

Valley Early Childhood Regional Council

DECEMBER 10, 2018

In attendance: Pam Lorenzo, Nurturing Families Network; Ayanna Williams, Derby, Seymour, Shelton Liaison; Krista Gambino, Ansonia School Readiness; Desiree Caporaso, Zero to Three Infant Toddler Court Team; Christine Butler, Shelton Public Schools; Linda Jordan, Child First PCRC; Jean Schoenleber, Child First PCRC; Debra Hansen, Valley Regional Adult Education; Dee Kopec, Shelton Youth Service Bureau; B.J. Hornby, Shelton; Victoria White, Shelton Board of Education; Barbara Eckner, Valley YMCA; Meredith Martineau, TEAM, Inc.; Carissa Caserta, Naugatuck Valley Health; Keely Edwards, Derby School District; Mary Sue Feige, Seymour Public Schools; Kimberly Farmer, Seymour Parent; David Morgan, TEAM, Inc.; Dorca Rodriguez, McKinney-Vento Liaison Ansonia School District; Sharon Kelley, Julia Day Nursery; Cathi Kellett, Griffin Hospital/Safe Kids; Evie North, Community Member; Janet Buchanan, DCF; Eileen Ehman, Ansonia Public Schools; Mark Holden, Shelton Board of Education; Allison Tait-Enright, Melissa New, and Dr. Daniel Brien, Commerce Park Children's Dentistry & Orthodontics; Michele Holovach, TEAM, Inc.

Welcome/Introductions

Pam welcomed everyone and introductions were made. Pam announced the finalized VECRC Mission Statement that was voted on: "To support the Valley Community as a leader in early childhood development and family engagement in an effort to ensure all Valley children are prepared socially and developmentally to thrive in school."

Regional Budget

Pam reported that as of 11/30/2018 the regional budget is \$9,676.02. 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.

September 17, 2018 Meeting Minutes Vote

Dee made a motion to accept the minutes from September 17, 2018, BJ seconded and all were in favor to accept the minutes as written.

Guest Speaker

Dr. Daniel Brien, Pediatric Dentist from Commerce Park Children's Dentistry and Orthodontics, spoke on the importance of early oral care. Dr. Brien discussed why parents should bring a child to the dentist, the difference between a Pediatric and a General Dentist, and dietary recommendations such as night time bottles, juice consumption and sticky, starchy and sweet foods. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all children should have a dental home by the age of one year. Dr. Brien gave all the VECRC members Commerce Park lunch bags, infant dental cloths, toothbrushes and information for families.

Governance Reports

Child First – Jean reported that referrals are increasing and Child First had an excellent monitoring visit by the OEC on 12/3/18. Jean briefly explained the Rate Card project and the Innovations Modules that staff have completed.

Early Head Start Home Based – Michele announced that she has filled the two vacant Home Visiting positions and enrollment is increasing. The 2 new Home Visitors completed 3 days of curriculum training with Parents as Teachers on 12/3, 12/4 and 12/5. EHS-HB also had an excellent monitoring visit by the OEC on 12/3/18 and staff is also working on the Rate Card project and Innovations Modules. The families have all been signed up for Toys 4 Kids which begins on 12/14 along with receiving snowsuits, coats, hats, gloves and books for families through the CT Partnership for Children in Seymour.

Family Resource Center/Diaper Bank – Ayanna reported that TEAM's Diaper Bank continues to be part of the National Diaper Bank who is concentrating on baby brain development with their "Too Small to Fail" campaign. The Family Resource Center is supporting this effort with distributing books and giving families the opportunity to engage in activities to support literacy. Ayanna shared a parent handout that contained diaper time songs and encouragement for families to keep talking, reading and singing to increase baby's literacy skills.

PEIP – Amanda was not in attendance so Pam will get an update on the progress of the Prevention through Early Intervention (PEIP) program.

Valley Regional Adult Education – Debra announced that the Fall semester has ended with over 200 students participating in ABE/GED, Credit Diploma and ESL classes. The spring semester begins its registration on January 7, 2019 for all enrollments. There has been a literacy push with book distribution to ESL & GED classes. In November, VRAE co-hosted the CT Naturalization ceremony at Shelton Intermediate School. On May 30th, GED and Credit Diploma will be visiting high school's guidance departments.

Office of Early Childhood Liaison Report/VECRC Committee Reports

PDG funding will no longer have funding to support the preschool classrooms at the end of the 2019 school year. Derby has 2 PDG classrooms (one with 18 children, the other with 17 children) and Seymour has one PDG classroom of 18 children. On December 12th, Ayanna will be attending the state meeting that will discuss strategies to sustain the PDG classrooms beyond June 2019. One Derby classroom might be able to obtain Alliance funding but the other Derby classroom and the Seymour classroom do not have funding available.

The state meeting on 9/28/18 focused on ECIS (database) reporting which will eventually include an attendance module and leadership/governance dashboard for reporting purposes. Background check fingerprinting will have a fee increase along with a 5 year requirement for updated fingerprinting. There will also be a background check management system created to record and access background check information.

The yearly requirement for unutilized slot surveys had to be submitted for each community throughout the state.

Krista reported on the Priority & Competitive Liaison meeting that was held on 10/18/18 which covered state monitoring and the School Readiness RFP that will be out in January. There is concern regarding inclusion and hours - the state wants services in the classroom rather than children leaving the classroom. A provider's meeting was held for all School Readiness and PDG providers to discuss OEC updates, K pre-screening, attendance and liaison monitoring.

Committee Updates:

School Readiness Governance Committee – No meeting – one will be set up in January.

Transition to Kindergarten Committee & Family Engagement Committee – A joint meeting was held on 11/28/18. Results and trends from pre-screenings that were completed in October were discussed. Family workshops preliminary planning has begun with focus on supporting children’s education and preparing for kindergarten. There was discussion on bringing back the Play & Learn Fair.

Valley Council for Health & Human Services Collective Impact Study

David reported on the VCHHS Collective Impact Study that is in its preliminary phase. The focus will be on the goal of “childhood poverty”. Using the Valley Community Index, the study will look at the two generational approach and take the entire family into account when discussing the impact of childhood poverty on a family. It will be important to have a diverse population at the table for this study.

Program/Agency Sharing and Announcements

Pam announced a Save the Date for Wednesday, April 24, 2019 for the Read Across the Valley breakfast kick-off event to be held at Brownson Country Club in Shelton.

Dee shared that the Youth Service Bureau is sponsoring “Speak Sobriety” on March 20, 2019 at Shelton High School at 7:00 p.m. The speaker will be Steven Hill, a law student battling with addiction.

Ayanna said the Community Baby Shower has been postponed until the spring.

TEAM’s Toys 4 Kids is still taking applications for its annual toy drive which will be held at its new home: St. Joseph’s School 430 Coram Avenue in Shelton on 12/14; 12/17; 12/18 and 12/19. Pam will resend the flyer. TEAM, Inc. is taking energy assistance applications through April 2019.

Janet shared that DCF will be moving back to investigations only and concentrating on mental health and substance abuse. She said over the last 4 months, there has been a shortage of foster homes so there are 100 children who have not been placed.

The next two meetings of the Valley Early Childhood Regional Council will be on:

**Monday, March 4, 2019
Diane Stroman Community Room
TEAM, Inc. 30 Elizabeth Street Derby
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

**Monday, June 3, 2019
Ansonia Board of Education
42 Grove Street Ansonia
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**