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**NORTHEAST EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCIL**

**Monday, January 25, 2021**

**5:30-7:00 p.m.**

**ZOOM Meeting**

**In Attendance:** Candace Anderson, Robert Angeli, Myra Ambrogi, Patricia Buell, Jill Bourbeau, Patty Bryant, Patricia Buell, Rena Cadro, Robert Chanail, Kristine Cicchetti, State Rep. Anne Dauphaniaus, Ken DiPietro, Samantha Drobiak, Senator Mae Flexer, Paula Graef, Diane Gozemba, Kristen Hempel, Rick Ives, MaryEllen Jones, Jennie Kapszukiewicz, Gail Lanza, Erin Lavallee, Tammy Miner, Lesley Munshower, Heather Pagan, Abigal Porier, Laurence Prentiss, Emily Ross, Chris Rosati-Randall, Erin Rhault, Jocelyn Sanbourin, Sally Sherman, Judith Smith, Melinda Smith, Melanie Smith*-*Cervera, Barbara Tetreault, Mark Weaver

**Agenda:**

1. Welcome
2. Guest Speaker: Commissioner Beth Bye - OEC
3. School Readiness Updates
4. NECC Updates- Regional Director
5. Regional Programing / Community Updates

**Welcome:**

Brief Introductions

**Guest Speaker:**

Beth Bye – Commissioner of Office of Early Childhood, contact at Beth.Bye@ct.gov

Commissioner Bye shares some data around early childhood and what they have been working on and where they see things going. State Department of Education reports that 15,000 children have not show up to school from Pre-K – grade 12. Out of the 15,000, 8,000 of those were Pre-k and K. In addition, 30% of childcare facilities have not reopened. There is 67 million dollars coming into CT, the OEC is working on project and programming that can be used to best support children and families and is grateful for the opportunity to meet with our group to get feedback.

**Question #1**:  Our six towns have seen a 40% reduction in preschool enrollment this year, along with 21 kids who withdrew to homeschool.  This, coupled with the reduction of in-person learning due to schools on hybrid and/or remote learning, we are concerned about learning loss due to limited, equitable access.  Are you aware of any plans for funding that may be used this summer to offer summer programming for school year programs?  We believe that this may support a smoother transition to kindergarten.

Response: Yes, we know children are missing so much structure and learning, there is a proposal for funding, maybe 3-week programs (not approved yet), it crosses into SDE (they are getting $ also). The OEC would like feedback from communities on what they have done in the past around summer programming?

Feedback from NECC: Sally mentions Killingly’s past programs that were successful, through PDG funding they have held summer Kindergarten camps, they were 2 weeks long for 5 ½ days. Had 3 teachers and 2 paraprofessionals. The key to this being successful was making sure transportation was included. Patty Bryant mentions Putnam’s 4 week summer program which was ½ days, transportation included.

* **Beth requests if any districts have per pupil costs of these programs – that would be helpful to provide to OEC**

**Question #2:**   Are there plans to offer the Project Family Outreach Program again?  This looked like a wonderful program, and we would like to support more families to engage in this program if we have more time to complete the application.

Response: This program proved to be very successful, reviewing data. It was a very quick turnaround due to left over grant money needing to be spent. The application process and program rollout were also quick. The program consisted of learning materials sent to parents who registered and then connections with programs to assist parents.

Feedback from NECC: More programs in our area would have loved to participate if this program is offered in the future.

**Question #3:**  Are there any plans to establish additional "HUBS" through the CT CARES for Family Child Care Pilot Program (Staffed Family Child Care Networks), which will allow for coordinated effort to provide support to home daycare programs?   We know the original program was slated to end in December 2020.  However, if funding is made available again, we would like the opportunity to serve as a HUB for our region as we already have strong connections to providers and families in our region.

Response: Currently, there’s no plans to expand the number of HUBS, we started with 5 years back and with the funding and partnerships with the FRC’s, quickly established more (12 total). However, feedback is welcomed.

Feedback from NECC: We would love to see a HUB in Windham County. The “HUBS” that were established to cover our region were split between two different entities and neither are located in Windham County. Some of the many benefits of our regional council is our ability to share resources, skills, ideas, and be consistent with our outreach approach in our “Quiet Corner” of the State. We work hard to know the needs of our rural communities and the providers serving those families. If the opportunity allows, we would ask that our FRC’s be considered to support this project in the future. We are poised to offer support based on our previously established connections through our three FRC’s. It would be great to partner with the CSDE and OEC on this effort and represent Windham County. The regional nature of our Early Childhood Council allows us to have strong connections to our Public Schools, provide consistent and targeted community outreach; and have an understanding of the needs of rural communities and access to local resources.

