

Kent County
Family & Children's
Coordinating Council



Get meeting agendas & minutes online at www.accesskent.com/kcfccc!

KCFCCC Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2002, 12:00p.m. – 1:30p.m.

Kent County Health Department
700 Fuller Avenue, NE

Members/alternates present: William Blacquier (for Marvin McKenzie), Nanaruth Carpenter, Candace Cowling, Sandra Davis (for Tom Czerwinski), Mary Dengerink (for Bonnie Huntley), Lynne Ferrell (for Milton Rohwer), Karl Hascall, Cyndi Hicks (for Ruth Buntin), Debra Holmes Garrison (and Barbara Terry), Linda McDonald, Christine Nelson (for Susan Broman), Patti Nussbaum, Cathy Raevsky (and Sandra Walls), Diana Sieger (and Wendy Jackson), Mary Alice Williams, Andrew Zylstra (and John Cole)

Members absent (with no alternate present): Beverly Drake, William Forsyth, Miles Murphy, Mike Weiler

Others present: Bethanie Archbold, Mary Swanson (staff); Carol Bragg, Lynn Heemstra, Janay Jorgensen, Penny Pestle, Kate Scheid, Bree Whitmore

I. Welcome and Approval of Agenda

Diane Sieger opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. There were no changes to the agenda.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mary Alice Williams moved to approve the minutes of the previous Council meeting. Sandra Davis supported. Motion carried.

III. Strong Families Safe Children

A. Current Year (FY2002) Allocations

Bethanie Archbold reviewed the requests for current year SF/SC committee/administrative funds and the Executive Committee's recommendations for funding. The Executive Committee recommended that funding be allocated to the Early Childhood Committee's Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) Planning Project (\$6600) and the Ongoing Family Support Committee's planned substance abuse training and educational materials for Perspective 21! Early Impact caseworkers) \$3300. Ms. Sieger asked that the Council consider these recommendations, with an amendment to increase the amount for the Ongoing Family Support Committee to \$3400 to help cover unanticipated additional costs.

Karl Hascall moved to approve the recommendation. Christine Nelson supported. Motion carried.

B. Multi-Year (FY2003-FY2005) Plan

Ms. Archbold presented the FY2003-FY2005 plan, presented as a recommendation from the Executive Committee. Based upon the ad hoc committee's review of KCFCCC funding criteria, SF/SC program requirements, trend data on required indicators, and program evaluation data, the Executive Committee recommended the continuation of currently funded services. In making its recommendation, the Executive Committee concurred with the ad hoc committee that the Council should continue to emphasize prevention and support broad community efforts by ensuring long-term, consistent funding for community priorities.

John Cole moved to approve the recommendation. Linda McDonald supported. Motion carried.

Ms. Sieger thanked the members of the ad hoc committee (Susan Broman, Sandra Davis, Debra Holmes-Garrison, and Wendy Jackson) for their hard work in reviewing the data and preparing the recommendations.

IV. Grand Rapids Education Reform Initiative

Ms. Sieger introduced Wendy Jackson to present on the Grand Rapids Education Reform Initiative (GREI). Ms. Sieger stated that the GREI was the result of collaboration between the Frey, Grand Rapids Community, and Steelcase Foundations to develop a 20-year plan to improve student achievement in the Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS).

Ms. Jackson reported that the impetus for the initiative occurred in 1999 when Governor Engler identified education as a top priority, and identified the schools of Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Lansing as key examples of schools in trouble. In response, the three foundations united to fund the GREI, an initiative which involves 23 key business, philanthropic, and community leaders to improve child outcomes for GRPS students. She stated that the initiative had 6 goal areas:

- Assure student success and achievement
- Guarantee administrative operating efficiency
- Achieve empowerment and success within individual schools
- Secure adequate and equitable infrastructure financing
- Implement community programs for school readiness
- Build community support for urban education

She stated that the group has reviewed GRPS administrative and student data, perspectives of community members, public perception research, and alternative models, and has made site visits to other cities that have gone through education reform movements. Some findings from the public perception research included:

- 84 percent of those surveyed identified the need for change as "urgent"
- Those parents who have left the GRPS would not consider returning
- There is a degree of hope; the majority of those surveyed felt that the problems with GRPS were fixable, and that they were willing to work on the issue, though those outside of the city were in general not prepared to contribute money.

She stated that the group is working on coming to consensus on 25 recommendations. She stated that the group would meet for a "consensus conference" on June 19, then begin meeting with

other key stakeholders before the official public rollout of the reform platform. She stated that the members of GREI would continue to keep the Council informed.

V. Expanded Learning Opportunities

Lynn Heemstra presented information on the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) project, co-sponsored by the City of Grand Rapids Office of Children, Youth, and Families and United Way. She stated that Grand Rapids was one of eight cities to win a technical assistance grant from the National League of Cities for expanded learning. She stated that the purpose of the project was to ensure that every child in Grand Rapids has access to quality out-of-school programs. Children who participate in out-of-school programs perform better in school, have improved attendance, and engage in fewer risky behaviors, such as sexual activity or substance abuse. The five goals of the project are:

- Develop a city-wide action plan for expanded learning opportunities for kids
- Map current programs to ensure equitable distribution
- Develop a set of quality standards for before and after school programs
- Work with providers and funders to streamline efficient use of dollars and resources
- Build on public/private/parent partnership for coordination and outcomes

Ms. Heemstra introduced Janay Jorgensen, who is coordinating the mapping effort. Ms. Jorgensen stated that 650 surveys have been sent out to youth organizations, and already 150 have been returned. She asked that Council members encourage youth organizations to fill out the surveys and return them so that an accurate database can be built. She stated that the group was also working with MSU and the KCFCCC Middle & High School Years Committee on two separate projects to gather input from youth and share the information with key decision-makers.

