

**CITY OF NORWALK
EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 18, 2015**

ATTENDANCE

Cathy DeCesare, Co-Chair; Bruce Morris Co-Chair; Adele Gordon, Director of Day Street Community Health Center; Anthony Allison, Executive Director Norwalk ACTS; Barbara Fitzpatrick, Director of The Star Rubino Center Birth to Three; Betsy Bain, Community Representative; Cristina Matos, ELLI Lead Preschool Teacher; Darlene Hoffler, Clinical Services Coordinator/Norwalk Health Department; Eva Beau, Norwalk Community Health Center; George Hensinger, Community Representative; Jamie Bennetta, Staff; Jeanne Taylor-Hard, Community Representative; Joan Parris, Early Childhood Program Director Norwalk Community College; Kate Deli Carpini, ELLI Lab School; Lynn Sadlon, Director Fox Run Family Resource Center; Mary Kate Locke, Director Adoption & Prevention Services/Family Children's Agency; Mary Oster, Early Childhood Coordinator for the City of Norwalk; Nicole Fagon, Director of Carousel Preschool; Pamela Augustine-Jefferson, Instructional Specialist/Early Childhood Education for Norwalk Public Schools; Patricia Marsden-Kish, Program Director for Norwalk Housing Authority Head Start Early Childcare Education Programs; Rovitta Paul, Director The Children's Playhouse Preschool; Sherelle Harris, Assistant Director for Norwalk Public Library; Joyce Abate, Director Carousel Preschool

CALL TO ORDER

Cathy DeCesare called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. A quorum was present.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. DeCesare welcomed everyone, thanked the Superintendent for coming and asked for everyone to go around and introduce themselves. Once all introductions were completed Dr. Adamowski became describing what is happening in Norwalk.

DR. ADAMOWSKI

In the process of developing a strategic plan for district, aligned with number of partners, including Norwalk ACTS. Working now on Six Elements; vision, theory of action, set of measures, set of goals, strategies to use and implementation steps. During a retreat six goals were created they will be ready to be shared in about a month and these are what the plans are over the next three years. Dr. Adamowski described the achievement gaps that are occurring within Norwalk (internal and external) and how early childhood education fits into closing the gaps. He expressed that it is very important to close the internal gap between children and having children in a robust program at an earlier age can help close the gap.

Recommending:

Set of four intra-magnet schools

Develop greater and better choices for families

International Baccalaureate Program

Three programs currently intera-district Magnet schools
Columbus- Bank street model
Jefferson-Science will become STEM schools
Silvermine- currently half is dual language-want the entire school to offer dual language
Need a 4th- currently looking at public Montessori school

South Norwalk there is no school- over the summer the families would receive a letter saying where the child would go with no say in where so families will have priority if they do not have a school.

PRESCHOOL VISION

Dr. Adamowski stated that he would like to have at least one preschool using an effective model at each elementary school. This would give the children a home based school where they can have ownership because they will stay there for their entire elementary years. Currently Norwalk has data that shows that the ELLI model is effective in closing the achievement gap. Dr. Adamowski plans to work with Stepping Stones over the next two years to be able to replicate the program in the elementary schools.

Inclusive preschool programs now enroll 50% typical peers and 50% special needs. Roosevelt school will now be the home of all the 50-50 classrooms; 6 classrooms, 6 therapy rooms. This will free up space in the schools that are crowded at 100% capacity.

Still in the beginning stages of figuring out if the classrooms will be 3 year olds and 4 year olds. It would have to depend on how many classes are in each building.

Ten year facilities plan that will look at the buildings and the enrollment plan. Currently Norwalk is 100% full now and using portable at Jefferson. Looking at possibilities of building new school and if this happens then preschool classrooms will be built into the schools. Right now Norwalk is not meeting all of the preschool need because there are only six classrooms. The thought is to have more School Readiness slots and right now there are many at Norwalk Housing Authority. Norwalk can ask for an increase or reallocate slots. This would depend on the universal level, if not at universal level then we can look to increase School Readiness slots, right now it is unclear where we are on the universal level or how universal preschool is measured.

Joyce Abate asked Dr. Adamowski how the ELLI program was chosen as the model to use. The reason that the ELLI model was chosen was by looking at the data that came from the PELI. Fox Run preschool had the highest performance results. Kate Deli Carpini described that they (at Fox Run) use a total of nine different assessment models that shows how we closed the gap when entering into kindergarten.

Betsy Bain brought up that historically a public school is much more costly than private and Dr. Adamowski stated that the district would have to cover any additional cost.

When asked about school day and full day concerns Dr. Adamowski talked about leaning more to the full day to improve the education.

Busing concerns: Too much busing, children are on the bus at times for two hours. Children in the area will walk and this will build the community and we will cut cost with the district.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Joan Parris made the motion to approve the minutes from September 9, 2015 and Patricia Marsden-Kish. All approved.

