

Middletown School Readiness Council
12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.
Wednesday, May 20, 2015
Wilbert Snow School
299 Wadsworth St.
Middletown, CT 06457

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TOWN CLERK
MIDDLETOWN, CT

Members Present: Ed Bonilla, Alice Torres, Jessica Stewart, Sheila Daniels, Wendy Berling, Amy Waterman, Beverly Lawrence, Kitty Robinson, Donna Marino, Izzi Greenberg, Susan Sienkiewicz, Ann Perzan, Pat Charles, and Christine O'Grady.
Also present: Cindy Guerreri and JeJe Brant.

I. Welcome & Call to Order: Ed Bonilla called the meeting to order at 12: 15P.M. Introductions were made.

II. Announcements: Cindy Guerreri reported the Graustein Foundation is waiting for the state budget to be finalized, so she had no news. Donna Marino attended the Kindergarten Symposium and shared handouts from the meeting. Izzi Greenberg updated the group that the most current study report on food insecurity has been presented and is available on the Coalition's website. Izzi reported for Monica Belyea in her absence, reminding the Council of the upcoming Opportunity Knocks monthly meeting on May 26. Izzi also stated following the Opportunity Knocks meeting is Family Support Committee which will include a discussion on Element 3 (Element 3: Connecting Families, Schools and Communities) of the Safe Schools Healthy Students (SSHS) Grant. Alice noted Early Head Start has not heard yet on their competitive application for the Head Start Grant. She also noted ACES will be hosting its 2nd annual PreK to Grade 3 symposium July 22nd and their target audience is school leaders in their service area. Ed and Alice will be conducting their first annual listening tour to engage everyone involved in early childhood in an effort to bring the community together. They are reaching out to providers and leadership on other committees/councils to see what works and does not. Dr. Charles noted we have learned so much through SSHS work on collaboration and overlap and was supportive of this venture. Ed also announced the next MIAC meeting is at the Dekoven House Thursday at 8:30 and the discussion will be with two faith-based representatives to discuss successful partnerships between nonprofits and faith-based groups. Izzi shared she will be chairing the Advocacy Committee of CT Early Childhood Alliance. She also shared a bill that will either mandate worthy wage of \$15/hr. Let Izzi know if you have any interest in supporting this bill, she will send you the information around it.

III. Acceptance of the April 8th, 2015 School Readiness Council meeting minutes: Wendy Berling moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Christine O'Grady seconded the motion. Sheila thanked Izzi and Jessica for taking the minutes in her absence. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Financial and Monthly Summary Reports: Jessica distributed the financial report, showing slots full. She noted there is the potential to request a carry-over of grant funds and we currently have a surplus of \$9,000. The new social worker hired with Discovery Literacy funds

has been very successful in the School Readiness programs to date and it is already impacting better attendance among preschoolers and support for program directors and families.

V. Coordinator's Report:

Early Literacy funds were cut completely from the budget, and now have been restored to the 95% of the amount awarded on July 1, 2014 and the same goes for Community Plan funds. This is great news in light of the current state budget.

The School Readiness and Quality Enhancement grants have been submitted.

The slot reimbursement rate may see an increase for full day slots in the upcoming year; it all depends upon the state budget passing.

Local Update: The CT Storytelling program is going well. Jessica went to watch one of the story tellers at South Farms Nursery School and it was wonderful. Children were fully engaged and enjoying their time.

CREC work is winding down and has been going well. Circle of Security training through the FRC has given really great exposure to this training and we have funded the food offered at the trainings. FRC director, Amy Waterman noted it is very much appreciated by the families and her. Amy serves as the facilitator for these trainings. Ann Perzan hired Julie Giaccone to conduct a workshop on English Language Learners, it went well.

Jessica reported there is talk around removing the residency rule under the School Readiness requirements. The bill is on the table. A brief discussion followed.

In other bill matters – there is language now to push out the 50/50 staff credentials requirements to July 1 2017. There has been mixed response for those that worked so hard to get the credentials or left jobs because they weren't credentialed.

Jessica also noted that summer slots for school year slots is an issue for parents that need summer care and we should keep this concern on our radar for future support to those families.

Other Updates:

EHS: Alice reported the agency is still welcoming referrals.

Discovery Update: As noted in the announcements, Cindy reported Graustein is still waiting on the state budget to pass.

Head Start Update: No update, as Marla was not present.

Even Start Update: in Lina's absence, Jessica reported possible 5% cut to Even Start

Opportunity Knocks Update: Monica absent, discussion at the next Opportunity Knocks meeting, set for May 26th, and will be around pediatric dental homes.

Child First Update: Christine O'Grady introduced new clinician, JeJe Brant and noted they are very busy. Their wait list of 24 is down to 11-12 and asked people to continue to make referrals so they can continue and expand their work.

FRC Update: Amy reported playgroups will be held at Farm Hill, and playgroups will be held outside at Macdonough and fieldtrips to local places will continue. The Kickstart program has 9 confirmed children from Macdonough and 4 children for Farm Hill and both sites will use MAE Even Start space. Amy stated there is talk around expanding the Kickstart program and Wesleyan University students are ready to work to support the efforts.

The FRC RFP 2 year grant application process has stalled in SDE. A June 4th date has been noted as the date the RFP will go out, so it won't be in before the new fiscal year but there doesn't seem to be concern. Amy will update the Council as she gets information.

Middlesex Coalition for Children Update: Izzi reported work she and Monica are doing this summer to help the farmers market in the absence of the NEAT Director, Bobbi Peterson. Discussion around promoting participation ensued. Qualifying families receive double dollars at the market. They have learned Middletown has the lowest redemption of WIC offerings and wonder how can we push to improve rates of redemption. Jessica asked if anyone reached out to WIC staff. Could the staff collect data on why they are not redeeming the vouchers?

Transportation and frequency of market days might be barriers along with the use of fresh vegetables and fruit among food stamp users and the need to educate them on cooking with fresh produce, possibly by offering cooking classes with the emphasis on quick cooking. Kitty asked about connecting with summer programs to do so and Donna noted MAE has a cooking area that might be used.

Family School Connection Update: Donna reported 3 home visitors are making home visits, meeting to bring TripleP (The Triple P – Positive Parenting Program © is a parenting and family support system designed to prevent – as well as treat – behavioral and emotional problems in children and teenagers. It aims to prevent problems in the family, school and community before they arise and to create family environments that encourage children to realize their potential.) to Middletown, meeting tomorrow and will find out about training in Triple P with Level 1 happening now throughout the state.

Other News: Salvation Army is interested in a being a host for the summer lunch program. This is good news as their location is optimal.

VI. Adjournment: Ed closed the meeting at 1:11P.M., thanking those present for their attendance.

**The next Middletown School Readiness Council meeting will be held on
Wednesday, June 10, 2014
at
Wilbert Snow School
299 Wadsworth St., Middletown, CT 06457
from
12:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted by:
Sheila C. Daniels

