



November 1, 2023 Council Meeting Notes

Members Present	9/6/23	10/4/23	11/1/23			
Jess Bialecki	•	•	•			
Steven Cousin	o	o	o			
Mary Derwin	•	•	o			
Daniel Diaz	o	o	o			
Vanessa Diaz-Valencia	•	•	o			
Karen Dubois-Walton	•	•	o			
Eliza Halsey	•	•	•			
Jennifer Heath	•	•	•			
Billy Johnson	o	o	o			
Soma Mitra	o	•	o			
Robin Moore-Evans	•	o	•			
Leonora Netter	o	•	•			
Averi Pakulis	o	o	•			
Tamesha Robinson	•	•	•			
Allyx Schiavone	•	o	o			
Galit Sharma	o	o	o			
Kioamary Sotillo	•	•	o			
Susan Taddei	•	•	•			
Elisabeth Teller	o	o	o			
Carmelita Valencia-Daye	•	•	o			
Lynn Wiener	o	•	•			
Sadie Witherspoon	o	o	•			
<i>Percent in attendance:</i>	55%	59%	45%			

Staff: Denise Duclos

Welcome & Call to Order

Jennifer called the meeting to order and welcomed both Council members and guests

Announcements

Jennifer announced a new zoom AI feature would be taking notes and a summary would be provided
 Jess Bialecki from CT Children's Museum and Creating Kids announced the program received notice from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that Creating Kids was reaccredited.

School Readiness Updates

Restoration of School Readiness (SR) spaces--OEC response

Jennifer provided an update on the SR spaces which were taken back by the OEC due to under enrollment. We have an opportunity to get them back based on our ability to fill the spaces we currently have. OEC will look at enrollment data from June, September and October to determine how many will be returned, basing their decision on the overall average for the 3 months. The Council will then decide on the space allocation to the programs that requested more SR spaces and send the recommendations to OEC for final approval.

SR preliminary survey results

Denise summarized the results of a phone survey of SR programs conducted last week. Twenty of the twenty-two programs responded. The first survey question asked how many children were served in October. Programs' enrollment averaged 90% utilization.

The 2nd question: Do any programs plan to convert their SR spaces to infant/toddler spaces—a new opportunity allowed by OEC. Of the 20 programs responding, 3 planned to convert spaces and 4 were considering this option. Also asked was whether programs would benefit from the Council increasing from 25% to 40% the number of over income families that can be served and 33% said they would welcome the change. The Council will continue to review this policy change.

A recent policy change the Council approved was to allow programs to take children from low-income families that live in surrounding towns beginning in December. Eleven of the 21 programs indicated they have families that would benefit.

New Haven SR Liaison update

The New Haven Public Schools Board of Education approved the move of the Liaison position from NHPS to United Way, with Vanessa serving in the interim role until a person is hired.

Recruitment campaign to increase SR enrollment

Based on the recruitment campaign discussed at the last meeting and with an ad hoc group, lawn signs and flyers are being printed in English and Spanish. The phone number on the flyer and signs will be answered by a bilingual UW staff person who will direct families to programs with openings. The calls will be tracked to see how effective the effort is. *We are asking all council members, SR program directors and interested guests to pick up lawn signs and flyers and put them in neighborhoods we are trying to better serve: Hill, Fair Haven, Newhallville and Dixwell. Please call or email Denise if you want them delivered to you (203-430-8699 denise.duclos2014@gmail.com). You can also call Kerry to have them put aside for you at United Way (203-589-1416).*

There is also a new incentive program where a currently enrolled parent or a staff member will receive a \$100 gift card if a family they recruit enrolls in a SR space.

Overview of City of New Haven award of \$3.5mil to expand and improve city's childcare system

Jennifer and Tammy provided information on the ARPA funds awarded to United Way and Cercle. Tammy said workforce development is the focus of the award to Cercle. Family day cares and center-based staff in New Haven and surrounding towns can apply for funds for training, conference expenses, onboarding new staff. The application is available now and help in completing the application is available. Info sessions are being held in the evening. Go to www.ct-cercle.org for more information.

Jennifer briefed the council on the Early Care and Education Grants program available through the United Way. The first round of grants are directed to child care programs with specific ideas for program enhancement and/or quality improvement. Examples of possible areas for funding are: supplies/upgrades to indoor and outdoor materials; family engagement or parent education activities; outreach and marketing to specific populations; and, health and safety upgrades. The application will be available November 6, and there will be info sessions on November 8 and 14. For more info go to <https://uwgnh.org/ecegrants> There is also money for a strategic planning process for an early care and education system that better serves children and families in New Haven.

Expanding Family Child Care opportunities

Randi McCray briefed the Council on her efforts to support family child care businesses and/or to help unlicensed providers find a location and help with licensing. The project is being funded through recent CT legislation designed to create incubator hubs in New Haven and other towns. Currently Randi is working with several family day care providers who are seeking a location to run their business. A recently renovated apartment building near Lincoln Basset School may be an opportunity for 3 family day care providers to start their businesses. Randi shared that her goal is to have an incubator hub in all underserved New Haven neighborhoods. The Connecticut Project is leading the advocacy efforts to expand the legislation to other towns.

Update on Connecticut Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Care

Tammy provided a brief overview of the recent info session held at Gateway Community College where the 3rd draft of the Blue Ribbon Panel's Plan was discussed. Governor Lamont and OEC Commissioner Beth Bye were speakers. This draft contains significant changes from the 2nd draft. The final report will be available in December. Draft 3 is available at https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/20231017_BRP-Plan-Outline-V3.pdf

Change in age eligibility of CT's Kindergarteners: opportunities and challenges

Parents and early childhood providers brought up their concerns re the legislation that moves the eligibility for kindergarten from January 1 to September 1. While there is no opposition to the new eligibility date there are concerns about the roll out of the changed eligibility date. These include:

- The burden on families to pay for another year of prek
- With more children staying longer in prek, there may be a need for SR providers to ask for more spaces to accommodate these families
- Each town is able to do their own assessment of children born after September 1 . New Haven has not announced its process and with the Magnet Lottery about to take place, there is little time for parents to know their options. Parents Lauren and Averi said that having the option of a child with an October birthday either go to Kindergarten or stay another year in preschool has been nice for parents. All speakers agreed the roll out was too fast.
- Anne asked if the Council could be a voice to express these concerns. Jennifer said this is clearly a topic that needs further discussion by the Council.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20pm