

**Stratford School Readiness and Child Care Advisory Council
Promise Leadership Work Group****Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – May 1, 2009**

Members present: Lynette Baroni, Barbara Blosveren, Melissa Daskam, Susan Gottlieb, Pat Naylor, Abel Padro, Greta Roberts, Tammy Trojanowski, Alix Semanchik, Elaine Watson

Members not present: Christina Kazanas, Priscilla Long, Carolyn Ross, Norma Tomes, Myra Watnick, Alice Williams

Consultants: Sonja Ahuja, Maria Mojica

1) Welcome and Introductions/ Approval of Minutes:

Sue Gottlieb and Alix Semanchik (co-chairs) conducted welcome and introductions. A MOTION was made to amend the April 2009 Council Minutes. Under section 3, next steps, language will be amended to read: "Maria led the group through the Power Point presentation, and the ESC discussed." Abel Padro MOTIONED to approve the minutes as amended, and SECONDED by Greta Roberts. APPROVED.

2) Partner Updates

- Alix reported that the Library fundraiser was very successful and commended Barbara Blosveren for the Stratford Library's efforts.
- Sue read the proclamation from the Office of the Mayor concerning Read Across Stratford. She and Alix, on behalf of the SRACCAC/PLWG, will be sending a thank you letter to the Mayor for his mention of the Council in the State of the Town Address.
- Sue spoke about recent Town meetings regarding the renovation of Honeyspot House and a conversation among ESC members ensued. The Town Council will vote on the issue at their May meeting. Sonja Ahuja asked whether or not the SRACCAC/PLWG should respond to the issue and/or take a position.
- Sue also mentioned that she has signed the physician survey and that Dr. Landis provided feedback prior to co-signing.
- Elaine reported about a professional development conference in April for Kindergarten teachers. Preschool teachers were invited as well and Council member Melissa Daskam attended and expressed her satisfaction with the event.
- Elaine provided information about the Parent Leadership Training Institute, stating that it was a great program. Other Council members agreed.
- Pat reported that Public Schools are finished with centralized Kindergarten registration and that the Stratford Library was a great location to host the event.

3) Convening a Writing Team

Sue inquired whether or not the ESC felt that the process of writing the narrative of the plan should be opened to the larger group. Comments were made that it might be difficult to complete the task of writing with a big team.

4) Upcoming Workgroup Meetings

Greta reported that she put the plans (i.e., work completed thus far) into a linear format. She sent the work to GMF, and the plans to the ESC, and obtained feedback. She will send the feedback to ESC members per request. The strategic work groups will continue to develop their portions of the plan.

Elaine, Sue and Greta proposed that the workgroups meet at the May 19th meeting to work on the plan.

Sonja commented that the State Model asks for plans to be data driven and outcome focused. It also gives autonomy for the Council to set their decision-making process.

Abel reported that he has been involved in a number of planning processes. In Bridgeport, parent involvement is in their plan, and therefore in their governance. Elaine asked what their parent involvement piece looked like, and Abel commented that the plan is separated by subgroups and each group has a parent.

Abel MOTIONED that the writing team be comprised of each workgroup chair, plus one additional member. Pat Naylor SECONDED. APPROVED.

Maria added that every partner at the table needs to be transparent and has an obligation to report and communicate progress on their work. Workgroup information will be sent to Greta to send to the Council.

It was suggested that the writing team meet to discuss the feedback from GMF and Charter Oak, as well as ask for feedback from the Council. Feedback will then be sent to Greta and reported at the May 19th meeting. It was brought to the Council's attention that someone from the Library should be on each workgroup. SPP and SLA staff will meet.

5) Summer Planning Meeting

A survey was sent out to the SRACCAC/PLWG via survey monkey regarding a date for the annual planning meeting this summer. The group felt that they were forced into choosing a response even if they did not have a preference for the date. The survey will be revised and sent out again by Greta.

6) Discussion on Governance

Maria Mojica led the discussion on Governance and began with a visual to prompt dialogue about governance.

- Pat stated that the Nominating Committee was ready to report. At last summers planning meeting by-law changes were made, but not presented at the September 2008 meeting. All standing

organizations need a representative. This led to a discussion on By-laws including the addition of one general education and one special education teacher. They will be voted on at the May 19th meeting.

An additional By-Law revision that was proposed is the addition of a vice-chair and co-vice-chair so that the plan is less staff driven and ensures that the ESC is making the decisions. Presently, there is a leadership issue. Pat made a MOTION to amend by-laws to reflect new vice-chair positions and bring changes to the larger Council. Abel SECONDED. APPROVED.

Elaine stated that the workload should be shared and that she initially didn't realize everyone at the table was an equal partner.

There was a discussion about ESC meetings being more participatory and less reactionary.

Maria asked what members of the group would need to feel more involved. Maria also asked the group who they would want to staff this initiative. Maria mentioned that it does not matter where the initiative is housed, only that the work gets done. She commented that implementation is more about institutions and not about individuals. The current structure does not support the plan and further discussion about who will support the work needs to occur.

Pat made the suggestion that the ESC be more involved in fiscal decisions and how Discovery money is spent. Parents' Place should not be the sole decision maker about the money. Elaine suggested that there be a financial report so the Council knows how the money is being spent and can approve. It was suggested that the library bring a financial report to the ESC periodically.

Maria stated that the governance structure should be very clear. By-laws as they are now do not define the authority of Council Subgroups. All the Council has at present are the executive and nominating committees.

There was a discussion about the pros and cons of specific bylaws and the need to clarify leadership and staffing roles. Staff should not have oversight of governance. Elaine stated that workgroups should collaborate and then bring governance.

Sonja suggested that these opinions be brought forward to the larger group at the May 19th meeting. The Council needs to recognize the next level of discussion around structure/governance (e.g., how will it happen). This may possibly be done at the summer meeting.

Elaine suggested that governance be first on the agenda for the ESC meeting in June. Pat made a MOTION to put the topic of governance at the top of the ESC agenda for June. Barbara SECONDED. APPROVED.

7) Agenda – May 19th

The Council discussed delivering a report about governance to the larger group. There should be discussion about how the structure will support the plan.

Sonja discussed a two-hour Self-Assessment that needs to be completed for the Discovery grant.



Elaine made a MOTION to add a meeting on June 16th at 6:30 p.m., Birdseye Municipal Complex, Room 110 for the assessment. SECONDED by Abel. APPROVED.

Barbara suggested that the June ESC meeting be run longer until 12 pm. A MOTION was made by Greta to extend the meeting, and Alix SECONDED. APPROVED.

Ellen Michaels, Alice Williams, Holly Shultz and Norma Tomes will receive phone calls about the meeting.

The next meeting of the Executive Steering Committee is scheduled for Friday, June 5, 2009, from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon in room 110 at the Birdseye Municipal Complex, 468 Birdseye Street.