

**Branford School Readiness
Meeting Notes
In Person and Via ZOOM
10-16-2024**

Council Members Present are in Bold: Dale Izzo, Robin Comey, Dr. Chris Tranberg, James Cosgrove, Rachael Kalman, **Ariana Loyola**, Diane Pappacoda, **Carole Weisberg**, Charles Cicarella, Deidre Popkin, Erin Hearn, **Lauren Skultery via Zoom**, Melissa Hey, Kaliula Spears-Burgess, **Laura Gunneson**

The Meeting was called to order by Dale Izzo at 1:10 PM

1. Motion for Approval of Meeting Minutes 9/18/2024. Correction noted to the name of Guest John Hartwell attended (not Hartman). Laura moved to approve with correction; Ariana 2nd, all in favor.
2. SR Liaison Report – Carole reported that Early Start CT discussions are continuing. Early Start CT combines funding for SR, CDC and State Head Start under one funding stream and requires the creation of Local Governance Partners (LGPs). OEC has been having listening sessions, and meetings with Liaisons. At a recent meeting with Liaisons a preliminary structure is emerging which Carole shared with the Council. One important decision is that in communities where there is a School Readiness Council, such as ours, the SR Council can serve as the LGP for Branford. There was discussion about the changes in roles and responsibilities for LGP's (different from SR Councils) and Liaisons. Grants will now be done by the individual programs on a contractual basis with OEC.

There was questions about how funds would be handled. Dale currently enters the budget through eGMS for SR. Programs can elect to keep their fiscal agents or receive funding directly. It is unclear how this will be handled with Early Start CT. It is also unclear how they will fund the LGP's for the expanded responsibilities they will have in the new structure and how they will support a Liaison.

Visit Early Start CT website for updates: <https://www.ctoec.org/early-start-ct/>

3. Program Site Reports
 - a. BELC – Ariana reported that a request was made for 6 additional SR slots. If granted they go from 10 to 16 SR pre-k slots. Currently under CDC funding they have 37 pre-k and 8 Infant-Toddlers. Currently 64% of families are below SMI. She has room for 16 more slots center wide. They had a Pie and Cookie fundraiser and a raffle of donated items fundraiser that was fun and successful.
 - b. FRC – Lauren reported that all is well, but they are down a staff member which is challenging. However, good things are happening as they create unified opportunities with all the early childhood programs at Indian Neck. They recently had a field trip together. And, with parent permission, they are integrating pre-k kids as peer models in the Early Years program. It's mutually beneficial for everyone.

4. School/Community Reports:
 - a. Ariana reported they will be doing a Book Fair which is opened up to community providers. It will be held after program hours. Funds raised will go towards "One Book/One Town". The funds are through Scholastic's books and the chosen book will be purchased from them. Will have the books by the Spring family event.
 - b. Blackstone Library - Laura reported that she has been visiting programs in town for Story Time with the goal of visiting all the programs at least once throughout the year. She has also been running an Adult ELL playgroup. And, at the library, there is story time for the early childhood community. The curriculum is "Every Child Ready to Read". There is usually 20-30 in attendance. There will be story time at the Town's Halloween event.

5. Old Business:
 - a. Carole reported that the Branford Community Guide is ready for printing. She brought a copy for review and received suggestions about the cover. Will update with the BOE logo. It was the understanding that BELC received funding through the Branford Community Foundation to cover the cost of printing. Ariana will confirm. Brochures will also be available on websites. Lauren is in process of updating Indian Neck's website. FRC will have its own page.
 - b. The date for the ECE Fair was set for Saturday, Feb. 1st, snow date Feb. 8th. The date for the April Family Event to celebrate the Week of the Young Child was set for April 5th.

6. New Business - none

7. Public Comment – none

8. Meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm.