

Stamford School Readiness Council Meeting
Wednesday, March 13, 2013
9:00 a.m.
United Way of Western CT, 1150 Summer Street, 2nd Floor

Council Members Present:

D’Luc, Imelda	Head Start/Childcare Learning Centers
Garcia, Maritza	Adult Learning Center
Hallsisey, Jennifer (Chair)	United Way of Western Connecticut
Morrow, Polly	Pitney Bowes
Mullett, Alisha	SoundWaters (via phone)
Pavia, Robin Lawler	Mayor’s Representative
Reardon, Ellen	Stamford Museum and Nature Center
Rigano, Sue	Stamford Public Education Foundation
Sabia, Michele	Stamford Public Schools
Sandahl, Margo	Stamford Public Schools
Wenz, Karen	First Presbyterian Nursery School

Council Members Who Gave Proxy Votes In Advance of Meeting:

Burke, Jennienne Peoples	Care to Care (Family Centers)
Farrell, Anne	UConn Stamford
Feder, Karen	Abilis

Staff/Advisors:

Arcuri, Donna	School Readiness Liaison, City of Stamford
Brennan, Karen	United Way of Western Connecticut
Garvin-Kester, Barbara	Childcare Learning Centers (via phone)
Sargent, Carol	William Pitt Child Development Center

Guests:

Coakley, Julie	CES
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I. Welcome and Introductions

Jennifer welcomed everyone to the United Way, including Robin Lawler Pavia, the Mayor’s new designee to the Council. We are delighted to have Robin join us—as a former special education teacher, she brings a wealth of early childhood experience and a deep commitment to understanding and using data.

II. Approval of Minutes from February 2013 Meeting

The Council unanimously approved the minutes from the February meeting.

III. School Readiness Liaison Update

Donna Arcuri updated the Council on the provider workshop held on March 12 at Government Center. The workshop was designed to generate interest in new providers applying for School Readiness slots and to answer any questions programs might have as they relate to the application process, the NACEYC accreditation process, and School Readiness in general. We're excited to report that seven providers attended and many good questions were asked. Donna Delohery from Education Connection attended on behalf of the state and was a terrific resource. As a next step, Donna will follow up with programs to assess their interest in applying this year and/or reasons for not applying. Applications are due on April 17, 2013.

IV. Old Business

A. Alternate Plan of Care Policy

The Council voted to accept the SRC'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). After many discussions with our State contacts, the School Readiness Council has chosen to align our policy with the State policy to avoid jeopardizing our grant funding. CLC submitted their policy as requested and Donna is following up with the State – we anticipate presenting it at next month's meeting.

B. Quality Enhancement Grant

The Council voted in favor of continuing to advertise as it has in the past for the Quality Enhancement grant (included here at Addendum B). 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.

V. New Business

A. Monitoring Reports from CES

As the Council knows, monitoring is required of all School Readiness sites. Reports from Julie Coakley and Suzanne Clements were sent to the Council in advance of the meeting. Julie came and presented a high level summary at the meeting. In sum:

- 30 classrooms from four sites were monitored (Maple Avenue, Palmer's Hill, William Pitt, and Sacred Heart).
- The reports are used to guide the technical assistance and professional development then offered to the sites.
- For William Pitt, monitoring leads to individual classroom action plans being created. CES is proposing that these same action plans be developed for the Maple Avenue and Sacred Heart classrooms.

- The reports outline strengths (e.g., early literacy centers, family engagement practices, daily schedules) and areas of improvement (e.g., the need for outside play time at Maple Avenue, the critical problem of staff turnover at William Pitt) for each of the sites.
- CES recommends that all sites follow the State recommended guidelines for having three teachers in each classroom. There is great value to the three teacher model—it allows for all teachers to be working towards the School Readiness benchmarks, continuity when teacher absences naturally occur, and

A thoughtful discussion around the unprecedented staff turnover problems at William Pitt followed. It was agreed that a working group would be formed to further investigate this topic, including, but not limited to: teacher morale, salary ranges of all Stamford preschool programs, recruitment practices, union rules, length of teaching year, and more. Ellen Reardon, Karen Wenz, Robin Lawler Pavia, Donna Arcuri, and possibly someone from Pitney Bowes agreed to work on this issue. We'll continue the discussion at a future School Readiness meeting.

