

**Middletown School Readiness Council**  
**12:00 P.M. - 1:30 P.M.**  
**Wednesday, December 17, 2014**  
**Wilbert Snow School**  
**299 Wadsworth St.**  
**Middletown, CT 06457**

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**Members Present:** Ed Bonilla, Alice Torres, Jessica Stewart, Sheila Daniels, Wendy Berling, Amy Waterman, Monica Beylea, Beverly Lawrence, Kitty Robinson, Donna Marino, Izzi Greenberg, Jerome Long, Pat Charles, and Christine O'Grady. Also present: Lina Kronenberger and Cindy Guerreri.

**I. Welcome & Call to Order:** Ed Bonilla called the meeting to order at 12:11P.M. Introductions were made.

**II. Announcements:** Izzi announced there is a 4:00 P.M. vigil at Trinity Church for homeless people that passed away during 2014. Ed added that a meal at St. Vincent DePaul will be offered after the vigil. Ed added MAIC will host a holiday gathering with several guest speakers including Monica Beylea presenting on professionals eating on the run, and Erika Halford from the CT Yoga Center will offer some simple yoga techniques for busy people. Amy Waterman announced she has set up Twitter accounts for the FRCs at Macdonough and Farm Hill, with that said, Superintendent Pat Charles tweeted out this meeting! Alice Torres noted Barbara Stern (from ACES) is offering training in January around Behavioral Challenges, and Jessica stated she will send the flyer out to the Council.

**III. Acceptance of the November 19, 2014 School Readiness Council meeting minutes:** Wendy Berling moved to accept the minutes from the above mentioned date. Jerome Long seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**IV. Financial and Monthly Summary Reports:** Jessica distributed the financial report, showing 7 vacancies. The deadline for reporting vacancies is Jan. 9, 2015. Jessica is hoping to fill all slots in time for filing the report. It was suggested we add non-resident inclusion to our advocate list for the upcoming legislative session. Izzi and Jessica are working on this and will update the Council as news develops. It was noted that enrollment priority would be on local residents first and then non-residents to fill programs and only a small percentage of outside residents would be served. Alice noted Head Start is also having difficulty filling slots and they too are participating in discussions on policy change. She noted a partnership between the federal and state driven programs should be focused on along with a long term. Further discussion followed. Izzi asked if the Special Education numbers are consistent year to year. Jessica will check and report back to the Council.

**V. Coordinator's Report:**

**Teacher Registry Update:** Jessica reported the state is enforcing the policy on teacher registry. The OEC will be using the data to ensure mandated qualifications are met, and will defund programs that are out of compliance. She is working on making sure programs have staff qualified in the registry and that registry information is regularly updated. She explained that staff has to register first and the program director has to follow up and confirm the registration and there appears to be some data glitches.

**Discovery Update:** Jessica received notice that the state match of funds has been cut by 5% and she will have to send back around \$2,300. The Network Alliance will focus on support for future funding. Rumor has it funding may be cut for next year in the amount of \$45,000. Izzi reminded Council members to let their legislative representatives know this is important funding. Cindy noted after 14 yrs Discovery may end their funding June of 2015. The Memorial Fund is talking about sun-setting the current grantee communities. Cindy

also noted the next phase of work is not known at this point. She encouraged Council members to contact their legislative representatives and ask them to maintain funds at the state level. Local Planning Communities are included in O.E.C. language. Graustein Executive Director, David Adams, will be informed soon of their Board's decision of focus. He met with the governor who is a supporter of early childhood education and issues. Alice said we need to communicate how important the local infrastructure to the legislative body.

**Smart Start Update:** The filing deadline for the RFP is December 19th. There were a lot of things written into the grant that made it a challenge to many communities. Cindy also mentioned that some communities received Federal funding and that deterred them from applying for this grant.

**MECN Update:** Jessica noted workshops are scheduled for remainder of year. Oral Health in January, Sen. Beth Bye will present in February, AFP leadership training in March and April, Barbara Stern will present on behavioral challenges and attachment in May and June.

