*All New Haven children, birth through 8 are healthy, safe, thriving in
nurturing families and prepared to be successful lifelong learners.*

**NHECC Council Meeting Minutes**

November 2, 2016

**Guest Speaker Presentation Dr. Madeline Negron, New Haven Board of Education -**

Madeline shared her background and experience. Madeline has been with NHPS five years and used to be a classroom teacher and returned as Principal of Hill Regional. Madelone likes to work with adolescents and recently accepted the appointment of Director for Instruction. Madeline’s passion is to identify ways in how she can support schools and administration in providing the best for all children. Former Superintendent Harries assigned to her the role of early childhood in NHPS. This is a new area for her, most of her experience is with grades 5 - 12. Madeline led a middle school for a significant period of time and has experience doing pull out services for children not operating at grade level. Madeline is committed to making sure students receive what they need to be set up for success.

Madeline joined the meeting to provide a status update on NHPS initiatives that were discussed last year.

**Bank Street Education Center Update**

Bank Street analyzed programs within NHPS through Interviews, focus groups, and classroom visits for School Readiness, HeadStart, and PreK Magnet. The report indicated there wasn't a clear vision for early childhood in New Haven. The looked at whether there was evidence of developmentally appropriate instruction? The report found that there were pockets but that did not find consistency across the board. Former superintendent Harries vocalized the need to be sure to have developmentally appropriate instruction in all of NHPS and instructions that embeds trauma informed practices and integration of play based instruction into the learning so that it is purposeful. Madeline expressed that her goal is to become instrumental in making sure that the staff in NHPS have a shared understanding of developmentally appropriate instruction to ensure consistency of practice in the classroom. This year the district will focus on getting support from Bank Street to build capacity that provides a solid infrastructure for continued learning and support for teachers in NHPS. Bank Street’s report was presented to the district and NHPS was able secure funding for the contract this year, but these funds may not be available each year to bring in an outside agency to help do the work. Madeline expressed the need to build capacity with the district to sustain ongoing efforts to the work within NHPS. Her emphasis is on articulating a vision and working with the staff to build capacity to continue support to educators after Bank Street’s involvement. A message was sent to families to let them know about this initiative and they have received many inquiries as to when they will see this change in the classroom. Madeline was clear on her commitment to establishing a solid plan that delivers on that message.

**Implementation Plan**

The implementation will start with a training at the Dr. Mayo School with PreK. Starting at the Dr. Mayo school, offers an opportunity to target more students and the ability to arrange the classrooms to support play based instruction. A learning lab will also be setup up at the the Dr. Mayo School so that can experience receiving practice, guidance and coaching. In addition to these efforts with PreK, Lynn Brantley, the district reading supervisor, will be doing small pilots with teachers who will collaborate and support each other by using teachers who are already implementing play based instructions in the classroom. To start, Lynn will be working with two teachers at Columbus. Madeline is ensuring that Lynn’s efforts align with the work at the Dr. Mayo School.

**Trauma Training:**

Many of the teachers in the district are receiving trauma training through the New Haven Trauma Coalition without cost. The district is being very strategic in partnerships and tapping into existing resources.

**NAEYC Accreditation**

Prek Magnet Schools are going through NAEYC accreditation. 13 schools going through the process. All schools have done part one, are enrolled, and are currently doing part 2, the needs assessment.

**Question: What’s happening in regards to training with principles?**

Madeline expressed the need to get principal buy in. Lynn and Madeline are making sure principals are aware of the training and invited to participate through training and be present during site visits.

**Question: Is play based instruction being done anywhere else in the country?**

Madeline stated she believed there are pockets where it is being done, she has found that in NHPS some teachers are able to do this organically.

**Question: How are special education students being supported?**

Madeline expressed that her philosophy is that all services are available to all children and this would include children in special education. She was very intentional about making sure all teachers received the same materials and training. Classrooms will need to meet the needs of students through differentiation as needed, but within the same curriculum that all students are receiving. The district is being mindful not to create a scripted curriculum but building an infrastructure where the efforts are aligned and all children are getting similar experiences.

**Question: Who is providing the training?**

Bank Street and Creative Curriculum trainer will come from the company who owns Creative Curriculum.

Comments: Teachers should be able to adapt and adjust the curriculum to the needs of the students.

**District Infrastructure**

Madeline also shared that there used to be an early childhood supervisor and a person dedicated to curriculum and instruction just for early childhood. Those positions do not exist as positions within NHPS. She has been very expressive that if the district feels early childhood is a priority, then the district needs to support and provide the resources necessary to support the priorities. Madeline expressed that she would welcome the support and help from the Council in championing this message.

**Question: Was this a budget consideration or did the district feel the positions weren’t necessary?**

Madeline believes that it was due to budget. People realize that the positions are important, but the district is trying to ensure they are maximizing resources.

**Question: Who is supporting the classrooms through the accreditation process?**

Madeline stated that she has a team that is designated just to work with supporting schools through NAEYC accreditation. The district also received a grant that is supporting the schools and Carol Annette and Wendy McCowen are working with NHPS in a supportive role for the schools in going through accreditation.

**Policy & Advocacy**

Care4Kids Updates

Call To Action - Randi distributed the Call to Action sheet and shared an update on the upcoming advocacy efforts around the Care4Kids situation. She shared that she will have more details after the CT Early Childhood Alliance’s meeting tomorrow which will be forwarded by email.

Video - Randi shared a video that was uploaded to the NHECC website. The video features parents who would be impacted by anticipated changes to the Care4Kids program.