ADVOCACY

Mary Oster reported that on December 7th at 8:30 at Ely there will be a State Legislative Advocacy Event. The agenda was passed out. There will be a 45 minutes session that will conclude by them visiting a toddler/preschool room. All the state legislators will be present along with the Dr. Adamowski and Mayor Harry Carey.

BUDGET

Cathy DeCesare and Mary Oster put a letter together about \$999,999 that is looking to be cut from the School Readiness budget. Letter was passed out for approval.

Motion to approve a letter of some form.

Betsy Bain made a motion to have Cathy/staff develop a letter and send it.

Lynn Sadlon second.

All in favor-

No one opposed.

The problem is that raises were already given to the teachers and this could possibly keep programs from meeting the bachelor's degree requirements. Some teachers are in unions or under contract so this will cause a problem.

EMERGING OPORTUNITIES

Anthony Allison: The 2 Generation project: six communities were chosen- Norwalk was one of them. Three meetings have occurred so far, one was last week to discuss how this project is a way to measure the development of the child and the parent. Each community will have 15-25 families as a part of this project. There are a lot of resources needed for these. NO RFP yet, and if there is one submitted then as a community we would work on that. There is a lot of structure being put around this, a lot of process at the state level because they think it will be a national level.

RULER- Promoting emotional intelligence in Early Childhood. Anthony Allison stated that he will have a wome he is working with come to the January Provider Network meeting to give a presentation on RULER. After the presentation we can set up a pilot program that will start to implement the RULER

PEER: Cathy DeCesare- Yale is getting research using a cross project with Stamford, Bridgeport and Norwalk. Research is being collected that could help with ELL children, PD and collectively get a sense of where we want research done.

PELL: Pam Augustine-Jefferson The first round of testing is completed and Paula is now going to disaggregate the data. This year the PALS was administered to 150 dominate Spanish speaking children. In December the providers will meet around the PD to help align with k-12 literacy coach and literacy how.

Playful Learning Professional Development:

Kate Deli Carpini: There was about 200 people, all the groups made representation that are displayed on the walls today. The teachers learned about playful learning and progress monitoring. Teachers were able to share their own ideas and get ideas from each other so it was a great day of collaboration. Program Providers had good feedback from staff that attended.

SCHOOL READINESS UNDERUTILIED SLOTS

Cathy DeCesare: Norwalk needs to report to the state on the utilization of the slots. Need to submit a report by November 30. The state is going to look at pulling back slots and or give to other towns that have room for more slots.

As of now NHA has 10 more full with 202 open. NHA is looking at a total of 10 slots not used since September report period. Cathy DeCesare asked the council to agree to that if nothing changes that the council will agree to reallocate the children that are not being used.

Betsy: makes a motion to find, fill and reallocate slots in the best of their ability so Norwalk does not lose the slots.

Joan Parris- Second

All in favor: none opposed

Patricia Marsden-Kish: The Norwalk Housing Authority has the families but the families want Ben Franklin because they don't have transportation, and other families do not want to pay the fee.

RESIDENCY

Committee had made the decision to not accept children that do not live in Norwalk. Rovitta Paul is asking for this to be looked at again because she has 3 temporary slots that will be leaving in January. Rovitta Paul indicated that the council decided to talk about it in November and it has not been discussed again yet.

**Put this on the agenda for the Steering Committee

Cathy DeCesare: Taking families who work in Norwalk but live in other cities may be a problem down the line (if we want to ask for more slots) because Norwalk will not be able to say that there is a need for the slots because Norwalk is not filling the slot with Norwalk children.

Pam Augustine-Jefferson suggested that this is discussed now but should not make the decision now. The councils need to be prepared with other providers, data and have other people around the table.

Bruce Morris: Legislators fight for the slots with the intention that the fight is for Norwalk families. If the slots are given to other communities within Norwalk, this does not benefit the fight for Norwalk slots.

Cathy DeCesare makes a motion:

For the next cycle (grant year) we will agree that 2% (up to 12 students) of slots can be given to out of residency families as long as the family has a connection to Norwalk. They must either work or go to school in Norwalk.

Bruce Morris: moved

Adel Gordon: Second

All in favor: none opposed

Jamie Bennetta will send out notice to all providers that we are accepting the slots and that she will need to have the information before the child will start the program.

CLOSING STATEMENTS

Joyce Abate stated her concern and questions if the council is on board with the Superintendent's plan. Joyce Abate is concerned how the programs will hold up against the ELI programs because the Superintendent is just looking at the PELI and ELLI program data. She wants to understand what quality programs are and how that is going to be looked at as a community. There is a concern that this data can have an impact on the private preschool business.

**On Agenda for the next meeting

Adjourn: 11:40