

Middletown School Readiness Council

1:00 P.M. – 2:30 P.M.

Wednesday, January 20th, 2010

Wilbert Snow School

299 Wadsworth Street, Middletown

Members Present: Betsy Morgan, Christine Fahey, Sheila Daniels, Wendy Berlind, Maureen Partyka, Beverly Lawrence, Jerome Long, Steve Gaarder, Alice Ellovich, Donna Marino and Bill Boyd. 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.

II. Minutes of December 3, 2009 School Readiness Meeting: Wendy Berlind moved for acceptance of the minutes for the above mentioned date. Donna Marino seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Announcements: Betsy circulated a flyer for the VITA program and noted that it is up and running with many volunteers this year. Call 2-1-1 for information. Chris circulated flyers for upcoming M.E.C.N. workshops, Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative sponsored professional development offerings for early childhood directors, New Jerusalem Christian Center's (in Middletown) Raising Healthy Kids, Family Advocacy's seven-week series Parenting Management Training, and the Board of Education's five-session Parent Training and Support.

IV. Financial Report: SDE is no longer providing communities with monthly data reports. Chris will create a document that details student demographic information over the past six months for the next council meeting.

V. Coordinator's Report:

Middlesex Community Foundation Grant Application Update: The School Readiness Council was awarded \$3,000 in funds for their ongoing early literacy work that will include storytelling performances, workshops for teachers, and book distribution programs to children.

Child First Grant Application Update: The Middletown team met with the review team in December to discuss the grant application and provide clarifications. The team was impressed with all the collaboration in Middletown and the proposal, but the replication grants were awarded to Norwalk and Waterbury. Middletown is in a good position for funding if there is a second round

Early Head Start Update: The grant award letter was received prior to the holiday break to serve 70 children in Middletown and the shoreline area. Families will be receive weekly home visits and bi-monthly socializations OR monthly home visits and a center-based child care experience. Transportation to socializations and medical appointments will be need-based and provided by Middlesex Hospital. The start-up phase will run through the end of April with a May 1st start date for serving families. Renovations at the Hall House on 425 Hunting Hill Ave. (owned by the Board of Education) have begun and ACES staff will move there upon completion of those renovations. Clinton Child Care Center will be offering spaces in their program for the shoreline area; they are looking forward to the professional development opportunities that will be provided. Chatham Court Community Center in Portland, Henry Carter Hull

Library, Macdonough Family Resource Center, and Russell Library will be socialization sites to date. Monica is working hard on the snack and meal program that is a challenging requirement of Early Head Start. The award announcement came through Sen. Dodd's office and a small piece appeared in the Hartford Courant. Discussion was held about holding an Open House, inviting federal legislators, and getting the word out in the community. Betsy asked Chris to invite the Early Head Start staff to a Council meeting to be introduced. A brochure is being developed and will be shared with the Council.

Business – Meeting Schedule: Our meeting schedule must be posted with the Town Clerk's office by the end of January. A schedule of meeting dates for the 2010 year was distributed. Meetings will remain on the third Wednesday of each month from 12:00 to 1:30 P.M. with the exception of February and April due to the school vacations on the third week of those months. Donna Marino moved that the Council adopt the schedule of meetings for 2010. Maureen Partyka seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Sheila will send the schedule to Town Clerk Sandra Russo-Driska.

Capacity Report: The annual slot and capacity report was distributed to the Council. Two new programs have been licensed and have openings currently - *P.E.A.C.E.* on Long Hill Rd. and *Home on the Grange* on Butternut St. *Apple Tree* has opened a new addition and expanded the number of infant and toddler spaces. The capacity report showed 939 total preschool spaces in Middletown programs. It was noted that both home day care and infant/toddler center-based enrollment are down, which might be a reflection of the economy. Betsy signed off on the report and it was submitted to SDE.

Middletown Kindergarten Students Preschool Experience 2009-2010: report was distributed and reviewed with the Council. Alice noted that this was great data and asked if it could be shared statewide. The information sheet we distribute to incoming families was circulated and discussed. 85% of kindergarten students in Middletown had at least one year of preschool.

Discovery Update: Catherine reported that the application for the 2010 – 2012 grant cycle was released on January 15th with a due date of February 26th and included three levels of funding. Middletown is in the Option 1 category with a community plan in place and ready for implementation. The Graustein Memorial Fund Board of Trustees will meet in mid April and funds will be distributed retroactive after that date. The application focus is on community decision-making structure and process, process for finalizing plans and implementation strategies. There is an early literacy RFP for Level 1 communities that meet the strict qualifications that will provide a community with \$100,000 cash and \$100,000 in technical support to be a demonstration community. Catherine noted that the requirements may prevent us and other communities from applying for this funding.

Opportunity Knocks Update: The **Oral Health** work group is working on the February 23rd meeting. They will be recognizing "child friendly" dental practices by distributing plaques. A press release will follow and go out to practices that did not receive recognition. Dr. Cliff O'Callahan will offer training to any practice requesting it. The **Infant Feeding Group** met this morning for the first time and is looking at best practices, strategies for getting information to the public, and family friendly work places and child care centers. Dawn Crayco is analyzing the breast feeding surveys completed by families. Betsy noted that a **Family Support Committee** was formed as part of our community plan. This is a group of 20 people who will meet monthly after the Opportunity Knocks meetings. Alice noted that dental health liaisons are throughout the state now and she will find out who serves Middletown. The CT Dental Partnership helps families find dentists who accept Husky Plan dental coverage.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:33 P.M. with thanks to all in attendance.

The next meeting of the School Readiness Council
will take place on
Wednesday, February 24th, 2010
at
Snow School
from 12:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.
(Lunch will be served)

Respectfully Submitted by: Sheila Daniels