

**CITY OF NORWALK
EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 11, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: Cathy DeCesare, SVP, Strategic Initiatives, United Way of CFC;
Lauriston Avery, Five Mile River Nursery School/Director;
Nicholas Brophy, Jefferson Science Magnet School Principal;
Mary Oster, Early Childhood Coordinator/City of Norwalk;
Christal Leach, Learn, Growing and Play
Mary Kate Locke, Family and Children's Agency
Rovitta Paul, The Children's Playhouse Director;
Jamie Zyla, School Readiness Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. DeCesare called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m. A quorum was present.

• **Week of the Young Child Report** – Ms. Oster said that she had sent out emails with photos of the display. There have been a number of Community Readers. Ms. Paul said that tomorrow was pizza day and the parents were coming into read to the children. The children will be presenting "The Hungry Caterpillar" play.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 14, 2019

**** MS. OSTER MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 14, 2019 MEETING.
** MS. LOCKE SECONDED.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Brophy joined the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

SCHOOL READINESS.

• **Kindergarten registration** – Ms. Oster said that they were ahead of the number of registrations from last year. There were two community events which were successful. There were many people who were available to assist the parents in filling out the application. The ASQ seemed to go quicker.

Ms. Zyla said that NECC has been working with NPS and Norwalk ACTS and there is someone who is visiting the various early Childhood programs to assist the parents in registering children for kindergarten. Discussion followed about how the various agencies are promoting the kindergarten registration.

• **Monitoring** – Ms. Zyla said that she had completed all of the classrooms and she had collected all the lesson plans. The family survey is due May 29th. She updated everyone on the progress with the new format.

Ms. Leach joined the meeting at 4:58 p.m.

• **Provider share out** – Ms. Paul said that finding substitutes for the Pre-K programs. She explained that her program is closed for a week during the summer and that she has offered her staff payment for taking their training classes. Ms. DeCesare asked how they can expand their pool of substitute teachers. Discussion followed about finding adequate substitutes. Ms. Paul pointed out that many of the substitutes that work with the BOE are not interested in working with Pre-K children. Ms. Zyla said that they would put this on next month's agenda for further consideration.

• **Utilization** – Ms. Zyla said that they had a full complement last month, which she believed was the eighth straight month that the program was at capacity. Ms. DeCesare said that she would like to have a discussion at the next meeting about the attendance and students who were chronically absent.

The discussion then moved to the parents who are reluctant to pay their child's tuition. The providers can encourage the parents to apply for Care for Kids, but they can't do more than that. A suggestion was made to see if the payment could be automated. Ms. Zyla said that she had looked into this but that automated payments have a 3% charge which the program is not allowed charge the parents, so the program would have to absorb that cost. Ms. Paul said that she was surprised by the attitude that the parents have developed about this issue. Mr. Brophy said that there were parents in his school that owe the school money for lunches. Discussion followed.

• **Slots for 2019-2020** – Ms. Zyla reported that there had been a reduction of five slots. The office has sent out a slot survey and there have been two respondents have indicated that they are interested in slots. Both Steppingstone and Tracy School are interested in school day slots. Discussion followed about the details.

Ms. Zyla said that the Office of Early Childhood recommends that the programs not be 100% funded. The funding should come from parent payments, Care for Kids and the School Readiness funds. Because of this, there are programs that like the option of private payments. Ms. DeCesare said that there was no conversation about what the community would prefer. Ms. Zyla was asked if the demographic of where the neediest students were located was available. Ms. Zyla said that it was the Jefferson area. Discussion followed.

Ms. Zyla said that in order to submit the RFP, the Council would need to vote on the number of slots that would be requested. After a short discussion, Mr. Brophy pointed out that the Council does have to make a decision. Ms. Zyla said that the RFP review team is meeting on the 7th to review the budget.

Ms. Avery suggested that they expand at Tracy because it is a neighborhood school and has been developing over time.

Ms. Paul said that she contacted other providers earlier in the day to see if they had any input. Joan Parris at NCC informed her that the requirements for a B.A. degree is good, but the course is only offered online. She has contacted Western Connecticut about developing a program but that would take some time to implement. The cohort for Eastern Connecticut has finished and it was discovered that it was too difficult for people to make to the campus for classes. Bright Horizons has partnered with colleges and they are paying full tuition for their employees with an agreement that the teachers will remain with Bright Horizons for a year and a half. Discussion followed.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. DeCesare adjourned the meeting at _____ p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services