

**Middletown School Readiness Council**

12:00 P.M. – 1:30 P.M.

Wednesday, February 24, 2010

Wilbert Snow School

299 Wadsworth Street, Middletown

**Members Present:** Betsy Morgan, Christine Fahey, Sheila Daniels, Wendy Berlind, Maureen Partyka, Beverly Lawrence, Alice Ellovich, Christine O’Grady, Bill Boyd and Ed Bonilla. 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.

**II. Minutes of January 20, 2010 School Readiness Meeting:** Wendy Berlind moved for acceptance of the minutes for the above mentioned date. Beverly Lawrence seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**III. Announcements:** Chris circulated flyers for the following workshop opportunities: Nurturing Fathers, St. Joseph College School for Young Children Math and Science Symposium, Parent SEE Program, and SERC Early Childhood offerings. She also circulated the latest All Children Considered newsletter and today’s Middletown Press featuring photograph coverage of yesterday’s Opportunity Knocks celebration of Dental Health Month with local “family friendly” dentists being honored. Christine O’Grady noted that the Children’s Trust Fund Windsor Collaborative will be hosting an Early Childhood Conversation. Christine will forward information on this event via e-mail to Chris for her to send out to the Council members.

**IV. Financial Report:** A financial report was distributed reflecting the School Readiness Grant funds spent down through January. All slots are filled at this time and programs have waiting lists. Discussion followed.

**V. Coordinator’s Report:**

**Good News:** Town & Country Early Learning Center on South Main Street received N.A.E.Y.C. accreditation. Chris noted how difficult it is to become accredited, especially when a program includes infant and toddler age children. The Council congratulates Judi Kenney and her entire staff on this impressive accomplishment.

**Early Childhood Advocacy Day:** will be held at the Capitol on March 3<sup>rd</sup> from 10:00 to 11:30 A.M. in Room 310 and followed by appointment visits to local legislative representatives and senators. Chris will attend this event with the School Readiness program directors.

**Early Learning Challenge Grant Forum and Conversation:** with the chairs of the Education Committee and Human Services, this event will take place on March 8<sup>th</sup> at 2:00. This is an effort to position CT for federal funding opportunities including the Early Learning Challenge Grant. A conversation with communities will follow from 3:30 to 5:00 in the private dining room at the LOB. School Readiness Council members are encouraged to attend this gathering. Chris will forward exact time and location information to the Council by email as the date draws nearer.

**March 17<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting Date: has been changed to March 24<sup>th</sup>** at noon in Room 1C at the LOB. Invitations to all the Middletown legislative representatives and senators will be sent out.

**United Way Annual Advocacy Conference March 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> in Washington D.C.:** Ed Bonilla and Chris Fahey will attend. They will meet with CT representatives and senators while in D.C. This is the third year Ed and Chris will be attending this conference.

**Middletown Kindergarten Students Preschool Experience 2009-2010 Update:** A handout outlining three items requested during the review of the initial report that was distributed to the Council at the January meeting. The first chart shows 71% Caucasian and 29% Minority children kindergarten students with two or more years of preschool experience. The second chart shows those students without a preschool experience were 60% Caucasian and 40% Minority. The third chart shows 58% Full Pay and 42% Free/Reduced lunch students with no preschool experience. It was noted that this chart reflects that of the student population in our public schools. More discussion followed around the issue of children with no preschool experiences.

**Policy Review:** although this usually takes place in April, Chris brought a request for a change to the Council - a recommended change in **PO-09-04 School Readiness Definition of Space Types** that reflected the addition of the following statement: *Children must arrive to participate in the program not later than 9:00 A.M. each day.* A lengthy discussion followed regarding this and the importance and benefits of children participating in the academic portion of the program's day as well as fostering the timely start of the school day that will continue to be an important part of children's educational experience for years to come. Bill Boyd moved that the Council adopt the addition to the policy as noted above. Wendy Berling seconded. The motion carried with nine in favor and one opposed. The Council asked Chris to share their discussion with the providers, especially the concern about a possible increase in the number of children being expelled from programs.

**Executive Summary of Yale Zigler Center Evaluation of CT Family Resource Centers:** Middletown's two Family Resource Centers were among 16 throughout the state that were chosen for this evaluation process. The executive summary of the evaluation report was distributed while Betsy congratulated Family Resource Center Director Maureen Partyka and her staff on the positive review by the evaluators. Maureen thanked those present that participated in the interview process for this evaluation. She noted that the FRCs do a lot with a little funding and tailor their programs to their communities' needs by enhancing, not duplicating services. It was noted that this accomplishment should be shared beyond the Council through the District Highlight portion of a future Board of Education meeting or on the Board of Education's Spotlight on Education television program. Board members Sheila Daniels and Bill Boyd will pursue this suggestion.

**Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance 2010 Policy Agenda:** was distributed for the Council members' review. It will be useful for meetings with legislative representatives and senators so that we can advocate for early childhood issues in a uniform manner.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 P.M. with thanks to all in attendance.

The next meeting of the School Readiness Council  
will take place on  
**Wednesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010**  
at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford  
Room 1C  
from 12:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted by: Sheila Daniels

