

Middletown School Readiness Council
12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.
Wednesday, June 9, 2014
Wilbert Snow School
299 Wadsworth St.
Middletown, CT 06457

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TOWN CLERK
MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

Members Present: Mayor Dan Drew, Tina Gomes, Alice Torres, Ed Bonilla, Christine Fahey, Sheila Daniels, Wendy Berlind, Monica Beylea, Susan Macary, Jim Gaudreau, Beverly Lawrence, Jerome Long, Kitty Robinson, Donna Marino, Izzi Greenberg and Christine O'Grady.
Also Present: Paige McMullen and Marla Hinz.

- I. **Welcome & Call to Order:** Co-Chair Ed Bonilla called the meeting to order at 12:15 P.M. thanking those present. Introductions were made and the meeting was turned over to the Mayor.
- II. **Recognition and Proclamation:** The Mayor thanked the Council for their work supporting school readiness and recognized Tina Gomes for her work and role as a resource. He then thanked Chris Fahey for her service to many children in Middletown and beyond. He noted her impact on those children and the community at large and that her retirement will be a loss for the community. He then went on to read the proclamation that honored Chris by making June 9th, 2014 Christine Fahey Day. A round of applause followed. Sheila Daniels presented Chris with a Waterford vase filled with flowers on behalf of the Council members. Chris responded with thanks and noted she has thoroughly enjoyed her work, especially the people she encountered along the way, but is ready to rest.
- III. **Announcements:** Monica reminded the Council of the Help Me Grow screening at the Healthy Kids Fair this Saturday. Donna added that the school district sent out a reminder to each school. Donna added that the PLTI graduation will take place this Thursday evening with a 5:00 P.M. reception followed by the ceremony at 6:00 P.M. Marla announced that CRT Head Start has two vacancies. Interested people may visit the CRT website for more information.
- IV. **Acceptance of the May 14, 2014 School Readiness Council meeting minutes:** Wendy Berlind moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Monica Beylea seconded. The motion carried unanimously with thanks.
- V. **Financial Report:** was distributed, showing two open spaces in May. We are on target to spend down the remainder of the grant funds. We received word last week on next year's allocation and the YMCA's program at Bielefield School will receive six additional school day spaces. Discussion around spending down funds followed. Chris explained the unearned funds never come to the community. She also noted that the Middletown School Readiness Grant will be just over two million dollars next year.
- VI. **Coordinator's Report:**

Monthly Report: Summary Report: was distributed for review. Discussion followed. An increase in the collection of parent fees this past month was noted. It looks as though there may be a total of one million dollars collected in parent fees and Care4kids for the 2013-14 fiscal year.

BOE Program Budget Change Request: Snow Preschool Program made a request to move \$2,500 from professional development (line 314) to instructional supplies (line 410). Wendy Berlind moved that we approve the budget change request. Christine O'Grady seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Birth Rate Data: CT birth rate data by town was distributed. A 13.6 % drop in births state wide from 2006 to 2012 was noted. Middletown birth rates have stayed fairly steady. Discussion around the discrepancy between steady birth rates and declining enrollment in public school kindergarten followed. It was noted this discrepancy may indicate that people are moving out of the city as their children reach school age. Marketing our city and our schools, or the lack thereof, may contribute to the exodus. More discussion followed. The state will have to keep the birth rates in mind as expansion plans continue for universal preschool.

2014 Children's Champions: Sen. Dante Bartolomeo has been selected to be honored by the CT Early Childhood Alliance as a Children's Champion this year along with two others from Meriden – Rep. Cathy Ambercrombie and Rep. Hilda Santiago. Izzi is working with Jessica Stewart from Meriden on the recognition that will take place in the fall. Izzi noted that Sen. Andrea Stillman is also being honored as she retires from the Senate. Sen. Stillman serves a portion of the town of Old Saybrook, so is a Middlesex County legislator. Donna added that Sen. Bartolomeo will be the guest speaker at the PLTI ceremony on Thursday.

Office of Early Education News: Director Myra Jones-Taylor attended the May Alliance meeting to provide an update on the activities of the Office of Early Childhood: a Quality Information System is in the process of being built with ratings to come in the following year; home visiting system is being coordinated using eight key standards; press releases are coming out soon about the work force (57% on target to meet teacher credentials set for 2015 and 50% on target for the 2020 credentials); plan is in development to address how the state will implement a new kindergarten entry age of October 1 and a report is due to the legislature in June 2015; Care4kids is being moved over to the office on July 1 and there is a review of the CT policies and what might be changed; Safe Babies Court which pairs DCF and Judiciary is being implemented to insure that court orders that impact infants and toddlers are developmentally appropriate for the child's age. Alice added that the new Early Head Start and Child Care Partnerships application is out. The goal of the child care partnership is to improve program quality. There will be more to come on this work. The Office of Early Childhood has resolved a Care4kids issue that will now allow access to this subsidy, which is critical to a successful partnership application.

School Readiness Grant Update: We are expecting the grant award letter very soon. Once received, the contracts will be developed and approved by the city attorneys before being signed. It appears that we will be all set for the upcoming fiscal year and there will not be a delay in summer reimbursements.

Discovery Grant Update: We should receive an award letter in early July.

Summer School Readiness Council Meetings Reminder: The Council will only meet during July and August if there is business that needs to be conducted.

Early Head Start Update: Alice noted that they are preparing for their annual program review scheduled for June 18th at Moody School. School Readiness Council members are welcome to attend.

Even Start Update: No one was present to offer an update.

Head Start Update: Marla noted that there are 57 children enrolled in the summer program. The Hamlin Street site is used as one summer lunch location. The children enrolled in the summer program are part of a separate lunch offering. Traverse Square children go to CRT on Hamlin Street for their summer meal program.

Opportunity Knocks (OK) Update: Susan gave an update on Opportunity Knocks. Monica is going to give another presentation on "The Secrets of Baby Behavior" in New Haven on Friday. BMI data collection is taking in our programs now as a follow-up study from the work done a few years ago. Susan will provide an update on behavioral health and BMI at the June OK meeting. The early education logic model for the Safe Schools Healthy Students (SSHS) grant was worked on by Opportunity Knocks. The need for another Child FIRST team to reduce the waiting list and to begin to serve kindergarten and first grade children surfaced. Susan noted that the development of a maternal depression provider resource guide for medical providers is almost complete. This guide was developed for medical providers to help patients make decisions and was not tailored for parents. OK is participating in the Child Health and Development Institute's database project using the yellow health forms received from doctors at preschool programs. The YMCA programs and Snow Preschool program are inputting their data now. The report will come out in the fall.

Child First Update: Christine O'Grady reported that they have 15 families on their waiting list and they closed out four families in May. Christine thanked Opportunity Knocks for supporting the expansion of the Child First program. Discussion followed.

FRC Update: Amy was not present due to illness, but it was noted that she is working on the "Kindergarten Kick Start" summer program.

Discovery Report: Cindy was not present.

Adjournment: Ed officially thanked Chris for her work. He noted that she was a member of the interview committee that hired him at United Way. Ed thanked Chris for her work in early education and her support of children locally and throughout the county both as the School Readiness Coordinator and as Education team chair at the United Way. He went on to note that she will be a "tough act to follow". The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 P.M. with thanks to those in attendance.

The Council wishes Chris Fahey the very best in her retirement and offers thanks for her dedication to the education and well-being of children in our community and beyond.

The next Middletown School Readiness Council meeting will be held on

Wednesday, July 16, 2014

(if needed)

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