core State Standards and one on school culture.
- We have set the dates for the Play and Learn Nights: May 9 (Yerwood Center), May 23 (Ferguson Library), and June 13 (Maple Avenue/Domus).
- Jennienne shared that Care to Care has found a new CPR/First Aid instructor and will be running a training session on February 26 at Post 53 in Darien. The cost of the instructor aligns with the going rate and will effect how many times per year trainings can be held (likely two instead of four).
- We will be applying to CHDI and Graustein for a Discovery grant for a small Health Data Institute.
- The Executive Committee is making progress with its strategic planning and will be ready to have a discussion in March. We'd ask Council members to allow for an extra hour for the March 13 meeting.
- As a reminder Council members are encouraged to send agenda items requiring discussion by the end of the month so that we can plan meeting time accordingly.

VII. Regular Reports

- Reports from Sacred Heart and CLC for January were sent to the Council in advance of the meeting and are included here as Addendums.
- Addendum to the meeting: Sherry Tarantino wrote to say that the Zoning Board of Appeals unanimously approved Sacred Heart's application for the move to St. Clement's Preschool. Now the work begins ... final approval from the Stamford Building Inspector and the State of CT Licensing Specialist, Deb Hayes. They already have approvals from the Health Dept and the Fire Marshall.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

**The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 13 at
William Pitt Child Development Center, 195 Hillandale Avenue.**

Addendum A: Alternate Plan of Care

Stamford School Readiness Council **Policies and Guidelines** **Alternate Plan of Care**

All School Readiness sub-grantees that enroll children participating in full day/ full year and/or extended day slots must have 50 weeks of service available to families. Full day programs must operate for ten hours per day, five days per week. Extended day programs must provide the equivalent of ten hours of care per day, five days per week. These minimum care requirements are exclusive the following legal State holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Lincoln's Birthday, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day (total 11 days).

- Each sub-grantee must submit their program calendar each grant year to the Stamford School Readiness Council for approval.
- Each sub-grantee will submit to the Stamford School Readiness Council, for prior approval, a written plan for alternate care to accommodate families' needs. Each sub-grantee's plan for alternative care must:
 - Guarantee Full-Day service for all families requesting it during a *non-holiday* closure. (Sub-grantees may develop cooperative arrangements with other early childhood sub-grantees in the community, within their own sub-grantees or provide payments to parents for weeks when care is not provided);
 - Give clear notice to parents 30 days in advance allowing sufficient time to make their own plans as needed;
 - Each sub-grantee must give families at least 30 days prior written notice of the non-holiday closing;
 - Parents must be informed of the alternative care policy and the alternative care programs when they enroll in the sub-grantee's school readiness program. Each sub-grantee must have families sign a form for their child's file that indicates whether they need the alternative care;
 - Each sub-grantee must have a policy on how alternate arrangements of care will be reimbursed; and
 - Inform parents of the alternative care policy when they enroll and the available alternative care available if needed.

Addendum B: Childcare Learning Centers Report, January 2013

- Program Utilization
 - a. Authorized Capacity – Full Day – 334; Part Day – 97; Extended Day – 113 = 544
 - b. Ages: 3 year olds – 172; 4 year olds – 306; 5 year olds- 32
 - c. Children with disabilities = 22 with IEP, 0 without IEP
 - d. Notes and Trends:

- Program Attendance:
 - a. 99% of enrollment
 - b. Notes and trends: We are full in the Part day Program this month but we only have one person on the Part day waiting list at this point.

- Staffing
 - a. Open Positions-Head Teacher- Cluster A, Assistant Teacher- Cluster A, Assistant Teacher-Cluster A (new), Assistant Teacher- Cluster C, Head Teacher -Cluster C (new), Assistant Teacher- Cluster D, Head Teacher- Cluster F, Assistant Teacher - Cluster F, Part-Time Aide – Cluster B
 - b. Recruitment – ad on-line, local newspapers, postings at NCC, Craig’s list
 - c. Notes and Trends – We continue to have a difficult time finding staff with a Bachelor’s degree with 36 credits in ECE.

- Training:
 - a. January 3 – “Read Aloud/Bloom’s Taxonomy” – Dr. Debbie Schreiner and Dori Walker
 - b. January 17 – Product vs. Process Art – Carol Sargent
 - c. Action Plan follow up meetings with Julie Coakley and Michele Sabia – January 7, 8 9, 14, 15, and 22.

- Special Events/Activities:
 - Teachers are preparing lesson plans based on the Preschool Curriculum Standards and the individual needs of the children.
 - Ladybug Melodies – presented to children – January 16th and 17th.
 - Lunch and Learn- “Reading and Your Child” – presented by Caroline Ward and Margo Sandahl
 - Parent Advisory Council – January 29th
 - Stamford Museum and Nature Center – “Animals in Winter” visit to William Pitt January 29th, 31st, and Feb 1st.
 - Kindergarten Night – January 23rd.
 - Parent/Teacher conferences throughout the month.

Addendum C: Sacred Heart Report, January 2013

Program Utilization:

- School Day – School Year – 47 Students
- Pre – K 3 Class – 18 (Child moved into area)
- Pre – K 4 Class #1-15
- Pre – K 4 Class #2-14 (Child moved back to India)
- All 26 School Readiness slots are full.

Program Attendance:

- Children – 70% colds, stomach flu, bronchitis, ear infections, high temperatures
- Staff – 90% Personal days
- School Closed – 1/21/13 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Early Dismissal on 1/28 at 2:00pm due to possible ice and snow.

Staffing:

- No staffing changes

Activities & Events:

- 1/18 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration with Staff & Children
- 1/22 – Professional Development – 7 area Catholic Schools/32 teachers were treated to a wonderful presentation from Cindy Bess, Ph.D regarding, “Experiencing Preschool through the eyes of a child.”
- 1/28 - Crazy Hat Day & Pizza Lunch for children, staff & parents
- 1/31 - Pajama & Pancake Breakfast for children, staff & parents
- School wide collection of pajamas and preschool books for children. Donated to St. Joseph’s Parenting Center on Elm Street.

Moving Update:

The Zoning Board of Appeals has scheduled a hearing on Wednesday, February 13th at 7:00pm at the Stamford Government Center listed under St. Clement’s Church Corp. (our new school site).