

Middletown School Readiness Council

12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.

Wednesday, October 21, 2015

Wilbert Snow School

299 Wadsworth St.

Middletown, CT 06457

Members Present: Ed Bonilla, Jessica Stewart, Sheila Daniels, Amy Waterman, Beverly Lawrence, Izzi Greenberg, Susan Sienkiewicz, Dr. Jerome Long, Donna Marino, and Monica Belyea. **Also present:** Cindy Guerreri, and Dionne Lowndes, Jennifer Cannata.

I. Welcome & Call to Order: Ed Bonilla called the meeting to order at 12:05 P.M. welcoming everyone back. Introductions were made.

II. Announcements: none

III. Acceptance of the September 15, 2015 School Readiness Council meeting minutes: Amy Waterman moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Susan Sienkiewicz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with clarification from Donna Marino that \$31,000 in funding was awarded for PEP and Voices for Families.

IV. Financial and Monthly Summary Reports: Jessica shared the financial report, showing 7 slots open between Bright & Early and the YMCA. Bright and Early has now since filled their slot, and the YMCA is still working on filling 5. Amy volunteered to contact Melanie at the YMCA to help recruit children for their openings. Jessica reminded the Council of the State level budget cuts that could impact School Readiness Grant funds and we should be contacting our legislative representatives and senators, there may be possible cuts to slot funds, so programs need to keep slots filled. She went on to inform the Council of the larger concern around the School Readiness Grant as a reimbursement program and there was discussion around funding being awarded up front rather than as a reimbursement model presently in place. At the last state liaison meeting, conversation rose around unfunded slots being taken back. For Instance, the Smart Start program is fully funded up front and School Readiness is not. Beth Bye will be presenting on Advocacy to Community Providers in December specifically to encourage programs to find ways to advocate for their programs, children and families. Donna is currently working on the Voices for Families program and Jessica state she will be looking to recruit those who attend the December workshop to partake in the Voices for Families program starting in February 2016. Amy reported Beth Bye spoke to the Family Resource Center Alliance around matching funds at the local level, Ed mentioned competing priorities and Izzi mentioned "one ask vs many individual askings". Donna complimented the School Readiness Council for their efforts on funding with strategic planning. Amy added we need to strategize for the universal system and we might be a step ahead of other communities. Donna offered to present on the work she and Jim Gaudreau have been working on around family involvement and empowering families. Izzi will bring this topic to the family support committee for conversation. Jessica shared handouts from the last Coalition meeting including a visual of the OEC staff, and the power point presentation.

Updates:

Discovery Update: Cindy noted Discovery funding ends in June of 2016. The Office of Early Childhood has the line item in their budget. She mentioned the Discovery (School Readiness Coordinator in Middletown) coordinators are working on developing a voice of support. Cindy noted capacity building supports will be ending the end of December 2015, and there was no Stone Soup this year. The Graustein Foundation has a new mission and they are sponsoring 60 people for a Equity summit meeting in CA and Amy Waterman and Izzi Greenberg will be attending on behalf our Discovery community. She suggested we work on what we want to sustain and how we are sustaining it. There is an opportunity for Councils to request technical assistance. Yearly there is \$2,400 for technical assistance and \$4,000 for liaison support. Cindy noted an RFP for some small funding will be going out in the upcoming months.

Local Program Updates:

Early Head Start: Dionne reported in Alice's absence. She encouraged referrals to the EHS program. During September, there were 8 referrals, 8 contacts, 2 intakes scheduled, no waiting list, 7 children exited, and 6 intakes completed. There are 55 families enrolled in family visiting and of that number, 5 for prenatal support. Dionne also wanted to mention the screening opportunities they have for families and they are promoting home environmental safety checks for families. Early Head Start has completed their move to 300 Washington St. and are settling into their new facility. They are also looking to secure funds to improve their setting.

Head Start Update: Marla was not present.

Even Start Update: Lina was not present.

Opportunity Knocks Update: Monica reminded the next Opportunity Knocks meeting is on Tuesday, Oct 27th, and the meeting may not be able to take place in the Hazen Room at the YMCA. Dionne offered the new Early Head Start facility at 300 Washington Street. Monica noted she attended the CT Coalition for Breastfeeding meeting and shared brochures from that meeting, noting they are appropriate for FLMA packets. She also noted most complaints come from teachers and nurses around breastfeeding barriers. It is important to have a written policy and let expectant moms know ahead of their baby's delivery the policies around breastfeeding in the workplace. These measures reduce employee turnover and increases breastfeeding practice. Discussion followed around the behavioral health focus of the next meeting. Circle of Security training will occur at Town & Country for 9 teachers. Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) is funding this pilot program. Jessica noted 29 people were trained last year in Attachment Theory and Town & Country Early Learning Center was offered the same training in October 2015. Sarah Gray will assist in the evaluation (from All our Kin in New Haven). SS/HS started funding discretionary funds through a small application process. Jessica noted the next Attachment Theory training will be conducted for the PreK - K Committee in January and April and in March & April an evening training will occur. This is a great prelude for Circle of Security. The Attachment Theory model is being used for the Case Consultation meetings now as well.

Child First Update: Christine O'Grady was not present.

Family Resource Center Update: Amy reported Martha Sanchez, the new site coordinator, started working 28 hours per week. She has a lot of preschool experience and is bilingual. She is working with

DPH on knapsack train the trainers with 5 topics and computer training for Kith 'n Kin and family day care providers around nutrition. The FRC is working with Adult Ed on Circle of Security trainings and Amy is working to offer this training to newcomers to expand those exposed to it. She also shared concern around funding cuts in the future and keeping an eye on work at the state level. Under the Early Literacy committee, Jessica said a conversation around where are the trainers now has been had, and a group will be looking at who is willing to train on Circle of Security. Amy noted it might behoove us to gather those trainers together and meet around how they are serving the community. Monica suggested it be put under the Behavioral Health Group. This is a good Segway from the Early Literacy group to the Behavioral Health group since that funding will end with Discovery. Next Behavioral Health meeting is scheduled for November 9th.

Middlesex Coalition for Children Update: Izzi reported Childhood Hunger Task Force is set to discuss the summer lunch program, the universal breakfast and lunch program at 2 schools. November is open communities alliance - what that looks like statewide and locally and the impact of that. Data project in process, hoping to begin presentation in December, would like at some point to have it on the Council agenda make a presentation.

Family School Connection Update: Donna reported the program is nearly full and staff is busy here at Snow School. She noted staff was recently all trained in Triple P and they enjoyed the training, finding it will be beneficial to most families. Their budget was cut at end of legislative session, so they are looking for other support sources. Tomorrow there is a statewide home visiting conference. Susan Sienkiewicz noted families are letting them know the Family School Connection staff is very supportive and is hearing from the families they work with at DSS. Donna hoping state will look at the data and expand the program beyond the current three cities. Jen noted they bridged the gap here at Snow as a resource. A handout was circulated on Community Messengers. This will be covered by a small grant award and Donna and Jessica are currently working on developing this program. Donna went on to note anyone is welcome to help by reviewing the information and offering any feedback and support for training. This is a good way to share the resources in Middletown. Ed suggested United Way as a place to look for volunteers.

CAHS: Liz Fraser was not present.

VI. Adjournment: Ed closed the meeting at 1:37P.M., thanking those present for their attendance.

**The next Middletown School Readiness Council meeting will be held on
Wednesday, November 18, 2015
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

