

Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative (TECC) Education Workgroup Meeting Minutes

Meeting held on June 8, 2015. Meeting Called to Order at 12:06p.m. by Cheryl Kloczko, Workgroup Co-Chair. Minutes from our last meeting were reviewed and approved as printed.

In Attendance: Elaine Hanscom/TECC, Donna Labbe/TECC & Torrington Public Schools (TPS), Cheryl Kloczko/TPS, Carmella Galipault/Head Start, Judy Courtot/EDUCATION CONNECTION, Patrice Nelson, CT Center for School Change, Mary Cecchinato/Torrington Child Care Center, Lucille Fines/Vogel-Wetmore School, Elizabeth Rhoades/Early Childhood Consultation Partnership McCall Foundation, Paula Gajewski/Community Family Learning Center, Deb Bristol/Family Resource Center, Teresa Allen/Girl Scouts of CT, Claudia Ocasio/Even Start, Eileen Smedick, Susan Fergusson/East School, Ms. Fenn/Forbes

Items Discussed:

School Readiness (SR) Updates-

- SR funds- The grant application was submitted and TECC is expected to hear within the next few weeks.
- Update on Federal Preschool Expansion Grant-
A spreadsheet is in the works highlighting the differences between the ongoing grant and this new grant. An Office of Early Childhood (OEC) staff member will be available to talk about how best to share information on the new grant program to parents in our community.
- Two bills were passed in the legislature:
Bill 7020 extended the deadline until July 2017 to meet criteria for staff qualifications in the SR centers (50% of Qualified Staff Members to hold a bachelor's degree and 50% of Qualified Staff Members to hold an associate's degree) and grandfathers staff from the staff qualification requirement who have been employed in the same state-funded program since 1995. The SR centers in Torrington are in good shape to meet this requirement by the new deadline.
Bill 1101 removed the residency requirement for children served in SR centers, to enable children of parents working in communities with SR centers to be served. Special thanks goes out to Mary Cecchinato, for her efforts to inform our legislators about the importance of early childhood issues.
- UConn has been contracted to do random academic testing of SR children in the centers to better assess the effectiveness of the SR program.

Kids Play Event & Kindergarten Readiness Fair-

- Kids Play Museum will host a Family Day event on February 21, 2016 and is interested in TECC partnering with them to do an educational component that day. It will not replace the Kindergarten Readiness Fair, but we can use this event to build awareness of the expectations of Kindergarten and to promote the K Fair.

- After discussing the principals' concerns about the timing of the K Fair it was decided that the Kindergarten Readiness Fair will be held in early March and Kindergarten registration will be held at the schools the two weeks immediately following the fair.
- Discussion followed about the possibility of the CFLC having parent information nights in the spring about the expectations of Kindergarten.

Birth to 8 Community Plan Implementation-

- Summer Learning Loss Follow Up-
Today the group prioritized the following actions to address summer learning loss:
Educate parents regarding the importance of summer learning &
Determine how to reach families and students so they invest in summer learning

Paula Gajewski handed out the updated summer resource guide to the group. It will be distributed electronically to community members and those organizations listed to distribute. Discussion needs to continue about how best to determine how parents used the guide and if it changed parents' behavior over the summer. Two small ad hoc groups may meet over the summer to work on educating parents about summer learning loss and improvements to and performance measures for the Kindergarten Readiness Fair event.

- Events-
Back to School Clothing Drive will be held on August 15th. New business community volunteers on board this year due to social media outreach. CFLC will host a summer Music Program for up to 25 families with children ages 4 and 5 for six weeks at Kids Play.

Funding Update-

The Community Plans line item was included in the state budget for the 2015-200016 fiscal year. TECC will hear by July 1st from WCGMF about available funding. The Discovery initiative is coming to an end and WCGMF will release details about their future initiatives in the fall.

Meeting adjourned at 2:05p.m.

Next Education Workgroup meeting scheduled for September 14, 2015.

Respectfully submitted by Elaine Hanscom, TECC Secretary.