

School Readiness Meeting Notes
4-3-2024 @ 1PM
Via ZOOM

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

The Meeting was called to order by Dale Izzo at 1:05 PM

BSRC Agenda

1. Motion for Approval of Meeting Minutes 1/17/2024. 1st Motion: Robin Comey; 2nd Diane. Motion carries.
2. SR Liaison Report
 - a. SR Grant – Carole reported that the School Readiness Grant this year is a “continuation” application. A copy of the grant was sent to all SR Council members for review including links to all documents. The grant asks for acknowledgement and affirmation that the SR Council has reviewed the grant and read all the documentation included.

Carole explained how the SR grant amount is computed. There is a prescribed per child slot amount of \$10,500 plus 5% for the Liaison stipend. This rate reflects the first time in about 6-7 years that the reimbursement rate for school readiness has increased (it was \$8,924 per slot). We have 28 slots in Branford served by 10 slots at the BELC and 18 slots at the FRC.

The child slot portion of the grant is 28 slots times 10,500 which equals \$294,000. This money goes directly to the programs as reimbursement for serving SR Children.

The administrative stipend for the Liaison is 5% which equals \$14,700.

Dale asked for a motion to approve the SR Grant application. 1st motion James Cosgrove; Diane 2nd

Discussion: Jamie asked about additional slots for Branford. Carole reported that there hasn't been any notification that additional slots are available for districts to request as there has been in past years. Carole noted that we were able to gain additional slots when the opportunity was offered, however, at the present time, we are at our capacity of 28 slots with what the BELC and FRC can accommodate. Neither program can add more slots at this time. This year the state did allow for new programs to apply for School Readiness, but that was to help districts where existing programs were underutilizing their spaces due to staffing issues and possible classroom closures, and not because there was redistribution of slots or additional funding for an increase of slots in the state.

If there were funding for additional slots and we were in a position to add programs, if there was interest, the programs would have to be NAEYC Accredited. Robin asked if any other programs in Branford have gotten NAEYC Accreditation. It was thought that The Nest might be accredited or seeking accreditation.

Discussion concluded. Dale called for a vote on the motion to approve application of the SR Grant. All approved. Motion Carries.

- b. QE Grant –Quality Enhancement (QE) funds is provided to SR programs. For Branford the amount is \$3,881. We have two areas for discussion on QE Funds. 1) The remaining funds from FY24, which amounts to \$2681. And 2) The full QE grant of \$3881 for next FY25.

- 1) \$3,881 for FY25. Carole reported that in meeting with the Directors of BELC and FRC that they would like to use a portion of the funding for PMT (Physical Management Training) which is a crisis intervention program. The cost for this training is \$2,400 for both BELC and FRC to participate.

Lauren suggested that the district provides training in CPI (Crisis Prevention) and wondered if we wanted to have training for the programs that is consistent with the district. And, that there are people in the district who are able to provide this training. One seems to focus on the physical restraint piece while the other focus is on de-escalation. The program directors had been through PMT and related that it does cover de-escalation and also provides training on “safe hold” practices which they value having this training. Both PMT and CPI require recertification every year. Lauren suggested that since district personnel are able to provide the training and certification, it might make sense to look into it. Diane related that it was beneficial to have the PMT training and that they liked that it needed to be taken every year. It was suggested that Carole contact Charles Cicarella to ask about CPI and what it entails and costs and what the similarity or difference is with PMT.

The remaining funds of \$1,481 would be applied to the Week of the Young Child – Early Childhood Fair/Family Day expenses in FY25 and fall under Parental Activities for QE.

Motion approve FY25 QE Funds for crisis prevention/intervention training (either CPI or PMT) and expenses related to the Week of the Young Child in FY25. 1st motion James; 2nd Ariana. Passed unanimously.

- 2) \$2,681. remains from QE FY24. Suggested that these funds can be used for expenses related to the Week of the Young Child Early Childhood Fair/Family Day. We can apply these funds to Parental Activities for Quality Enhancement through making a simple revision to the QE Budget. Expenses for the Fair would be reimbursing BELC for the purchase of 950 books for every child of \$1,740 (books go to Branford

preschool programs and agencies and libraries). Photo Booth is \$450, music \$250 and the rest for supplies purchased for the fair.

Motion to approve remainder of FY24 QE funds. 1st motion Ariana, 2nd Robin. Motion carries

- c. Legislative update: The early childhood community has been working to promote and support HB 5002 which establishes an Early Childhood Fund. Diane testified and both she and Carole wrote letters in support. The Governor put forth a Bill establishing Early Start CT which looks do some good things like streamlining funding streams for SR, State Head Start and CDC, but also includes some questionable changes that . Clearing up the waitlist for Care 4 Kids,
3. Program Site Report:
 - a. FRC – full enrollment, all SR Spots filled, will be doing a full-day summer program starting in June and running for 8 weeks. Ariana secured funding that to provide a family yoga program that will begin in July and run once-a-week. To promote health and wellness and social-emotional health. Ariana reported that June 30th will be her last day at the FRC. It was noted what a huge loss this will be for BPS and all wished Ariana well in her new endeavors.
 - b. BELC – Had a parent meeting on language and literacy development. Participated at dinner at Community Dining Room. Did a clothing exchange in March. Have a new collaboration with Christine Russo who does birthday parties for children in need. Been working on the WOTYC. Robin and Diane testified for HB 5002. Applied for the Branford Community Foundation Grant to cover expenses for the Branford Early Childhood Resource Booklet. Diane and Ariana have been working on the booklet. Funding would be used to print the booklet.
 4. School/Community Reports: None reported
 5. Old Business: WOYC Early Childhood Fair and Family Day – April 20th. Everyone has been working hard on this. It's posted on the Parks and Recreation's website. Ariana will send a flyer and request for distribution to be sent through the district. We have a great day planned.
 6. New Business: None
 7. Public Comment: None
 8. Adjournment. Motion to adjourn. 1st motion Rachel; Ariana 2nd. Meeting adjourned at 2:06 pm.