

Griswold School Readiness Council Minutes

February 10, 2022

6:00 – 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM

Present: Julie Hall (Kidsteps/B23), Yvonne Palasky Griswold BOE Vice Chair), Debbi Poirier(Director, TVCCA Little Learners), Heather Lunny (Owner, The Little Log School House), Joe Bordeau (Principal, GES), Sean McKenna (Superintendent, GPS), Sarah McEwan(GES School Nurse), Jennifer Anderson Norman (parent), Jaselyn Caviness (co-chair/parent), Katie Sawaryn (co-chair/GES), Stephanie Cote(GES Teacher), Cheryl LaMothe (SR Liaison)

Program News

TVCCA Little Learners

- Recently reaccredited by NAEYC – this is an arduous process of providing documentation (class and program portfolios) for hundreds of assessment items, program site visit. Congratulations to TVCCA Little Learners for your continued quality work with children and families in Griswold!
- Eastern Connecticut Ballet performed for children, supporting an awareness and appreciation of music and movement.
- Family Conferences/checkpoints for mid-year taking place.
- Debbie participated in a recent legislative event to promote much needed funding for ECE.

Griswold Board of Education Integrated Preschool

- Family conferences held last month, with 100% participation by families.
- Recent NAEYC Accreditation site visit, awaiting Accreditation Decision Report.
- Dates have been set for initial **Transition to K** activities, with plans for TVCCA and The LLSH to participate with GES. The School Readiness Liaison will be available to share information and promote awareness for the Griswold School Readiness Council. Stacey Frazzel, GES Team Leader, will be working with programs.

The Little Log School House

- Recently submitted candidacy for NAEYC Accreditation and is in their 6-month window for their site visit.
- ECERS (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale) visit scheduled for later this month.
- Employee evaluations taking place.
- Revised documents with new license information have been approved by OEC (Office of Early Childhood) for SR funding through June 2022.

Budget

- Budget documents reviewed, with additional program documents available in the shared google folder. Katie and Jaselyn will meet with finance director Alisha Stripling and provide budget updates for our next meeting.

- Programs are reminded to invoice for Quality Enhancement funded purchases, if they haven't already done so. Any budget changes must be presented to the council for approval and made before the end of April.
- FY 23 RFP documents were just received and will be distributed to programs. There are no additional SR funded slots available at this time, and funding per child remains the same. This is a full RFP year, requiring public notice, readers/scoring of applications, narratives highlighting Griswold's work related to SR Quality Components. The SR Council will need to add an April meeting to review/recommend proposals (April date TBA).

Monitoring Updates

- Cheryl was able to complete in-person classroom observations with all programs, and completed staff and child file reviews. Classroom and LEP Rubric documents are in the shared google drive. Additional documentation will be added and available for review/discussion.
- It is important to note the quality education and care services being provided by Griswold's School Readiness programs. Children's lives are enriched by quality learning environments and nurturing relationships with educators and peers. The NAEYC DAP Position Statement highlights the importance of joyful learning through play. This was very evident in our SR Preschool classrooms.
- Supplemental funding for monitoring and support provides for additional classroom observations specific to social-emotional learning and teaching practices. Classroom observations showed ongoing efforts by teachers to provide a positive learning environment, opportunities for SE learning. PreK strategies are aligned with those proposed for GPS. Cheryl continues to participate in planning meetings and will support community programs as they come together to work with children and families. GPS is in the process of re-branding, with a focus on Griswold's character pillars.

School Readiness Council Membership

- Cheryl recently met with GES PTO to promote awareness and recruit parents to our School Readiness Council. Stephanie shared that there are a few families interested in participating.
- There was concern expressed re: having enough voting members on the council, as program representatives are not eligible to vote on grant proposals/funding. Cheryl will contact SR Program Managers at OEC for additional clarification on this matter.
- Programs will continue to encourage families to participate.
- The new First Selectperson, Dana Bennett, is interested providing ongoing support to early childhood providers and activities in Griswold. Cheryl will reach out to Dana and be sure to include in SR Council meetings, communications.

Subcommittee

- Cheryl, Jennifer and Heather met to begin the review/editing process for the Griswold School Readiness Policy Booklet. Revisions are necessary to meet updated School Readiness General Policies, reflecting on the needs of the Griswold community. Heather has provided suggested revisions, Jennifer has offered to format the book when ready. We hope to have revisions ready to present to the council by July 1.

Discussion

- SR Council meetings have been held virtually for two years. We discussed timing re: returning to in-person meetings. This year, the council meeting was moved to evenings, coinciding with Griswold's DPAC meeting, hoping the time would attract more parents. Because of continued Covid concerns, it was decided to continue holding Zoom meetings for the time being. This will be revisited later in the year.

Community Updates

- Slater Library: Saturday Story time 2nd Saturday of each month at 10:30, Take and Make Crafts, "Let's Lego" drop in and build every other Wednesday at 3 p.m., Teen Art Outreach Program to Griswold Youth Center with Rebecca Jusseaume (Slater Director). March: John Fox Slater Birthday Celebration!
- Julie/Kidsteps: impacted by Covid (staffing, families), was 80% in person, now 20% in person services to families with children with special needs. Julie expects in-person home visits to continue, with additional staff and improving Covid numbers.
- Wolverines Forward: Griswold's before and after school/no school program run by Jaselyn Caviness has been very successful. They have certified staff supporting the program, providing engaging activities, homework help, STEM activities, with 60 children enrolled for after school, 58 enrolled in before school sessions.
- Sean/Board of ED: budget process is underway, with fixed cost, special requests, and initial budget proposal to be presented 2/28; in-person musical to be presented at GPS; basketball team won championship; given recent student overdose tragedies in other districts, the BOE is considering a NARCAN policy. GPS welcomes Kayla Hedman as Community Relationships Specialist. BOE meetings are streamed live, to support community engagement and involvement. Summer Learning plans are underway.

Next meeting will be March 10 at 6:00 via ZOOM.

Respectfully Submitted by Cheryl LaMothe, School Readiness Liaison