Ms. McDonald asked what activities were available for kids. Ms. Heemstra stated that one of the purposes of the project was to gain a clearer understanding of what activities were available for kids, and then to share that information with the community. She stated that the first year mapping will focus on children and youth in Kindergarten through 12th grade, and will be expanded the second year to include pre-K and after 12th grade.

Mary Dengerink asked what Council members can do if they know of some groups that should be included. Ms. Jorgensen stated that she had copies of the survey available for use when talking to groups. Anyone who is interested in more information about the project can contact her at (616) 456-3102.

Ms. Williams stated that she had attended a presentation by Dr. Villaruel and had found his research on minority youth very impressive. She stated that his research presented a great learning opportunity for organizations which seek to improve the way they offer services to all people.

Andrew Zylstra stated that from an FIA perspective, both the GREI and the ELO were very important. He stated that as the State is requiring mothers to work, the community must ensure that support services are available to them. He stated that lack of supervision for children can lead to bigger problems in the future, such as crime, drug use, failure in school, etc. He stated that children with these problems are more likely to grow up to be adults who need FIA assistance.

Ms. Sieger thanked Ms. Heemstra and Ms. Jorgensen for their presentation.

VI. Committee Updates

A. Early Childhood Committee

Ms. Nelson reported that the committee is engaged in a long-term planning effort to create a coordinated, integrated system of services for children from birth to age five. She stated that the committee has spent some time coming to consensus on what this system would look like, and coming to a common understanding on definitions. As the committee continues its planning, it will work to fill identified gaps. The committee's Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) planning project is an example of filling such a gap.

B. Elementary School Years Committee

Wendy Jackson stated that the committee is wrapping up its neighborhood-based outreach phase, and beginning to prepare for the citywide media campaign, to be kicked off mid-June. She stated that the ultimate goal was to increase participation at Grand Rapids summer food sites. Next year the committee will work on increasing the number of out-county sites.

C. Middle and High School Years Committee

Patti Nussbaum presented information on the committee's Youth Voice project, which seeks to draw out the voices of youth that do not generally take advantage of the wide array of structured activities or actively engage in other areas of the community. Once the committee has gathered the information, it will compile and analyze the data in order to form recommendations for action, which will be shared with the community for help in prioritizing and dividing responsibilities for implementation.

Ms. Archbold added that the group needed help in moving the project forward. She stated that opportunities for participation include hosting or facilitating a focus group, involving youth groups in the interview portion of the project, provide financial or material support, or receive a copy of the final report and recommendations and/or help implement the recommendations. If anyone is interested, please contact Ms. Archbold.

Mr. Hascall moved to approve the Executive Committee's recommendation to appoint Jim Madole of Saint John's Home as Chair of the committee. Ms. Williams supported. Motion carried.

D. Ongoing Family Support Committee

Ms. Davis reported that with the Council's approval of SF/SC allocations, the committee could move forward on its plans to host the specialized two-part training series for P21! Early Impact caseworkers on substance abuse. Part one will provide information on identifying drug use, confidentiality requirements, and how to access resources for treatment. Part two will be an in-depth training on strategies to engage families in recognizing the problem and seeking treatment. The committee is also beginning to explore next steps for its action.

VII. Legislative Updates and Strategic Planning

Ms. Sieger noted that last month's presentation by Sharon Parks about TANF reauthorization marked the Council's first step in becoming more active in leadership and advocacy within the framework outlined in the Council's Leadership and Advocacy guidelines. She stated that the Executive Committee was now exploring ways for the Council to stay involved and active with upcoming issues, including legislative updates, strategic planning, and policy forums.

VIII. Updates & Administrative Items

A. Interagency Response to Children in Need of Out-of-Home Care

Mary Swanson presented an update on the Interagency Response to Children in Need of Out-of-Home Care workgroup, established based on a recommendation of the Council's early advocacy group. She stated that staff from FIA, CMH, and the 17th Circuit Court Family Division had met to identify a response to serving children needing out-of-home placement, but which do not necessarily fit within any of the systems. She stated that the group had reviewed cases and found that often the situation could be solved by addressing specific glitches in the system. As a result, the group has established a multi-system group known as PERC to review cases. She asked that if anyone who knows of a family in need of out-of-home care that doesn't fit into existing services, that person should make a referral to Bonnie Beal.

Ms. Cowling asked whether First Call for Help would be notified of the service. Ms. Swanson replied that the service was a last resort if existing services do not address the individuals' needs. Individuals needing this type of service who call First Call For Help would be referred to Cornerstone Helpline as a first step.

IX. Other Community Information & Updates

There were no items presented.

X. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:30pm. **The next Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council meeting will be September 3, 2002, from 12:00pm – 1:30pm at the Kent County Health Department, 700 Fuller, N.E.**