

# Valley Early Childhood Regional Council

**SEPTEMBER 17, 2018**

In attendance: Pam Lorenzo, Nurturing Families Network; Ayanna Williams, Derby, Seymour, Shelton Liaison; Krista Gambino, Ansonia School Readiness; Kristen Festa, Shelton Public Schools; Desiree Caporaso, Zero to Three Infant Toddler Court Team; Christine Butler, Shelton Public Schools; Karen Martinez, Child First PCRC; Jean Schoenleber, Child First PCRC; Nicole Cignoli, Derby Public Library; Debra Hansen, Valley Regional Adult Education; Dee Kopec, Shelton Youth Service Bureau; B.J. Hornby, Shelton; Victoria White, Shelton Public Schools; Gladys Lazurek, Derby Day Care; Barbara Eckner, Valley YMCA; Tracy Platt, Ansonia Public Schools Pre-K; Jamie Peterson, TEAM, Inc.; Meredith Martineau, TEAM, Inc.; Amanda Graham, PEIP PCRC; Alison Conway, Derby Public Schools Little Raiders University; Shaye Roscoe, Boys & Girls Club; Carissa Caserta, Naugatuck Valley Health; Keely Edwards, Derby School District; Mary Sue Feige, Seymour Public Schools; Kimberly Farmer, Seymour Parent; David Morgan, TEAM, Inc.; John Saccu, Derby Youth Service Bureau; Dorca Rodriguez, McKinney-Vento Liaison Ansonia School District; Sharon Kelley, Julia Day Nursery; Allison Tait-Enright, Commerce Park Children's Denistry; Michele Holovach, TEAM. Inc.

## **Welcome/Introductions**

Pam welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

## **Regional Budget**

Pam reported that as of 8/31/2018 the regional budget is \$10,272. Anyone interested in using funds for regional activities needs to submit a proposal with an attached budget to Pam and then the request needs to be approved by the Council.

## **June 4, 2018 Meeting Minutes Vote**

Vicky made a motion to accept the minutes from June 4, 2018, Jean seconded and all were in favor.

## **Guest Speakers**

Dorca Rodriguez, McKinney-Vento Liaison for Ansonia Public Schools did a presentation on the McKinney-Vento Liaison role. CT requires all school districts to ensure access to public education for children experiencing homelessness and ensure success in school once enrolled. Dorca explained that homelessness is defined as those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence including those who are sharing the housing of others. She shared the 2017-2018 CT LEA Homeless Liaison Catalog and if anyone has questions, they could contact Louis Tallarita at the CT State Department of Education. The McKinney-Vento Liaisons from the other 3 communities are as follows:

Derby – Dina Gotawala

Seymour – Vonda Tencza

Shelton – Janice Simmonetti

## **Mission Statement**

The original mission statement along with 6 proposed new ones was sent out prior to the meeting and a discussion ensued. Certain terms were deemed important parts of the mission statement: family, community, effort to ensure, prepared socially & developmentally and thrive in

school were all reviewed and considered. Pam will take all of the ideas and wordsmith a mission statement that will be sent out to all and then voted on. Also, Pam wanted members to be thinking about ideas for a logo for the VECRC.

### **Governance Reports**

**Child First** – Jean reported that Child First registered 2 more infants younger than one which is a goal that has been established. She also shared information on the rate card program, the CQI project, the Innovation modules, the Abecedarian Learning Games program and annual reporting.

**Family Resource Center/Diaper Bank** – Ayanna reported that summer Kinder Kamp was held the week of August 13<sup>th</sup> at Derby Public Library with 18 children attending. She shared the positive evaluation feedback from the parents along with programs provided by Cathi Kellett, Evie North, Al deCant and Sandi Schuchmann plus visits from the Principals from Irving and Bradley plus a K-9 Officer. The TEAM Diaper Bank is serving 200 families and Diaper Need Awareness Week (September 24 – 30) will be highlighted with posts on TEAM's website ([www.teaminc.org](http://www.teaminc.org)). The Community Baby Shower is still in its planning stages and Pam will send out a flyer once the plans are completed.