**Early Literacy Group Update:** Jessica reported the group is moving away from the attendance incentive to social work support in a means to connect parents with resource services. Christine O'Grady noted that in November Town & Country Director, Judi Kenney, asked Child First to hold an info session at their center on behavioral issues and 15 parents attended. Circle of Security Update: Amy updated that parent trainings will be offered at the FRC for home day care providers in January. Training will take place at Town & Country again, and for families at Macdonough in the spring. She and Monica are working on engaging families in the North End whose children go to Farm Hill School conducting an 8 week course on nutrition. Amy reported this is a simple, very good program to build relationships.

**PreK - K Alignment Group Update:** The group met in December and discussed the professional development scheduled in January. The teachers want to walk away with something in hand. The Planning Committee will create a basket of materials for those present to create a "take-a-way". They also discussed playgroups and the hardship getting parents to attend. Discussion around how we build relationships prior to kindergarten for preschool families took place. Jessica noted it was a very rich discussion.

**Pre-K Experience Report:** Jessica distributed this annual report to the Council outlining the information within and explained the graphics that showed 89% of our children had 1, 2 or more than 2 yrs. experience in preschool/childcare programs prior to Kindergarten. Discussion followed. Alice suggested a subcommittee to address family day care homes and review other preschool information within the document, possibly how to look at data differently and report data differently as well. The achievement gap is widening at the kindergarten level between those that had a preschool experience and those that did not. Discussion followed around how the preschool experience is calculated. Amy noted the Kick Start program even helps in the 5 weeks children are enrolled. It was suggested the school district maximize face to face contact at kindergarten registration. Summer offerings at the schools for incoming kindergarten students are great, too, and do happen at many of our elementary schools. Even informal meetings such as a group of mothers meeting on the school playground weekly have taken place and connect parents and children prior to the onset of the school year. Ed suggested Council members review the data and send questions to Jessica or share them at the next meeting. Jessica will e-mail the report to the Council.

**ACES/ EHS Update:** Alice reported the application was submitted for the Birth to 5 Grant. She shared the ACES Middlesex County EHS/HS Partnership abstract with the Council. The timing of the grant award is not known at this time. Alice noted there is talk of moving state funded preschool into Head Start and Birth to 3 programs. Alice distributed an eligibility recruitment selection enrollment attendance form.

**FRC Update:** Amy noted everything is going well. Circle of Security training sessions and playgroups are ongoing along with youth development group and the Kick Start program plans are already in the works for next summer.

**Child First Update:** In Christine's absence at this point in the meeting, Monica reported Child First has a waiting list of 15.

**Opportunity Knocks Update:** Monica noted there will not be a December meeting. The Oral Health subcommittee and the steering committee will meet this Friday. The Nurturing Families program is offering Circle of Security training and Linda and Paige are moving forward on perinatal health.

**Middlesex Coalition Update:** Izzi noted the December meeting on two generational learning was very interesting. This method of learning is already in place here in Middletown under the Even Start program, ChildFirst, FRC's, Nurturing Families, and Early Head Start. The presentation is on the Coalition's website. She also noted discussion around funding two generational learning will take place during the upcoming legislative session and they are talking about supporting existing programs. The January meeting will focus on juvenile justice issues.

**Even Start Update:** Lina reported they continue to wait for their NAEYC visit and the program is full at this time.

**Board of Education News:** Pat is offering a program for parents on immigration to educate and talk with families about the process. She noted there is a lot of misinformation and opportunists and would like to provide accurate information to parents and families. Details on this event will be forthcoming.

**VI. Adjournment:** Ed closed the meeting at 1:50 P.M. thanking those present for their attendance.

**The next Middletown School Readiness Council meeting will be held on  
Wednesday, January 21, 2014  
at  
Wilbert Snow School  
299 Wadsworth St., Middletown, CT 06457  
from  
12:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.**

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Sheila C. Daniels