B. Strategic Planning Discussion

As the Council knows, the Executive Committee has been working on a strategic plan since last summer. The plan was introduced at today's meeting with a PowerPoint presentation. In brief, it is the Executive Committee's recommendation to move from a dual mission group (i.e., with the School Readiness Council focused on the State mandated grant funded slots for children ages 3-5 and the Collaborative focusing on all children ages 0-8 as described in our community plan or Blueprint) to an integrated body with a shared agenda and common measures. The new model drives from the Strive model of collective impact and has been favorably received by the Mayor and the Superintendent.

The next several months will have us moving work forward, while also transitioning to this new model. A PDF of the presentation will be sent to the Council along with a survey designed to collect feedback and to assess interest in working groups.

VI. Council Announcements

- Karen Brennan shared the good news that Stamford was one of eight communities chosen to receive a grant from CHDI, the Grossman Foundation, and the Graustein Memorial Fund for a program called the Early Childhood Health Data Institute. The goal of this Institute is to help communities enhance their planning and data development related to child health, by learning ways to effectively gather and utilize data from the CT State Department of Education's Early Childhood Health Assessment Record (the "yellow" form).
- Congratulations to Carol Sargent and the staff at William Pitt on successfully completing their NAEYC accreditation.
- Imelda D'Luc shared the preliminary results from the 2013 Community Assessment she asked the Council to complete back in January. The results will be sent to Council via e-mail.
- 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 February were sent to the Council in advance of the meeting and are included here as Addendums.

VIII. Adjourn

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

**The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 10 at
Pitney Bowes, 1 Elmcroft Road.**

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: Quality Enhancement Grant Advertisement

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT GRANT PROGRAM FY 2013-2014

The purpose of the Quality Enhancement Grant Program (QEGP) is to provide funding for programs that focus on education and early care that address quality standards and/or expand comprehensive services for children and families.

NOTICE

Request for Proposals Available for Quality Enhancement Grant Program

The City of Stamford is making available Requests for Proposals to private, non-profit organizations offering educational and human services to children and families in Fairfield County for the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. The purpose of the Quality Enhancement Grant is to provide funding for programs that focus on education and early child care that addresses quality standards and/or expands comprehensive services for children and families.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) is the result of funds being made available by the Connecticut Department of Education, Bureau of Teaching and Learning to provide resources to the Stamford School Readiness program and family home day care and kin to kin providers in the City of Stamford. The City is seeking proposals from agencies that can fund two, part-time positions: A Health Education Coordinator to provide health education to home day care providers, kin and kin providers and parents on early childhood development and health issues; and a Nurse Practitioner to provide healthcare to children in the State-funded School Readiness Program.

All providers must submit an RFP for the City to submit to the State Department of Education for final approval.

A copy of the State Quality Enhancement program guidelines and an RFP are available by calling the Mayor's Office at (203) 977-4589 or by emailing Donna Arcuri at: darcuri@ci.stamford.ct.us. In order to be considered, two copies of the proposal must be sent to Donna Arcuri's attention in the Mayor's Office, 10th Floor, Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, P.O. Box 1052, Stamford, CT 06904-2152 by 4:30 p.m. on April 17, 2013.

