

Middletown School Readiness Council
12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.
Wednesday, May 15, 2012
Wilbert Snow School
299 Wadsworth St.
Middletown, CT 06457

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Members Present: Christine Fahey, Sheila Daniels, Wendy Berlind, Beverly Lawrence, Christine O'Grady, Kitty Robinson, Lisa Golebiewski, Jerome Long, and Alice Torres. Also Present: Izzi Greenberg.

I. Welcome & Call to Order: In Betsy Morgan's absence, Chris called the meeting to order at 12:11 P.M. Introductions were made and Izzi Greenberg was welcomed. Izzi will be taking over upon Betsy Morgan's retirement as the Executive Director of the Middlesex Coalition for Children.

II. Announcements: A "save the date" flyer for the Stone Soup Discovery Conference was circulated. This year's event will be held on Oct. 22nd at the Crowne Plaza in Cromwell. Council members were encouraged to attend. A flyer for Middlesex Community College's accelerated summer course offerings in early childhood education was circulated. This course offering will take place in Meriden.

III. Acceptance of the April 24, 2012 School Readiness Council meeting: Wendy Berlind moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Beverly Lawrence seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Financial Report: was distributed, showing no unearned spaces again this month. It was noted that we are on target to spend down the grant by the end of the fiscal year.

V. Coordinator's Report:

Monthly Report: was distributed and shows that the majority of children served are from low-income households. In April, a question was raised around the higher amount of parent fees collected during March. This is because the reporting period for February ended on February 22nd, making the reporting period for March a five week period.

School Readiness Grant RFP: is ready for delivery tomorrow. As stated in the past, Middlesex will close and the YMCA has applied for those spaces to operate classrooms at Macdonough and Bielefield Schools. They have submitted Child Day Care licensing applications to the Dept. of Public Health. Discussion followed.

Annual School Readiness Evaluation: Site visits have been conducted and all of our School Readiness programs are participating in the annual program evaluation this month.

Kindergarten Kick Start Program Summer 2013 Update: An op-ed article in the Hartford Courant authored by the Kick Start Program director, Anna Schusterman was distributed. Izzi reported they have identified some children at the Macdonough School registration. She noted that this year registration is taken, but not all who are registered will be able to enroll in the program. Ideally, the program wants to serve children who had no preschool to very little preschool experience.

Quality Enhancement Grant: is complete and will be turned in to the State Dept. of Education tomorrow. A final report of the 2013-13 QE activities will be shared with the Council at the June meeting.

CT Voices for Children Budget Impact Report: was distributed for review. A discussion was held on the Spending Cap Bill and its impact if it does not pass. A 2/3 majority vote is necessary for this bill to pass and at this time we do not have enough votes in the Senate for it to pass. An additional \$500,000 in FY 14 and \$800,000 in FY 15 will need to be cut by the legislature if this bill does not pass. Discussion followed.

Child First Update: Christine O'Grady reported that the program is currently serving 26 families in Middlesex County and has nine families on the waiting list. She noted that service to families lasts between six months to a year. Staff is in their final Child FIRST training and will be finishing in June. Clinicians finished intensive training on psycho-therapy. This training supports the child with tools to talk out issues in real words. Child First is receiving referrals from the preschool case consultation.

Early Childhood Office Update: The latest iteration of the organization of the proposed new Office of Early Childhood was distributed and discussed. This important proposal would improve access for families and collaboration between providers.

Early Head Start Update: Alice noted that the Office of Head Start has given them until May 31 to report on their new budget given the cut in funding due to sequestration. Her program enrollment was reduced from 70 to 62 through attrition. The future of the community classroom partnership with Even Start is unclear until the state has a budget. Early Head Start needs to relocate their office, as the public schools will be using Hall House for an alternate education program for middle school students. She also noted that their wait list is growing and they are down one full time home visitor. She is hopeful that the national advocacy efforts will help to restore funds. The advocacy message is the same - *why take away funds to support early intervention when we know it works?*

Action Day - May 29th: The Early Childhood Alliance is working with the national early childhood organizations to create opportunity for Connecticut to participate in this event. Chris will send details for this event when she receives them.

Early Literacy Work Group Update: Julie and her team are out in community preschool programs coaching the teaching staff. This is going very well. We will have post data in June to share with the Council.

Sustainability Session: Chris, Ed Bonilla and Izzi Greenberg attended this technical assistance session yesterday and provided an overview.

PreK - K Alignment Work Group Update: A play group at Bielefield will begin next week. This play group will be a one hour, four-part series running from 10:00 - 11:00 A.M. This template will be able to be replicated at the other elementary schools that do not have a Family Resource Center. It is an opportunity to develop relationships with families before their child comes to school, provide resources to parents and give staff an opportunity to identify children that might benefit from other services. Release time for one kindergarten teacher will be necessary to run this and act as the "face of the school".

Early Childhood Alliance Update: The Alliance is working on the annual Children's Champions Event to be held this year on June 3rd at the State Capitol at 3:00 P.M. Information will be sent as soon as the Alliance provides it. It was noted that it is nice to have Middletown people present at the event to honor any legislators that receive this award.

Opportunity Knocks Update: Both Susan and Monica are very busy right now and were not able to join the Council meeting today. The YMCA, Board of Education and South Farms have all submitted their data from the yellow health forms. Reports will be generated next week.

VI. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:34 P.M. with thanks to those in attendance.

The next meeting of the Middletown School Readiness Council will take place on

Wednesday, June 19, 2013

from

12:00 - 1:30 P.M.

at

Wilbert Snow School

299 Wadsworth St.

Middletown, CT 06457

Respectfully Submitted by:
Sheila C. Daniels

