

Danbury School Readiness Council Minutes

Date: March 1, 2023

Time: 3:00-4:30pm

Location: Workspace

Attendance: Claudia Anderson, Michelle Anderson, Kerzell Barnes, Tara Carvalho, Eileen Costello, Sue Giglio, Nicole Giro, Michelle James, Dionne Johnson, John Kleinhans, Anne Mead, Mark Meyer, Jennifer Pane, Elizabeth Quinonez, Marcela Ramos, Thomas Schrack, Robin Scott, Judy Sims, Maria Vargas, Kevin Walston

Guests: Ingrid Norfleet: DPS Cottage St. & Osborne campus, Robin Scott & Lourdes Cochancela: Park Avenue Early Learning Center, Jill Crimi: Interfaith Early Learning Center

Call to Order: Michelle Anderson: Welcome Robin Scott to the Council, replacing Nicole Taxiltaridis & **Approval of Minutes:** with addition of SR Coordinator report. Approved by: Mark Meyer & 2nd by: Nicole Giro

City of Danbury Update: John Kleinhans (Government Affairs and Communications Advisor)

City Hall is deep into the budget process. The Danbury Career Academy had it's groundbreaking a couple weeks ago and is going into Phase Two. City Hall is launching the Office of Federal, State and Local Grant Opportunities. This new office will pursue opportunities for the city of Danbury and it's nonprofit and business community to secure more money from available grants. The office will include a director, grant writers and a grant compliance officer.

Danbury Public Schools Update: Superintendent Kevin Walston

Kindergarten registration has begun and over 120 families are already registered. DPS will soon be reaching out to the Pre-K programs to get children assessed. Demographers predict 900 kindergarteners in September. Enrollment in grades K-12 has stabilized and grades 6-12 are off the charts with a predicted number of 3800 students at the high school level for school year 24-25. The district also had its first snow day of the year!

Agenda Item: SR Consultant Report- Eileen Costello, EdAdvance

Based on the feedback and needs of the programs, we have hired a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) who has begun working with the individual programs. Visits are being scheduled at each site in hopes of providing another level of support to the teachers. Care 4 Kids announced that applicants are being waitlisted, so summer campers will be the hardest hit. Eileen presented a powerpoint of our One Book, One Community event. The full Coordinator's report is attached and posted on the EdAdvance & City of Danbury Websites.

Agenda Item: Claudia Anderson & Judy Sims, Grant Review Team

The Grant Review Team completed their last program visit today. We enjoyed seeing the classrooms in action and have been very happy with the quality we are seeing. The feedback from the teaching staff and programs has been that they are very happy with the professional development and events that we are offering. Kudos to Eileen for all the training and supports that she is making available to them. The Grant Review Team will begin reading over each of the program grants in the coming weeks.

Agenda Item: Maria Vargas, Early Childhood Parent Collaborative

Both Marcela and I are available to do outreach 1:1 on playgrounds and at the library in continuing to work on bringing more parents together and provide resources. We attended the Motherhood event sponsored by the Knights of Columbus at the St. Joes Parenting Center. We plan to be at the Early Childhood Fair and the Danbury Public Library Community Baby Shower in May. The Portuguese Storytime series begins in May, and we have Positive Discipline sessions scheduled in English, Portuguese and Spanish in April, May, and June. Maria continues her work on the OEC Parent Cabinet and reported on Parent Survey findings, the Blue-Ribbon Panel and Care 4 Kids waitlist management.

Community Sharing: Tara Carvalho, Danbury Public Library

Danbury Library is holding a Community Baby Shower on Saturday, May 13th from 11:00am-1:00pm where families can meet organizations that serve babies and families with young children and receive resource information. We participated in Literacy night at Hudson Country Montessori and visited with the Community Messengers program to talk about the resources that can be found at the library. The Summer Reading Program is in the planning stages.

Community Sharing: Michelle James, CAAWC

Planning the Early Childhood & Community Resource Fair to be held on Saturday, May 6th from 10:00am to 1:00pm. at Roger's Park Middle School. Income Tax preparation is available for those making \$60,000 or less through April 13th. Danbury Works has hired a director to work with employers to find out what their needs are. A job fair for Nuvance Health is being held on April 4th from 3:00-6:00pm. A security guard program is being held in April.

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

We are looking forward to Families Network's Annual Robert C. and Nancy Joy 25th Anniversary Luncheon on April 26th.

Community Sharing: Nicole Giro, Birth to Three

We had 50 evaluations for February and a lot of referrals coming through. Looking for physical therapists for the Waterbury and Torrington area.

Community Sharing: Elizabeth Quinonez, United Way

Planning the Morning Without Child Care Rally being held at the Danbury Library Plaza from 5:00-6:00pm on March 8th. We are launching a new cohort of coaching for 15 providers to prepare them for their CDA. Many programs are working towards being licensed and need assistance with issues regarding housing to obtain a license. We are looking into running an Incubator Model in collaboration with Head Start.

Community Sharing: Dionne Johnson, ECCP

ECCP is available for early intervention and offering support in the classroom. We can make assessments, assist in building strategies and partner with parents. We provide Socio-emotional support for home-based caregivers and would like to build capacity in the preschool programs. We also provide mental health and stress management for teachers and can help in identifying gaps in the classroom. Email us for a referral and we can get the partnership going.

Guest Presentation: Three School Readiness programs: Jill Crimi from Interfaith, Ingrid Norfleet from DPS Cottage St and Osborne St campus as well as, Robin Scott & Lourdes Cochancela from Park Avenue Early Learning Center gave presentations to the council on three of the 11 Quality Components. Ingrid from DPS shared information on the Nutrition Services component, Jill shared the Transition component and Robin and Lourdes spoke about the Admission/Enrollment component. Additional School Readiness directors will present the remaining components, Family Literacy & Referrals at the next council meeting in May.

Motion to adjourn: Claudia Anderson, Second Mark Meyer

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 3, 2023