

## **Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative (TECC) Education Workgroup Meeting Minutes**

Meeting held on March 9, 2015. Both January and February meetings were cancelled due to poor weather. Meeting Called to Order at 12:05p.m. by Cheryl Kloczko, Workgroup Co-Chair. Minutes from our last meeting were available.

In Attendance: Elaine Hanscom/TECC, Donna Labbe/TECC & Torrington Public Schools (TPS), Cheryl Kloczko/TPS, Carmella Galipault/Head Start, Paula Romanelli/Head Start, Deb Bristol/Family Resource Center, Judy Courtot/EDUCATION CONNECTION, Cindy Guerreri/William Casper Graustein Memorial Foundation (WCGMF), Patrice Nelson, CT Center for School Change, Dawn Markelon/Torrington School, Kristen Fern/Forbes School, Kaitlin Marchand/Southwest School, Mary Cecchinato/Torrington Child Care Center, Debbie Collins/Future Foundations, Kristen Cellerino/East School

Items Discussed:

### *School Readiness (SR) Updates-*

- Quality Enhancement Scholarships were offered to three out of the seven candidates who applied for funds for spring 2015 higher education classes. One recipient works at Torrington Child Care Center & two work at Hilltop Early Learning Center.
- Torrington was awarded a federal Preschool Expansion Grant for new slots for children turning 4 years old by January 1, 2016, to be up and running in September 2015. Torrington Public Schools will run, and is looking for sites currently. These slots are for families in Torrington that are at or below 200% of the poverty level. There will be 47 expanded full day full year slots with no fee to the parents. Also included in this grant are 23 improved preschool slots moving from half day to full day at the existing school readiness sites, and improving teachers' salary.

### *Birth to 8 Plan Implementation-*

- Kindergarten Readiness Fair was held in January 2015. 130 families were in attendance, which was a better turn out than last year. Principals would like it to be held later in the calendar year. The goal of this fair is to reach the families with children not attending any Pre-K programs in the community, so that children are registered early & assessed early enough to provide additional learning opportunities as needed before Kindergarten entry. We reached 33 children that had not been identified to TPS previously. We still have work to do to educate parents about the expectations of Kindergarten. Forbes has approximately 40 children already registered for Kindergarten this year, which is much higher than usual for this point in the year. There was a high number of community participants. Set up will continue to be revised based on participation.
- Summer learning loss follow up- The group focused on reviewing the answers collected at our last two meetings to the following questions:  
What are we already doing in relation to summer learning? What data do we need in order to determine the needs in our community related to summer learning loss? What data do we need to tell us how well we are doing with the existing efforts?

Discussion today centered around the data that is being generated from the programs that are already offered, the fact that there is no community partner to run the Ready, Set, Go program for this summer, and the need to collect more data to answer the overall question of what difference do these actions make for our children. Additional follow up is needed to see if there are duplicate programs in the community, and to see if certain age groups are more targeted.

- Early Literacy Grant- Community Family Literacy Center is partnering with the Family Resource Center to offer monthly workshops to families. They have brought Kids Play museum and the Warner Theater on board to enhance programs for families. Discussion today was around performance measures and if we can create common measurements that cross strategies and actions.
- The Governor's budget was presented to the legislature with many cuts, including the line item for our Community Plan work. The Graustein Memorial Fund has offered to match state funds, but we will not learn what the budget will look like until late spring or early summer. Debbie Collins is our current TECC representative at the CT Alliance for Early Childhood meetings. They meet weekly during the legislative session. There is a public hearing scheduled for March 12<sup>th</sup> on a wage bill that could generate revenue to increase salaries of preschool employees. Donna Labbe gave testimony on TECC's behalf at a public hearing on education and office of early childhood.

Meeting adjourned at 1:58p.m. Next Education Workgroup meeting scheduled for 4-20-15.

Respectfully submitted by Elaine Hanscom, TECC Secretary.