

Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative (TECC) Education Workgroup Meeting Minutes

Meeting held on September 14, 2015. Meeting Called to Order at 12:00p.m. by Donna Labbe, TECC Community Outreach Coordinator. Minutes from our last meeting were reviewed and approved as printed.

In Attendance: Elaine Hanscom/TECC, Donna Labbe/TECC & Torrington Public Schools (TPS), Carmella Galipault/Head Start, Judy Courtot/EDUCATION CONNECTION, Patrice Nelson, CT Center for School Change, Paula Gajewski/Community Family Learning Center, Deb Bristol/Family Resource Center, Teresa Allen/Girl Scouts of CT, Susan Fergusson/East School, Kristen Fenn/Forbes, Paula Romanelli/Head Start, Kathryn Wehrle/TPS, Carol Opperheim/TPS, Sara Satalino/TPS, Patti Harris/Early Childhood Special Education Teacher

Items Discussed:

Membership Changes-

New members to the group were welcomed. A letter was read from Lucille Fines, who has decided to no longer serve on this work group. Representation from all the elementary schools for students from Kindergarten to third grade is desired. New designees from the mayor's office and the superintendent's office are needed and Donna Labbe will facilitate meetings with both.

School Readiness (SR) Updates-

- SR funds- In the recent past, Quality Enhancement funds from the SR grant have been used to fund scholarships for students working toward degrees in early childhood education, to help meet the state's mandates for staff qualifications in the SR classrooms. (50% of Qualified Staff Members to hold a bachelor's degree and 50% of Qualified Staff Members to hold an associate's degree by July 2017) Other ways to use the funds are to offer professional development opportunities to staff members or to provide curriculum enhancements. As SR liaison, Donna Labbe will poll the SR site directors as to the current need in their facilities, to bring back a recommendation to this work group.
- UConn has been contracted to do random academic testing of 20 SR children (4 year olds) in Torrington as part of a statewide study to better assess the effectiveness of the SR program, and will report results to the General Assembly.
- New legislation allows SR councils to authorize opening slots to non-residents. This would enable children of parents working in Torrington to be served. Priority would need to be given to residents first. Donna Labbe will prepare a written policy to bring to the next meeting for discussion.
- Update on Federal Preschool Expansion Grant-
3 classrooms up and running at East School, serving 4 year olds. Still recruiting students, currently have filled 39 out of 47 available slots. Discussion at the table today centered around meeting the needs of all children in the program. There are additional grant funds available to provide behavioral supports in the classroom. If a child is identified as having special needs,

they will go through the regular TPS channels to have an Individualized Education Plan completed if needed.

Events-

- 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. Paula Gajewski from the Community Family Learning Center agreed to coordinate this effort.
- The Kindergarten Readiness Fair will be held in early March, with a snow date, and Kindergarten registration will be held at the schools the two weeks immediately following the fair. The official school calendar needs to be adjusted to reflect these dates.

Birth to 8 Community Plan Implementation-

Summer Learning Loss Follow Up-

No meetings were held during the summer months.

A summer resource guide was completed at the end of the school year and sent electronically to community members on the CFLC mailing list. Currently it is unknown how parents used the guide and if it changed parents' behavior over the summer. Paula Gajewski agreed to contact schools and community organizations to ask if it was sent out, how and when it went out, and to poll parents who attend the CFLC Open House in September as to how they used the guide and what would make it more useful. Donna Labbe agreed to post on the Discovery communities list serve, asking what other communities have found to be the most successful activities to address summer learning loss. Elaine Hanscom agreed to contact the organizations on the TECC summer learning spreadsheet that was developed in the spring to determine the number of families served by these existing community efforts.

- Several members agreed to meet separately from the Work Group, as an ad hoc small group, to form a list of recommended actions to focus on regarding summer learning loss this fiscal year, based on the answers received to the above data inquiries.

Funding Update-

TECC received full funding for the 2015-2016 fiscal year. The Discovery initiative is coming to an end and William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund has announced a new mission around race and equity. Further details are needed to determine if TECC initiatives will align with this mission.

Meeting adjourned at 1:55p.m. Next Education Workgroup meeting scheduled for October 9, 2015.

Respectfully submitted by Elaine Hanscom, TECC Secretary.