

Danbury School Readiness Council Minutes

Date: November 9, 2022

Time: 3:00pm-4:30pm

Location: Workspace

Attendance: Mayor Dean Esposito, Jon Barney, Claudia Anderson, Michelle Anderson, Eileen Costello, Nicole Giro, Casey Levene, Anne Mead, Olga Mejia, Mark Meyer, Jennifer Pane, Elizabeth Quinonez, Marcela Ramos, Thomas Schrack, Robin Scott, Judy Sims & Maria Vargas

Guests: Michele Burbage-Halberg, YMCA Children's Center & Suzy Almeida, Salvation Army, The Right Place.

Welcome & Introductions: Michelle Anderson & **Approval of Minutes:** Claudia Anderson & 2nd by Mark Meyer.

Non-Residency Policy: Review and discussion of revised Non -Residency Policy, Motion to approve: Mark Meyer & 2nd by Anne Mead

City of Danbury Update: Mayor Dean Esposito

The Career Academy project purchase should close at the end of November. This addition to Danbury will address critical space shortages and provide a top-notch curriculum as well. Mayor Esposito would like to thank the members of the School Readiness Council for their continued participation. The Great Plain School addition project is moving along nicely. A bond referendum supported this project and should be on schedule. The City of Danbury has launched a new website. Operations for the City of Danbury are going smoothly, and the Mayor appreciates the hard work of all the individuals and departments for all that they do. He will be giving his State of the City address at the Amber Room on Friday, December 9th.

Agenda Item: School Readiness Consultant Report- Eileen Costello

Eileen shared a Powerpoint presentation providing an overview of the One Book, One Community event that we hosted in October. Over 200 classrooms participated and over 200+ families attended the kickoff event that we hosted at the Danbury Public Library.

The SR Council will have a table at the Mayor's Luncheon on Dec. 9th, we will be circulating a sign up for any members of the SR council that would like to attend.

Coordinators report attached.

Eileen is submitting a revision to the SR grant to correct the numbers at DPS to reflect 56 at Osborne Street and 29 at the Cottage Street location. **A motion to approve was made by Casey Levene and was 2nd by Mark Meyer.**

Programs are seeing an increase in behavioral issues and a lack of self-help skills & toilet training. We are looking into hiring a behaviorist to go out to the programs and assist teachers in finding ways for children to be successful. Nicole Giro may have someone that can provide this service.

Agenda Item: Danbury Public Schools Update – Anne Mead

Danbury Public Schools is also launching a new website which will be linked to the City of Danbury website. The schools are seeing an influx of Brazilian families entering the school system due to the recent political changes in Brazil. Kindergarten registration will begin in mid-February, they will need the assistance of council members to distribute information and provide onsite registration. Thanks to the Mayor and Tom Hughes for getting the new building up and running so that they could be in as of the beginning of the school year. The new space includes 3 preschool classrooms, 4 kindergarten classrooms and a registration center. Both Morris Street and Cottage Street still have playgroups happening and may eventually open at Osborne St. as well.

Agenda Item: Michelle Anderson

The Superintendent would like to ask the members of the SR council to move future meetings to the first Wednesday of the month. Michelle will send an updated meeting schedule out. Our January meeting will be via ZOOM.

Agenda Item: Maria Vargas & Marcela Ramos, Parent Outreach

Participated in the Hispanic Heritage Celebration giving out information to families. One on one parent outreach has been important, they are getting feedback from parents saying that they do not understand what School Readiness is and what the council does. Maria suggests that we create more of a social media presence that parents can follow for more info and notification of events. Anything would need to be in multiple languages. Marcela will be doing a winter story telling series/playgroup at the library. Parents are still very interested in the playgroups, so they will look to continue. OEC is starting with the Pyramid Model and Maria will be participating in that. In October, Maria and Gabby Ramon presented a workshop on the Sparkler App for providers, held at Workspace. They are available to offer Positive Discipline at one of the centers either virtually or in person if the need is there in the winter or early spring.

Community Sharing: Olga Mejia-Parent Volunteer

Working at the Dominican Center and recently graduated 40 children who completed a reading and arts and crafts class. They have a robotics workshop for children coming up.

Community Sharing: Nicole Giro- Birth to Three

August was the highest visit total ever with increased numbers across the board. They have many pending assessments right now. Seeing a preference for ABA services vs. Birth to Three Autism programs because ABA offers a drop off vs. parent coaching and offers F/T childcare.

Community Sharing: Elizabeth Quinonez- United Way

UW seeing an increase in new potential FCC providers, calls have increased since the recent local tragedy. Providers would now like to get licensed. UW offering new workshops for their providers on topics such as: Transition to Kindergarten, Epi-pen and education topics as well as the start of a new group of Community Messengers.

Guest Presentation: Michele Burbage-Halberg & Suzy Almeida gave presentations to the council on two of the 11 Quality Components. Michele from the YMCA Children's Center shared information on the Professional Development component and Suzy from Salvation Army/ The Right Place spoke about the Sliding Fee Scale component. Additional program directors will present the remaining components at future council meetings.

NEXT MEETING: January via Zoom

Michelle Anderson will distribute a new calendar with revised dates.