



**Stratford School Readiness and Child Care Advisory Council
Promise Leadership Work Group**

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – January 9, 2009

Members present: Lynnette Baroni, Barbara Blossveren, Melissa Daskam, Susan Gottlieb, Patti Law, Priscilla Long, Pat Naylor, Abel Padro, Greta Roberts, Carolyn Ross, Alix Semanchik, Holly Shultz, Norma Tomes, Tammy Trojanowski, Elaine Watson, Alice Williams

Consultants: Sonja Ahuja, Maria Mojica

Staff: Laurie Raccuia

1. **Welcome and Introductions/ Approval of Minutes:** Sue and Alix conducted welcome and introductions.
MOTION made by Abel Padro to approve December 2008 Council Minutes,
SECONDED by Priscilla Long. APPROVED.

2. **Partner Updates:**

Tammy Trojanowski, Stratford Community Services:

- RYASAP Youth Report presentation is scheduled for January 14, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. in Town Hall Chambers.
- Stratford High School post prom committee is hosting a fundraising event – a flyer was shared with the group.

Pat Naylor, Stratford Public Schools:

- Kindergarten Parent Information meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2009 (snow date of the 29th) and flyers were distributed.
- The SRACCAC will co-sponsor the event; Alix and Sue will give welcoming remarks, and Transition Committee members are invited to assist with greeting parents.
- Planning is continuing for centralized kindergarten registration this spring.
- The new preschool at SA is targeted to open on January 26, 2009. There will be an Open House on January 22, 2009 from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Norma Tomes, Knowledge Learning Corporation (KLC):

- 1 new child has entered at the Stratford Academy Champions school readiness site, making a total of 12. There are 11 children at the South End Community Center Champions site.
- All school readiness slots are funded and filled.
- There are a total of 17 open slots.

Pat Naylor mentioned that perhaps transportation issues, as well as economic issues were preventing families from enrolling at the new site.

Melissa Daskam, YMCA Child Care:

- YMCA Child Care is still accommodating parents' financial needs with flexible programming – for all child care programs, holiday camp and after school programs.

Barbara Blosveren, Stratford Library Association:

- Library usage is soaring. Services are free.
- The Library is working with SCS in preparation for the RYASAP presentation.
- The Library has worked with Stratford Parents' Place to avoid program conflicts.

Sonja Ahuja, The Graustein Memorial Fund (GMF) Liaison:

- GMF is conducting strategic planning and are seeking parents from all of the Discovery communities to help inform their planning. There will be 4 parent conversations held at the Memorial Fund's Hamden office. Participants will receive \$75; there is also money for child care and transportation expenses. Priscilla Long will send out the information to all members.

Priscilla Long, Stratford Parents' Place:

- The letter of award for the \$24,000 Discovery grant for 2009 was received. A more in detailed financial report will be available next month. Priscilla anticipates some money to carry forward to the 2009 grant cycle.
- A Discovery 2009 Orientation session is scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 2009. All members are encouraged to participate.
- Gerri Rowell, SDE School Readiness Contact, announced that the 2009-2010 School Readiness funding will remain level, but the grant will require only 13 slots as opposed to the current 15. The SDE does not believe that programs can deliver quality services to the same number of children when funding is not increased.
- Priscilla also mentioned that there has been some conversation with KLC regarding merging the 2 sites because of the high number of vacancies. Pat Naylor mentioned that Norwalk and Bridgeport classrooms are full and have waiting lists. Priscilla noted that they are a priority school district, not a competitive one like Stratford. It might prove beneficial to speak to other competitive school readiness programs to see how they are faring.

3. Stratford's Promise to Young Children

a. Review of Promise Timeline: – Maria reviewed the timeline. 2008 accomplishments include the focus groups, the health survey, committee meetings, the Profile draft. Things to do from 2008 include hosting a breakfast for members of the business community, tweaking the Profile, and working on the RBA process. Looking ahead to 2009, Sonja noted that it is important to make a whole-hearted attempt to engage with the community – mayor, superintendent, businesses, and parents. GMF is looking for communities to document their approaches to solidify attachments (they may not be in place, but the planning needs to be documented). The RBA process allows for looking at the partners that are needed and being very specific about how they can help. The feasibility and sincerity on which the plan is based is very important.

A discussion on governance ensued. Pat Naylor asked about the experience of other communities. Sonja noted that the governance structure is part of the community planning process (in original 8 principles) – it is not intended to be a separate body. Maria said that by June 30th, we should have a plan that will spell out how everything will be accomplished. When the plan is developed, the collaborative may move toward memorandums of agreement with key partners. Reaching this stage at collaborative tables takes time, however, and relationships with partners must reflect strong commitments to the planning process. Sue and Alix will be meeting with the Mayor on February 2 and are hoping to meet with the Superintendent soon. The meetings are to lay the groundwork about what we are doing and start the process of engagement. Patti Law mentioned that the meetings should be a chance to get on their agendas.

Pat Naylor expressed concern that the “planning process” not get in the way of the work we have to do for kids and families at the local level. She believes it is important to have a balance between RBA and Stratford’s goals.

Results Based Accountability – Review of Strategic Areas – Maria showed how the Required Plan Elements align with RBA. Members have all received copies of the latest Profile draft. Sue remarked that that members need to make final comments at this time.

Health Committee: Greta Roberts, Stratford Health Department, shared that the health committee met and reviewed a survey will be sent to pediatricians to discover their perceptions in several areas: barriers that they face, basic demographics, use of insurance, general health of children, and incidence of specific diseases, etc. A letter has been drafted to pediatricians to tell them about the survey. Dr. Rob Landis, SRACCAC member will co- sign the letter with the SRACCAC Co-chairs. The committee is seeking approval from the committee to purchase a newspaper advertisement to thank pediatricians for their participation in the survey. MOTION made by Patti Law to approve the purchase of an advertisement in the paper. SECONDED by Holly. APPROVED.

Kindergarten Survey: The committee continued its discussion on the implementation of a kindergarten survey. There is a need to gather information about why children are not attending preschool, and since the new kindergarten registration time is not a viable venue to do a survey, how else can the SRACCAC gather this data? A suggestion was made to start with the kids who will be in the 6-week summer program. Other ideas included contacting the school nurses, surveying every kindergarten parent, and surveying at open

houses. The Superintendent's approval is needed prior to the distribution of any survey.

Choosing Headline Indicators Activity: Maria explained that in the interest of time, that each member take home the list of data points, and complete the activity. Priscilla will email the list of instructions and indicators to all members, and asked that members return the completed lists by January 15, 2009. Staff will compile the data for use at the January 20, 2009 meeting.

4. **January Meeting Agenda** – This topic was tabled due to time.

The next meeting of the Executive Steering Committee is scheduled for Friday, February 6, 2009, 9 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., room 110, in the Birdseye Municipal Complex.

Recorded and submitted by:

**Laurie Raccuia and Priscilla Long
Stratford Parents' Place**

January 27, 2009