

Middletown School Readiness Council

12:00 P.M. – 1:30 P.M.

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

Wilbert Snow School

299 Wadsworth Street, Middletown

Members Present: Betsy Morgan, Christine Fahey, Sheila Daniels, Wendy Berlind, Maureen Partyka, Christine O'Grady, Jerome Long, Monica Beylea, Bob Rosenbaum, Kitty Robinson, Cindy Cappetta, Beverly Lawrence, Ed Bonilla, Bill Boyd, Steve Gaarder, Alice Ellovich, Krystal Ndukwu and Lisa Ellis. Catherine Bradshaw was also in attendance.

I. Welcome & Call to Order: Betsy Morgan opened the meeting at 12:10 P.M. welcoming all those present. Introductions were made and the Council welcomed its student representative, Katie Pierini, from Mercy High School.

II. Approval of Minutes for the Sept. 2009 Meeting: Bob Rosenbaum moved for acceptance of the minutes of the above-mentioned date. Jerome Long seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Announcements: Chris circulated several fliers for upcoming events and M.E.C.N. workshops and Donna distributed parent program brochures.

IV. Financial Report: will no longer be provided by Central Office due to changes in staff. Betsy suggested that information be shared each month on unearned funds. It was noted that there are \$2,782 in unexpended funds to date with one unused space at Town & Country and four spaces at South Farms, all of which are now filled.

V. Coordinator's Report:

Early Head Start Grant Update: A team of auditors was at ACES for more than a week. Alice is now working out final issues with ACF in Boston. Chris thanked Monica for her assistance in exploring the food program options and regulations who in turn acknowledged Dawn Crayco at End Hunger CT for her assistance. Transportation plans are also being reworked. A meeting will be held on Friday to try to tie up loose ends. There are hopes for a tentative start up date of December 1st.

Born Learning Trail: Comcast is going to sponsor a Born Learning Trail in Middletown. It will be constructed next April for their Day of Caring and will also coincide with the Week of the Young Child. The approval for this project, which is to be constructed on property next to the exit roadway for Wilbert Snow School, is in process.

CT State Budget for School Readiness Grant: the award letter confirming a \$1,775,592 grant to Middletown has been received and is sufficient to cover all requested spaces. Funds received at City Hall include reimbursements for programs that received an 11% shortfall during the summer months.

Implementer Bill: Betsy reported that the Early Childhood Cabinet is still in place with a revised membership that includes more early childhood providers. She noted that responsibilities have been reduced with some moved to the Office of Early Childhood Planning, Outreach and Coordination. The bill passed by the House, but not yet the Senate, includes an eight billion dollar Early Learning Challenge grant to states with about \$160 million coming to Connecticut for infrastructure building. It was noted that this work maybe part of a huge effort to overhaul the early childhood system. Discussion followed.

Opportunity Knocks Update: Monica reported she will be staying on a bit longer in order to allow Susan and her family time with their newly adopted daughter, Celia. Congratulations to Susan and her family from the entire School Readiness Council! Work continues on the work groups including the Infant Feeding Group that has a new champion in Dr. Rosen and parent survey work to be conducted by Dawn Crayco from End Hunger CT. The Oral Health Group continues to train non-dental providers. Work is also being done on physical activity and nutrition in homes as well as early child care programs. Council member, Steve Gaarder, is working on revising the logic model for Opportunity Knocks.

Graustein Discovery Update: Catherine Bradshaw provided an overview of the Stone Soup 2009 Conference held the day before. She noted that David Nee spoke of a five-year plan that would include three levels of funding. Our community falls under the highest funding level designated for communities with comprehensive plans in place that are ready for implementation. Congratulations to Middletown parent Tawana Bourne who was a recipient of the Stone Soup Parent Award.

Discovery Grant RFP Requirement: David Nee and Carmen Siberon from the Graustein Memorial Fund will be coming to Snow School to speak to the Council on December 3rd from 1:00 – 2:30 P.M. All members are invited to attend this important meeting.

Housekeeping - Council Appointment Updates: The mayor will attend the November School Readiness Council meeting to swear in all council members who have not yet been sworn in.

Other Business: Bob Rosenbaum suggested that early childhood professional development for staff be considered if federal funding is considerable. Discussion followed. It was noted if we develop a plan for professional development; it might help to insure funding opportunities and may also serve as a model for other communities and states. Rates of compensation and staff credentials need to be considered. The big question might be: *Do we try to serve more children with less qualified staff or serve fewer children with more qualified staff?* Betsy suggested that the Council devote time in future meetings to further discuss this issue.

Christine O'Grady reminded the Council of the award that Donna received last month.

It was noted that Macdonough School principal Jon Romeo was one of the speakers at the Stone Soup Conference yesterday. He was on a panel and shared his school's strategies for CMT success.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 P.M. with thanks to all in attendance.

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

Wednesday, November 18th, 2009

at

Snow School

from 12:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.

(Lunch will be served)

Respectfully Submitted by: Sheila Daniels