Addendum C: Childcare Learning Centers Report, February 2013

- Program Utilization
 - a. Authorized Capacity – Full Day – 334; Part Day – 97; Extended Day – 113 = 544
 - b. Ages: 3 year olds – 152; 4 year olds – 333; 5 year olds- 57
 - 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, waiting list remains limited.
- Staffing
 - Open Positions-
 - a. Head Teacher- Cluster A, Teacher-Cluster A, Assistant Teacher- Cluster A, Assistant Teacher- Cluster A (new), Assistant Teacher- Cluster C, Head Teacher -Cluster C (new), Teacher – Cluster D, Assistant Teacher- Cluster D, Teacher – Cluster E (new)Head Teacher- Cluster F (new), Assistant Teacher - Cluster F.
 - b. Recruitment – ad on-line, local newspapers, postings at NCC, Craig’s list
Notes and Trends – We continue to have a difficult time finding staff that meet the required credentials.
- Training:
 - a. February 7th - Product vs. Process Art – Carol Sargent
 - b. February 6th – Debriefing of the Monitoring/ Action Plan system – Julie Coakley
 - c. February 15th – Staff Dev. Day – Diversity- Carol Sargent and Emma Cassell
 - d. February 28th - Learning Experience Plan Committee – Debbie Schreiner and Dori Walker
- Special Events/Activities:
 - Teachers are preparing lesson plans based on the Preschool Curriculum Standards and the individual needs of the children.
 - Stamford Museum and Nature Center – Maple Sugaring – all classrooms went in February.
 - Lunch and Learn- “Importance of Dental Health” – presented by Dr. Cortez – February 13th
 - Parent Advisory Council – February 26th
 - Hearing Screenings – throughout the month
 - Parent/Teacher conferences completed throughout the month.
 - School Readiness Program Tours for families interested in registering. – February 27th.
 - Stamford High School Preschool lab – Cluster C – February 6th and 26th, Cluster B – February 25th.
 - Storytelling – Maple Ave #13 – February 12th
 - Belly dancing and Movement – Maple Ave #13 – February 21st
 - “Come Visit w/ Me” – Cluster E and F – February 13th
 - Black History Month – Ms. Emma shares African culture – February 26th

Addendum D: Sacred Heart Report, February 2013

Program Utilization:

- School Day – School Year – 47 Students
- Pre – K 3 Class – 18
- Pre – K 4 Class #1-15
- Pre – K 4 Class #2-14
- All 26 School Readiness slots are full.

Program Attendance:

- Children – 89% colds, high temperatures
- Staff – 90% Personal days
- Winter Recess Vacation – February 18 – 22, 2013

Staffing:

- No staffing changes

Activities & Events:

- 2/1 – Teddy Bear Picnic – Children were treated to a picnic style snack with Teddy Grahams and juice/water.
- 2/6 – Annual Photo Day with Cassidy Studios – Individual and Class photos taken.
- 2/14 – Celebration of Love & Friendship – Each classroom invited parents and friends to share a special snack time. Children shared Valentine’s with classmates.
- 2/26 – Staff Professional Development – Mandatory Diocesan PD. Returning staff members to review NAEYC Classroom Profile Boxes for updating. New staff members were trained on what is needed and how to update Classroom Boxes.
- 2/27 – Dental Health Day – Dental Care Kids visited with each classroom to learn about good nutrition and what foods are not good for our teeth! Children received “goodie” bags filled with a toothbrush, toothpaste, stickers and a certificate for \$25.00 to encourage a first time visit to a dentist.

Moving Update:

The Zoning Board of Appeals met on Wednesday, February 13th at 7:00pm at the Stamford Government Center. Attorney John Leydon presented our case to the board. Anne McCorry, Diocesan Chancellor, Sherry Tarantino, Director of SHS, Barbara Garvin-Kester, Executive Director of the Child Care Learning Center and a Sacred Heart School parent spoke on behalf of the importance and value of SHS to its children they serve and our community.

It was decided later on that evening by unanimous vote that Sacred Heart School was granted Special Exception to change the grade level from K – 5th to 2 Preschool grades.

(3’s & 4’s) which will enable the move to St. Clement’s school building, thus becoming St. Clement’s Preschool. A move date has not been scheduled.