

Bristol Early Childhood Alliance

Zoom Meeting Notes

December 2, 2020 (11:00 – 12:00 p.m.)

In attendance: Erica Benoit, Maureen Eaton, Cecelia Garay, Kate Kerchaert, Lauren Kittle, Donna Koser, Mary Alice Petrucelli-Timek, Karen Lombardi, Shannon Michelson (UW Intern), Donna Osuch, Catherine Plourd, Valerie Toner and Melissa Volpe.

Members were invited to introduce themselves.

Community Outreach – Appetite for Reading Volunteers adopted the rest of the “Adopt a Reading Buddies” funded by the Bristol Rotary. Donna K. announced that the United Way has received funding to offer the Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) beginning in January, 2021. This year, the training will be offered virtually and Donna asked for members to share the information widely. It is a great opportunity for parents, grandparents and community members who would like to learn how to learn how systems work, local and state government and more. Donna also shared updates for the upcoming Virtual Polar Express.

Collaborating Grants: Ready for Kindergarten equity grant is being sought after to address the low number of children who are enrolled in preschool this year. The feeling is that parents are scared to send them at this time. There have been several cases of COVID 19 reported at several of the preschools/school in the community. It is important to note that all confirmed COVID cases were not traced back to the school environment. COVID cases were contact traced and most of the families infected were at gatherings such as birthday parties and sporting events. Parents are also concerned about the loss of their jobs, loss wages from being quarantined, etc. should their child contract COVID. The shut down in March was devastating to our preschool programs. This grant would offer an app (similar to our Sparkler App) that will help with Social Emotional concerns, etc. This would benefit the community since we have lots of anecdotal data reports from teachers who are seeing a decline in focus in Bristol’s Kindergarten population. Many who cannot follow 2 step directions. Recently, while conducting yearly vision screenings with the Lions Club equipment, it was observed that a very high number of the K students could not sit for the screening. School nurses resorted to “old school vision” charts to assess the children. In addition to a loss of focus, it was noted that a high number of K students did not know their letters (Nov. 2020).

Information on the **Share our Strength, NO KID HUNGRY** grant was discussed in case a Bristol organization felt there was a need they were encouraged to apply. The Parent & Child center has received several phone calls from families regarding food insecurities and will look into the opportunity further. Donna O. noted that there was a Zoom call scheduled for Dec. 3 to answer any questions.

The **OEC Grant** has once again been pushed out. The Parent & Child Center will send in their Letter of Intent and application (RFP is due January, 2021). The OEC grant is for Prenatal to age 5 with a focus on recruiting prenatal families, moms of color, those at risk for poor maternal outcomes and live births, etc. The Parent & Child Center will be seeking funds to offer the **Parent as Teachers** home visiting model.

Subcommittees:

Infant & Toddler The committee met last month and began planning for a Virtual Polar Express event. The event will air on the Making Bristol Better Facebook page on Dec. 11, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. Walmart will be sponsoring a bell and hot chocolate packet for 200 children. Bags will be located at the Bristol Public Library. Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services will have three locations for children to mail their letters to Santa. It is planned that each child will receive a reply.

Health Committee The committee met yesterday with discussion on the Polar Express event. It was put together very nicely with lots of collaboration. The committee will launch “Wellness Wednesday” posts on Making Bristol Better this month. Next month, in partnership with Jessica from Shoprite, the committee will

introduce “Taste Test Tuesday” where families will receive coupons to pick up foods and the information will be shared on Making Bristol Better. Food comparison will include items, such as a banana vs. a plantain, etc. Jessica will try to make sure seasonal foods are introduced. The Park, Recreation, Youth and Community Services and the Bristol Library may have funds to help purchase the foods offered. The Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services will also be working with Shoprite for future Culinary classes to be launched in the Bristol Community. The Bristol-Burlington Health Department will provide materials (measuring cups, coloring books, etc.) to support the program.

Transition to K. – The committee is currently looking into links to be downloaded to tablets should the remote learning be in store for the future. Imagination and Bristol Preschool completed their remote learning plans; meeting all the Criteria of the OEC. Bristol is just waiting on official notification that they have been approved. Data predicts there are lots of children who will be entering Kindergarten in the fall of 2021 without a preschool experience. The committee is working on putting together an activity bag that will help children work on school readiness skills prior to entering. Donna Osuch shared the recent Kindergarten survey. Aprox. 190 surveys were returned and the BBHD was able to access data from the registration forms. There is a slight improvement (87%) of families who reported their child had a Pre-K experience prior to entering Kind. Last year, the committee saw 84% with a Pre-k experience. 45% of families reported they read to their child daily in comparison to 44% in 2019. The data is still low for the amount of sleep Kindergartens are getting. It is suggested that K students receive 12 to 13 hours a day. 56% of K students only have about 10-11 hours of sleep.

Community Sharing:

WIC: WIC recently held a successful food drive for Thanksgiving.

MSCF – Kate invited everyone to visit the website, www.mainstreetfoundation.org, for upcoming grants and to call the office with any questions. COVID 19 emergency needs fund is still available to those who are eligible.

Park & Rec/Parent & Child Program: Winter Programs have been launched. Please visit their website for more information: <https://www.bristolrec.com/info/default.aspx> Watch for more information on the “Park Packed” program where families will received backpacks filled with balls, games, etc. - The Parent & Child Center also shared they are having a toy drive on Saturday, Dec. 5th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to collect unwrapped toys for their families.

Bristol BOE: Cecelia reminded members that a new site for Spanish speaking families has been created to share information from the BOE and the community. <https://www.facebook.com/EscuelasPublicasDeBristol>

UWWCC: Farmers to Families event will be held on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. on the Boulevard. Toys are currently being collected for the “Joy of Sharing Program”, Recruitment for the Parent Leadership Training Institute is ongoing.

BBHD. has an important reminder: All preschool children need to receive their Flu vaccine by December 31st, 2020. Please encourage your families to make their appointments soon.

Next Meeting: *January 6, 2021 (Zoom)*