

**CITY OF NORWALK
EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 10, 2015**

ATTENDANCE: Cathy DeCesare, Co-chair; Pamela Augustine-Jefferson, Adele Gordon, Day Street Community Health Center; Dr. Sally Grose, Community Representative; George Hensinger, Community Representative; Patricia Marsden-Kish, NHA Head Start Early Childhood Program; Marie Angie Nicolas, NCC Parent Representative; Mary Oster, NPS Early Childhood Coordinator; Erica Phillips, Norwalk-Stamford All Our Kin; Lynn Sadlon, Fox Run Family Resource Center; Jeanne Taylor-Hard, Community Representative; Mary Windt, Under One Roof Director

OTHERS: Marilyn Calderon, CT Parent Power

CALL TO ORDER.

Ms. DeCesare called the meeting to order at 9:36 p.m. A quorum was present. Ms. DeCesare suggested that next year's meeting be limited to an hour and a half.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. DeCesare requested that everyone introduce themselves. Following this, there was an announcement regarding two recent births.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES.

**** MS. OSTER MOVED THE MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2015.**

**** MS. NICOLAS SECONDED.**

The following corrections were noted for the minutes:

Page 1, under **OTHERS:** please add "Julian Susan Dioses"

Page 3, under **OTHER UPDATES**, paragraph 2, line 1: please change the following from: "Ms Augustine Jefferson said that the existing providers, with the exception of one, were re-applying for funding."

to: "Ms. Augustine Jefferson said that all the existing providers were re-applying for funding."

Page 4, paragraph 1, line 1, please change "Ms. Ms. Santamaria said that she was" to "Ms. Dioses said that she was"

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2015 AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

SCHOOL READINESS PROVIDER NETWORK UPDATES.

No report.

QE/SCHOOL READINESS UPDATE.

Ms. Augustine-Jefferson stated that the QE grant had been submitted. It was reported that the requirement for a four year degree has been pushed back. Ms. Augustine-Jefferson explained that while all the programs were currently meeting the requirements, but added that if one staff member leaves a program, they will be difficult to replace.

Mr. Hensinger pointed out that it would be important to communicate the details of the grandfathering clause to everyone. Discussion followed.

NOMINATING
(Membership Discussion)

Ms. DeCesare announced that this would be the last meeting of this school year.

Ms. Windt announced that she had officially resigned from the Council because she cannot make all the meetings and did not want to occupy a seat that someone else who could attend more regularly could have.

Ms. DeCesare asked if there were any suggestions for additions to list. She said that she felt that Malta House needed representation. Ms. Oster will reach out to them. Discussion followed about potential candidates and corrections.

DISCUSSION ON PARENT ENGAGEMENT.
(Notes from discussion from May NECC meeting)

Ms. DeCesare said that Ms. Oster had consolidated the notes from the evening meeting for the Council members. She suggested that the Council review the items and create a small group to move one of the suggestions forward.

Ms. DeCesare said one suggestion was to create a comprehensive list of the contacts for the Norwalk faith based organizations. Ms. Sadlon suggested having a luncheon for the pastors in order to get the word out. Mr. Hensinger suggested that the Council go to the places of worship and present the information. Ms. DeCesare asked if there was anyone interested on working on this project. Ms. Augustine-Jefferson, Ms. Sadlon and others indicated that they were.

Dr. Grose asked if there was any way to get feedback about what impact the work of the Council has on the students that are entering the school system. Ms. Augustine-Jefferson said that the District has been using the m-Class assessments. The data from last year should be available soon. Ms. Augustine-Jefferson said that she had information on the School Readiness students and will try to blend in the data with other programs. Ms. DeCesare said this would become base line data. Dr. Grose said that this will be important to know this information when meeting with the pastors. Discussion followed.

Ms. Oster asked if anyone had heard of a text app called "Remind", which was developed to notify parents about upcoming school events. She said that if a group of people were willing to sign up, the Council could test the app out. She then wrote the access code on the board and said that the texts will be coming from her and the members' information will not be disclosed. Ms. DeCesare said that this is a possible tool for the Council.

