

**Middletown School Readiness Council**  
**12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.**  
**Wednesday, September 15, 2015**  
**Wilbert Snow School**  
**299 Wadsworth St.**  
**Middletown, CT 06457**

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**Members Present:** Ed Bonilla, Alice Torres, Jessica Stewart, Sheila Daniels, Wendy Berling, Amy Waterman, Beverly Lawrence, Kitty Robinson, Donna Marino, Izzi Greenberg, Susan Sienkiewicz, Christine O'Grady, Susan Macary, Monica Belyea, Jerome Long, Marla Hinz, Lina Kronenberger, Jim Gaudreau and Liz Fraser.

**Also present:** Cindy Guerreri and Rebecca Deotte.

**I. Welcome & Call to Order:** Jessica Stewart called the meeting to order at 12:10P.M welcoming everyone back. Introductions were made.

**II. Announcements:** Jim Gaudreau informed the Council he attended a parent/teacher home visiting workshop and shared a handout along with giving an overview of the value of family involvement.

Izzi Greenberg announced the Childhood Hunger Task Force meeting will be the last Monday of the month at 12:00 at City Hall. The Family Support Committee will meet after the October Opportunity Knocks monthly meeting at 1:15P.M. in the Hazen Room at the YMCA on Union Street. This meeting allows a forum for home visiting groups to get together. It was noted this would be a good venue for Jim to talk and share information on the parent involvement initiative. Cindy suggested we consider pairing with other districts and noted the School Family Community Conference is next week.

In Donna Marino's absence, Rebecca announced the district received \$31,000 to support the PEP (People Empowering People) program. She circulated flyers for the upcoming PEP program that will have a Special Education focus.

Alice reported ACES held its 2nd Annual PreK - K Symposium in July with over 26 districts represented.

Ed thanked Jessica for starting the meeting in his absence and also thanked those present for their dedication to the City and the School Readiness Council.

**III. Acceptance of the June 2015 School Readiness Council meeting minutes:** Christine O'Grady moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Wendy Berling seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**IV. Financial and Monthly Summary Reports:** Jessica shared the financial report, showing slots full for the previous fiscal year and addressed the slot capacity. This fiscal year to date we have filled every slot in July, August and September has very few slot openings. There are 6 non-residents out of the 21 that were allocated throughout the 7 sites. Izzi asked if we could add those numbers to the future monthly reports. Discussion followed.

**Discovery Budget:** We were fully funded by Graustein Foundation and thank them for graciously doing so. Jessica reviewed the budget with the Council and outlined what will be funded with these funds. Discussion followed. (Sheila Daniels stepped out briefly)

**Conflict of Interest information and forms:** Jessica shared handouts and forms with the Council for their review and signatures. Discussion followed. Ed mentioned this exercise supports what we are already aware of in a more formal manner. Council members were asked to sign and return the form to Jessica before leaving the meeting today. Any member that did not return the signed form is asked to do so before or at the next Council meeting.

**Safe Schools/Healthy Students Support:** This grant has been cut by \$95,000 and the Community Management Team has requested letters of support be sent. Rachel Bruno created a template and Jessica will it send out to Council members for their support.

\*Side note: Since the Council meeting, the cut funds of \$95,000 were returned to the school district. Thanks to those that sent letters of support and Rachel Bruno for her efforts. Also, funds from the Office of Early Childhood were since cut with a reduction to both community plan funds and early literacy for a total loss of \$2,177 of which major projects will not be affected. This may not be the last recession for these funds it is anticipated this happening again in the spring of 2016.

#### **Local Program Updates:**

**Early Head Start:** Alice reported they are fully enrolled and getting ready to move into a new location at 300 Washington St (Faith Lutheran Church Building). Early Head Start was not successful in receiving the Head Start grant as it was awarded to Community Renewal Team (CRT). Alice would like to collaborate with other early childhood agencies by sharing their new space. This space could be used to house the following: parent and policy council meetings, parent resource center, a community meeting room, play groups, and home visitation option meeting area. She is waiting to sign a contract for a CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) to support a playground in hopes to share with existing programs.

**Head Start Update:** Marla announced they received funding for 77 slots and noted this decreases their capacity of funded slots down from 120. She noted current classrooms are now full year, there is a young 3 yr. (2.9 yrs. of age) classroom and 17 slots were reserved for those children. Currently 20 slots are funded through the OEC Child Day Care grant funds and the other 57 slots are funded through Head Start. Discussion followed, Marla noted future slot capacity is not clear at this point. Other classrooms have a mix of 3 and 4 yr. old children. The Portland site has 16 slots and the Clinton site has 17 slots.

**Even Start Update:** Lina reported classrooms are full and they have a wait list already. She noted everything is going well in their 2 classrooms.

**Opportunity Knocks Update:** Monica reminded those present the Opportunity Knocks September meeting will take place on Tuesday, Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> at noon in the Hazen Room at the YMCA, Union Street. This meeting will be their 13<sup>th</sup> year and all are welcome to attend and take part in the review of the program to date.

**Child First Update:** Christine O'Grady noted the program currently has a wait list. It dwindled during the summer, but crept back up as the summer ended.

**FRC Update:** Amy reported the Kickstart program ran this summer and combined the groups to make one large group. This was the last summer of the grant so next steps will have to be planned to sustain this valuable program. Amy reported she has combined the playgroup calendars to try to encourage people to attend multiple events. The site coordinator position at

Macdonough has not been filled to date. She will provide Circle of Security training in October and in the spring at the Even Start program. Amy is working on building a day care group to conduct a train the trainer's opportunity around nutrition. Amy also noted local licensed family day care home numbers are down.

**Middlesex Coalition for Children Update:** Izzi announced the library has MP3 players for youngsters. The Coalition has resumed its monthly meetings after the summer break and Izzi noted the next two meetings will be interesting with discussions around: chronic absence, suspension and expulsion. Discussion followed.

**CAHS:** Liz echoed what Izzi said regarding connections and funding. She went on to say the budget next year is speculated to be worse than this year. She shared copies with the data book with the Council and noted it is on their website.

**Other:** Ed announced the MAIC meeting will be held tomorrow at the Dekoven House and Terry Edelstein, the Governor's Non-Profit Liaison, will discuss what she has done and what the office of non-profits is doing to sustain funding.

**VI. Adjournment:** Ed closed the meeting at 1:40P.M, thanking those present for their attendance.

**The next Middletown School Readiness Council meeting will be held on  
Wednesday, October 21, 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

