

Danbury School Readiness Council Minutes

Date: September 14, 2022

Time: 3:00-4:30pm

Location: Workspace

Attendance: Mayor Dean Esposito, Claudia Anderson, Michelle Anderson, Kerzell Barnes, Tara Carvalho, Eileen Costello, Sue Giglio, Nicole Giro, Michelle James, John Kleinhans, Casey Levene, Olga Mejia, Mark Meyer, Jennifer Pane, Elizabeth Quinonez, Thomas Schrack, Judy Sims, Maria Vargas

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

City of Danbury: Mayor Dean Esposito

Mayor Esposito extended a welcome to the members of the School Readiness Council, shared his plan to continue working together and reassured everyone that the City of Danbury is behind the Council and the Early Childhood community in Greater Danbury. He will support the work of the Council and the School Readiness program as much as possible. The goal is simple: Work to get funds needed for the youth of the city.

Agenda Item: SR Consultant Report- Eileen Costello, EdAdvance

Eileen shared her School Readiness: Year in Review power point presentation and a recap of the August 26th Professional Development Day that was held at the Ethan Allen Inn to include the News-Times coverage of the event, special guests and awards presented that day. Eileen reviewed upcoming events such as the One Book, One Community Mo Willems, Elephant and Piggie event being held on October 15th that we are partnering with the Danbury Public Library on. We are also planning a full calendar of professional development for the Fall and early Winter with a combination of Director's Forums, evening workshops, DOTS online training and the Sparkler App. The full Coordinator's report is attached and posted on the EdAdvance & City of Danbury Websites.

Agenda Item: Michelle Anderson, EdAdvance

Michelle shared the Legislative Citation honoring the School Readiness Council on their 25th anniversary and recognizing their commitment to the Greater Danbury Early Childhood community.

The Council continues to look to for members to fulfill specific membership requirements.

Agenda Item: Maria Vargas, Early Childhood Parent Collaborative

Marcella Ramos is out of the country but continues to do remote work. She will return in the late Fall. She is planning to do some Sparkler training in Portuguese and English. She offered a Portuguese Storytime at the library and had 15 families with ongoing participation in the storytime/ playgroup and was able to link families with services and child development resources. She will continue these through the Winter. Marcella has agreed to act as our Parent Ambassador. OEC has just conducted a parent survey that just closed. Maria will attend the Hispanic Heritage Cultural Fair on Saturday, September 17th on behalf of School Readiness from 12-4pm to distribute info. Maria discussed her role on the Parent Cabinet and her participation on the Sliding Fee Scale sub-committee.

Community Sharing: Tara Carvalho, Danbury Public Library

Multi-lingual staff from the Danbury Public Library will be participating in the Hispanic Heritage Cultural Fair on 9/17 at Rogers Park. The library is celebrating Hispanic Heritage month at the library with a month of assorted activities and events such as movie nights, dance lessons and dancing on the plaza. The goal is to welcome families into the library. They are holding Tues-Fri story times and afterschool programs for K-8, all activities are posted on the online calendar. Tara participated in the Danbury Public Schools convocation to kick off the school year and is visiting schools to promote library card signups for students and families. Let her know if you would like her to visit or do PD for your agency or center.

Community Sharing: Michelle James, CAAWC

The childcare center is looking for teaching staff. The agency has been busy as they head into energy season. Applications for energy assistance are online and in-person and they are looking for staff to help process applications. Mission Health Day is at the Morganti Garage at Danbury Hospital on 9/17 from 9-2 pm. They continue to see more and more requests for basic needs and housing. They will begin working on their Thanksgiving baskets.

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

Both PAT and home visiting programs at capacity and still taking intake referrals. Their Full time Portuguese speaking staff have a full case load. They are seeking P/T home visitors and a F/T Admin Assistant. Will be attending the Hispanic Heritage Fair, the New Milford Apple Festival, and the Newtown Health Fair. Looking into PLTI with Lead. The Ma & Pa co-parenting group will begin at the Joy Center and All Pro Dads will be at Morris St. School. PLTI classes are enrolling.

Community Sharing: Elizabeth Quinonez, United Way

There are now 90 providers in the Family Childcare program. After the recent Danbury tragedy, they have seen many families applying for licenses. 5 providers are in the English CDA cohort, and a new cohort is beginning for the Spanish CDA group. UW was not able to apply for the OEC grant so funding may be an issue. FCC providers enjoyed participating in the August 26th Professional Development Day at the Ethan Allen and found it a valuable one. Discussion continued with input from those childcare centers and agencies that participated that day regarding the value of continuing to hold the event at the Ethan Allen or a similar quality venue of that size. It was agreed that the professional venue is a nice way to recognize our early childhood professionals and that the ability to have over 200 teachers and directors in one room together creates a positive and collaborative environment for networking and community building amongst the programs and the honored guests that attend.

Community Sharing: Casey Levene, United Way

Prosperi-Key Digital Marketplace has gone statewide and connects ALICE families with targeted support, services, goods, and discounts. The Healthy Savings program with \$10 of fresh produce each week has been retooled and they are expanding it. The \$300 Enrichment Fund (up to \$900 per year) is taking applications for children of ALICE families to help with the cost of afterschool enrichment activities. The Ready, Set, Let's Read is back up and running. Volunteers are being processed to go into the Early Childhood programs to read to preschoolers. The ALICE SAVES: budget coaching is being offered and the Danbury Food Collaborative -ARC will pilot a Saturday food pantry to enable those unable to go during the work week an opportunity to better access the pantry.

Community Sharing: Nicole Giro, Birth to Three

Have seen an influx of referrals. The department is finally well staffed after experiencing some shortages. They continue to see a high influx of Spanish and Portuguese families being referred.

Motion to adjourn: Eileen Costello

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 9th 3:00-4:30pm @ Workspace

Danbury School Readiness Council Agenda

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

Location- WorkspaceCT

16 Trowbridge Drive, Bethel

Time -3:00 -4:30pm

Time	Person	Discussion Points	Action	Time
Welcome and Announcements/ Approval of Minutes	Michelle Anderson/ All	Welcome May minutes review Member role review Upcoming Meeting Plans		10 mins
City of Danbury	Mayor Esposito	City Hall		20 min.
Danbury Public Schools	Superintendent Walston	District Update		
Consultant Report	Eileen Costello	Year in Review PD Day Review		20 min.
Other/Community Sharing	All	Danbury Public Library Birth to Three Early Childhood Parent Collaborative CAAWC United Way Families Network Other		10 min.