**Early Head Start Home Based** – Michele has 2 openings for Home Visitors and enrollment has declined due to children aging out of the program, custody issues and families leaving due to the attachment with Home Visitors that have left the program. The Grow Up With Good Nutrition program has started up on September 6<sup>th</sup> and will continue through February. Families have a 45 minute informational session on nutrition and then shop for fresh produce, meats, fish, dairy and shelf stable items twice a month leaving with approximately 75 lbs. of food at each visit.

**PEIP** – Amanda introduced herself as the new Prevention through Early Intervention (PEIP) coordinator. She has scheduled sessions with Julia Day and Derby Day. The Derby Schools are using a new program called Second Step Social Emotional Learning so Bradley and Irving are opting out of the PEIP program. Consequently, there are openings in the PEIP schedule that Amanda will be filling.

**Valley Regional Adult Education** – Debra introduced herself as the new Director of Valley Regional Adult Education and reported that summer ESL class was completed with 29 students. The fall semester began today with 100 ESL enrollees in both day and evening classes, new Citizenship classes beginning, Credit Diploma adding more students in November and GED registration beginning today. The Enrichment catalogs were sent and all of those classes have strong enrollments and many of the bus trips are all booked. In November, the State of CT Naturalization ceremony will be taking place in Shelton.

### **Office of Early Childhood Liaison Report**

Krista and Ayanna reported that the State School Readiness meeting will be held on 9/28/18. Providers have signed all the required MOU's for both the School Readiness & PDG grants. The Quality Enhancement grant will provide social/emotional training with Lisa Burton, Peaceful Ways Classroom Curriculum and Sue Vivian, with training and coaching in Building a Portfolio of Topics of Study Lesson Plans.

The OEC's Thrive! Program which provides child care providers with a variety of professional development that improves the level of quality in programming, will be holding 2 trainings on October 3, 2018 and October 17, 2018 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Jamie offered to host the workshops at TEAM Inc.'s Howard Avenue site and 50 staff will be in attendance. A grant through the VECRC might be requested for the cost of food for the 2 workshop dates.

The Policy Committee met to discuss chronic absenteeism, its impact on funding and how support can be given to families to improve the outcomes. Monitoring and screening will begin in mid-October for School Readiness and PDG. All School Readiness slots are filled and there is still one opening in PDG at Little Raiders University.

Sign-up sheets were circulated for the 3 subcommittees of the VECRC:

**School Readiness Governance Committee** – (the former Policy Committee). The purpose of this committee is to create, update and monitor policies to ensure compliance to School Readiness General policies. This committee will also be reviewing School Readiness RFP grants (Providers cannot be members of this committee).

**Transition to Kindergarten Committee** – The purpose of this committee is to support children and their families who will be entering Kindergarten. This committee will assist in planning activities such as Pre-K/K Roundtables, Kindergarten registration, parent workshops, etc.

**Family Engagement Committee** – The purpose of this committee is to plan and coordinate various programs centered on specific topics such as health/safety, family literacy, preparing your child for kindergarten, etc.

### **School Readiness 101 Part Two**

The objective of the state funded School Readiness program was reviewed. The VECRC oversees the 2 Priority School Districts of Ansonia & Derby and the 2 Competitive Grant Municipalities of Seymour & Shelton. The importance and the requirements of the Council and its necessary representatives were discussed. The 11 Quality Components the Council must monitor and evaluate were reviewed with special emphasis on Family Literacy and the Annual Evaluation that need special support.

### **Program/Agency Sharing and Announcements**

A Collective Impact discussion was tabled until the next meeting. It is a goal of the Valley Council for Health & Human Services to work on a Collective Impact project that will be able to create lasting solutions for critical social issues. Childhood poverty is the critical issue that the VCHHS will be tackling.

Sharon announced that the Valley Director's Network has set this year's conference date for March 22, 2019. Presenters are being scheduled and this full day of professional development will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott in Shelton.

Jamie shared that TEAM's Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 11, 2018 at Racebrook Country Club.

**The next meeting of the Valley Early Childhood Regional Council will be on:**

**Monday, December 10, 2018**

**Valley United Way, Shelton**

**9:00a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**