Danbury School Readiness Council Minutes

Date: May 11, 2022  Time: 3:00-4:30pm  Location: Workspace

Attendance: Claudia Anderson, Michelle Anderson, Kerzell Barnes, Tara Carvalho, Eileen Costello, Sue Giglio, Michelle James, Casey Levene, Anne Mead, Olga Mejia, Mark Meyer, Jennifer Pane, Elizabeth Quinonez, Thomas Schrack, Judy Sims, Maria Vargas

Welcome: Michelle Anderson  Approval of Minutes: Michelle James 2nd by Claudia Anderson

Public Comment: Rich Reynolds- Director of Workspace

Overview of Workspace facility and its catering and venue offerings.

Agenda Item: SR Consultant Report- Eileen Costello, EdAdvance

A grant review process overview was given by review team members, Judy Sims and Claudia Anderson. Scores and funding amounts were shared with the council. Grants were approved by the Mayor and the Superintendent and submitted to the Office of Early Childhood prior to the deadline. The full Coordinator’s report is attached and posted on the EdAdvance & City of Danbury Websites.

Agenda Item: Michelle Anderson, EdAdvance

The location for future meetings was discussed as well as the possibility of Mayor Esposito having the capability to ZOOM in for meetings, he is unable to attend in person. The SR Council is looking to fill a few membership slots. We did add Matteo’s Multicultural Market as the local business representative but are looking for others as the time commitment is a challenge for small business owners. Committee sign ups have been slow, and we will continue to recruit. Look for an announcement for a strategic planning session sometime next year.

Agenda Item: Anne Mead, Danbury Public Schools

Enrollments are very busy and continues to climb. Kindergarten registration is online, and they are finishing up testing this week. They are seeing decreased self-help skills and learning gaps in children that have not been in a preschool program. Toilet training an issue for incoming Kindergarteners. Summer School programs will be offered to many. Families are looking for baby formula has been an increasing challenge. The school referendum is coming up on June
7th, please encourage families to come out and vote. They need 15% of the voters to vote. Kindergarten students beginning in the Fall will have a planned transition into the school year.

**Agenda Item:** Maria Vargas, Early Childhood Parent Collaborative

Maria and Marcela are continuing to work on bringing more parents together and become involved in any way that they can. First meeting will be the end of May for a smaller group to work on issues. They have created a parent survey which they are distributing at community events such as the Early Childhood Fair and others. Marcela is working on sharing the Sparkler App with families and a new presence at the Danbury Public Library story times. Maria continues her work on the OEC Parent Cabinet.

**Community Sharing:** Tara Carvalho, Danbury Public Library

The Summer Reading Challenge for students kicks off on June 18th. The new children’s program coordinator is starting next week and will be available to work on planning bilingual story times etc. They will continue to use the Beanstack App and will track data. Big Books and Stem kits available for teachers to borrow. The library will be at the ECE Fair to distribute information and sign families up for library cards.

**Community Sharing:** Michelle James, CAAWC

There will be a Juneteenth celebration on June 19th at WCSU. If programs want a table for community sharing, let them know. It will be held from 12:00-4:00pm. They still have funds available for housing and utilities. Energy can apply until the end of June and help with water bills is available. Food pantries are seeing over 100 families per week, and they are delivering to the elderly in public housing.

**Community Sharing:** Sue Giglio, Families Network of Western CT.

Dr. Dad’s program is beginning 5/23 in English, it is a 4-part series for fathers of Infant/Toddlers. They currently have openings for home visiting. The FNWC luncheon was held at the Amber Room in Danbury and was a wonderful success, thank you to the SR Council for sponsoring a table. Next year they will be celebrating their 25th anniversary.
**Community Sharing:** Casey Levene & Elizabeth Quinonez, United Way

The Early Childhood Fair is being held on May 14th at the Danbury Dome, with the location being sponsored by the Danbury School Readiness Council and event sponsors, Action Early Learning Center, Danbury Public Schools, United Way of Western CT., Parent Leadership Training Institute and Latinos for Educational Advocacy & Diversity. There are approximately 41 vendors, children’s entertainment, and raffles. The Community Messengers program has ended and will be holding a Community Café at the end of May. 40 providers completed the CDA program. They are training parents on the Sparkler App. on 6/2/22. Additional providers are interested in FCC but are having problems with landlords who will not agree to let providers operate, they are having discussions to support providers on this issue.

**Community Sharing:** Olga Mejia, Parent Volunteer

Participated in PLTI and Parent SEE where she learned a lot about advocacy and the Danbury community.

Michelle Anderson distributed Certificates of Appreciation to all SR Council members to thank them for their participation and service to the community.

**Motion to adjourn:** Anne Mead

**Next meeting:** TBA
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Discussion Points</th>
<th>Actions taken</th>
<th>Approx. Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and Announcements/ Approval of Minutes</td>
<td>Michelle Anderson All</td>
<td>Welcome Approval of March minutes</td>
<td>15 mins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danbury Public Schools</td>
<td>Superintendent Kevin Walston or designee</td>
<td>District Update City Update</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Danbury</td>
<td>Mayor Esposito or designee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultant Report</td>
<td>Eileen Costello</td>
<td>SR updates OEC legislative updates Grant Update QE Update Michelle Member update Strategic Planning in Fall Committee Updates</td>
<td>25 min.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC Collaborative Grant</td>
<td>Maria Vargas/Marcela Ramos</td>
<td>Parent outreach efforts (Sparkler presentations, Pos. Dis, K readiness ideas)</td>
<td>15 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other/Community Sharing</td>
<td>Any New Updates?</td>
<td>Danbury Public Library Birth to Three Coalition for Healthy Kids Working Cities United Way Families Network CAAWC</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
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