

**Valley Early Childhood Regional Council Meeting**

**October 14, 2021**

**Zoom 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

***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***

In attendance:

Council Co-Chair - Carissa Caserta, Naugatuck Valley Health District

Council Co-Chair - Mary Sue Feige, Principal, Bungay School Seymour

Diana Brancato, Ansonia School Readiness Coordinator

Ayanna Williams, Derby, Seymour, Shelton School Readiness Liaison

Annmarie Drugonis, First Selectwoman, Seymour

Dee Kopec, Mayor’s Office, Shelton

Dr. Reese Morales, Ansonia Public Schools

Mario Ciccarini, Principal, Bradley School Derby

Lauren Reid, Assistant Principal Bungay School Seymour

Jamie Peterson, Lead Director Early Childhood, TEAM Inc.

Tracy Platt, Ansonia School Readiness-Ansonia Public Schools

Alyson Stanisci, Ansonia School Readiness/Shelton School Readiness-TEAM, Inc.

Barbara Eckner, Ansonia School Readiness/Derby School Readiness-YMCA

Kristen Santilli, Director of Curriculum/Shelton School Readiness-Shelton

Shannon Bullard, Ansonia School Readiness-Julia Day

Liz Heon, Seymour School Readiness/Derby School Readiness-Kid’s Club

Gilbey Delgreco, Kid’s Club

Cathy Pomeroy, Bradley School Derby

B.J. Hornby, Shelton

Cathi Kellett, Safe Kids-Griffin Hospital

Dorca Rodriguez, McKinney-Vento Liaison-Ansonia

Linda Flach, Early Childhood Consultation Partnership, Parent Child Resource Center/BHcare

Keely Edwards, Irving School Derby

Debra Hansen, Valley Regional Adult Education

Lynn Rider, Child First, Parent Child Resource Center/BHcare

Linda Jordan, Child First Parent Child Resource Center/BHcare

Desiree Caporaso, National Infant-Toddler Court Program

Rebecca Troop, Seymour Public Library

Jen Shuart, Ansonia Public Library

Michele Holovach, Early Head Start, TEAM Inc.

**Welcome/Introductions**

 Mary Sue and Carissa called the meeting to order and introductions were made.

**April 29, 2021 Minutes**

 BJ made a motion and Dee seconded to accept the minutes from the April 29, 2021 meeting. The motion carried.

**Regional Budget**

 Carissa is waiting for a call from the fiduciary, TEAM, Inc. to report the exact amount in the regional budget. When the information is obtained, it will be added to the minutes.

**Naugatuck Valley Health Department**

 Carissa reported that there are still heavy cases of COVID being reported with an uptick of 20-30 year olds. The schools in the Valley are doing a good job following protocols and keeping numbers of outbreaks low. The NVHD clinic is still being held every Friday from 10:00-12:00. Tomorrow, there will be the addition of a 2:00-4:00 time slot. Carissa said that the flu clinics (which can be combined with COVID vaccinations) have started and NVHD will be administering both throughout the Valley.

**Program/Agency Sharing**

**School Readiness Providers**

Shannon shared that at Julia Day, Ansonia School Readiness has 23 full day/full year

slots of which 22 are being currently utilized. The quality components reported on were the usage of Health Bright with parent and the nurse to log for access to health records. The school was represented at Ansonia’s Harvest Fest.

 Barbara reported that the YMCA has 22 full day/full year slots for Ansonia School Readiness of which 16 are being utilized. Barbara also has 7 full day Derby School Readiness slots of which 5 are being utilized. The quality components were regarding the usage of the Sparkler app with families to track Ages and Stages developmental questionnaires that can be completed on the parent’s phones. All YMCA staff must be fully vaccinated.

 Aly shared that TEAM has 18 full day/full year slots for Ansonia School Readiness of which 16 are being utilized and 28 full day/full year slots for Shelton School Readiness of which 24 are being utilized. The quality components included the professional development that was held at the end of August, start-up of Circle of Security parenting groups, the use of the Creative Curriculum family engagement portal and the usage of on-line learning opportunities through Kaplan.

 Tracy reported that Ansonia Public Schools have 50 full day/full year School Readiness slots of which 47 are being utilized and 10 part day/part year slots of which 9 are currently being utilized.

 Liz reported that Kid’s Club has 13 full day/full year Seymour School Readiness slots of which all 13 are being utilized and 6 full day/full year Derby School Readiness slots of which 1 is being utilized. Kid’s Club held a Fall Fest outdoors, began the use of the Bright Wheels app with parents to share daily updates and pictures, is implementing the CT Documentation & Observation for Teaching Systems (DOTS) to monitor each child’s progress and is working toward achieving NAEYC accreditation.

 Kristen shared that the Shelton Board of Education has 10 part day/part year slots and all 10 are being utilized. There are 4 teachers (2 in the 3 year old room and 2 in the 4 year old room), there has been ongoing professional development and Eureka Math Squared has been introduced to the preschool teachers. (See attached six VECRC Program Provider full reports)

 **Child First –** Lynn shared that the Child First had 30 cases before the COVID shutdown when 14 families is the capacity. All staff remained intact during this periodand Child First has received funding to continue the work with families in the Lower Naugatuck Valley. (See attached Child First full report).

**Early Head Start Home Based** – Michele reported that the program had 3 staff vacancies over the summer but 2 of those positions have been filled. The fifth Home Visitor vacancy will be posted once enrollment increases. Recruitment for new families is a top priority. (See attached Early Head Start Home Based full report).

**Valley Regional Adult Education** – Debra reported that Adult Education classes have begun and classes are in person with distancing and masking in place. An additional Guidance Counselor is now available and Debra told Michele to send the Early Head Start Home Based flyers to her to distribute to the GED, Credit Diploma and ESL programs for recruitment. (See attached Valley Regional Adult Education full report).

**Public Library –** Jen Shuart shared that the Ansonia Library is now open and would like to start collaborating with programs. Rebecca Troop reported that the Seymour Public Library is now open to the public and held their first in person event last night. Seymour Public Library used to only allow children 5 years and older to obtain a library card but now has adopted the First Steps program which allows children birth to age 5 to receive a library card.

**OEC/Liaison Updates/VECRC Council Binder**

During July and August, the government wanted families to have free preschool so OEC sent funds to programs to reimburse/credit families using Summer Fee Replacement funds. OEC has also sent out the Supplemental Administrative funds to Ansonia, Derby, Seymour and Shelton to support the work that the liaisons have and continue to do during the pandemic. Ayanna and Diana shared the VECRC binder with all members and reviewed its contents. This binder provides Valley Early Childhood Regional Council list of members, the job of the Liaisons, a glossary of terms, a list of providers, the subcommittees and the by-laws.

**Quality Enhancement Motion for Shelton**

At this meeting, the Providers were released from the meeting so that the Council could vote. At the last Council meeting on April 29, 2021. Shelton had not been approved for School Readiness slots at this time so that for this fall meeting on October 14, 2021, the motion would be discussed by Ayanna for the Shelton Quality Enhancement funds of $3,881 to be split between TEAM’s Shelton School Readiness and the Shelton Board of Education School Readiness slots that were approved.

Linda made a motion and Dee seconded for the Shelton Quality Enhancement Funds to be split. $1,940.50 would go to TEAM’s Shelton School Readiness 28 slots and the other $1,940.50 would go to the Shelton Board of Education School Readiness 10 slots for the enhancement of the playground for NAEYC accreditation. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

**Next VECRC Meeting: Thursday, December 9, 2021**

**9:00-11:00 via Zoom**