

Branford School Readiness Council Meeting

Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2022

Council Members Present are in Bold: Dale Izzo, Carole Weisberg, Carly Lemire, Robin Comey, James Cosgrove, Diane Pappacoda, Lauren Skultery, Vanessa Fleming-Redd, Kim Cellini, Erin Hearn, Deidre Popkin, Rachel Kalman.

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 AM by Carole Weisberg. Dale was delayed in joining meeting.

1. Approval of meeting minutes:

Nessa made a motion to approve the November minutes, Diane 2nd. Motion carries.

2. SR Liaison Report:

SR Grant:

- Carole reported that we are in a new grant cycle and will need to complete a full grant application for SR Funding. Both of our SR Programs will also need to re-apply for Council approval to continue as school readiness sites.
- The grant due date is May 8th.
- We need to publicly release an RFP to invite new and continuing eligible early childhood programs to gain SR slots through the grant process. However, there is not any additional funding for more slots. We have a total of 21 SR slots
 - FRC = 11
 - BELC = 10
 - We are not eligible for additional slots

Quality Enhancement Grant:

- Discussion to identify our Quality Enhancement Grant area of focus/expertise:
 - Quality enhancement funding is \$3,881.00
- Kim and Diane believe that the money would be best spent towards kindergarten preparedness and inviting all Branford childcare providers with the goal to support quality alignment on children's readiness for kindergarten.
- Lauren brought up the KEI, Kindergarten Entrance Inventory that is required by the state to score kindergartners on different learning components when they enter school
 - The last few years oral language has scored low
 - She does not see this changing since COVID has caused our worlds to shrink - experiences and exposures outside of the home have dwindled
- Ideas included self-regulation and oral language. It was suggested a coach who focuses on executive functioning might be beneficial. Kim had someone from ECSU in mind.
- The group made a motion by Diane and then 2nd by Erin to allow a subcommittee, committed to narrowing down where the QE money would be best spent
 - Committee includes: Kim, Carole, Diane, De and Lauren

Grant Review and Submission Timeline:

- RFP Public Notices will be posted for programs to apply to be SR Sites and for Vendors to apply for QE Funds. All RFP's will be due no later than 3pm on April 1st.

- SR Council will meet on April 6th – to review and score program grant applications and choose QE Vendor(s).
- SR Council will meet on May 4th – for a review of the final draft of the FY23 SR Grant before submitting by May 8th.
- Please note that additional meetings may need to be scheduled once we get closer to our grant due date.

Program Site Updates:

- BELC has 4 SR children transitioning to kindergarten next year, they are already filled through her waiting list
 - She has 5 new hires since COVID
 - She is working on incorporating diversity into her grant writeup this year
 - Her waitlist list is totaling at 77 and 11 of those are SR eligible
- FRC has 2 SR slots available next year, they are already filled through her waiting list
 - She has a total of 16 students and 8 on her SR waitlist
 - They are piloting a new program, Learning without Tears that uses all learning styles to introduce concepts in approachable ways
 - They have seen increased participation and a willingness to try new things even if they do not get it right the first, second or even third time.

School/Community Reports:

- Robin wanted to remind early childhood programs that Care4Kids has been reconfigured, making reimbursement that much easier. Programs are encouraged to consider participating in C4K again.
- Robin reported on the Governor’s budget and the disappointing fact that there is no additional funding for early childhood. Some legislators are looking for ways to address this.
- Carly wanted to let everyone know that the Blackstone is taking personal reflections for their time capsule that is being buried in June.
 - Families have till the end of April to submit their forms
 - Fillable forms are available on the Blackstone website

New Business:

- **Week of the Young Child** -the group discussed ideas for the Week of the Young Child – Diane agreed to help with ideas and coordination of a committee, but does not have time to do the work of it. She will meet with Kim and Carly to discuss further.
- **Preschool Fair** – it was discussed that since COVID restrictions were easing we may be able to have an in-person preschool fair this year, possibly in March. Carly offered the community room at the Blackstone Library. Carole will coordinate with Carly on logistics.

Old Business: Council Membership

- We are still short the required board members on the SR committee
 - We need at least 4 parents, a representative of a workforce training organization as well as a local business owner
 - Dale has been putting out “feelers,” and suggestions are still welcome

A motion to adjourn was made by Robin, 2nd by Diane. Meeting adjourned at 2:25pm.