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Regular Meeting
Vernon School Readiness Council
January 5, 2022
1:00pm
Draft Minutes

VSRC Mission: To ensure that every child in Vernon will start school ready to learn

I. Welcome and Introductions

Present: Michelle Hill, Anna Figueroa, Kimberly Manganella, Sherry Yarusewicz, Shelley McCone, Cynthia Zingler, Betsy Crayton, Kaytee Walters, Dave Coricelli, Joy Houlder, Ruth Sales

All members introduced themselves and described their agency affiliation and/or role.

II. Review and Approval of draft minutes for 11/03/2021

Michelle noted small edit to name doc. "Draft Minutes". Michelle made change. Shelley made a motion to accept. Cynthia seconded. All who were present at the meeting voted, those not present abstained. Motion passed. Minutes approved.

III. School Readiness Liaison - Grant updates

Anna shared news regarding launch of CT Shares and how it may be helpful to our participants and the early childhood field as a whole. Anna also shared OEC's plan to launch a workforce recruitment campaign, acknowledging the challenges occurring in our field with staffing crisis's.

A discussion around the number of OEC Memo updates coming out and the potential for confusion occurred. Shelley asked for a summary or a consolidated document of most recent changes. Shelley also commented information floating around from the field in chats, emails etc... that can be misleading and confusing. Anna referred Shelley, and all, to the OEC website which contains all necessary, up to date, information in a very user friendly-need to know- set up. Highlighting only the current guidance that has changed. Anna also sent out a recent email 1/3 to programs with a direct link to the page for Memo review. Programs, SR Coordinators, in particular need to visit the site regularly. If there is a program specific question, Anna will help direct them to the appropriate OEC staff member for clarification (if she cannot answer it herself). It was noted that it is an extremely challenging time for all, going directly to the

source-OEC- will be needed for clarification of what seems to be ever changing guidance during this period of pandemic.

IV. Conscious Discipline Updates

Kaytee reported in her new role as acting Director, she was unaware of the Conscious Discipline Training until she met with Anna. She was thankful that we were able to get her and her staff quick account access. Kaytee reports activating her own account and found it user friendly. 1 teacher has already completed all 10 sessions. Kaytee believes they have ~3/4 of their staff signed up and ready to access courses.

Shelley reports VPS was consumed by NAEYC prep this fall, on-boarding new teachers and now budget season. Shelley's advice to Kaytee is "Don't Wait!"

V. Program Updates

A. Accreditation update:

VPS is awaiting their response from NAEYC. Shelley noted that she felt all went well.

"Y" reports working with the older NAEYC standards. Kaytee reports feeling the same- can not wait- and they are making good progress.

B. Program Enrollment

VPS fully enrolled

"Y" continues to have some enrollment challenges (2 open SR spaces). Kaytee has 2 tours scheduled for preschoolers this week.

C. Program Highlights

Dave was excited to report the Y will be using their stabilization funds to overhaul the center. They will have some brand-new staff and a brand-new center!

D. Challenges and Need

"Y" - Kaytee reports staffing challenges. The "Y" will be hosting a hiring event on January 11th from 4-7. Kaytee is hopeful this may yield some candidates, even substitutes would be helpful.

VI. Strengthening Local Early Childhood Collaboration- Vernon's Better Together Initiative –

A. Status Update:

Kimberly shared her ability to immediately get things going once she was hired as she has years of experiences in Vernon's community and know many, many folks. She noted how grateful she is to the parents who accepted her invitation to join our work as either Parent Ambassadors or Parent volunteers.

Sherry Yarusewicz- Parent Ambassador

Heidi Ciampa- Parent Ambassador

Dacia Ball- Parent Volunteer

Nancy Kruplenski- Parent Volunteer

Shireen Rhoades- Parent Volunteer
Heather Jasion- Parent Volunteer

Raising up parent voice is our primary focus. The Vernon's Better Together team is working on mapping resources and filling gaps. Kimberly also noted the behind the scenes work that is going on for the website which will include the addition of a parent sharing section. Kimberly is working with the parent team to finalize surveys (both for our parents and the community)

Ruth suggested possibly adding a "Needs and Wants" section to the website.

B. CT Shares: See above

VII. Partner Updates

Cynthia- Peace at Home Parenting Solutions course is available (Kimberly will share the course with our group)

Next session of Laugh and Learn is approaching

March 1st will start Kindergarten registration

Cynthia noted that they are here to help parents connect to resources. Cynthia gave a shout out to Swiss Cleaners-Get Fresh for helping one of their families who experienced a fire. Get Fresh took all the bedding and clothes and washed free of charge. Ruth commented on our "Community Hero's"!

Ruth- ECCP is looking to hire. They are looking for bi-lingual Program Managers. Shelley asked about qualifications. Ruth responded Master level in social work or human services. CHR in Manchester is hiring. Regions will be revamped.

Feb/March Ruth will be providing training for center-based and home-based providers to include Social Emotional Development, Transitions, Routines...

Shelley noted VPS will start taking applications around Valentine's Day.

Dave noted that although they are having some staffing challenges, the "Y" will have capacity for more children through CDC resources in the near future.

Michelle discussed the town availability of N 95 masks. She will get some to Dave.

Reminder: Meeting are the first Wed of month at 1pm.

Meeting adjourned

Minutes submitted by: Anna Figueroa