Kim Harris also expressed the urgency and need to communicate to parents and providers the importance of their involvement. Kim expressed that the deficit and anticipated changes will be dire for families as well as providers and it is imperative that they understand the need to get involved. She also expressed some barriers that parents may see in being visible in the advocacy efforts and that we should keep those challenges in mind when we are asking for interviews and the like.

**Question: What are actions as a Council?**

Jayne said suggested that an increase of hours for NHPS programs should be explored as a contingency plan. Jayne believes the Council should advocate that NHPS extend the school day until 6:00PM free of charge to be more supportive of parents needing after school care. She also recommended that the Council explore a budget increase from the Office of Early Childhood. The Council needs to advocate for those dollars to be replaced. Jayne expressed the Council should consider support in the form of transportation to the December 7th forum. Jayne also noted that the Council needs to consider a contingency plan for New Haven parents in securing care.

Kim proposed a strong letter from the Council. Randi agreed to draft the letter and send it out the full Council for review and approval. Kim stated that this budget challenge happens every so often and we need a better system of being ahead of the budget pitfalls. Kim asked how we better plan and prepare for these budget issues so that we aren’t trying to find solutions in the middle of the crisis. Jayne recommended that we gather data to find out how New haven families and providers will be impacted.

**Question: Is anyone measuring the impact on the workforce?**

Sarah shared that the Community Foundation Board voted to fund the CT Voices for Children to provide some analysis around Care4Kids as one issue paper and also looking at the State budget to see where there are avenues by which we could capture resources towards early childhood. The immediate goal is to work with the Alliance and CT Parent Power to make sure we have parent voices and local voices in this effort to change Care4Kids.

**Question: Is the business sector being engaged in terms of their advocacy power?**

Randi shared that the CT Early Childhood Alliance Policy and Advocacy committee took on the charge of reaching out to local businesses for their support. Targeting specifically partnerships with health, retail and fast food industries as these are the jobs most impacted.

**School Readiness Report**

Denise shared the number of slots open. SR slots are 1065, served 900 children in October. 74 spaces remain open. Same thing that happens each year due to magnet school enrollment expectations. The slot availability is uploaded to the website. Denise sends the openings to her list of social service organizations. Denise concluded by stating that the Grants committee will be looking at openings at their next meeting and preparing a recommendation for slot transfers.

**School Readiness Enrollment Challenges**

Lynn expressed that enrollment challenges may be related to families that are over income. They cannot pay the fee but they do not qualify for School Readiness dollars. Jayne asked if the threshold can be changed.

Sarah stated that the policy is guided by ensuring that families with the greatest need have access first.

Eliza expressed challenges around parents not being able to pay the small fees as well as the need for full day programs. Eliza also noted that the Council has discussed in the past whether School Readiness fees can be waived. Access and Enrollment can explore this further. She also noted that the Council can be more strategic in developing partnerships with the district to tackle these larger issues.

Jayne expressed that there may be challenges due to location. As an example, Jayne suggested that YMCA should move the front door to a different area and market differently. Another suggestion was offered to invest in beautification and a re-grand opening to attract more parents to the program.

**What number of the slots are NHPS?**

NHPS has 25 open slots of the 74.

**Are the number of slots (26) at the YMCA the same as last year?**

No. Denise clarified that the current director is the Executive Director of the YMCA and they are looking for a Preschool director.

**Committee updates**

**Racial Equity Committee** - Tirzah announced the Council received the funding for the ELP partnership. Training will take place in February or March. 20 slots will be available. Gladys will be attending the Race Matters conference which is supported by the Graustein Memorial Fund. Jayne asked that the membership share any trainings, events, and workshops that Council members can participate in.

**Grants Committee** - Will have a report in December.

**Quality Committee** - Randi shared that the committee is working on the plans for a legislative breakfast to discuss the impact of the 20/20 initiative. Allyx also asked that each committee identify areas of advocacy related to their committee work which can also be added to the agenda. Kim Harris shared the committee's plan for recruiting youth into careers in early childhood to help inflate the pipeline of the workforce in the early childhood sector. Kim and Sandy will be working on connecting with Youth at Work and other school career programs to explore marketing, mentorship and work experience opportunities. Kim has a program with her facility which exposes them to activities and workshops happening around the city in early childhood. Kim also shared that the resource center enrollment is going well and that the workshops are valuable to participants. Additionally, the committee is exploring videotaping the sessions for future learning opportunities.

**Access and Enrollment Committee** Eliza shared that the committee is putting together a proposal for the Operations Committee for piloting the Common Application. Jayne asked if the grant to the Memorial Fund explicitly indicated a pilot in the Fair Haven community. Randi shared that the grant covers the process and the engagement of stakeholders in the process of developing and piloting an common enrollment system, but did not provide a specific target area.

**Recommendations for future Council Planning and Advocacy**

Identify strategic goals for the Council and utilize all of the Council resources toward those efforts

The Council develop a list of recommendations/requests and send to Madeline that express our priorities and how we want to partner with the district on those recommendations/requests

Get the report from Bank Street so that the Council can identify areas it can focus on in its agenda

**Announcements**

Kim Harris shared that Harris and Tucker is looking for partners starting in January to introduce their parents and community to what is available to them as resources to support high quality care. The vision is to bring an activity or workshop to Harris and Tucker and/or have the Center bring parents to the NHECC resource center for a training.

Welcome of new members. Fred Acquavita and Dr. Reverend Bosie Kimber.

**Next Steps:**

Jayne will request the Bank Street report from Madeline.

Denise will discuss some of the minor recommendations to the YMCA with the ED

Randi will draft letter regarding Care4Kids and send to the full Council for review