

Middletown School Readiness Council
12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.
Wednesday, November 19, 2014
Wilbert Snow School
299 Wadsworth St.
Middletown, CT 06457

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TOWN CLERK
MIDDLETOWN, CONN.

Members Present: Ed Bonilla, Jessica Stewart, Sheila Daniels, Wendy Berling, Susan Sienkiewicz, Amy Waterman, Monica Beylea, Beverly Lawrence, Kitty Robinson, Donna Marino, Izzi Greenberg, Jerome Long, Kitty Robinson, Jim Gaudreau. **Also present:** Lina Kronenberger.

I. Welcome & Call to Order: Izzi Greenberg called the meeting to order at 12:15P.M. in the co-chairs' absence. Introductions were made.

II. Announcements: Wendy Berling announced the upcoming Preschool Fair at Russell Library will take place on Saturday, January 24, 2015 (with a snow date of Jan. 31st). Amy Waterman offered to contact licensed family day care providers and inform them about the event. She also volunteered to assist with the project. Kitty Robinson requested anyone interested in participating in this event should RSVP to Wendy. Izzi Greenberg reminded the Council of the Childhood Hunger Task meeting to be held at noon on Monday, November 24th at City Hall with discussion around the summer meal program. She also informed the Council that on Tuesday, November 25th following the Opportunity Knocks meeting, Housing Authority Director, Bill Vasiliou will be present to discuss housing needs. Anyone who has to navigate the system is invited to attend at 1:15. Izzi is beginning to develop an agenda for the December Coalition meeting and is looking into an educational focus. What do people want to know about? A brief discussion followed. Donna Marino noted Middletown School Association (MS) will be meeting Monday, November 24th at 6:30 at Moody School. She also shared flyers for an upcoming information session for parents on the Parent SEE program. Ed announced MIAC will be meeting to discuss food access and affordability. End Hunger representative Dawn Crayco, along with staff from Middlesex Hospital will be in attendance. Patty Dowling, Executive Director of Shoreline Soup Kitchen & Pantries one of the MIAC speakers.

Acceptance of the October 15th, 2014 School Readiness Council meeting minutes: Donna Marino moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Jerome Long seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Financial and Monthly Summary Reports: Jessica distributed the monthly financial report. She noted there are still vacancies; however the vacancies are less than last month. Jessica has talked to the State about non-residents wanting to access our SR programs. All communities are seeing openings. A brief discussion followed. Questions arose - is it an expense issue, are we saturating the market, why do we have openings? Transportation continues to be an issue. Susan noted DCF is also hearing transportation as a barrier too. She also mentioned the paperwork is a challenge and Lina agreed that at the Even Start program she sees the same challenges.

V. Coordinator's Report:

Worthy Wage Press Conference: Legislation is currently written to support this initiative. Beth Bye noted the State should stop expansion and move funds to support the Worthy Wage efforts by increasing the reimbursement rates for funded programs. Jessica noted slots fill up as we move forward in the fall. March is the crucial month, as that is the month the State looks at slot utilization for funding in the next year. Currently, there are 11 slots open in Middletown and other cities have more. Maggie Adair from the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), will be joining the School Readiness Liaison group at their meeting to hear more about changes needed around School Readiness. Ed asked if there are any issues around future funding concerns that Jessica might share with the Council so we can communicate to the proper parties at the State level. Donna Marino noted that transportation is an issue and asked why there isn't a focus on transportation. Goals around self-sufficiency including a means of transportation might be a topic of conversation at home visits. Jim Gaudreau offered a suggestion on preschool transportation via Dattco busses. Izzi suggested working with MAT to see if bus routes run in areas of the city that house preschool and child care programs. She suggested a sub-committee be formed to discuss that as a resource. Educating people of the routes may also help. Ed suggested a public meeting with MAT. Jessica will ask program directors to start collecting info around transportation hardships. Donna asked if CDBG funding would serve transportation. Ride sharing with reimbursement support might also be a good idea. Complete Streets Committee meeting might provide a venue to address these issues. Monica suggested some Council members attend, she will look into it.

Teacher Registry: Every teacher must register within the first 30 days of employment, and program administrators must login in monthly and make updates, or verify the program has had no changes in staffing. Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is pushing for programs to make sure they register each teacher. This information will be used as a monitoring tool as well as a way to support the Worthy Wage initiative through salary information. Discussion around the Governor's recent budget news took place. Concern was shared around the table in regard to budget cuts to programs.

Local Program Update:

School Readiness Council Policies and Guidelines: Jessica shared the revised policy guidelines that she previously sent to the Council for their review and approval. She ran through the revisions with the Council. Donna Marino moved to approve with the stated changes. Wendy Berling seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

ACES EHS Update: Jessica informed the Council that Alice is writing the Head Start grant which is due November 24th, a strong application to blend funding streams and reach families within different parts of Middletown.

FRC Update: Amy noted everything is going well.

Child First: Jessica gave update in Christine O'Grady's absence noting 15 people attended a workshop at Town & Country. Currently the program has a waiting list, but the time period to wait is not long.

Opportunity Knocks Update: Monica reminded the Council of the upcoming meeting on Tuesday, November 25th.

Middlesex Coalition Update: Izzi noted the earlier mentioned announcements took care of her news.

Even Start Update: Lina noted everything is running well. They are currently transitioning a couple of children into the BOE program and still waiting for NAEYC to visit.

Meeting Schedule for 2015: Wendy moved to accept the outlined meeting schedule. Lina Kronenberger seconded. The motion carried unanimously

VI. Adjournment: Ed closed the meeting at 1:40 thanking those present for their attendance.

The next Middletown School Readiness Council meeting will be held on

Wednesday, December 17th, 2014

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

