

**Middletown School Readiness Council**  
**12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.**  
**Wednesday, November 18, 2015**  
**Wilbert Snow School**  
**299 Wadsworth St.**  
**Middletown, CT 06457**

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**Members Present:** Ed Bonilla, Jessica Stewart, Sheila Daniels, Amy Waterman, Beverly Lawrence, Izzi Greenberg, Christine O'Grady, Donna Marino, Kitty Robinson, Jerome Long, Patricia Charles, Susan Sienkiewicz, Monica Belyea and Liz Fraser.

**Also present:** Dionne Lowndes, Lina Kronenberger, Marla Hinz, Jennifer Cannata, Matt Lesser.

**I. Welcome & Call to Order:** Ed Bonilla called the meeting to order at 12:10P.M welcoming everyone. While waiting for guest, Rep. Matter Lesser, Izzi Greenberg circulated a handout of a priority list outlining proposed budget cuts in the areas of early care and education and family supports developed by the Early Childhood Alliance.

**II. Legislative Update:** State Representative Matt Lesser joined the Council to share news on the current budget challenges. Representative Lesser reported the Legislature is in the middle of bipartisan negotiations. The Governor made approximately \$100,000,000 in cuts, a lot of which will impact hospitals (who felt unfairly targeted). The plan is to balance the deficit of \$370 million. Several plans, including one from Governor Malloy, are being shared this week. Representative Lesser noted all budget proposals cut every organization to some degree. Izzi shared the above mentioned handout outlining the most important funding sources to the Council with Representative Lesser. He noted there is strong support for reinstating the commissions on the cut list.

He further noted there is a lot of momentum to get a budget cut plan done quickly and he personally is not in favor of this approach, but said at this point, this is a closed door process, not fully vetted and under pressure of time to be completed and voted on.

A lengthy discussion around the items outlined followed and those in attendance shared their concerns. School Readiness, Quality Enhancement, Child First, and Parent Trust were key items discussed.

Representative Lesser noted we should expect the cuts occurring now will more than likely not be restored in the new legislative session. Jerome Long asked what we can do to help get our message to those at the Legislature. Representative Lesser mentioned budget proposals also include some items added into the budget as well as some tax cuts. Council members mentioned concern around direct cuts to families, School Readiness, school breakfast programs and after-school programs. Representative Lesser encouraged the Council to reach out to local representatives and senators and identify areas of concern to them. If he can identify five areas of concern that he feels can be addressed, that is what he will focus on as budget discussions move forward. He also noted the Governor has the right to make additional cuts and has directed agencies not to release funds unless they are medical and safety related. There is a big concern

around future budget conversations and decisions. If legislators say no to the current budget proposals, will there be a two-fold problem when we resume budget work for the upcoming year because there is no public hearing process, some are uncomfortable? Ed mentioned if there is anything the Council can do please let us know. Representative Lesser said to call and ask for meetings with the leaders, reach out to colleagues in the same areas throughout the state. He also noted there hasn't been an outcry from the public, and suggested we make noise! The Council thanked Representative Lesser for his time, input around the budget concerns and for listening to the Councils concerns.

**III. Acceptance of the October 21, 2015 School Readiness Council meeting minutes:** Monica Belyea moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Amy Waterman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**IV. Financial and Monthly Summary Reports:** Jessica circulated it and all slots should be filled this month. She added the non-resident slot usage to the document as requested by the Council.

**V. Adjournment:** Ed closed the meeting at 1:33P.M., thanking Representative Lesser for meeting with us and those others present for their attendance.

**The next Middletown School Readiness Council meeting will be held on  
Wednesday, December 16, 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