KCAN/NECC UPDATE.

Ms. Augustine-Jefferson said that the group had been meeting for several months. She indicated there was a hand out for the Revised Action Plan Components and reviewed the key highlights including the strategies that the Council could use.

Ms. DeCesare said that the page with the values and commitments should look familiar to everyone. She displayed a copy of the previous Action Plan, which could be overwhelming. This breakdown would be more focused on specific goals. In the early days, the Council was focused on data but did not have the capacity to handle the data. Now the Council has more capacity and can measure outcomes more accurately.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS.

Mr. Hensinger spoke about the a number of legislative topics including:

- the postponement of the BA requirement and the grandfather clause.
- Legislation for the use of Excess Educational Funds where the town can now fill empty seats from surrounding towns.
- Hearing tests have been added to the Birth to Three assessment requirements.
- Magnet and Charter Schools are required to have the NAEYC (The National Association for the Education of Young Children) accreditation.
- A standard Kindergarten registration and Kindergarten assessment form is being drafted. Ohio and Maryland are using similar type of this form. Next year will be a field test and the form will be used in the State the following year. Mr. Hensinger said that copies of the form would be helpful so that

the Council could see what kind of indicators the State will be looking for. Ms. DeCesare asked what the community position would be on this. Mr. Hensinger said that the District could start using it before it is required. He will send out a link to the Council Members. It was noted that it would be important to review this with the pre-school providers. Discussion followed.

- The Early Childhood Cabinet will be adding new members and one of them will be from Norwalk. The Council will be submitting the name of a candidate to Mr. Duff's office.
- There is now legislation about eliminating pre-school expulsions. This would be applicable to programs the programs linked to District school, but may not apply to private programs. Ms. Marsden-Kish said that there have been issues in the past year. It was suggested that there be a process for moving the student through to the services they need. It was pointed out that there may be issues at home. Discussion followed.

Ms. Marsden-Kish said that it might be worthwhile to have a pre-school survey about these students with difficulties. There is a program to assist teachers with SEFEL Social Emotional Development out of Vanderbilt University.

Dr. Grosse said that she would like to see records on these children who are experiencing difficulty and aggressive behavior as they progress through out the school years. She reminded everyone of a recent event where an adult bit off the nose of his partner. It will be important to build the teacher's capacity to deal with an orally aggressive child.

- Care for Kids originally had a 6 months re-accreditation requirement, then it was moved to 8 months and now is a year long requirement.
- The bill requiring the police to notify the pre-schools about lock down situations has passed.
- Ms. DeCesare said that CAHS sends out emails that covers a broad range of issues including health and other topics. She suggested that the Council members consider signing up for these email
- The bill was passed to eliminate veteran homelessness by 2015 and chronic homelessness by 2016.
- Ms. Gordon said that there may be 23,000 parents who have been removed from Medicaid and will be pushed into the State insurance program.

SUMMER UPDATE - FOOD, READING, ETC.

Ms. DeCesare said that summer was a challenging time for the children and families. Ms. Oster then displayed two posters about summer food programs. It is important to let the residents know that they do not asked for identifying information. NPS food service is providing lunch but is only from those 18 and under. Therefore if a parent arrives with three children the three children would be served food, but the parent would not. The programs are also starting to sponsor simple activities. This is being done with a grant from Arby's. Most of the sites are where the day camps are being held. June 29th through August 14th.

The summer reading program is coming up. It will be important to have the students sign up for the program.

OTHER/NEW BUSINESS.

Ms. Phillips said that she had worked on some of the data analysis and they had identified some areas of weakness. Ms. Sadlon said that there was a Norwalk READS book drive recently. The books are then given out to families in the hopes that they are building a library.

Ms. Oster said that currently one program is looking for students who are entering kindergarten that did not attend pre-school. There are 75 slots open for the five week and three hours a day program.

The beach concerts will start on the August 14th.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 9th in the evening.

Recently, Betsy Bain was honored by the Graustein Fund at the United Way event.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. DeCesare adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services