**Question #4:**  How can our local early childhood council support and facilitate the goals of the OEC moving forward?  How can we ensure that rural NE CT is represented on any committees or task forces the OEC has?

Response: Continue to lift parent voices, we know that the systems in place were built years ago and workforce needs have changes. There’s a regional cabinet being formed with the OEC for parents, will be looking for representation.

Feedback from NECC: Invite the OEC to join our meetings in future if you are looking for feedback and please use the Council for outreach as we have a large list serve of parents in our 6 communities.

**School Readiness Updates:**

When programs move from in-person to hybrid or full remote, the Council leadership needs to be alerted and the OEC needs to be updated on what plan the program is using (all programs had to submit a plan for each model). We are tracking this process on a google drive spreadsheet in the shared google drive. Liasions send an email to Leadership that a change has been made on the spreadsheet and alert OEC. The spreadsheet has a tab for each community so we can track data.

Monitoring Visits:  these happen with each program and reports are reviewed with leadership team for feedback.  This year, programs are given the option of in person or virtual (virtual requires more work on the programs end to provide documents, etc.)    Completed Sterling monitoring visit in December.

Program Updates: All full program reports were sent, quick highlights include:

Killingly:   60 or 65 school readiness slots are filled – total enrollment 97. 2 new staff members. Completed 4 professional learning events completed in December and January and 4 more planned over the next 3 months.

Plainfield:  24 of 28 school readiness slots are filled. Our part day/part year program is open in a hybrid model. Our full day/full year program is running 5 days a week. Completed four additional professional development events in December and January.

Brooklyn:  24 of 24 school readiness slots are filled. No new staffing changes, shifted to full distance learning on January 11th. Paraprofessionals completed training in areas of inclusion, sensory integration and transitions. NAEYC standards study upcoming.

Sterling: 21 of 24 school readiness slots are filled. No staffing or program changes. Students are in school 5 days a week for AM and PM sessions.

Putnam:  78 of 87 school readiness slots are filled. No changes in staffing. Program was remote for 1 week from 1/18 – 1/22. Upcoming trainings: virtual CPR/First aid in February

Thompson:  20 of 20 school readiness slots are filled. No changes in staffing. Staff members completed CPR and first aid training on January 4th. Preschool staff completed school wide training on ALICE, FEMA, COVID, DCF and Sexual harassment.

School Readiness QE Grants:   all towns have been awarded funding to be used the same as last year.  Grant money to be used for professional development and materials during this time.

**Regional Director Updates:**

Regional Guide Distribution: Mailings were completed, Day Kimball hospital requested more as they are handing them out to parents during well visits.

Mental Health Task Force (MHTF) Update: Continuing to hold bi-monthly meetings. Michele Devine from SERAC was out last guest speaker. If you would like to be on the MHTF list serve, please let me know.

Grant Updates: Announcement came out that there will be another opportunity to apply for funding through strengthening local early childhood collaborations – this grant will be for a year. Not sure when the RFP is coming out however.

**Community Program Updates:**

Myra in Plainfield:   February is child development months. Will be holding ages and stages developmental screenings online.

Christine Rosati-Randall: Nurturing Families Network:  Currently holding parent visits virtually, limited in-person.  These are free, easy to enroll.  Have a fathering group as well, please contact Chris Rosati. View the quick video on this program here <https://fb.watch/3yQQnZjmuW/>.

Diane Gozemba: EASTCONN:  Have been involved in the GEER project with the OEC. They have continued with home visits (over 800), however they have moved to remote visits last month due to increase in COVID cases.

Jill Bourbeau – TEEG:   Hired 2 new people in TEEG to work with outreach and home visiting’s programs. Hosting virtual playgroups as well.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:05

Please don’t forget to forward any resources, flyers or information you would like shared.
Mark Your Calendar: NECC Meeting Schedule – Zoom Link will be sent the week before each meeting:

**Upcoming Meetings:**

**Monday, March 15th
Monday, May 3rd**